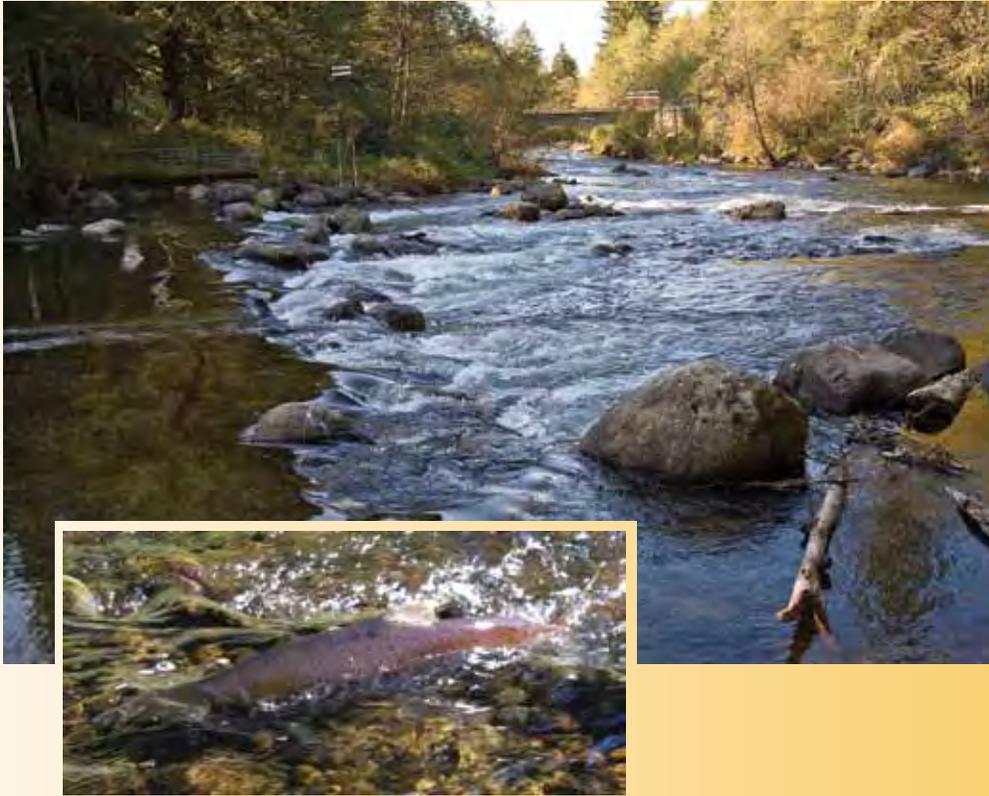


THE LAKE WASHINGTON/CEDAR/SAMMAMISH WATERSHED

The Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed Chinook Salmon Conservation Plan guides our efforts to create a future where people and salmon can live together. This report documents our progress during the first five years of Plan implementation.



"I'm thrilled when people tell me they saw salmon near Microsoft in Kelsey Creek. That's upstream of downtown Bellevue. It means our hard work is paying off – for both salmon and people in our watershed. When my grandkids get excited about returning salmon, it reminds me why our efforts are so worthwhile."

*Don Davidson, Bellevue Mayor and
Chair, WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council*

I. The First Five Years and Our Future

“Solving shared problems together on behalf of a shared place is the essence of democracy.”

—Kemmis 2001

Author Timothy Egan described the Pacific Northwest as “any place salmon can get to.” Since 2000, members of the Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed (WRIA 8¹) Salmon Recovery Council, and its supporting staff and committees, have worked to ensure that our watershed remains a quintessentially Northwest place where salmon return each fall.

Our shared goal is to make our watershed a place where salmon and people can live together. We are working to ensure that Chinook and other salmon species can return to sustainable, harvestable levels. In the most populated watershed in Washington State this is no small task, and it requires both optimism and resolve. The community that cleaned up Lake Washington in the 1950s is applying that same spirit and commitment to recovering salmon today.

In 1999, the federal government listed Puget Sound Chinook salmon as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. In 2000, concerned about the need to protect and restore habitat for Chinook salmon for future generations, 27 local governments in WRIA 8 came together to develop a salmon conservation plan. They were joined by citizens, community groups, state and federal agencies, and businesses. Participating local governments include King and Snohomish counties, Seattle, and 24 other cities.

In 2005, local jurisdictions ratified the WRIA 8 Chinook Salmon Conservation Plan. They agreed to pay for a small team to coordinate implementation of the WRIA 8 Plan through 2015. The WRIA 8 Plan was approved by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in 2006 as a chapter in the overall Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Plan. What we do for salmon in this watershed is an important component of restoring Puget Sound.

On December 3, 2010, over 100 stakeholders from throughout the WRIA 8 Watershed and Puget Sound gathered to learn about the state of our watershed and its salmon, talk about the progress we have made during the first five years of salmon recovery implementation, and chart a course for the next five years. This Watershed Summit was a vital component in the “adaptive management” of our efforts. This progress report summarizes the analysis done in preparation for the five-year Watershed Summit and points to priorities for future action based on our analysis and progress to date.



¹ WRIA stands for Water Resource Inventory Area, a geographic watershed area designated by the Washington Department of Ecology for watershed planning purposes. The WRIA boundaries were also used to delineate watersheds for salmon recovery planning in Puget Sound.