

WRIA 8 Chinook Salmon Conservation Plan Update – Review Draft Memo

A draft of the WRIA 8 Plan Update is available online at the WRIA 8 website for review. The Salmon Recovery Council will discuss the draft and provide initial feedback at the July 20 meeting. Council members are encouraged to review the draft online ahead of the meeting. Only a few hard copies of the draft document will be available for reference at the meeting.

WRIA 8 staff will take comments and feedback on the review draft through August 18. Please note a few appendices were still being completed at the time of the Council meeting packet's distribution. As they are completed, these will be added to the document posted online.

Plan Update Review and Approval Schedule

- July 20: Salmon Recovery Council review and discuss draft at meeting
- July 24 – August 18: WRIA 8 partners review draft and provide feedback
- August 21 – September 13: WRIA 8 staff incorporates comments
- September 14: Final draft distributed to Salmon Recovery Council for review
- September 21: Salmon Recovery Council discussion and approval of Plan update
- End of September – March 2018: WRIA 8 Interlocal Agreement partners ratify Plan Update

Draft Plan Update Summary

The 2017 WRIA 8 Chinook Salmon Conservation Plan (2017 Plan) updates the 2005 Plan by drawing on current science to develop quantitative habitat goals for Chinook salmon, evaluate the negative impacts (or pressures) on Chinook salmon, update salmon recovery strategies to identify actions that address the highest priority stresses on salmon, and produce a Monitoring and Assessment Plan (MAP).

The 2017 Plan is an addendum to the 2005 Plan, but is also intended to serve as a stand-alone document. As an addendum, the 2017 Plan continues themes and content discussed in the 2005 Plan, provides information learned during the first 10 years of implementation, includes new habitat goals, and identifies new and updated strategies to meet salmon recovery goals. The twenty strategies are a critical new tool to direct us in addressing the key factors limiting salmon recovery in our watershed. They are outlined in section 4 of this document and spelled out in detail in Appendix E.

Over the past 10 years, we have learned more about human impacts on Chinook salmon survival through empirical scientific research, studies, and formal and informal monitoring of implemented projects. While the 2005 Plan included measurable salmon population recovery goals, there were no measurable goals for habitat restoration. The

2017 Plan uses recent habitat monitoring efforts that establish baseline conditions to develop near-term (2025) and long-term (2055) quantifiable habitat recovery goals.

To produce a plan to achieve these goals, a conceptual model was developed to identify key life stages and important habitats that may limit salmon recovery. Pressures were evaluated for each life stage and geography, and this formed the basis for developing strategies to improve conditions that support Chinook salmon in WRIA 8.

One of the primary gaps identified in the 2005 Plan was the lack of methodology to measure progress towards the desired future status of habitat. While we have learned much from monitoring efforts to date, developing the MAP (Appendix A) allows us to better assess our progress and course correct as we protect and restore salmon habitats and ecosystem processes. The MAP guides project sponsors in monitoring and reporting the progress of habitat restoration projects towards habitat and salmon recovery.

Primary significant changes to the WRIA 8 Plan since 2005:

2005 Plan Status	Change in 2017 Plan Update	Plan Update Reference
Focus on recovery of three populations (Cedar River, Issaquah Creek, and North Lake Washington Tributaries)	Combined Issaquah Creek and North Lake Washington populations into a single, Sammamish River population	Section 1.2
Conceptual model	New, lifecycle-based conceptual model helps prioritize life stages to inform prioritization of actions, location, and timing	Section 2.2
No habitat restoration goals	Numeric habitat goals for five key habitat elements	Section 2.2.1
Upper Cedar River Watershed, between Landsburg Diversion Dam	Area designated Tier 1 given regular, significant Chinook salmon spawning use since 2003 when construction of fish passage facilities allowed Chinook salmon to pass above Landsburg Diversion Dam	Section 1.2

and Cedar Falls, designated Tier 2 ¹		
Recovery strategies included in 2005 Plan	Twenty new and updated recovery strategies identified in 2017 Plan update to guide implementation of recovery actions. Strategies based on new science, current conditions, and lessons learned.	Section 4
Comprehensive List of Site-Specific Projects (600+ projects) Start List of most important and ready-to-go projects, land use actions, and education and outreach actions to implement in the first 10 years	Revised and updated list of site-specific projects to improve project specificity, update definitions, reduce duplication, and add newly identified projects. Revised and updated lists of (1) recommended land use actions, and (2) education and outreach actions. All projects/actions are connected to the most relevant recovery strategies.	Section 5 & Appendices F, H, and I
Monitoring and adaptive management framework	Monitoring and Assessment Plan guides monitoring and reporting on progress towards implementing recovery strategies and meeting habitat goals.	Section 6 & Appendix A

¹ Recovery “tiers” are determined by watershed condition and fish use and denote the priority for recovery activities. Tier 1 are highest priority, followed by Tier 2, which are satellite spawning areas and are important for the spatial diversity of Chinook. Tier 3 areas see infrequent or no Chinook use but are important from a water quality perspective.