

WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council
Issaquah City Hall
September 20, 2012
3:00 to 5:30 p.m.

Meeting Notes

Members Present

Dr. Don Davidson, Chair (Councilmember, Bellevue); Susan Boundy-Sanders (Councilmember, Woodinville); Peter Donaldson (Friends of the Cedar River Watershed); Chris Eggen (Deputy Mayor, Shoreline); Don Fiene (Councilmember, Lake Forest Park); Ted Frantz (Councilmember, Hunts Point); Ava Frisinger (Mayor, Issaquah); Dave Garland (WA Dept. of Ecology); Bill Knutsen (King Conservation District [KCD]); Kirk Lakey (WA Department of Fish & Wildlife [WDFW]); Mike O'Brian (Councilmember, Seattle); Larry Phillips (Councilmember, King County); Andy Rheaume (Councilmember, Bothell); Gary Smith (Trout Unlimited/Water Tenders); Cleve Steward (Sustainable Fisheries Foundation); Tom Vance (Councilmember, Sammamish).

Alternates Present

Terry Lavender (Water Tenders).

Others Present

Tom Beavers (King County); Hans Berge (King County); Doug Hatfield (WDFW); Jane Kuechle (Friends of the Issaquah Salmon Hatchery); Yvette Lizee-Smith (King County); Kathy Minsch (Seattle); Kerry Ritland (Issaquah); Stacey Rush (Kirkland); Mark Musick (KCD consultant); Linda Grob (WRIA 8 Team); Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz (WRIA 8 Team); Scott Stolnack (WRIA 8 Team).

1. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

2. Approval of Meeting Notes for July 19, 2012

The Salmon Recovery Council unanimously approved the meeting notes for the July 19, 2012 meeting.

3. Updates & Announcements

General Announcements:

Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz, Actions and Funding Coordinator, made a few brief announcements:

- The annual WRIA 8 Salmon Tour on Friday, October 5, focuses on the northern portion of the watershed, including North Creek, Little Bear Creek, Bear Creek and the Sammamish River. He encouraged people to RSVP.
- Annette Frahm, the Green Shorelines Outreach Coordinator, has taken a job at the City of Seattle. We are considering options for continuing the Green Shorelines outreach work. Annette recently completed two factsheets on bulkheads and docks, which are available as resources for local government planning staff. Information will be sent out to shoreline planning staff of lakeshore cities in the next two weeks summarizing available Green Shorelines outreach tools.
- The sixth annual Salmon SEEson fall campaign is underway. Contact Linda Grob, Administrative Coordinator, for posters and flyers listing viewing opportunities.

Committee Reports:

Scott Stolnack, Technical Coordinator, reported that:

- **Fish Numbers:** Estimates through the Ballard Locks as of September 16 indicate that 2012 is a good year for returning salmon compared to pre-season predictions. Chinook returns are 45% above the twelve year average, and coho numbers are really strong. Don Davidson inquired if Chinook are coming through the Locks on time this year, because they are a little late in other watersheds. Scott

explained that they are through on time and holding in Lake Washington. He said we also saw some Chinook at the Issaquah Fish Hatchery tour before today's meeting. Doug Hatfield, Hatchery Operations Manager Region 4, WDFW, reported that the timing is normal for returns through the hatchery, but the numbers are low. Scott reported that early sockeye return numbers started strong, but tapered off towards the end of the season. Ted Frantz asked how salmon are counted at the Locks. Scott explained that they count salmon at the fish ladder for a certain number of minutes and extrapolate. Peter Donaldson inquired if there is any variation in fish numbers during the day and at night. Scott said he didn't have that information.

- **Invasive Mud Snails:** Discovered last year in Thornton Creek (Seattle) samples from 2009, mud snails have now been found in Kelsey Creek (Bellevue). Scott directed attention to the mud snail handout, and said we are getting the word out to jurisdictions. It appears that mud snails can't be eradicated, so taking precautions when working in streams is important for limiting their spread. WRIA 8 is in talks with WDFW on potential control methods. Dave Garland mentioned that the reason boots and waders no longer have felt on their soles is because they can pick up mud snails and other invasive species that can then be spread to other streams.

Funding/Grants:

Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz reported the following grant information:

- **EPA Watershed Protection and Restoration Grant:** The grant is administered through the Department of Ecology and Department of Commerce. The request for proposals will be released in October. The WRIA 8 Team and interested partners are exploring the grant as a potential funding source for the Trees for Streams effort.
- **Flood Control District (FCD):** District Board of Supervisors approved all six of the Cooperative Watershed Management grants that the Salmon Recovery Council (SRC) approved at the July meeting.
- **King Conservation District (KCD) Assessment:** KCD's proposed assessment submittal to the King County Council does not include funding reserved for WRIA or jurisdictional grant programs. The new proposed rates and charges system would raise almost \$6.5 million, which is close to the current assessment. KCD proposes a new grant program for community conservation needs (stormwater management, fish barrier removal, native plant revegetation, invasive species control) is proposed for funding. The King County Council will review and approve a KCD work plan and budget by the end of 2012. Bill Knutsen added that there is \$2 million in the budget intended to be directed to cities.
- **Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) Strategy:** Puget Sound Partnership (PSP) submitted an \$80 million legislative request for PSAR funding for the 2013-2015 state biennial budget. The request has two components: 1) \$30 million divided among Puget Sound watersheds for typical salmon recovery project grants; and 2) \$50 to fund a prioritized list of large, high priority projects. WRIA 8 submitted three projects for the prioritized list: Riverbend Acquisition and Relocation; Sammamish River Transition Zone Restoration; and Ballard Locks Fish Passage Improvement. Thirty requests were received, and Riverbend was our highest ranked project, ranking 17th out of 30.
- **Smolt Flumes at the Locks:** WRIA 8 has been helping to fund development of the smolt flumes since 2000. The smolt flumes provide a safer way for juvenile salmon to migrate over the Locks. They are installed each year in time for juvenile outmigration and then removed. Unfortunately new Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) safety regulations may prevent installing them next spring, and they are coordinating with National Marine Fisheries Service to look at other ways to meet ESA requirements and provide safe passage for juveniles. Jason said we will continue to track this issue, and it will become part of the fish passage improvements request in the WRIA 8 federal legislative priorities. We will keep the Salmon Recovery Council updated.

Discussion:

- Kirk Lakey said the Locks Fish Passage PSAR proposal did not rank very high, because making the case for state funding for a federal facility is challenging. There is a real need to make these improvements at the Locks.
- Don Davidson stated that everybody agrees our salmon recovery efforts are underfunded. The question is what to do about it. We've heard presentations here about the watershed investment district (WID) concept. Until we have something like that, or a Puget Sound WID, we have to continue piecing together funding.
- Peter Donaldson questioned if there was any point to having cities advocate one way or another on the KCD proposal. Don Davidson explained that he also sits on the KCD and FCD Advisory Committees. Now FCD has been tapped to pick up the funding for WRIA grants, which KCD used to do. He said he thinks WRIA grant program funding is KCD's responsibility, not the responsibility of FCD.
- Larry Phillips stated that the County Council hasn't yet discussed the KCD proposal and where WRIAs will be funded in the future. Because of the lawsuit on the KCD assessment and state Supreme Court decision that the Mason County Conservation District assessment is invalid, we've had to rethink where we are, and the current proposal from KCD has made that a challenging discussion. He said we had no choice this year regarding the WRIA funding. Going forward, we are also looking at the WID concept, and considering other avenues to resolve the KCD issues.
- Chris Eggen noted that if FCD funding for the WRIAs goes into 2013 there will be some pressure to raise rates. He asked if the County Council can do that. Larry Phillips said that's a good question. We believe we have the authority as FCD Supervisors to raise rates, but we don't know if there is the political will to do it.
- Regarding the smolt flumes at the Locks, Chris Eggen asked if there was any way for NOAA to tell the Corps what they should do. Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz replied that a NOAA engineer is now talking with the Corps about options, and Scott Stolnack is also tracking the issue and discussion.
- Larry Phillips asked why installing the smolt flumes is so unsafe. Jason explained that the Corps takes the flumes out and puts them back in every year. Now we are told they will have to use different techniques to install them, which pose a significant engineering challenge.
- Don Davidson said that Corps Headquarters wants money to go navigation, not to fish passage at the Locks. Kirk Lakey added that the commerce level going through the Locks is low, because ships are coming through empty.
- Peter Donaldson inquired if the SRC does any lobbying about the Locks besides writing internal letters. Jason reported that we've raised the need at the legislature, met with congressional staff on the issue and invited them to our tours, and are now couching the fish passage improvements needs within the greater public safety issue. The Corps does not want to highlight potential public safety concerns, given their recent experience with Howard Hanson Dam.
- Cleve Steward asked if WRIA 8 has tried going to the congressional delegation to get an earmark for the Locks. Jason reported that Senator Murray did go forward with an earmark a few years ago, but it didn't make it through. And now Congress no longer makes earmarks in their budgeting process.

4. Confirm WRIA 8 Legislative Agenda

Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz went over the 2013 legislative priorities:

Federal:

- Support and sustain \$65 million for NOAA's Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund;
- Support passage of the Puget Sound Recovery Act; and
- Support inclusion of \$5.9 million in the Energy and Water Development appropriations bill for the Corps to improve fish passage and benefit navigation at the Locks.

State:

- Support \$80 million for PSAR;

- Support \$40 million request in the state budget as match to the federal Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund; and
- Support funding for salmon recovery lead entities in the Recreation and Conservation Office's operating budget request.

Discussion;

- Don Davidson reported that Bellevue will incorporate these priorities into its own legislative agenda. He said he hoped other cities would consider doing the same.
- Larry Phillips commented that whatever we can do to raise public awareness on these topics is important. It's hard to answer Congress' questions in Washington, D.C. regarding if we've recovered salmon. It is important to make the best case possible to get funding.
- Don Davidson mentioned that we are also losing Representative Norm Dicks, a huge Puget Sound champion. He said we hope to groom another champion.
- Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz remarked that this is meant to be an iterative legislative agenda and it will likely be updated as additional information is available. We want the Salmon Recovery Council to have the best information possible for their use in conversations with state legislators and Congressional leaders.

The Salmon Recovery Council unanimously approved the WRIA 8 Legislative Agenda by head nod.

5. Issaquah Hatchery Goals and Challenges

Doug Hatfield went over the history of the Issaquah Hatchery, from construction (1936), first annual Salmon Days Festival held (1970), formation of Friends of the Issaquah Salmon Hatchery (FISH) in response to potential closing of the hatchery (1993), construction starts after Issaquah and the state commit \$1.15 million toward capital improvements (1994), to completion of the remodel (1995).

Doug reported that the hatchery continues to produce fish for commercial and recreational opportunity. Current hatchery programs include:

- Fall Chinook: 5,000 adult returns annually, 2.3 million eggs annually taken, 2 million released.
- Coho: 11,000 adults annually, 1.2 million eggs taken, 450,000 released, with the rest released to school programs.
- Lake Sammamish Kokanee: Joint program with King County, USFWS, Sammamish, Issaquah and private organizations to recover and enhance Lake Sammamish kokanee. Focus is on Ebright, Lewis, and Laughing Jacobs Creeks.
- Rainbow Trout: 30,000 brought into the hatchery every year fill a void in visual aids for school kids. Rainbow Trout are planted in Beaver and Pine Lakes.

Among the principals guiding management of the Issaquah Hatchery are the ESA listings of Chinook, steelhead and bulltrout, and the Hatchery Science Review Group (HSRG) recommended actions for hatcheries. HSRG recommendations that have been implemented at the hatchery include:

- Marking/tagging fish to evaluate straying and contribution to harvest.
- Developing a plan to identify natural origin recruits (NORs) and incorporate into hatchery broodstock.
- Incorporating all segments of run representatively into broodstock.
- Implementing volitional release program to reduce predation risk.
- Not implemented: Recommended upgrading of the water incubation system.

According to Doug, operational challenges at the hatchery include:

- Chinook and coho programs are integrated programs.
- The hatchery must strike a balance between NORs released in Issaquah Creek and included in the hatchery broodstock program.
- The number and origin of fish passed upstream and interacting with NORs.

He said we need about 1,200 Chinook in order to meet hatchery goals, and we need to balance returning fish with spawning goals. In 2004 the integrated approach was implemented at the hatchery. The number of hatchery fish in Issaquah Creek is 70-90% of the population. The goal is to get 10% natural fish into the hatchery broodstock, and put 1,000 NORs upstream. Doug said that wasn't hard from 2004-2007, but that year we changed and only passed NORs upstream. Since 2008, returns have been lower. There are less incorporated NORs in our broodstock and even less going upstream. Fourteen thousand Chinook are through the Locks so far this year and headed to the hatchery, which should increase the number of NORs going upstream.

Doug reported that we have a contract with a buyer who purchases surplus hatchery fish. A significant portion feed into the state-wide food bank program through Northwest Harvest. A portion of the revenue (\$100,000-\$200,000) funds the regional fisheries enhancement groups. He said we also have a nutrient enhancement program, taking excess fish and distributing them back into the watershed.

Discussion:

- Susan Boundy-Sanders noted that the 2007 numbers show 13,000 Chinook collected and only 533 spawned. Doug Hatfield replied that 1,050 spawned, and the rest went to the commercial buyer. Councilmember Boundy-Sanders asked if the hatchery doesn't bother to process the eggs. Doug said it does not. The buyer puts fish back into the market as food, and sells them world-wide. The remaining money goes back into state funds for hatchery operations. Councilmember Boundy-Sanders commented that it is a human decision to control the Chinook NOR numbers being released into Issaquah Creek, not a limitation of the habitat. Doug noted that establishing the hatchery was a human decision. WDFW hopes the number of Chinook being allowed upstream is more than adequate to sustain the watershed.
- Gary Smith remarked that we have the opportunity, with removal of the Issaquah Dam, to increase the numbers of Chinook going upstream. WDFW is working within the limits of fish coming into the hatchery. As habitat capacity increases, he asked if numbers of fish released will go up. Doug responded that we think 1,000 Chinook exceeds the capacity of the watershed, but WDFW will monitor as the watershed opens up.
- Don Davidson remarked that our whole system is unnatural. These integrated hatchery programs are an important part of recovery for our Sammamish population.

6. Issaquah Creek Fish Passage Improvement/Dam Removal Project 2013

Project Background:

Kerry Ritland, City of Issaquah, described the fish passage and infrastructure problems at the Issaquah Dam, including the concrete apron which can strand fish, fish passage issues with the ladder and water intake, and the risk to the hatchery water supply due to the dam's age. The 1975 flood nearly took out the dam, and in the 1990's issues with the dam were recognized. From 1999-2005 the dam was part of the Corps' 205 Study. Issaquah received a SRFB feasibility study grant in 2008, and a NOAA Open Rivers grant for design in 2010. In 2012 the legislature appropriated funding to remove the dam as part of the jobs bill.

Kerry said six project alternatives were proposed in the design phase. The design alternative selected will remove the existing dam and ladder, install a new constriction intake for the hatchery, and install grade control structures downstream. Project sponsors created a physical model in a SeaTac warehouse to study the innovative intake design. Ted Frantz asked if the fish passage model is going to work for salmon passage. Kerry explained that it has been modeled before, but this will be the first actual application.

The next steps are to complete the design, secure final permits, and acquire the easements and property. The construction bid goes out in November 2012, and construction will occur from April to October 2013.

Monitoring & Adaptive Management:

Cleve Steward, consultant to the City of Issaquah, described the habitat monitoring objectives of the Issaquah Dam removal project:

- Measure quantity and quality of habitat in upper Issaquah Creek
- Estimate the productive capacity of the stream;
- Identify factors limiting reproductive success and juvenile production; and
- Monitor changes in quantity, quality and distribution of salmon spawning and rearing over time.

Cleve reported that monitoring objectives for adult spawners will involve bi-weekly spawner surveys from September through November. Monitoring objectives for juvenile outmigrants measure the response to removing barriers. Using rotary screw traps from April through July, information on juvenile salmon size and condition will be collected. We will conduct tests, estimate daily numbers, and calculate the total population. He said overall they expect an increase in escapement. Ultimately we want to see the Issaquah Creek Chinook listed as a third WRIA 8 population on WDFW's annual report, in addition to the Cedar River and Bear Creek populations.

7. Success Story: Issaquah Confluence Conservation Easement

Tom Beavers, King County Basin Steward for Bear Creek, Cedar River and Issaquah Creek, reported that King County purchased a 125-acre conservation easement at the headwaters of Issaquah Creek. Thirty-four acres are in fee on undeveloped adjoining property along Issaquah Creek. The county purchased a 28-acre 50-year lease from the WA Department of Natural Resources with the option to purchase in 2015. The county also granted a ten-year grazing lease to the existing landowner. He said the acreage has good habitat, nice woods, and some invasives, with a nice undercut bank. Funders for the easement are Conservations Futures, King County Parks Levy, KCD, and transfer of development rights funds.

8. Next Meeting

November 15, 2012, 3:00-5:15 p.m., Kirkland City Hall.