

WRIA 8 Update

September 19, 2013

- **Puget Sound Regional Update** – The **Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council** (PS SRC) last met on July 25. Agenda topics included updates on steelhead recovery planning options and related marine survival study, scope and eligible activities for Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration ‘capacity’ funding, regional policy questions on monitoring and adaptive management project, Regulatory Subcommittee proposed scope of work, and nomination and election of PS SRC leadership. The PS SRC meets next on September 26.

The **South Central Action Area Caucus** has not met since the last WRIA 8 SRC meeting and last met on June 17. The Caucus Group continues to work to identify specific near-term actions based on the highest priority local actions to recover Puget Sound, which will be communicated to the Puget Sound Partnership as part of the 2014 Action Agenda update. WRIA 8 staff participate on a Caucus Group work group to more clearly communicate the most important local salmon recovery actions and projects into this process and to inform EPA and the state agency 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.

- **WRIA 8 Cooperative Watershed Management grants awarded** – The King County Flood Control District Board of Supervisors approved the Cooperative Watershed Management grant proposals for King County watersheds at their meeting on September 9. WRIA 8 will receive \$1,200,000 for the projects and programs recommended by the Salmon Recovery Council for funding at the July 18 meeting. Important habitat restoration and protection work, outreach, and monitoring will either continue or be initiated using these funds. King County administers the grant contracts, which are being finalized currently and will allow sponsors to begin spending these funds in the near-term.
- **Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration ‘capacity’ funding scope of work** – In addition to capital project funds from the Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration fund, WRIA 8 also receives an allocation of ‘capacity’ funding. In previous PSAR allocations, these funds were more flexible and allowed us to fund our priority programmatic activities, such as Green Shorelines and riparian area focus. However, this biennium these funds are restricted to being used to support priority capital project development and implementation. WRIA 8 anticipates applying PSAR funds to support much of the WRIA 8 Actions and Funding Coordinator position’s project development and implementation work program, to free up inter-local agreement funds to support the priority programmatic work identified in the 2014 WRIA 8 work plan. There may also be an opportunity for WRIA 8 to direct a portion of these funds directly to project sponsors to address technical assistance needs associated with developing priority projects.
- **Floodplains by Design** – The Nature Conservancy, Puget Sound Partnership, and U.S. Geological Service are partnering on the “Floodplains by Design” project, which is intended to improve the resiliency of Puget Sound floodplains for the protection of human

communities and the health of the ecosystem. The project will build upon existing work to identify priority floodplain restoration and management opportunities, to identify critical projects that offer multiple benefits, such as flood risk reduction, public safety, water quality, and salmon habitat protection and restoration. The Coordinated Floodplains request to the legislature this past session, which resulted in funding for nine priority floodplain restoration and management projects including the Lower Cedar River Integrated Floodplain Management Project that will help fund the Rainbow Bend Floodplain Restoration Project and Riverbend Acquisition and Relocation Project on the Cedar River. The “Floodplains by Design” team is hosting a workshop on October 2 at the Edmonds Conference Center from 9a.m. – 3p.m. to identify barriers, develop strategies to address barriers, and build interest to develop the next suite of priority actions. If you are interested in attending, contact Jim Kramer at jkramer.consulting@gmail.com or call him at 206 841-2145.

- **Salmon SEEson going on now** – The annual WRIA 8 Salmon SEEson program promotes opportunities for the public to view salmon in local streams and the Cedar River between September and January, and learn more about the salmon life cycle and habitat needs. The viewing sites are sponsored by several local partners, including cities and non-profit organizations. This year the program website features links to video of some of the viewing sites as well as information about protecting salmon and their habitats. Salmon SEEson is also joining forces this year with the Saving Water Partnership, a collaboration of local water utilities who together promote water conservation, since saving water helps keep water in the rivers for salmon, people, and wildlife. Visit www.savingwater.org to learn more. Salmon SEEson posters and fliers are available by contacting Linda Grob (linda.grob@kingcounty.gov).
- **Salmon Recovery Tour** – The annual WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Tour is scheduled for October 11. Invitations went out on September 11. Please save the date and RSVP to Linda Grob (linda.grob@kingcounty.gov). Our priority for the tour is to get members of the WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council, Congressional staff, and state legislators and their staff out to see WRIA 8 salmon restoration projects. If space allows, we would also welcome other local elected officials from WRIA 8 jurisdictions. Please let us know if you would like to invite another elected official from your jurisdiction. We anticipate being able to visit several high priority, large scale restoration projects on the Cedar River, Issaquah Creek, and Bear Creek. Additional details to come.
- **Returning Chinook and sockeye salmon numbers** – As of September 8, an estimated 7,600 **Chinook** salmon have passed through the Ballard Locks. This is only 79% of the 17-year average for Chinook salmon, and well below last year’s 13,800 Chinook through the locks by this date. **Sockeye** salmon numbers, at 179,000 through the locks, are slightly better than last year though still only 88% of the 17-year average for sockeye. Both numbers are well below long-range planning targets. (See attached charts.)

WRIA 8 Committee Reports

- **WRIA 8 Technical Committee** – Met July 24 and September 2. Meetings were focused on initial steps in developing a WRIA 8 adaptive management framework using Puget Sound Partnership guidance. Worked on project scope/planning context, recovery targets, habitat stressors, and key ecological attributes (KEAs).
- **WRIA 8 Implementation Committee** – Met on September 10. Agenda topics included updates on the annual Salmon Recovery Tour, review of the draft 2014 WRIA 8 legislative priorities, discussion of assessing programmatic priorities, status of the WRIA 8 monitoring and adaptive management project, and review of the September 19 Salmon Recovery Council meeting agenda. The Committee discussed and recommends assessing WRIA 8 programmatic priorities as a way to confirm the current priorities and determine if there are any gaps that should be addressed with available resources. The Committee identified four main programmatic priority areas to assess: general public outreach to raise awareness (e.g., Salmon SEEson), Green Shorelines work to promote more salmon friendly shorelines on Lake Washington and Lake Sammamish, riparian area stewardship, and reducing toxics in stormwater. The Committee meets again on October 8.
- **Green Shoreline Steering Committee Meeting** – The Steering Committee has not met since the July SRC meeting. The Steering Committee continues to update 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 has been discussing the need to expand the green shorelines effort to include marine shorelines. A Salish Sea Shoreline Forum will be held on September 30 at Tukwila Community Center, and is being sponsored by Puget Sound Partnership, Washington SeaGrant and Futurewise (with grant support from the Department of Natural Resources and Department of Fish and Wildlife). The Steering Committee will meet again in on September 30 in conjunction with the Salish Sea Shoreline Forum. If you are interested in attending, please go to: <http://futurewise.org/action/Salish-Sea-Shoreline-Forum>