

WRIA 8 Update

Sept 20, 2012

- **Oct. 5 WRIA 8 Salmon Tour** – Remember to RSVP for the annual Salmon Tour. This year the focus will be on the Sammamish Chinook population and projects in the northern half of the WRIA 8 watershed. Highlights include:
 - A 2011 North Creek Restoration Project at the Clearwater School in Snohomish County
 - Celebrate a recently completed fish passage project on Little Bear Creek in Woodinville (media will be invited)
 - A future floodplain restoration on Lower Bear Creek in Redmond planned for 2013
 - See salmon on Bear Creek and hear about habitat protection on Bear Creek
 - Learn about fish passage improvements needed at the Hiram H. Chittenden Locks

- **Puget Sound Regional Update** – The **Puget Sound Action Agenda (AA) update** was adopted by the Puget Sound Leadership Council in August. Salmon recovery interests are well represented in the priority near term actions identified in the strategic initiative for Habitat Protection and Restoration. Key strategies and actions include:
 - implementation of salmon recovery 3-year workplans;
 - developing cooperative agreement with BNSF Railroad to enable implementation of high priority restoration projects
 - development of homeowner incentives to remove shoreline armoring;
 - protection of 10% bluff backed beaches or other priority nearshore habitats;
 - floodplain protection by facilitating actions, policy changes and programs necessary to reduce barriers to floodplain protection and restoration
 - continue to work with Corps on levee vegetation policy
 - revision of Hydraulic Code rules to prevent or mitigate impacts of fish life and habitat
 - assistance to local governments to update shoreline master programs
 - identification of barriers to incorporating policies consistent with AA into local land use planning and identifying best practices and assistance to overcome barriers
 - protection and restoration of instream flows

To see full document go to: http://www.psp.wa.gov/action_agenda_2011_update_home.php

The **Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council (PS SRC)** met on July 26 and discussed steelhead funding, the legislative strategy for Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) funding and the tribal input regarding the AA Update. The Council will meet again on Sept. 27 to discuss the ranking of the large regional projects for the PSAR request. They will also have an implementation conference on Oct. 10-12 to help set priorities for the PS SRC actions to help with implementation of the Puget Sound Chinook Recovery Plan. The **South Central Action Area Caucus** is scheduled to meet again on Oct. 15.

- **Green Shorelines** – Annette Frahm, who has been the Green Shorelines Outreach Coordinator since February 2011, has taken another position with the City of Seattle. Her last day with the WRIA 8 Team was Sept. 18. Her part time temporary position was scheduled to end on Dec. 31, 2012. Jean has been discussing future Green Shorelines coordination and outreach efforts with the Green Shorelines Steering Committee. Green Shoreline outreach efforts since the July meeting include:
 - Another YouTube video featuring a lakeshore property owner's positive experience with setting back her bulkhead and adding a beach is now available.

- Two fact sheets (handouts)--on bulkheads and docks--designed for permit staff to give to landowners when they apply for shoreline permits are also available.
- On Sept. 18 we presented a class for the American Institute of Architects.
- We held a meeting to brainstorm a green shorelines class for realtors. We are looking for someone to carry this forward.

An email will be sent to shoreline planning staff from lakeshore jurisdictions in the next two weeks summarizing all the Green Shorelines outreach tools that have been developed to date and how to access them.

- **Salmon SEEson** – Salmon can be seen from July to January at eight different locations in the WRIA 8 watershed. Please help promote the 6th annual Salmon SEEson program by printing something about these events in your newsletter, posting them on your website (we can provide a Salmon SEEson “button” for a weblink or a Salmon SEEson banner graphic), including the information in your regular email updates, or displaying posters and distributing flyers in public places. Contact Linda Grob if you would like Salmon SEEson outreach materials at linda.grob@kingcounty.gov or 206-296-8016.
- **Fish Returns** – (handout) 2012 is turning out to be a relatively good year for Chinook and coho salmon returns. Chinook returns through the Locks are about 45% above the 12 year average, and coho salmon numbers are very strong as well. Sockeye returns, though failing to live up to the early season hype, are well above forecast (though only 71% of our 12 year average). Salmon are being sighted in most of our streams, and redd surveys begin soon.
- **Invasive New Zealand Mud Snails found in Kelsey Creek** – (handout) King County field scientists recently identified invasive New Zealand mud snails in Kelsey Creek in Bellevue. This is the second stream in WRIA 8 to be found to contain these snails – they were found in 2011 in Thornton Creek (Seattle) and in Lake Washington off Matthews Beach Park (mouth of Thornton Creek). Other known locations in Washington include Capitol Lake in Olympia, and along the Columbia River. This is a worrisome invasive species that can be spread by people, pets and wildlife. There is no known method of eradication – the best we can do is prevent the spread into other streams. WRIA 8 staff will coordinate with WDFW, other state agencies, and local jurisdictional staff to determine best way to communicate to local citizens and educate staff on control methods.
- **EPA watershed grant** – In mid-October, the Washington State departments of Ecology and Commerce will release a watershed management grant request for proposals. The purpose of the grant is to support watershed-scale efforts to protect and/or restore ecological processes and functions. The WRIA 8 team, along with interested partners, will explore this grant opportunity for our “trees for streams” concept to work with public and private landowners to improve riparian area protection and restoration in our watershed.
- **WRIA 8 2012 Cooperative Watershed Management Grants** – On July 26, the King County Flood Control District Executive Committee approved the six projects that the WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council recommended for Cooperative Watershed Management grants. The six projects include:
 - Riverbend Acquisition (Cedar River), King County
 - Cedar River Stewardship in Action, Seattle Public Utilities
 - Cedar River Salmon Journey, Friends of the Cedar River Watershed
 - Salmon Watcher Program, King County

- Beach Naturalists Program, Seattle Aquarium
 - WRIA 8 Fish In/Fish Out Monitoring, King County
- **King Conservation District (KCD) Assessment Proposal** – The KCD released their new proposed system of rates and charges and a proposal for their 2013 workplan to King County Council on Aug. 1, 2012. The proposal would raise close to \$6.5 million annually. It does not include grant programs reserved for WRIAs or for jurisdictions participating in KCD. It does propose a new grant program for community conservation needs such as stormwater management, fish passage barrier removal, native plant re-vegetation, and invasive weed control projects. The proposal identifies the following resource management priorities for the District and the percent of the 2013 budget allocation to each priority: aquatic habitat – 35%; water quality and quantity – 25%; forest health management and upland habitat – 17%; agricultural lands – 16%; and economic vitality of working lands – 7%. King County Council must act on KCD’s proposal by the end of 2012.
 - **New PSAR Strategy & What WRIA 8 Submitted** – The Puget Sound Partnership submitted an \$80 million legislative request for PSAR funding in the 2013-2015 biennium. The request includes two components: 1) \$30 million divided among Puget Sound watersheds for the typical habitat projects grant round, and 2) \$50 million dedicated to fund a prioritized list of specific large, high-priority capital projects submitted by Puget Sound watersheds. Proposals submitted by WRIA 8 included:
 - Riverbend Acquisition and Relocation (Cedar River)
 - Sammamish River Transition Zone Restoration
 - Ballard Locks Fish Passage Improvements
 Proposals will be reviewed and scored to develop a ranked project list. The Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council will review and make a decision on the final sequenced list at its September 27 meeting.
 - **Emerging Issue with Smolt Flumes at Locks** – Since 2000, smolt flumes at the Hiram Chittenden Locks have provided a safer way for juvenile salmon to migrate over the Locks. Through the Lake Washington General Investigation Study, WRIA 8 provided local cost share funding to pay for the development of the smolt flumes which are installed each spring in time for the outmigration period. New Corps safety regulations may prevent the smolt flumes from being installed next spring. Corps staff are looking at alternative ways to provide safer passage for juvenile salmon over the Locks and are committed to finding a solution before next spring’s migration period. WRIA 8 and King County will continue to monitor the issue and engage with the Corps as appropriate. We are very concerned that we are losing ground on many of the operational fish passage improvements that have been made at Locks made since 2000 due to aging infrastructure and lack of funding for improvements.

WRIA 8 Committee Reports

- **WRIA 8 Technical Committee** – Meeting schedule is reduced in summer due to field work of science staff. Met on September 12. Received an update from King County on Rainbow Bend, discussed design status and monitoring plans. Revisited H-Integration status in preparation for September 20 SRC meeting.

- **WRIA 8 Implementation Committee** – Met on Sept. 11. The committee discussed: updating the WRIA 8 Legislative Agenda for 2012, WRIA 8 funding update/information sharing, the WRIA 8 Salmon Tour on Oct. 5 and preparation for the Sept. 20 Salmon Recovery Council meeting.