

WRIA 8 Update

July 18, 2013

- **Puget Sound Regional Update** – The **Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council** (PS SRC) last met on May 23. Agenda topics included updates on legislative and budget priorities, discussion of the tribal culvert case, potential Salmon Recovery Funding Board focus on developing a coordinated state salmon recovery marketing/messaging strategy, results of two steelhead projects focused on modeling habitat potential and marine survival, update on progress on the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery monitoring and adaptive management effort, formation of a Monitoring and Adaptive Management Subcommittee, updates from the Regulatory and Behavior Change subcommittees, and presentation and discussion on the Watershed Investment District proposal and Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council participation in House of Representatives Stakeholder Group process to develop consensus bill language for legislative consideration by 2014. The PS SRC meets next on July 25.

The **South Central Action Area Caucus** last met on June 17. Agenda topics included a presentation from King County on a WRIA 9 stormwater retrofit project funded by EPA, discussion of a draft proposal for technical assistance from the Department of Commerce focused on addressing the difficulty some local governments have in meeting both growth management and water quality goals in infill development areas, presentation and discussion of a South Sound proposal to change the Puget Sound Partnership enabling legislation to formally emphasize the need to fund local priorities identified by local integrating organizations like the Caucus Group, and the proposed 2013-2014 work plan for grants to LIOs to support administration, coordination, and Action Agenda revisions and implementation.

The Caucus Group continues to work to identify specific near-term actions based on the highest priority local actions to recover Puget Sound. WRIA 8 staff participate on a work group to more 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. The Caucus Group next meets on September 16.

- **Legislative Priorities Update and Results** – The state legislature adopted biennial 2013-2015 operations and capital budgets in late June. Below are highlights on WRIA 8 priorities:
 - **Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR)** – PSAR was funded at \$70 million, which represents a very strong state investment in salmon recovery. The full request was \$80 million. WRIA 8 receives 5.7% of the first \$30 million as part of our 2013 grant round; any appropriation above \$30 million supports projects on a list of large regionally prioritized projects identified as part of the legislative request by the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council. In addition to capital funds, 6% of the \$30 million is provided to watersheds to support capital project development. Of the 6%, WRIA 8 receives \$97,773 to support priority project development, including technical support, feasibility studies, and design work.

- Watershed Investment District – Representative John McCoy, current Vice Chair of the House Natural Resource Committee, initiated a stakeholder group process to get consensus language on a watershed priorities funding bill that can be introduced in the 2014 legislative session. The first meeting of the stakeholder group was held on May 30. WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council members in attendance included Don Fiene, Andy Rheume, and Chris Eggen. Contrary to initial expectations, the state does not have resources to support the stakeholder group process. WRIA 9 volunteered to lead the stakeholder process to develop a consensus bill by December 2013. WRIA 9 is planning to develop issue papers on the main concepts of the need for stable, sufficient funding for watershed priorities and communicate with stakeholders to better understand perspectives in preparation for a funding summit in September.
 - Coordinated Investment for Puget Sound Floodplains: The capital budget includes \$33 million for nine specifically identified multiple-benefit floodplain restoration projects, including \$4.1 million for King County’s Lower Cedar River Integrated Floodplain Restoration proposal. This proposal combines funding needed for two high priority Cedar River floodplain projects – Rainbow Bend Floodplain Restoration and RiverBend Floodplain Acquisition and Relocation. WRIA 8 wrote letters to key legislators, supporting the Cedar River proposal as part of the broader legislative request coordinated by The Nature Conservancy.
 - Belmondo Reach Acquisition and Restoration project (Cedar River): Seattle Public Utilities received \$338,000 to match a 2012 WRIA 8 SRFB grant for acquisition of priority parcels in the Belmondo Reach of the Cedar River, and to support floodplain and riparian area restoration.
- **Rainbow Bend Project (Cedar River)** – Construction began in June on this high priority levee removal and floodplain restoration project. The contractor has completed the internal portions of both the side channel and cut off channels of the site, installed large wood, and removed the levee and revetment system. This project will be featured on this fall’s WRIA 8 Salmon Tour.
 - **Issaquah Dam Removal Project** – Removal of the Issaquah Dam is in process. Construction is planned to be completed this summer. This project will provide fish passage to more than 10 miles of high quality salmon spawning habitat.
 - **Lower Bear Creek Project** – In early June, the Army Corps of Engineers issued the permit for Lower Bear Creek restoration. The City of Redmond has moved ahead with contracting for the archeological dig and channel work to be done this year. This is a high priority WRIA 8 restoration project, which has taken over 10 years and more than \$10 million to implement. The lower half of the new creek channel will be constructed this summer, while construction of the upper half of the creek channel and replanting of the floodplain will occur in 2014. Creek flows will be diverted to the newly restored creek channel in the summer of 2015, and the old channel will be abandoned.

- **Willowmoor Project (Sammamish River)** – King County has initiated public and stakeholder outreach on this large restoration project at the transition zone between the Sammamish River and Lake Sammamish through Marymoor Park. King County is convening a stakeholder advisory committee for the project, and requested participation from WRIA 8 staff.

- **King County Conservation Futures and Parks Levy Funding Recommendations** - The King County Conservation Futures Citizens Committee completed its recommendation report for 2014 funding for Conservation Futures (CFT) open space acquisition projects, and proposed unincorporated King County Parks Levy acquisition projects. The Parks Levy will be on the August ballot and will need to be ratified by the electorate of King County for projects to be funded. Projects recommended for funding that have a nexus with the WRIA 8 Plan include:
 - Issaquah Creek Waterways acquisition at confluence of North Fork and main stem Issaquah Creek – City of Issaquah
 - Bear Creek Rehabilitation acquisition as part of Lower Bear Creek Restoration – City of Redmond
 - Little Bear Creek acquisition at 134th Ave NE in Woodinville – City of Woodinville
 - RiverBend Acquisition and Relocation (Cedar River) – King County
 - Upper Bear Creek Waterways conservation easement as part of Paradise Valley Natural Area – King County
 - Cold Creek Natural Area addition of outlet of Cold Creek from Cottage Lake – King County
 - Issaquah Creek Conservation acquisition along Issaquah Creek between Issaquah-Hobart Road and 252nd Ave SE – King County

- **Habitat Work Schedule Update** – In 2012, the Puget Sound Partnership and the Recreation and Conservation Office shifted funds from the regional grant for lead entities to implementation tracking. The funds were intended to support watersheds in updating project information in Habitat Work Schedule in a way that advances common regional reporting of specific metrics related to Puget Sound Chinook salmon recovery. The use of these metrics will allow watersheds and the region to begin to describe in a more consistent format some of the contributions of salmon recovery efforts to Puget Sound Ecosystem Recovery Targets set by the Puget Sound Partnership.

The deadline for completing this work was June 30, and WRIA 8 staff worked with local project sponsors to obtain updated project information and update project records in Habitat Work Schedule. In all, the status and metrics for approximately 165 habitat protection and restoration projects were either updated or confirmed through this exercise, and the status of over 300 “conceptual” projects was confirmed as well.

- **Salmon Tour** – The annual WRIA 8 Salmon Tour is scheduled for October 11. Please mark your calendar. We anticipate being able to visit several high priority, large scale restoration projects. Additional details to come.

WRIA 8 Committee Reports

- **WRIA 8 Technical Committee** – Met June 5. Agenda focused mostly on monitoring and adaptive management and efforts of PSP to support creation of WRIA adaptive management frameworks. Also discussed status of recovery planning at Puget Sound level for steelhead, New Zealand mudsnails, and upcoming stream survey work in WRIA 8. Next meeting is July 24.
- **WRIA 8 Implementation Committee** – Met on July 9. Agenda topics included updates on the results of salmon recovery priorities in the 2013-2015 capital budget, funding recommendations from the King County Conservation Futures and Parks Levy Citizens Committee, briefing on the status and schedule for the WRIA 8 monitoring and adaptive management process, discussion of potential efforts to reach urban audiences (e.g., developers, commercial and institutional property owners, etc.) that are not generally targeted through other WRIA 8 salmon recovery outreach and education programs, summary of WRIA 8 Project Subcommittee 2013 grant round funding recommendations, and review of the July 18 Salmon Recovery Council meeting agenda. The Committee meets again on September 10.
- **Green Shoreline Steering Committee Meeting** – The Steering Committee met July 2 to determine how to move forward with WRIA 8 specific work, while supporting expansion of a broader regional coalition to focus on marine shorelines. Heather Trim, FutureWise, agreed to coordinate the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee is updating the work plan to document work done to date and identify key next steps, including consideration of upcoming opportunities to outreach and promote Green Shorelines materials. The Steering Committee will meet again in August.