

# WRIA 8 Update and Committee Reports

January 16, 2014

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- **Puget Sound Regional Update** – The **Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council (PS SRC)** last met on December 6. Agenda topics included an update on harvest management, discussion of the Recovery Implementation Technical Team’s review of Three-Year Work Plans, a presentation on salmonid habitat monitoring, and an overview of the annual and biennial reporting cycles being proposed for watershed monitoring efforts. The PS SRC also approved the Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration Project Implementation and Development Award project list, concurred with the items listed on the Puget Sound state and federal legislative agenda (including support for funding infrastructure repairs at the Ballard Locks), and approved Scott Powell’s nomination to be PS SRC vice-chair. The PS SRC meets next on January 23.

The **South Central Action Area Caucus** last met on November 18. The meeting agenda included a Puget Sound legislative priorities update, 2014 legislative development update, update on the Green River System Wide Improvement Framework, and Caucus Group near-term action development. 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.

- **Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration Project Implementation and Development Awards funding proposal** – With Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration funded at \$70 million in the state’s 2013 – 2015 capital budget, the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council approved a Puget Sound Partnership proposal for setting aside some of these dollars for project development work. The Project Implementation and Development Awards will be allocated through a regionally-competitive process, and the intent is to direct funds where needed to advance ongoing projects or develop new projects for future funding requests. The WRIA 8 Project Subcommittee met on October 17 and recommended working with the City of Renton to submit an application for developing restoration concepts on the lower Cedar River within the City’s jurisdiction. The *WRIA 8 Chinook Salmon Conservation Plan* provides little detail on specific project actions in this area, and the proposal submitted on November 15 requests \$200,000 to conduct a detailed analysis of restoration opportunities on the lower Cedar and develop conceptual designs for feasible projects with high salmon benefit.
- **2014 grant rounds** – In the 2014 grant cycle, federal dollars are available through the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB – projected to be \$433,356), and local funding is being provided by the King County Flood Control District’s Cooperative Watershed Management (CWM) Grant Program (approximately \$1.5 million). WRIA 8 staff is currently

in the process of organizing the WRIA 8 Project Subcommittee and refining application materials and defining milestones for these 2014 funding opportunities. Draft CWM grant applications are due electronically on April 4, and final applications are due on April 18. SRFB pre-applications are to be complete in the PRISM Online project database by April 18 and final applications are due on August 1. The Project Subcommittee will conduct site visits and review and score applications for CWM in late April/early May and will do so for SRFB in mid-May. The Salmon Recovery Council will consider the Project Subcommittee's CWM recommendations at the May 15 meeting and the SRFB recommendations at the July 17 meeting.

- **Regional review of the 2013 WRIA 8 Three-Year Work Plan Update** – The Puget Sound Partnership and Recovery Implementation Technical Team issued the regional review of WRIA 8's 2013 Three-Year Work Plan Update. The three-year work plan serves as the primary document used to annually document progress on salmon recovery implementation efforts in WRIA 8. The regional review provides some broad regional salmon recovery themes, as well as more specific feedback on WRIA 8's recovery strategy and implementation progress. The review notes that the WRIA 8 strategy is consistent with the WRIA 8 Chinook Conservation Plan, and acknowledges our efforts to assess and address priority gaps in implementation and update and refine criteria for grant funding. The review notes the large number of projects on the WRIA 8 Three-Year Work Plan project list, and encourages WRIA 8 to work to limit the projects to what can realistically be initiated or completed within the next three years as well as to continue to work to better demonstrate prioritization and sequencing on the three-year work plan project list. The WRIA 8 Technical Committee and Project Subcommittee will continue to work on these issues in 2014. Beginning in 2014, reports from the monitoring and adaptive management framework being developed by the Technical Committee, in addition to the project list, will serve as the basis of the WRIA 8 Three-Year Work Plan.
- **Buffer requirements for federal funding** – As part of the federal government's response to tribal concerns expressed in the "Treaty Rights at Risk" paper, federal agencies and state agencies with federal pass-through funding for grants are in the process of increasing the minimum buffer sizes that will be funded with federal grant funding to 100 feet on salmon bearing water bodies (smaller buffers are allowed for non-salmon bearing streams). The Department of Ecology recently issued Water Quality Financial Assistance Funding Guidelines for State Fiscal Year 2015. The new guidelines require 100 foot minimum buffers for salmon streams. These new guidelines affect: Section 319 Grants, Centennial Clean Water Funds, the National Estuary Program, and Water Pollution Control State Revolving Funds. The Salmon Recovery Funding Board also recently considered a proposal by the Recreation and Conservation Office to apply these minimum buffer widths to Salmon Recovery Funding Board and Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration grants. No action was taken, but the topic will be revisited by the Board at their March meeting.

The purpose of increasing the minimum size of buffers is to increase levels of riparian protection to both protect and restore salmon fisheries and to help achieve water quality standards. They are based on much scientific evidence that supports the value of large

buffers. What remains to be seen is how the new guidelines offer the flexibility to consider site conditions, the purpose of the buffer, and the landowner's objectives.

- **Monitoring and adaptive management framework development** – WRIA 8 Technical Committee is progressing through identifying key indicators associated with habitat and Chinook salmon conservation goals. These indicators are being loaded into the Miradi software package; draft tables in Miradi format have been sent to PSP to meet project milestones. The WRIA 8 Implementation committee has been briefed and will be kept up to date as progress continues.

### **WRIA 8 Committee Reports**

- **WRIA 8 Technical Committee** – Met December 11 and January 8. Meetings were focused on developing the WRIA 8 adaptive management framework using Puget Sound Partnership guidance. Worked on translating WRIA 8 Plan goals into Miradi program and identifying indicators for tracking goals. Discussed RITT review of WRIA 8 Three Year Work Plan. Began discussions regarding upcoming monitoring needs; determined that indicators need to be identified and prioritized in order to justify monitoring needs. Reviewed presentation by Adopt-A-Stream Foundation on design of creek restoration project on Bear Creek.
- **WRIA 8 Implementation Committee** – Met on January 7. Agenda topics included updates on the Puget Sound Acquisition and Resonation project development grant awarded to the City of Renton to conduct a lower Cedar River habitat assessment and restoration project feasibility study, review of approved 2013 grants, current grant RFPs, King County Cedar River Corridor Study, and new WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council membership. The Committee also discussed the regional review of the 2013 WRIA 8 Three-Year Work Plan Update, a refined strategy for supporting funding for infrastructure improvements at the Ballard Locks, status update on WRIA 8 monitoring and adaptive management project, and preparation for the January 16 Salmon Recovery Council meeting. The Committee meets again on February 11.
- **Green Shoreline Steering Committee Meeting** – The Steering Committee met on December 13. The agenda included an update on work being done to identify and assess tax incentives for the prevention and removal of hard armoring along shoreline properties, a debrief on the first green shorelines workshop for realtors and assessors, presentation from NOAA staff on shorelines restoration project at the Sand Point Campus, an update on the Green Shores for Homes grant project, review of the draft February 3 Salish Sea Shoreline Forum meeting agenda, and updates to the 2014 Steering Committee work plan. The Steering Committee will next meet on February 3, in conjunction with the upcoming Salish Sea Shoreline Forum.