

WRIA 8 Update

March 21, 2013

- **Puget Sound Regional Update** – The **Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council (PS SRC)** The PS SRC last met on January 24. Agenda topics included further discussion on the structure of the PS SRC and its relationship to other groups including the Puget Sound Watershed Leads and Recovery Implementation Technical Team. The PS SRC also discussed creation of subcommittees for several topics, including funding, outreach and behavior change, and monitoring and adaptive management. Other agenda topics included an update on the Puget Sound Chinook recovery monitoring and adaptive management effort, legislative update and Governor’s transition team work, and PS SRC membership recommendations. Chair Davidson is Vice-Chair of the PS SRC and Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz also attends for WRIA 8. The PS SRC meets next on March 28.

The **South Central Action Area Caucus** met on March 18. Agenda topics included discussion of efforts to reorganize local South Central Action Area priorities according to the Action Agenda Strategic Initiatives (protect and restore habitat, prevent pollution from urban stormwater runoff, and recover shellfish beds), and efforts to refine local priority actions into more discrete projects for the 2014 update to the Action Agenda. The group discussed the need to emphasize to the Puget Sound Partnership (Partnership) that resource allocation decisions need to better reflect and account for local priorities. The group also discussed a potential proposal by the Partnership to reorient the Action Agenda to be based more explicitly on local priorities. This concept would be applied for future Action Agenda updates (likely 2016), and will be considered by the Partnership’s Ecosystem Coordination Board and Leadership Council at upcoming meetings.

- **Legislative Priorities Update and Next Steps** – Thanks to all SRC members who have communicated with the state congressional delegation and with state legislators about WRIA 8 priorities. For the state budget it is especially important for legislators to hear support for the Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration capital budget request.
 - **Capital Budget:** The latest state “revenue” forecast will be released March 20, after which the Senate and House are expected to release budget proposals. It is unclear when budgets will be released, and it could be into April before we see budget proposals. While this makes it difficult to know the status of budget requests, it does provide additional opportunity for communication with legislators.
 - **Coordinated Investment for Puget Sound Floodplains:** The Nature Conservancy (TNC) included a Lower Cedar River Integrated Floodplain Restoration proposal as one of nine projects in their Capital Budget request for *Coordinated Investment for Puget Sound Floodplains*. This proposal combines funding needed for two high priority Cedar River floodplain projects – Rainbow Bend Floodplain Restoration and RiverBend Floodplain Acquisition and Relocation. Both of these projects are high priorities in the WRIA 8 Plan and have received substantial WRIA 8 funding support in past grant rounds. This proposal would leverage state funding to replace existing county funds dedicated to project construction on the Rainbow Bend project and shift them to support the RiverBend Acquisition and Relocation project. Additional funds for the RiverBend project

are also requested through this proposal, to relocate 30 to 40 residents out of a high risk flood prone area. TNC requested stakeholder letters of support. Since letters needed to be submitted before the SRC meeting, the WRIA 8 Management Committee approved sending a letter of support.

- Watershed Investment District – The Sound Cities Association approved the recommendation from their Public Issues Committee to send a letter to Representative Dave Upthegrove, as Chair of the House Natural Resource Committee, to support convening a stakeholder group to develop consensus bill language to introduce in the 2014 legislative session. The letter requests Rep. Upthegrove’s leadership in convening the stakeholder group as part of the legislature’s 2013 work plan.

- **Grant funding update** – In the 2013 grant cycle, state and federal dollars are available through the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) and Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) programs (projected to be approximately \$2.092 million combined, pending legislative capital budget approval), and local funding is being provided by the King County Flood Control District’s Cooperative Watershed Management (CWM) Grant Program (\$1.2 million). Based on notifications of intent submitted by project sponsors, we anticipate seeing requests for CWM that far exceed available funding, while SRFB/PSAR intents are in line with the projected funding, which assumes the federal government approves \$65 million for the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund to support SRFB and that the state legislature fully funds PSAR. WRIA 8 is currently in the process of assisting project sponsors as they compile their grant applications for these 2013 funding opportunities. The CWM grant application deadline is April 12, while SRFB/PSAR applications are due on April 26. The Project Subcommittee will conduct site visits and review and score applications for both grant programs in late May. The Salmon Recovery Council will consider the Project Subcommittee recommendations at the July 18 meeting.

- **Trees for Streams update** – The Cedar River Stewardship in Action grant proposal was successfully selected by the Department of Ecology for a National Estuary Program Watershed Protection and Restoration grant. As part of the overall riparian – ‘Trees for Streams’ – strategy approved by the Salmon Recovery Council, WRIA 8 is supporting this effort including the following partners: Seattle Public Utilities, King County Noxious Weeds, Forterra, and Friends of the Cedar River Watershed. The \$250,000 grant will enable program partners to continue to work with public and private landowners to control knotweed and restore riparian areas along the Cedar River. We will continue to pursue funding opportunities to do similar riparian restoration efforts in other priority areas of the watershed, focusing especially on Issaquah Creek and Bear Creek.

- **Monitoring and Adaptive Management** – The Puget Sound Partnership is following through with an effort to help each of the 14 Puget Sound watersheds develop a monitoring and adaptive management plan that will roll up regionally. Each watershed area will be allocated up to \$40,000 to engage in this process, which will deliver a monitoring and adaptive management framework consistent with regional efforts. The WRIA 8 Team sees this as an opportunity to further develop our monitoring and adaptive management efforts while simultaneously laying

the groundwork for our upcoming 10-year update of the 2005 WRIA 8 Chinook Conservation Plan.

- **Lake Washington Ship Canal Water Quality Science Panel – final recommendations report to Army Corps of Engineers** – In 2010 the Army Corps of Engineers convened an ‘expert panel’ of oceanographers and salmon biologists to look into ways to improve salinity, temperature and dissolved oxygen conditions for salmon at the Locks and Ship Canal. The panel’s report was recently released. The report outlines nine actions to improve conditions, though stresses that nearly all of these recommendations need more quantitative study to assess their feasibility. Most recommendations involve drawing cold water either from deeper in Lake Washington or from the Salmon Bay estuary, but the ecological consequences of these actions need to be studied more carefully. One prominent recommendation is to improve the physical infrastructure at the Locks (i.e. the Stony Gate valves and control system), which WRIA 8 supports. The Corps has not yet said what their next steps will be.
- **Beach Nourishment Feasibility Project** – King County held a workshop on January 31 to engage nearshore experts and local nearshore restoration practitioners to obtain ideas and guidance on beach nourishment treatment concepts and sites along the WRIA 8 marine shoreline. The railroad comprises the majority of WRIA 8 marine shoreline, limiting opportunities and options for nearshore restoration. Through a past WRIA 8 King Conservation District grant, King County is undertaking this effort to identify the most appropriate type of nearshore restoration projects that could be tested as pilot projects for future implementation. King County plans to hold a second workshop during the week of April 22 at Edmonds City Hall to convene stakeholders and landowners that may be interested in and willing to pilot beach nourishment alternatives. It will be important to share the findings from this feasibility project with the WRIA 8 Technical Committee and the Salmon Recovery Council to determine if and how to continue to pursue nearshore restoration efforts.
- **Sammamish River Integrated Aquatic Vegetation Management Plan** – Representatives from the local governments along the Sammamish River, non-profit groups, concerned citizens, state agencies, and King County Water and Land Resources Division worked together to apply for an Aquatic Weeds Management Fund grant through the Washington Department of Ecology to develop an Integrated Aquatic Vegetation Management Plan (IAVMP) for the Sammamish River. The draft IAVMP addresses management and control of the following four invasive noxious weeds: purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), garden loosestrife (*Lysimachia vulgaris*), common reed (*Phragmites australis*) and Brazilian elodea (*Egeria densa*). The partners are educating others about the problem, contributing feedback about different treatment options, and working together to decide how best to manage the Sammamish River noxious weed problem. There is a public meeting on May 9 to present the draft IAVMP.
- **Lake Sammamish Kokanee Fry Release** – The Kokanee Work Group is planning the 4th Annual Lake Sammamish Kokanee Fry Release on the afternoon of April 26th, 2013. The event will be held at a private residence in Sammamish, the site of a recent fish passage barrier removal project. The event will include celebration of the following accomplishments:

- Best kokanee run since at least 1996/97,
- Wally's culvert project and associated restoration,
- Darigold water donation,
- Another successful year of the supplementation program, and
- Reintroduction this year of kokanee into Issaquah Creek, a decade after their extirpation there.

Space is limited for this event. If you are interested in attending, please contact David St. John at: david.st.john@kingcounty.gov

- **King County Parks Levy** – A proposed King County Parks Levy will be on the August ballot. The proposed levy would provide \$360 million over six year to maintain and operate existing parks, protect open space and parkland, improve and build trails and other public park infrastructure. The Parks Levy has been a significant source of matching funds for several WRIA 8 habitat projects, particularly habitat acquisition efforts to protect as natural areas. For more information, go to: <http://www.kingcounty.gov/parks/levy>.

WRIA 8 Committee Reports

- **WRIA 8 Technical Committee** – Met February 6 and March 6. Agenda items included updates on nearshore beach nourishment and Sammamish River side channel feasibility studies, PSP Adaptive Management and Monitoring draft framework, and recommending 2013 updates to the Three-Year Work Plan and project list.
- **WRIA 8 Implementation Committee** – Met on February 12 and March 12. Agenda topics included updates on WRIA 8 staffing, legislative priorities, WRIA 8 grant rounds, Ballard Locks infrastructure improvements, Green Shorelines Steering Committee, WRIA 8 Beach Nourishment workshop, Trees for Streams, and the Lake Washington Ship Canal Water Quality Science Panel's final recommendations report to Army Corps of Engineers. Meetings also included discussion of the Williams Pipeline Environmental Assessment, WRIA 8 Steelhead critical habitat designation, invasive New Zealand mud snail control, WRIA 8 Three-Year Work Plan update, Sammamish River Integrated Aquatic Vegetation Management Plan, and preparation for the March Salmon Recovery Council meeting. The Committee meets again on April 9.
- **Green Shoreline Steering Committee Meeting** – The Committee met January 31 to determine how it can continue in the future without WRIA 8 staffing. There was broad agreement that the Steering Committee should continue to meet and work to expand its purpose beyond freshwater lakes to include marine shorelines. It was determined that Nicole Faghin, Washington Sea Grant, and Heather Trim, Futurewise, will co-facilitate the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee will meet again in early April to refine its purpose and identify additional groups/individuals to participate in the expanded effort.