

**WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council**  
**Meeting Notes**  
**Kirkland City Hall**  
**January 17, 2013**  
**3:05 – 5:10 p.m.**

**Members Present**

Dr. Don Davidson, Chair (Councilmember, Bellevue); Eileen Barber (Friends of the Issaquah Salmon Hatchery [FISH]); Susan Boundy-Sanders (Councilmember, Woodinville); Diane Buckshnis (Councilmember, Edmonds); Bruce Dodds (Councilmember, Clyde Hill); Chris Eggen (Deputy Mayor, Shoreline); Nancy Eklund (The Boeing Company); Don Fiene (Councilmember, Lake Forest Park); Ted Frantz (Councilmember, Hunts Point); Noel Gilbrough (Mid-Sound Fisheries Enhancement Group); Bill Knudsen (King Conservation District [KCD]); Kirk Lakey (WA Department of Fish & Wildlife [WDFW]); Bart Masterson (Councilmember, Mill Creek); Hank Myers (Councilmember, Redmond); Joan Nolan (WA Department of Ecology [DOE]); Mike O'Brien (Councilmember, Seattle); Larry Phillips (Councilmember, King County); Andy Rheame (Councilmember, Bothell); Gary Smith (Trout Unlimited/WaterTenders); Frank Urabeck (Citizen); Tom Vance (Councilmember, Sammamish).

**Alternate Members Present**

Tom French (Councilmember, Lake Forest Park); Dave Garland (DOE); Don Gerend (Councilmember, Sammamish).

**Others Present**

Rika Cecil (Shoreline); Diana Foreman (Portage Bay Coalition for Clean Water); Sara Hemphill (KCD); Kathy Minsch (Seattle); Wally Pereyra (Kokanee Work Group); Jeralyn Roetemeyer (Redmond); Stacey Rush (Kirkland); David St. John (King County/Kokanee Work Group); Ron Straka (Renton); Linda Grob (WRIA 8 Team); Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz (WRIA 8 Team); Scott Stolnack (WRIA 8 Team).

**1. Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**2. Approval of Meeting Notes for November 15, 2012**

*The Salmon Recovery Council unanimously approved the meeting notes for the November 15, 2012 meeting.*

**3. Updates & Announcements**

**General Announcements:**

Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz, Acting Watershed Coordinator, made several announcements:

- **Puget Sound Salmon Regional Update:**
  - The **Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council (PSSRC)** met on November 29, adopting a PSSRC work plan, and discussing a legislative strategy supporting Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) funding, and possibly supporting a Watershed Investment District (WID) study bill. PSSRC also created a subcommittee to assist with the open standards for Puget Sound watershed adaptive management and monitoring plans. Scott Stolnack, Technical Coordinator, and Kirk Lakey are on the subcommittee.
  - The **South Central Action Area Caucus Group** met on December 10, to discuss the Action Area's 2013 work plan, creation of a subcommittee for implementation of the Action Agenda, and funding for Puget Sound recovery.
- **Knotweed Designation on the Cedar River:** The King County Noxious Weed Board met last night for its annual Noxious Weeds List public hearing. The Board approved listing knotweed on the Cedar River as a noxious weed for which control is required. Landowners on the Cedar River will now be compelled to remove knotweed, and King County Noxious Weed folks will assist with removal.

- Hank Myers reported that his neighbors have knotweed, which is now in his yard. He asked who he should contact. Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz said he should contact King County's Noxious Weed staff at [noxious.weeds@kingcounty.gov](mailto:noxious.weeds@kingcounty.gov).
- Chris Eggen asked if King County provides grants to hire staff to control noxious weeds. Jason explained that the county has technical noxious weeds staff that work with, and advise, landowners.
- **Grant Funding Update:** On December 10, 2012 the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) approved five WRIA 8 projects, awarding \$778,356 in SRFB/PSAR funding. The projects are
  - River Bend Floodplain Acquisition (King County), \$299,000;
  - Confluence Parks/Issaquah Creek Restoration (Issaquah), \$225,000;
  - Cedar River Belmondo Reach Acquisition (Seattle), \$150,000;
  - Bear Creek Reach 6 Restoration (Adopt A Stream), \$74,356; and
  - Little Bear Creek Knotweed Assessment (Snohomish County), \$30,000.
- **Trees for Streams:** Jason said it has been challenging to find a grant to support the "Trees for Streams" concept, which is the main effort to direct resources to implementing the WRIA 8 riparian strategy. As part of this effort, WRIA 8 is partnering with Seattle Public Utilities, King County Noxious Weeds, Forterra, and Friends of the Cedar River Watershed on an Environmental Protection Agency National Estuary Program Watershed Protection and Restoration grant to continue the Cedar River Stewardship in Action program to systematically control knotweed and restore riparian areas along the Cedar River.
- **Legislative Priorities Update:**
  - **PSAR:** All WRIA 8's funding priorities were included in Governor Gregoire's 2013-2015 biennial budget. The budget includes the full \$80 million PSAR request, and Jason pointed out the two PSAR handouts in the meeting packet which are good information resources for members to share with legislators in Olympia. Don Davidson said all the projects on the PSAR high-priority capital project list went through a thorough ranking process. Kirk Lakey reported that the Regional Implementation Technical Team (RITT) also helped technically evaluate those projects.
  - **WID Study Bill:** The Sound Cities Association (SCA) Public Issues Committee (PIC) created a WID subcommittee to consider support for a study bill. Andy Rheaume chairs the subcommittee, and Joan McBride is a member. The subcommittee recommended that SCA support formation of a stakeholder group by the state legislature to develop consensus language for a bill to be introduced in the 2014 legislative session.
- **Ballard Locks Fish Passage:** Jason said in September we heard from the Army Corps of Engineers that safety regulations may delay or prevent installation of the smolt flumes next spring. Corps staff are now exploring alternatives for next spring's juvenile migration. He said WRIA 8 staff met with the Corps on January 15 to better understand Locks operations and infrastructure improvements needs. Infrastructure improvements needed at the Locks go well beyond fish passage needs. The Locks' dam safety rating was reduced to a two out of five, with one being the worst, indicating that the Locks are not earthquake safe and could fail. The information shared at the meeting with Corps staff will help shape the update to our Legislative Priorities. It will likely be more effective to articulate the need for fish passage improvements as part of the need to make infrastructure improvements at the Locks to protect public safety, transportation infrastructure, and the regional economy.
  - Frank Urabeck remarked that the Corps indicated they were looking at alternates to smolt slides, and he asked if we know what they are. Jason replied that the Corps is still considering alternatives, but they don't have any better approach than what is now being used. They do have an approved contractor, and are looking at improving the smolt slide design.
  - Kirk Lakey asked if there is a structural issue with leaving them up all year. Frank Urabeck said there are technical and safety issues that prevent permanent installation of the current smolt slides.

- Noel Gilbrough commented that you don't want smolts going through the Locks, because they have high mortality. Jason noted that the smolt slides were part of an integrated approach to fish passage, which includes several other improvements to Locks operations.
- Ted Frantz asked who designed the smolt flumes. Noel Gilbrough explained that they were designed by the Corps, and constructed by a contractor. Frank Urabeck said the design of the smolt flumes was the Corps' best design, but worker safety is the current issue with installing them.
- Scott Stolnack said the smolt flumes are okay this year and next year, and the same process should be okay in out years as well. The Army Corps of Engineers are working with a NOAA fish passage expert on alternative designs.
- Chris Eggen inquired about the kind of a failure that might occur with the inability to open the Locks. Jason said we don't know if they know for sure, and we are looking at all aspects. Kirk Lakey explained that there are long walkways, and one is currently eroded at its footing. The Locks machinery is 100 years old and of Panama Canal vintage and much of the original machinery is past its design life.
- **Salmon SEEson:** The sixth season of Salmon SEEson was very successful, with partners reporting strong fish numbers in most locations.
- **King Conservation District (KCD):** Jason reported that the KCD interlocal agreement (ILA) was signed with King County, and the remaining WRIA grant program funds will be disbursed. Remaining WRIA 8 funds amount to approximately \$90,000 with another \$30,000 or more being returned from additional grants that will be closing soon, for an estimated total of \$120,000. Bill Knutsen said the Cedar River Stewardship in Action project is the type of project that would be a good candidate for the remaining WRIA 8 funding. KCD has requested that these remaining WRIA funds get spent by December 2014.

#### **Technical Committee:**

Scott Stolnack reported on several technical updates:

- **Critical Habitat for Steelhead:** NOAA just came out with the proposed critical habitat for Puget Sound steelhead. The bottom line for WRIA 8 is the steelhead critical habitat designation is similar to the Chinook critical habitat. The Cedar River is designated critical habitat, but Lake Washington, Sammamish River, and Lake Sammamish (including Issaquah Creek) are proposed to be excluded because of the economic impacts of inclusion outweighing the conservation benefits. Comments are due to NOAA on April 16. Critical habitat designation is a step in the process of creating a recovery plan for steelhead.
- **Fish Numbers:**
  - **Chinook Redds:** 2012 Chinook redd surveys are complete, with 409 redds counted in the Cedar River system, 7.6% above the 13-year average. The Bear/Cottage Lake system had 148 Chinook redds, 18% percent above the 11-year average. 85% on Bear/Cottage are hatchery-origin fish. Returns in both systems exceeded forecasts, but are well below WRIA 8 conservation goals. Larry Phillips asked how many Chinook redds on the Cedar were above Landsburg Dam. Scott replied there were 40 or so above Landsburg.
  - **Juvenile Chinook Outmigrants:** Outmigrant estimates are surprisingly good on the Cedar. A very preliminary estimate is 902,000 juvenile Chinook outmigrants in 2012, which is five times the 13-year average. [2/19/2013: Scott notes that fisheries scientists are pretty skeptical about these outmigrant numbers, and suggests caution when reporting them because they will likely be adjusted downward quite a bit.] Last year we had some flooding, which refreshed the gravel spawning beds and was likely good for Chinook. Our habitat projects and opening the upper watershed are both good for Cedar outmigrants. 22,000 juvenile Chinook left the Bear/Cottage Lake system, slightly above the 13-year average. Scott said we are meeting some of our ten year goals for both Cedar and Bear/Cottage outmigrants, and he will have more to say on this at the next Salmon Recovery Council (SRC) meeting.

#### 4. Looking at Year Ahead

- **Interlocal Agreement (ILA) Client Satisfaction Survey:** Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz reported that every topic area rated good to excellent on the annual WRIA 8 ILA Service Provider Survey distributed by King County. Six elected officials responded to the survey, versus 13 last year, with more staff responding this year than last year. Comments were mostly positive, praising the “good job at grant funding management” and “technical expertise”, as well as serving as a forum for information sharing on topics important to many local partners. There were a couple comments suggesting how staff services could be improved.
- **Topics for 2013:** Jason went over the main topics for 2013:
  - A panel discussion about science in the watershed, and the King County In-Lieu Mitigation Program (March);
  - WRIA 8 budget and workplan approval, and adaptive management and monitoring (May).
  - SRFB and Cooperative Watershed Management grant recommendations (July);
  - The Cedar River HCP, and the legislative agenda (September);
  - The Salmon Recovery Tour: Rainbow Bend, Issaquah Fish Passage, Lower Bear Creek (October); and
  - A progress report on project implementation, and the process for updating the WRIA 8 Plan (November).

#### Discussion;

- Hank Myers asked how SRC members can best get answers to general WRIA 8 related questions. Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz said the best place to start would be to contact him, and he will answer the question or direct you to the person who can provide the answer. He also suggested contacting your city staff, which are often very knowledgeable about WRIA 8 issues.
- Frank Urabeck inquired how WRIA 8 stacks up with other WRIsAs survey-wise. Jason said he didn’t know.
- Kirk Lakey noted that the March meeting also includes the Three-Year Work Plan capital project and programmatic priorities list update discussion and approval. He suggested a topic for the November meeting could be a presentation by a RITT representative about RITT/PSP feedback on the WRIA 8 Plan. We’ve never had a presentation of what the RITT thinks about our plan.
- Larry Phillips remarked that as we look at issues of salmon recovery, he’s not sure how we can escape ocean issues. Gary Smith commented that NOAA is studying ocean issues, but they don’t have anything to present yet. Noel Gilbrough added the issue is not just oceans, but river flows that could be 30% higher.
- Andy Rheume said it would be interesting to have a presentation from DOE on their watershed characterization model. Dave Garland responded that he could have Steven Stanley, Ecology, provide a presentation.
- Kirk Lakey reported that there is going to be a two-day climate change meeting in March in Mount Vernon, but he thought it was restricted to state employees.

#### 5. WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council Operating Guidelines and Letterhead Updates

Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz reported that we sent out a SRC letter in November to Governor Gregoire and Governor-Elect Inslee in support of continued PSAR funding, but there was not time for everyone to review it before it needed to be submitted to influence the Governor’s budget. Boeing was concerned that it was listed on the letterhead for this letter, since it implies that Boeing endorses the positions stated in the letter. The Implementation Committee discussed the issue and came up with a proposal to change the letterhead to include an “advisory/non-voting” category for “non-party” members of the ILA. Although the hope was this addressed Boeing’s concerns, Jason said Boeing came back yesterday and said the changed letterhead would not address its concern.

Nancy Eklund explained that Boeing's mission is to make airplanes, and the Government Affairs Section is concerned about the potential for Boeing's company priorities to be confused or misunderstood if they are listed on WRIA 8 letterhead. At the Implementation Committee this letterhead change seemed like a really good idea, but it turns out to not meet the needs of Boeing's Government Affairs Section, and they do not want Boeing listed on the letterhead. Boeing would like to suggest two options: 1) change the letterhead to have geographic representation of the watershed with verbiage describing WRIA 8 and not listing the membership; or 2) remove Boeing from the membership listing.

Don Davidson said he appreciates Boeing's participation on the SRC, but observed that local governments don't always go through their councils, nor do other interest groups, before allowing a WRIA 8 letter to be submitted. He stated that if the SRC waited for 30 people to go through their own review process to approve a letter, it would be difficult to ever send letters. He said he likes seeing everyone represented on the letterhead to show the number of cities/groups participating in WRIA 8. He noted that the letter in question was very pointed, and said that other letters forwarded by the WRIA tend to be more generic in content. He mentioned that he has contacts at Boeing, and stated that he hoped that we could work through a good solution with them. Don will communicate with his contacts at Boeing to discuss their concern, and determine the best path forward for updating the letterhead.

Jason noted that the letterhead should be updated to remove several entities that no longer participate on the Salmon Recovery Council and add new member entities that have joined over the past few years.

#### Discussion:

- Dave Garland, Department of Ecology (DOE), commented that he doesn't think we are going to change Boeing's mind. He said the DOE looked at the issue, and decided the benefits of being associated with WRIA 8 far outweigh any potential risk of being listed on the letterhead. He further noted that as a non-ILA party member, DOE isn't a direct signatory on anything.
- Hank Myers asked if individual cities are encouraged to write individual letters. The consensus was that yes, individual cities are encouraged to write individual letters supporting WRIA 8 positions. Councilmember Myers noted that the Redmond City Council also approves things that not everyone agrees with, and letters go out with everyone listed. He said he thought most people know that everyone doesn't always agree with everything in a letter.
- Nancy Eklund said that Boeing is very sensitive and thoughtful about the company's reputation.
- Chris Eggen commented that local governments don't want all issues intruding on our functions. He said he thinks being listed on the letterhead is worth considering, and he is going to go back and talk to his city council.
- Nancy Eklund suggested it makes sense for WRIA 8, given its focus on a collaborative locally-based effort to recover the watershed's salmon populations, to seek and maintain business membership on the SRC.
- Mike O'Brien said there is a lot of power in having all of us listed on the letterhead, and the more names on it the better. People who run WRIA 8 do a good job on consensus.
- Don Gerend commented that in his mind the letterhead should just list the WRIA 8 Plan signatories.
- Don Fiene remarked that when we're talking about legislative priorities, we could have letterhead with voting, dues-paying ILA partners listed on it. When we have priorities that aren't seen as lobbying, we could have all members listed.
- Tom Vance commented that he couldn't imagine the governor looking at this letterhead and not paying attention to the contents.

***The Salmon Recovery Council unanimously approved updating the WRIA 8 letterhead to include only groups currently participating.***

## 6. Kokanee Update

David St. John, King County, reported that Lake Sammamish kokanee are about at 5-10% of historic levels, and are one of two populations in Puget Sound. Kokanee used to have a wide range, but now spawn in only three creeks: Ebright, Laughing Jacobs, and Lewis. Kirk Lakey noted that in 2003 or 2004 the last female kokanee was seen in Issaquah Creek. David said we don't know much about kokanee productivity, and in 2007 after the early run went extinct, the Kokanee Work Group was formed to help coordinate efforts to recover kokanee. The collection approach is getting better over time. He said the minimum effective population size is 500, and many years we were below that. When you see populations fluctuate so much it is another indication that the population is in trouble. The kokanee run for this year is almost over, and there are still a few fish in the creeks. David noted that this year's run was the biggest we've seen in two decades, and WDFW will present the official count in April.

David said the Kokanee Work Group is very active, and the core who attend meetings include watershed residents, and representatives from King County, Sammamish, Issaquah, Bellevue, Redmond, the Snoqualmie Tribe, WDFW, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, Darigold, Coho Café, Trout Unlimited, Save Lake Sammamish, and Friends of Pine Lake. The kokanee conservation goal is: "Prevent extinction and improve the health of the native population such that it is viable and sustaining, and supports fishery opportunities". The Tier 1 conservation priorities include: implement an aggressive artificial propagation program; correct habitat conditions causing mortality and limiting habitat access; and protect existing intact habitat. The habitat project list was developed using grant funding from WRIA 8, and includes projects that benefit both kokanee and Chinook. There are eleven projects on the list, including three Issaquah Creek projects. There are no kokanee there yet, but we absolutely feel we need kokanee in Issaquah Creek to be successful.

David reported that this has been an extraordinary year for kokanee runs and kokanee are in creeks in numbers that we haven't seen before. He said he thinks this is the first response from the artificial supplementation program. Recent important kokanee events include the Pereyra culvert replacement, Coho Café and Trout Unlimited fund raising events, Darigold water donation, Sammamish and Issaquah donations to kokanee program hatchery improvements, and the fourth year of collection for the hatchery program. The near term focus includes several fry releases with schools, results from the otolith analysis, completion of the "Blueprint" strategy, completion of the fourth supplementation season, and the action plan for fixing Zacusse Creek fish passage barriers.

Eileen Barber said people have been spotting kokanee in Tibbets Creek. David St. John noted that we actually have spawning in the creek. Kirk Lakey said he heard there were kokanee in Tibbets, and he went out around Thanksgiving to see for himself. There were hundreds of kokanee in the creek for weeks on end, and we haven't seen that in Tibbets in over ten years.

## **7. Success Story: Ebright Creek Fish Barrier Culvert Removal**

David St. John introduced Wally Pereyra, who lives on Ebright Creek and is an active member of the Kokanee Work Group. Wally funded a culvert removal project on the WRIA 8 and kokanee priority project list, supported by funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, City of Sammamish, and King County. The project removed an 18 inch fish passage barrier culvert and concrete, installed a large 10 foot box culvert, restored riparian area, and tripled the available upstream spawning area.

Wally Pereyra reported that the culvert replacement project has been a long time coming. He purchased property on a small farm in 1973, when there were very few kokanee in the creek. The former owner didn't like kokanee, and built a dam. Wally said he is a fisheries biologist who fell in love with the creek and fell in love with the kokanee. Ebright Creek runs through a very steep canyon, and kokanee couldn't navigate through the culvert. He tried to get funding for the culvert removal, and hosted a meeting at his place where he decided it was time to step up and fund it himself.

Wally explained that he asked all agencies present at the meeting to help him with the permits, and he ended up going through six agencies. He hired R2 Environmental to do the survey and prepare the design work, and it took six months to make it through the permitting process. A very good contractor remodeled his farmhouse, and he used the same contractor for the culvert removal project. Trout Unlimited got involved and helped with funding. The contractor built a very large patio to the location of the new culvert, brought in large equipment to remove the old culvert, and built a coffer dam upstream. The creek was graded so it wouldn't be undercut, and the gravel was put back where it had been.

Wally reported that the first kokanee came back on October 29, 2012, and proceeded upstream without stopping. He said it was the earliest he'd seen the run start, and three months later there are still fish in the creek. He went up the canyon to see where they were going, walking to a major slide area. The last slide of March 2010 wiped out the entire wild spawning that year. He said this year there was easily in excess of 200 fish, and probably a million eggs planted in Ebright.

#### Discussion;

- Hank Myers inquired what is on top of the box culvert. Wally Pereyra replied that he wanted to be able to pass back and forth across the creek to access his property.
- Don Davidson explained that early on WRIA 8 decided to maintain the focus on Chinook salmon recovery, and to support the Kokanee Work Group's efforts but leaving it to the Kokanee Work Group to carry the ball in terms of implementation. He said we take pride in and talk about the great work they are doing. Wally remarked that it is important that various agencies around Lake Sammamish are involved with kokanee conservation. He encouraged the SRC to continue its involvement and protect these watersheds.
- Noel Gilbrough mentioned that what we've learned is when you pave the stream surface, you kill the stream. He said good streams are those that aren't over developed.

#### **8. Next Meeting**

The next meeting is March 21, 2013, 3:00 to 5:15 p.m., Bellevue City Hall.