



Legislative Priorities for Puget Sound Watershed Health and Salmon Habitat Recovery

Water Resource Inventory Area 8 Partners
Version November 2012

Federal Priorities

- **Support and sustain \$65 million for NOAA’s Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund** in the Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies appropriations bill. These funds allow NOAA to award grants to Washington State, Tribes and local watershed partners to implement salmon recovery priorities.
- **Support the passage of the Puget Sound Recovery Act** to designate Puget Sound as a “Great Waterbody.” The Act will designate Puget Sound as a formal Clean Water Act program and authorize up to \$90 million in federal funding, annually, to implement priority restoration efforts and protect water quality.
- **Support inclusion of \$5.9 million in the Energy and Water Development appropriations bill for the US Army Corps of Engineers to improve fish passage and benefit navigation at the Hiram H. Chittenden Locks.** Priorities include:
 - \$5.2 million to replace the 100-year old gate valves to the large locks with hydraulic valves to allow for slow, controlled opening and closing of the locks to avoid injuring juvenile salmon, and
 - \$700,000 to study a more permanent alternative to the temporary exclusion structure the Corps installed to prevent adult salmon from becoming entrained in the diffuser well of the fish ladder at the Locks.
 - Develop and implement temporary fix for smolt passage flumes starting in spring 2013 and study alternatives for a long-term solution to juvenile fish passage.

State Priorities

- **Support \$80 million for Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR)** funding which supports implementation of the highest priority projects throughout Puget Sound. The request includes two components: 1) \$30 million divided among Puget Sound watersheds for a habitat projects grant round, and 2) \$50 million dedicated to fund a prioritized list of specific large, high-priority capital projects submitted by Puget Sound watersheds. Funds are derived from State general obligation bonds (RCW 77.85).
 - WRIA 8 received \$737,019 in PSAR funding for 2011-2012, which helped fund the following priority projects:
 - Acquisition of 18.6 acres on the Cedar River for future floodplain restoration
 - Acquisition to protect 3.8 acres of Cedar River floodplain
 - Restoration at Confluence Parks on Issaquah Creek
 - Feasibility study for Edmonds Marsh restoration
 - Feasibility study for Sammamish River restoration
 - A portion of PSAR funding also supports watershed technical capacity to develop projects and advance programmatic priorities, such as Green Shorelines and new WRIA 8 focus on riparian area protection and restoration.
- **Support \$40 million request in Recreation and Conservation Office capital budget request, to serve as state match to federal Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund.** These funds, in addition to federal PCSRF funding, will enable a \$30 million state-wide salmon recovery grant round.
- **Support funding for salmon recovery Lead Entities in the Recreation and Conservation Office's general fund budget request.** These funds support staff capacity for the WRIA 8 team to implement state grant programs and to continue coordinating salmon recovery efforts with watersheds throughout the state.
- **Support a study bill of the draft Watershed Investment District legislation.** Recognizing the need for increased, dedicated, flexible funding mechanisms to invest in local watershed priorities including salmon recovery, WRIAs in the South Central Puget Sound drafted legislation that would allow creation of special purpose districts based on watershed boundaries to seek funds for identified watershed priorities.