Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed (WRIA 8)

Project Subcommittee Report

2012 Grant Round – Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) & Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR)

Project Subcommittee Members:
Hans Berge (King County)
Councilmember Don Fiene (City of Lake Forest Park, WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council)
Peter Holte (City of Redmond)
Michele Koehler (City of Seattle)
Kirk Lakey (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council, Recovery Implementation Technical Team)
Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz (Subcommittee Chair, WRIA 8 Actions and Funding Coordinator)
Frank Leonetti (Snohomish County)
Kerry Ritland (City of Issaquah)
Scott Stolnack (WRIA 8 Technical Coordinator)

2012 Funds and Regional Allocation: In 2012, a total of $745,000 in grant funds is anticipated to be available to WRIA 8 from the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) and Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) grant sources. The allocation of these grant funds is determined by the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council and approved by the Puget Sound Partnership Leadership Council and Salmon Recovery Funding Board. Both SRFB and PSAR grant funds are administered by the state Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO). Six pre-applications were received for SRFB and PSAR funds this round (see Table 2 for summary). The requests exceeded available funding by $251,000.

Table 1. Summary of 2012 Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) and Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) Grant Funds

	Fund Amount	**Total Estimated Project Costs**	**Amount of Request**	**Match to Grant Request**
Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB)	**$400,000**	**$8,842,632**	**$996,000**	**$504,672**
Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR)	**$345,000** (from 2011-2013 biennium funds)			
TOTAL Funding Available $745,000		**Shortfall ($251,000)**		

Project Eligibility and Match Requirement: Projects for SRFB and PSAR grant funds must meet the SRFB and PSAR criteria and policies outlined in Manual 18, respectively. For WRIA 8

the project must be within WRIA 8 and on the Three-Year Work Plan that is prepared for the Puget Sound Partnership Salmon Recovery Council each spring. Projects on the Three-Year Work Plan are: 1) A sub-set of the WRIA 8 Plan's 10-Year Start List of Actions (Volume I, Chapter 9), 2) Have been evaluated for benefits to Chinook and feasibility; and, 3) Are the highest priority projects for Chinook recovery. The Three-Year Work Plan is reviewed annually by NOAA's Recovery Implementation Technical Team (RITT) for the Puget Sound Region. Project proposals are evaluated using WRIA 8 criteria designed to assess a project's relative benefit to Chinook and certainty of being implemented successfully. A 15% match is required for SRFB or PSAR funding, with the exception of design-only projects, which require no match.

Project Subcommittee Process: The WRIA 8 Project Subcommittee is charged with reviewing project proposals and developing funding recommendations for Salmon Recovery Council consideration. To review project proposals the Project Subcommittee received the following: 1) SRFB/PSAR pre-applications, 2) grant criteria, narrative guidance for applying criteria, and scoring sheets, and 3) conflict of interest statement. On May 30th, Project Subcommittee members, in addition to SRFB Project Manager Elizabeth Butler, SRFB Review Panel Members Steve Toth and Tom Slocum, and WRIA 8 staff visited the six proposed project sites. Project sponsors gave brief presentations of their projects and responded to questions.

After the site visits the Project Subcommittee met to discuss and score the projects. Differences in scores among members were thoroughly discussed to identify issues before proceeding with ranking and funding recommendations. This year the Project Subcommittee applied newly refined grant criteria, which were developed to more clearly and directly align with priorities identified in the WRIA 8 Plan.

Table 2 summarizes the Project Subcommittee's final ranking and funding recommendations. Following the table are descriptions of the applications, in rank order, with highlights from the Project Subcommittee discussions.

TABLE 2: Summary of 2012 WRIA 8 Project Subcommittee Funding Recommendations for Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) and Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) Grant Funds						
Rank	**Project Name, WRIA 8 Plan #, Applicant**	**Total Project Cost**	**Request**	**Match to Grant Request**	**SRFB Funds Recommendation**	**PSAR Funds Recommendation**
1	***Confluence Parks/Issaquah Creek Restoration –*** *Plan Project #: I211; I213; I282; I283* *City of Issaquah*	$1,054,952	$200,000	$44,592	$200,000	$0
2	***Belmondo Reach Acquisition (Cedar River)*** *Plan Project #: C232* *Seattle Public Utilities*	$673,000	$150,000	$26,500	$104,000	$46,000
3	***Riverbend Acquisition (Cedar River)*** *Plan Project #: C219* *King County*	$6,834,000	$500,000	$75,000	$0	$299,000
4	***Little Bear Creek Knotweed Survey and Control*** *Plan Project #: N079A* *Snohomish County Public Works*	$48,580	$30,000	$18,580	$30,000	$0
5	***Bear Creek Riparian Restoration at Friendly Village*** *Plan Project #: N214* *Adopt A Stream Foundation*	$82,000	$66,000	$16,000	$66,000	$0
6	***Enhance Lower Reach of Tributary #0056 (North Lake Washington)*** *Plan Project #: C303* *Adopt A Stream Foundation*	$150,000	$50,000	$100,000	$0	$0
	ALTERNATE: River Bend Acquisition (Cedar River) *Plan Project #: C219* *King County*				Alternate would receive funds if projects recommended for funding are not approved or cannot be implemented	
	TOTALS	**$8,842,632**	**$996,000**	**$280,672**	**$400,000**	**$345,000**
	WRIA 8 Allocation SRFB and PSAR		$745,000			
	Shortfall		($251,000)			

Project Descriptions and Discussion Highlights
Note: Projects listed in rank order

1. ***Confluence Parks/Issaquah Creek Restoration Project (Plan #'s: I211; I213; I282; I283)***
   City of Issaquah
   This project would restore aquatic and riparian habitat at the confluence of Issaquah Creek and East Fork Issaquah Creek, where the city plans to develop a public park. The proposal is for a portion of the cost of construction.

   Discussion – Issaquah Creek is a high restoration and protection priority in WRIA 8. The WRIA 8 Plan identifies the confluence of Issaquah Creek and East Fork Issaquah Creek as a Tier 1 subarea, for which protecting and restoring riparian cover is the most important restoration approach. In 2011, WRIA 8 approved a King Conservation District grant to fund the project design, and a SRFB/PSAR grant to fund a portion of the construction costs that was contingent upon Subcommittee and SRFB Technical Review Panel review and approval of the 30-50% and final project design. The Subcommittee agreed the conceptual design for this project is a good example of riparian restoration, which should be maximized in the project design along with addressing other in-stream and stream bank salmon habitat elements. The Subcommittee is working with the City of Issaquah to review and comment on the 30-50% design and the final design to maximize overall benefit to salmon before releasing funding for project construction. The City of Issaquah is seeking the balance of construction funds from other grant sources, and plans to construct the project in 2013. ***Recommend $200,000 in SRFB funds*** (100% of request).

2. ***Belmondo Reach Acquisition (Plan #C232)***
   Seattle Public Utilities
   Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) will acquire 12.65 acres from a willing seller in the Belmondo Reach of the on the lower Cedar River. This project is part of larger efforts by SPU and King County to protect and restore habitat for Chinook, coho and sockeye salmon, and steelhead in the Cedar River. The project will protect some of the best remaining salmon habitat in the lower Cedar River and restore riparian and upland areas that have been impacted by invasive plants and development.

   Discussion – The acquisition of these properties in the Belmondo Reach protects high quality salmon habitat and provides continuity in the larger reach, securing the missing link in a one-mile chain of protected public lands up- and downstream, preventing potential development of three new homes where salmon utilization is well documented and habitat features and ecological function are relatively intact. The property contains high-quality side channel and backwater habitats which serve as excellent flood refuge habitat during high flow events. Restoration of this property will also address a previously untreated section of knotweed, as part of the Cedar River Stewardship in Action knotweed removal program. Since the upland portions of the property are on bedrock and therefore do not offer potential floodplain habitat, a conservation easement was suggested as an alternative approach to reduce the acquisition cost. While a conservation easement may reduce the acquisition cost, the

Subcommittee acknowledged the value of having the certainty of contiguous public ownership in the reach.
Recommend $104,000 in SRFB funds and $46,000 in PSAR funds (100% of request).

3. Riverbend Acquisition (Plan #C219)
King County
This grant will contribute to King County acquiring a 18.6 acre property along the Cedar River in Maple Valley for future floodplain and salmon habitat restoration. Acquiring this property fills a gap in significant public ownership and habitat along the left bank of the Cedar River between the Elliot Bridge Reach and Belmondo Natural Area, and is adjacent to the Cedar Rapids floodplain restoration site. The Riverbend mobile home park is currently located on the property, and has experienced significant flooding. Through acquisition and eventual restoration of the property, King County seeks to restore habitat and reduce flood risk by relocating residents. Additional funding is necessary for relocating residents and habitat restoration.

Discussion – The Subcommittee recognized the value of this property as a link between existing areas of public ownership, as well as for the potential future restoration opportunities it provides. The property is in a critical location along the Cedar River that builds on past acquisition and restoration investments. It is rare to have the opportunity to acquire such a large property from one owner, and it is crucial for King County to acquire the property at this time as the owner intends to sell the property if the county is unable to purchase it. The Subcommittee discussed concerns with the relatively high cost of acquiring the property (approximately $6.8 million), which could have a bearing on the project's certainty of success. However, the Subcommittee acknowledged that there are multiple funding sources contributing to the acquisition and the significance of anticipated benefits of acquiring and restoring the property for salmon recovery outweigh concerns about the cost. Due to concerns about the certainty of success, the Subcommittee recommends that funding for the project come from PSAR funds, which would come back to WRIA 8 for reallocation in the event the acquisition does not happen. The Subcommittee also recommends that the project serve as an alternate to receive additional funds if other WRIA 8 projects are not approved by the SRFB or cannot be implemented.
Recommend $299,000 in PSAR funds (60% of request).

4. Little Bear Creek Knotweed Survey and Control (Plan #N079A)
Snohomish County
This project would assess the extent of invasive knotweed in the Little Bear Creek sub-basin, develop a strategy to prioritize future knotweed control and riparian restoration efforts, and begin initial treatment to remove knotweed. This grant supports Phase 1 of a two phase project. Phase 2 will be long term control, surveying, and replanting with native species.

Discussion – Identifying and treating invasive species, particularly knotweed, in riparian areas is an important component of WRIA 8's salmon habitat restoration strategy. Invasive species control is challenging and often requires treatment at the basin scale. Some basins are so overrun by invasive species that treatment may not be cost-effective. Snohomish County identified the Little Bear Creek basin as a sub-basin where treating knotweed could be

effective. The Subcommittee felt an assessment of knotweed and development of a treatment strategy is important, and the approach is appropriate. The Subcommittee suggested Snohomish County should consider lessons learned from other similar approaches in other basins, such as the Cedar River. Also, Snohomish County should consider broadening the scope of the assessment to include multiple riparian area components (e.g., riparian vegetation, conifer trees, bank armoring, buffer size, etc.) and tools for protecting and restoring riparian conditions.
Recommend $30,000 in SRFB funds (100% of request).

5. ***Bear Creek Riparian Restoration at Friendly Village (Plan #N214)***
   Adopt A Stream Foundation
   This project would restore stream complexity and riparian habitat conditions along 350 linear feet of lower Bear Creek. The project will involve modifying the stream channel, increasing off-channel habitat, regarding stream banks, placing woody debris, and planting riparian vegetation. The project will be designed to be compatible with the City of Redmond's long-term restoration strategy for this portion of lower Bear Creek.

   Discussion – Bear Creek is a high priority tributary to the Sammamish River, and is critical to the Sammamish Chinook population. The proposed restoration will significantly improve habitat conditions in this portion of Bear Creek, and build on past efforts up- and downstream of the site. The proposed design includes common, appropriate technical restoration techniques. However, due to the significantly disturbed stream conditions at the site, the Subcommittee emphasizes the need to minimize the exposure of re-graded stream bank through alternative design approaches, and have a hydraulic engineer review the design. Adopt A Stream should also coordinate with the City of Redmond to ensure the project is compatible with the city's future restoration strategy.
   Recommend $66,000 in SRFB funds (100% of request).

6. ***Enhance the Mouth and Lower Reach of Little Creek (North Lake Washington tributary #0056) (Plan #C303)***
   Adopt A Stream Foundation
   This project would re-vegetate selective riparian areas along the restored channel of the lower 431 feet of Little Creek where it flows into Lake Washington near Log Boom Park in Kenmore.

   Discussion – Restoring creek mouths is important to provide rearing and refuge habitat for juvenile Chinook migrating through Lake Washington. The lower portion of this tributary stream in north Lake Washington will be restored through other funding, to add sediment and grade control features, add wood, and modify the stream channel. While this project seeks to re-vegetate the restored sections of the lower portion of the stream, it does not propose to improve conditions at the creek mouth habitat, which are most important to Chinook. In addition, there are constraints on the type of vegetation that can be planted to avoid blocking residents' views, which further limits the habitat value for Chinook. The project would be improved by focusing on restoring the mouth of the creek and ensuring riparian plantings maximize habitat benefit.

Recommend $0.

Conclusion: The Project Subcommittee was challenged to make their funding recommendations given limited funding. However, reserving a portion of the 2011-2013 PSAR funds enabled the Subcommittee to fully or partially fund five of the six project proposals. Projects recommended for funding vary geographically around the watershed, focusing on Tier 1 areas including the Cedar River main stem, Issaquah Creek, Bear Creek, and Little Bear Creek. The Confluence Parks/Issaquah Creek Restoration project is a large-scale restoration project at the confluence of the East Fork of Issaquah Creek and the main stem of Issaquah Creek that has good potential to provide Chinook habitat benefit in a highly visible, ecologically important section of the Issaquah Creek basin. The two acquisition projects on the Cedar River are very high priority parcels, and help fill gaps in significant sections of protected habitat along the left bank of the Cedar River. The Belmondo Reach Acquisition protects existing high quality side channel habitat, while the River Bend Acquisition protects a parcel that will enable substantial future levee setback and floodplain restoration opportunities, which will build on and enhance prior investments and restoration work done at the Cedar Rapids floodplain restoration site immediately upstream. While the Bear Creek Riparian Restoration project is a smaller scale restoration, it will improve riparian and instream habitat conditions in a section of Bear Creek that is significantly impaired. The Little Bear Creek Knotweed Survey and Control project will make an effort to get a handle on invasive species control in a sub-basin and at a scale with a good likelihood of success.