

## VII. Our Future: Challenges and Opportunities



### Watershed Report uses video to inspire high school students

How do you engage a new generation in protecting our watershed? Try making them leaders in producing a video.

Friends of the Cedar River Watershed (FCRW) has been working with high school students to research, narrate, and produce The Watershed Report. The innovative project is a series of short video reports on positive sustainability trends in the 13 school districts and 27 cities of the greater Lake Washington Watershed.

Updated every year, the report is like a collaborative report card. The report is featured each year on 19 public access channels.

The first report premiered in June 2010 with over 150 community leaders in attendance. The video won an award for watershed films sponsored by the Whole Watershed Restoration Initiative.

FCRW recruits students for the report through sustainability presentations in all 13 school districts in the watershed.

We have much to celebrate after the first five years of implementing the Chinook Conservation Plan. We have reason to believe that salmon will continue to be a vibrant, thriving part of our watershed into the future. We appear to be holding the line on Chinook salmon population trends and maintaining forest cover in the rural parts of the watershed. Collectively, we are taking the right actions in the right places for salmon recovery. Our commitment to improving the health of our watershed, and recovering salmon, remains strong.

### Too Little Progress in Implementing Plan Recommendations

Although the commitment to salmon recovery is strong in WRIA 8, at the five-year point of implementing the Plan we are not as far along as we anticipated when we ratified the Plan in 2005. We've only implemented 14% of the projects on our "Start List" of high priority habitat projects, and we should be closer to 50%. As discussed in Section VI, we've identified land use and outreach recommendations in the Plan needing more focused implementation efforts. A primary reason we have not made more progress is that, like most watersheds in Puget Sound, we are behind on our ambitious goals for funding salmon recovery.

In 2011, the National Marine Fisheries Service issued its five-year status review of implementation of the Puget Sound Chinook Recovery Plan (of which the WRIA 8 Chinook Plan is a chapter). It found that habitat is still declining Puget Sound-wide and that not enough is being done to protect and restore habitat.

### New Focus Areas for the Next Five Years

Based on our watershed analysis and Chinook salmon population trends, we need to:

- Restore more Cedar River floodplain habitat.
- Continue working with lakeshore property owners through our Green Shorelines outreach program.
- Protect and restore riparian areas in both the urban and rural parts of the watershed.
- Find solutions to address the barrier to restoring natural shoreline processes caused by railroads along the WRIA 8 marine nearshore.
- Improve fish passage through the Ballard Locks and Ship Canal.

### Opportunities and New Partnerships

With so many partners and our strong record of local match for state and federal funding, WRIA 8 is an influential voice for change. We need to ask for continued state and federal funding for salmon recovery and work with other Puget Sound watersheds and partners to develop new funding sources. We need to look at creative partnerships for implementing recovery actions, and focus on actions that provide multiple benefits. We can be more effective and efficient at implementing some actions in the WRIA 8 Plan when we collaborate and share the load. We should also work more with nonprofit and community groups to advance the most important projects and programs. We need to tell our salmon stories, highlight our challenges, celebrate our successes, and invite watershed residents to join us in our work to ensure a future for salmon in the Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed.