



Beaux Arts Village  
 Bellevue  
 Bothell  
 Clyde Hill  
 Edmonds  
 Hunts Point  
 Issaquah  
 Kenmore  
 Kent  
 King County  
 Kirkland  
 Lake Forest Park  
 Maple Valley  
 Medina  
 Mercer Island  
 Mill Creek  
 Mountlake Terrace  
 Mukilteo  
 Newcastle  
 Redmond  
 Renton  
 Sammamish  
 Seattle  
 Shoreline  
 Snohomish County  
 Woodinville  
 Woodway  
 Yarrow Point

Cedar River Council  
 Friends of the Cedar River Watershed  
 Friends of the Issaquah Salmon Hatchery  
 Greater Seattle Chamber of Commerce  
 Long Live the Kings  
 Mid-Sound Fisheries Enhancement Group  
 Mountains to Sound Greenway  
 Northwest Marine Trade Association  
 Sno-King Watershed Council  
 Trout Unlimited  
 Water Tenders

Alderwood Water and Wastewater District  
 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
 US Army Corps of Engineers  
 Washington Departments:  
 Ecology  
 Fish and Wildlife  
 Natural Resources  
 Washington Association of Sewer and Water Districts  
 King Conservation District

November 7, 2014

The Honorable Jay Inslee  
 Office of the Governor  
 PO Box 40002  
 Olympia, WA 98504-0002



RE: Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed (WRIA 8) Salmon Recovery Council State Legislative Priorities

Dear Governor Inslee:

On behalf of the Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed (WRIA 8) Salmon Recovery Council, I wish to share our enclosed priorities for the 2015 State legislative session. Your leadership is critical to ensuring we can continue our efforts—and Washington State’s commitment—to protect and restore habitat for salmon listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. Additionally, salmon habitat restoration is a proactive approach to making watershed ecosystems more resilient to a changing climate.

The state’s investment in salmon recovery and Puget Sound ecosystem restoration for the 2013-2015 biennium is permitting watersheds and the region to make significant progress on our highest priorities. Your support for the ***Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration*** program helps watersheds enhance our science-based salmon recovery efforts and advance regional recovery objectives. Additionally, funding in the current biennium for the ***Coordinated Investment in Puget Sound Floodplains*** program is greatly advancing implementation of multiple benefit floodplain management projects that restore critical salmon habitat, reduce flood hazards, and improve water quality. Thank you for supporting these programs, the results of which are in progress.

For the 2015-2017 biennium, we encourage you to build on the progress and momentum for salmon recovery and watershed health in Puget Sound and statewide. Specifically, we ask that you support the following:

- The ***Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration*** capital budget request through the Recreation and Conservation Office, which at \$140 million for the biennium will fund a prioritized list of 22 large salmon recovery projects around the Puget Sound region and will provide funding to each Puget Sound watershed for implementing smaller-scale—but critically important—habitat projects.
- The ***Floodplains by Design*** (formerly the Coordinated Investment in Puget Sound Floodplains) capital budget request through the Department of Ecology, which will dedicate \$50 million to a prioritized list of floodplain management projects around the state that enhance salmon habitat and protect public health and safety.
- Up to \$40 million in general obligation bonds as the state match for the ***Salmon Recovery Funding Board*** grant program through the Recreation and Conservation Office, which funds habitat protection and restoration statewide.

The Honorable Jay Inslee

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- ***Restoration of the state match used to support the watershed-based salmon recovery “Lead Entity” organizations tasked with implementing recovery efforts.*** A commitment of \$770,000 in state general funds to the Recreation and Conservation Office’s operating budget will position Washington State to be more competitive to receive a greater share of the federal Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund (PCSRF), which supports implementation of priority habitat protection and restoration projects in communities throughout the state.
- ***New watershed-based funding mechanisms that recognize the link between salmon recovery, water quality, and stormwater and floodplain management.*** With salmon recovery funding continuing to be limited, alternative funding mechanisms focused on overall watershed health are vitally important in helping us achieve our salmon recovery goals.

WRIA 8 appreciates the challenges involved in making state budget decisions and applauds your leadership. Thank you again for your work to continue Washington State’s commitment to salmon recovery, restoring the health of Puget Sound, and working to address effects of climate change.

If you have any questions about projects funded in WRIA 8 or how these priorities advance our salmon recovery objectives, please feel free to contact Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz, the Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed Coordinator at 206-477-4780 or [jason.mulvihill-kuntz@kingcounty.gov](mailto:jason.mulvihill-kuntz@kingcounty.gov). Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Larry Phillips  
Chair, WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council  
Chair, Metropolitan King County Council

Enclosure

cc: Sheida Sahandy, Director, Puget Sound Partnership  
Kaleen Cottingham, Director, Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office  
Maia D. Bellon, Director, Washington Department of Ecology  
Phil Anderson, Director, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife  
David Troutt, Chair, Washington State Salmon Recovery Funding Board  
Darcy Batura, Chair, Washington Salmon Coalition  
Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed (WRIA 8) Salmon Recovery  
Council members  
Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz, Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed  
Coordinator



# Legislative Priorities for Puget Sound Watershed Health and Salmon Habitat Recovery

*Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed (WRIA 8) Partners*

Updated: September 2014

## ***State Priorities***

### **Capital Budget:**

- **Support \$140 million for the Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration Fund** capital funding request. PSAR funds support implementation of the highest priority habitat protection and restoration projects throughout Puget Sound. The request includes two components: 1) \$30 million divided among Puget Sound watersheds for a habitat projects grant round, and 2) \$110 million dedicated to fund a prioritized list of specific large, high-priority capital projects submitted by Puget Sound watersheds. Funds are derived from State general obligation bonds (RCW 77.85).
  - WRIA 8's \$1.4 million allocation in the 2013-2015 biennium helped fund the following priority projects (all projects have substantial local match):
    - Cedar River floodplain acquisition and relocation of residents out of harm's way to enable future floodplain restoration in unincorporated King County.
    - Riparian area stewardship on the Cedar River, including controlling invasive knotweed and replanting with native plants.
    - Issaquah Creek riparian and in-stream habitat restoration.
    - Nearshore creek daylighting and salt marsh restoration in Edmonds.
    - Side channel restoration on the Sammamish River in Bothell.

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FOR INFORMATION ABOUT THESE PRIORITIES PLEASE CONTACT:

Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz, Watershed Coordinator, Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed (WRIA 8)

[jason.mulvihill-kuntz@kingcounty.gov](mailto:jason.mulvihill-kuntz@kingcounty.gov) • (206) 477-4780 • <http://www.govlink.org/watersheds/8/>

- In 2014, WRIA 8 partnered with City of Renton to secure an additional \$150,000 PSAR project development grant for Renton to conduct a habitat restoration assessment and preliminary project design in the lower Cedar River.
  - A portion of this funding also supports local watershed capacity for project development and implementation.
- **Support request of up to \$40 million in general obligation bonds in the capital budget for the state portion of the Salmon Recovery Funding Board grant program to protect and restore salmon habitat.**
  - **Support the \$50 million Floodplains by Design capital budget request.** In the 2013-2014 biennium, the legislature allocated \$33 million to the Department of Ecology to support a list of multiple benefit floodplain restoration and management projects. As part of this allocation, King County received a \$4.1 million grant to support completion of the Cedar River Rainbow Bend floodplain restoration project and assist with relocating residents of a mobile home park as part of the Riverbend floodplain restoration project. In the 2015-2017 biennium, Ecology will request \$50 million for a prioritized list of floodplain management projects. WRIA 8 supported development of a King County and Seattle Public Utilities proposal to acquire floodplain properties in priority reaches of the Cedar River and develop final design of the Riverbend floodplain restoration project.

### **Operating Budget:**

- **Support request for \$770,000 in state general funds in the operating budget to support and continue the role of salmon recovery Lead Entities** in recruiting, reviewing and prioritizing community-based salmon restoration projects for submittal to the Salmon Recovery Funding Board for funding. This will return the funding to a 50-50 state to federal match, making Washington State more competitive for federal funding. State funding is provided in the Recreation and Conservation Office operating budget to match federal Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund (PCSRF) funding from NOAA in the 2015-2017 biennium. Over the past few years, the state's portion of the match has been reduced 50% and has been backfilled using federal PCSRF funds. This reduction in state match

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makes Washington less competitive with NOAA for federal funding. Reinstating the state dollars would make Washington more competitive to receive a greater share of PCSRF funding. For the past 13 years, WRIA 8 has received a \$60,000 Lead Entity grant, as part of this funding, to support project development, grant coordination, and tracking implementation.

### **Policy Legislation:**

- **Support continued efforts to explore new watershed-based funding authorities to support multiple-benefit projects that address salmon habitat protection and restoration, water quality, stormwater management, and flood management.** Since 2011, recognizing the limited funding available to implement salmon recovery, WRIA 8 supported and participated in cross-watershed discussions to identify alternative funding mechanisms to implement multiple-benefit watershed priorities, including but not limited to salmon recovery habitat restoration, stormwater management, and flood management. These efforts and discussions are on-going and may result in future legislation.

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