

WRIA 8 Update

May 16, 2013

- **Puget Sound Regional Update** – The **Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council** (PS SRC) last met on March 28. Agenda topics included updates on legislative and budget priorities, the Puget Sound Chinook recovery monitoring and adaptive management effort in watersheds around Puget Sound, approval of the 2013 Puget Sound allocation formula for Salmon Recovery Funding Board grant funds, discussion of the purpose and charge of the subcommittee on behavior change, and a decision to form a regulatory subcommittee. The PS SRC meets next on May 23.

The **South Central Action Area Caucus** next meets on June 17. The Caucus continues to work to identify specific near-term actions based on the highest priority local actions to recover Puget Sound. The purpose of this work is to clearly communicate the most important local actions and projects for Puget Sound recovery to EPA and the Lead Organizations managing funding for Puget Sound recovery as they identify the priorities for the six-year Puget Sound recovery strategy.

- **Legislative Priorities Update and Next Steps** – The state legislature did not complete its work by the end of April, and is in special session starting May 13.
 - Funding for the Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) program looks promising. The full request was \$80M, and it is currently funded at \$60M in the Senate capital budget, \$70M in the House capital budget, and \$80M in Governor Inslee’s capital budget. It is still important to communicate with legislators about the importance of fully funding PSAR.
 - Watershed Investment District – The House Environment Committee has requested that a stakeholder group be convened in 2013 to develop consensus bill language by December 2013 in order to introduce a bill in the 2014 session. WRIA 8 staff is tracking the process and will inquire with the Salmon Recovery Council whether there is interest in having WRIA 8 participation on the stakeholder group.
 - 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. This proposal is currently only funded in the House capital budget.
- **Grant funding update** – The 2013 grant cycle is well underway. Seven project applications were received by the April 26 deadline for the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) and Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) programs. The amount of funding available to WRIA 8 in this grant cycle remains unknown, pending final state and federal budgets. The WRIA 8 Project Subcommittee will tour sites with the SRFB Technical Review Panel on May 22. For the King County Flood Control District’s Cooperative Watershed Management Grant Program (CWM), sixteen applications were received (eleven site-specific

projects, four outreach and education programs, and one monitoring proposal). These proposals will compete for the \$1.2 million in funding available to WRIA 8, consistent with the grant funding guidance approved at the March 21 Salmon Recovery Council meeting. The Project Subcommittee will visit CWM project sites on May 29 and will hear presentations from remaining project sponsors on May 30. The Project Subcommittee will develop funding recommendations for SRFB/PSAR and CWM by early June, and the Salmon Recovery Council will consider the Project Subcommittee recommendations at the July 18 meeting.

- **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. PSP is planning to help each watershed over the next 14 months to develop a monitoring and adaptive management framework, and the WRIA 8 Team will be working closely with the Technical and Implementation Committees.

- **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 years to maintain and operate existing parks, protect open space and parkland, and improve and build trails and other public park infrastructure. The open space acquisition portion of Parks Levy funds has been a significant source of matching funds for several WRIA 8 habitat projects. For more information, go to: <http://www.kingcounty.gov/parks/levy>.

- **Culvert Case decision** – The ruling from the 1974 U.S. District Court case, *United States v. Washington* – known as the Boldt Decision – found that when Indian tribes signed treaties in the 1850s, they reserved the right to catch up to 50 percent of the harvestable fish. The “Culvert case” was filed in 2001, when 21 tribes asked the federal court to rule that the state of Washington has a treaty-based obligation to preserve fish runs, which included repairing or replacing culverts that impede salmon migration to or from spawning grounds. In 2007, the court ruled in favor of the tribes; however, the state and tribes were unable to negotiate a settlement, and on March 29, 2013, the court issued a permanent injunction that ordered the state to take the following steps:
 - Within the next six months, the defendants (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Natural Resources, State Parks, and Washington State Department of Transportation) must complete a list of all culverts under state-owned roads in Western Washington that are salmon barriers;
 - Fix about 180 culverts that are owned by WDFW, DNR, or State Parks by October 31, 2016 (estimated to cost \$55.3 million);
 - Fix about 817 barrier culverts that are owned or operated by DOT by 2030 (estimated to cost \$2.4 billion); and
 - Ensure that any new culverts comply with standards to provide fish passage.

- **Smolt flumes installed** – The Army Corps of Engineers reported that all four smolt flumes at the Hiram M. Chittenden (Ballard) Locks began operating on schedule on April 19. The Corps plans to run the flumes 24 hours per day, 7 days a week until about mid-June. The spillway gates are also open and will be managed with a one-foot minimum gate opening.
- **Salmon Bay Natural Area tree cutting** – In early April, BNSF Railway Company cleared trees as part of maintenance activities near the Salmon Bay Natural Area site west of the Ballard Locks in Seattle. This action prompted substantial concern from the community, noting the importance of the trees to the adjacent natural area and salmon habitat. In response to these concerns, BNSF has indicated they will work with City of Seattle to replant the cleared area with appropriate native vegetation. Several WRIA 8 Implementation Committee members noted that BNSF is conducting this clearing activity all along its track from Seattle north to Everett.
- **Mountains to Sound Greenway proposed as a National Heritage Area** – On April 30, Congressman Dave Reichert introduced legislation in the U.S. House of Representatives to establish the Mountains to Sound Greenway as a National Heritage Area. This proposed designation would provide the framework to support future stewardship of the Greenway. Official recognition of the Greenway will acknowledge the national significance of this landscape, enhance regional partnerships, and improve funding opportunities.
- **Three-Year Work Plan 2013 update** – Every year, the Puget Sound Partnership requests an update of implementation progress from watersheds around Puget Sound, including documenting recovery goals, implementation strategy, new technical information, and any notable barriers and accomplishments. The narrative is the companion to the updated Three-Year Work Plan project list. The WRIA 8 Technical and Implementation committees provided feedback on the draft narrative. The 2013 WRIA 8 Three-Year Work Plan will be submitted to Puget Sound Partnership by May 15 for review and comment by the Puget Sound Recovery Implementation Technical Team (RITT).
- **Lead Entity Directory** - Lead Entities coordinate the locally-driven process to identify priority habitat protection and restoration projects for funding through the Salmon Recovery Funding Board and work together on a statewide basis to advance salmon recovery. WRIA 8 is the Lead Entity for the Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed. The State Recreation and Conservation Office worked with Lead Entities to create a directory to describe the collaborative, community-based work being done to recover salmon and to identify the groups involved. It highlights each Lead Entity by providing pictures of projects, lists members of advisory boards, and describes the local goals for salmon recovery. Please check it out (WRIA 8-specific information is on pages 18-19):
http://www.rco.wa.gov/documents/salmon/lead_entities/LeadEntityDirectory.pdf

The directory is a great resource for those of us engaged in salmon recovery, but also for those interested in learning more about the effort. In particular, it can be a useful communication tool to help inform decision makers. The introduction describes why salmon

recovery is important, how habitat restoration supports local economies, and how the process to identify and fund projects works in practice.

WRIA 8 Committee Reports

- **WRIA 8 Technical Committee** – Met April 3 and May 1. Agenda items included discussions of SRC Science Panel contents, monitoring and adaptive management, climate change impacts on WRIA 8 Chinook, Three-Year Work Plan narrative, Willow Creek/Edmonds Marsh restoration project feasibility, and discussion of WRIA boundary for mapping and analysis.
- **WRIA 8 Implementation Committee** – Met on April 9 and May 7. Agenda topics included updates on WRIA 8 legislative priorities, 2014 WRIA 8 budget and workplan, culvert case decision, monitoring and adaptive management process with Puget Sound Partnership, 2013 Three-Year Work Plan update, and use of science in WRIA 8 Plan implementation. The Committee meets again on July 9.
- **Green Shoreline Steering Committee Meeting** – The Committee met April 11 to determine how to move forward with WRIA 8 specific work, while supporting expansion of a broader coalition to focus on marine shorelines. Nicole Faghin, Washington Sea Grant, and Heather Trim, Futurewise, are co-facilitating the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee will meet again in May to talk about next steps for creating a coalition to bring together additional groups/individuals to participate in the expanded effort.