

WRIA 8 Update and Committee Reports

July 17, 2014

- **Puget Sound Regional Update** – The **Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council (PS SRC)** last met on May 22. Agenda topics included a presentation on the Hood Canal steelhead pilot project, discussion of recovery planning priorities for watersheds’ upcoming 10-year recovery plan updates, discussion of funding request to the Governor’s Salmon Recovery Office for Puget Sound regional monitoring priorities, update from the Council’s Regulatory Subcommittee, and creation of a subcommittee to provide policy review of watershed three-year work plans. The PS SRC meets next on July 24.

The **South Central Action Area Caucus** last met on June 11. The meeting agenda included an update from the Puget Sound Partnership on approval of the 2014 Action Agenda update, presentation on the Building Cities in the Rain project to identify ways to meet challenges with infill development in urban areas and associated stormwater management regulations, and discussion of the Kokanee Work Group’s proposal to incorporate their priorities into future updates to the South Central Action Area Caucus Group’s local priorities.

- **Cedar River Corridor Plan update** – The Rivers Section of King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks is reviewing the three proposals received in response to the Cedar River Corridor Plan request for proposals. They plan to award the contract at the end of July, and have the successful contractor on board by the fall. The outreach strategy for plan development includes convening an advisory committee and hosting a combination of property-owner and public meetings and online forums. WRIA 8 expects to be a partner in development of the plan, and requested a detailed briefing for the September 18 Salmon Recovery Council meeting.
- **Rainbow Bend project video** – WRIA 8 is partnering with King County to produce a video telling the success story of implementing the Rainbow Bend project on the Cedar River. This video would help communicate the value of completing other priority floodplain restoration projects on the Cedar River and be part of sharing the success of the first 10 years of implementing the WRIA 8 Plan.
- **Floodplains by Design** – Initiative being led by The Nature Conservancy, Puget Sound Partnership, and Department of Ecology to fund projects seeking to achieve multiple objectives (i.e., salmon recovery, flood risk reduction, water quality, etc.). Ecology received 77 pre-proposals for \$181 million in response to a request for proposals that will result in a project list for a 2015-2017 biennium legislative request. They reviewed the pre-proposals and requested the most competitive to submit full proposals by September, from which a project list will be developed comprised of the top \$50 million to support the legislative request. There are several proposals for priority WRIA 8 salmon recovery project work. Of the five proposals in WRIA 8, only King County’s proposal in partnership with Seattle Public Utilities for acquisition and restoration of Cedar River floodplain was asked to submit a full proposal. This proposal would fund high priority WRIA 8 projects, including final design of the

Riverbend levee setback and floodplain restoration project and support priority acquisitions in the Royal Arch Reach and Mouth of Taylor Creek reaches on the Cedar River. The Salmon Recovery Council should consider writing a letter of support for this proposal.

- **WRIA 8 letter of support for state and federal funding of Phase II monitoring and adaptive management** – Phase 1 of the WRIA 8 monitoring and adaptive management project was completed in June. Local watersheds, including WRIA 8, received funding support from EPA through the Puget Sound Partnership for Phase 1; however, Phase II is currently unfunded. The Salmon Recovery Council requested that WRIA 8 send a letter to state and federal agency partners to encourage them to continue to support the monitoring and adaptive management project by providing funding to watersheds for Phase II of the project. The letter is included in the July SRC meeting packet.
- **Update on 2014 grant rounds** – The WRIA 8 Project Subcommittee met on May 21 to visit project sites and evaluate grant proposals for the 2014 Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) grant round. The Subcommittee’s recommendations are being presented to the Salmon Recovery Council for decision at the July 17 council meeting and are detailed in the Project Subcommittee report contained in the July 17 meeting packet.

The list of Cooperative Watershed Management projects and programs approved by the Salmon Recovery Council at the May 15 council meeting will be presented to the King County Flood Control District’s Executive Committee on July 30. The Flood District’s final funding decision is expected to occur at the August 18 Executive Committee meeting, after which time grant agreements can be developed with sponsors receiving grant awards.

- **2014/2015 Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund (PCSRF) update** – The federal budget contains \$65 million for PCSRF in 2014, of which Washington State will be awarded \$20.5 million. For federal fiscal year 2015, the U.S. House of Representatives passed an appropriations bill in late May maintaining \$65 million for PCSRF—an increase of \$15 million over the \$50 million in the proposed Presidential budget. The House bill was subsequently approved by the Senate Appropriations Committee.

The Recreation and Conservation Office applies for the Washington State share of PCSRF in the spring of each year, which determines Lead Entity capacity funding and SRFB grant allocations. Given the actions to-date by the House and Senate, we are optimistic federal funding for salmon recovery will be maintained in 2015, which provides WRIA 8 with Lead Entity capacity funding (currently \$60,000 when combined with state match) and SRFB grant funds (current allocation is \$433,356).

- **WRIA 8 outreach and communications staff support** – WRIA 8 anticipates hiring temporary part-time staff to support education and outreach for the ILA renewal and 10-year plan update, and to coordinate priority programs (Green Shorelines and riparian stewardship). We hope to have staff hired and in place by August or September. The temporary staff position will be shared with the Snoqualmie Watershed team at King County. The position

will be hired for a year, with the possibility of extension depending on available resources and outreach and education needs.

- **New Corps of Engineers Seattle District Commander** – Every three years, the Seattle District of the Army Corps of Engineers undergoes a leadership change. Colonel Buck will replace Colonel Estok as commander of the Seattle District of the Army Corps of Engineers. WRIA 8 has had a good working relationship with the Seattle District under Colonel Estok, and hopes to maintain good coordination with the District under Colonel Buck, especially regarding critical infrastructure improvement needs at the Ballard Locks.
- **Seattle University capstone project** – WRIA 8 is partnering with King County Science and Rivers sections to support a Seattle University senior capstone team to help identify and collect data on salmon recovery and watershed health indicators in support of the WRIA 8 monitoring and adaptive management project. Scott Stolnack, WRIA 8 Technical Coordinator, will be the lead and mentor the students through the project. The capstone project will begin in the fall.
- **Wadeable Streams habitat status and trends project** – Data from the last 5 years of field work are being analyzed in preparation of a final project report on habitat status and trends to EPA and to WRIA 8 Technical Committee and to Salmon Recovery Council. The results of the project will also help inform implementation progress reporting and the 10-year update to the WRIA 8 Chinook Conservation Plan. Scott and Hans will be reporting more on the results of this project at future meetings.
- **Chinook/sockeye return numbers** – Official salmon counts at the Ballard Locks for the 2014 season began on June 12. By the second week of July, historically only about 2% of WRIA 8 **Chinook** salmon have passed through the locks, so it is too early to tell with any certainty how the Chinook run will be in 2014. Indications are for low returns this year, however. For **sockeye** salmon, usually about 50% of the run has passed through the locks by now – and 2014 numbers are among the lowest on record. So far in 2014 the co-managers have estimated around 20,000 sockeye have passed through the locks. For comparison, by the same time last year there were 134,000 sockeye passed through the locks.

WRIA 8 Committee Reports

- **WRIA 8 Technical Committee** – Met June 4. Discussed elements and contents of the final report for the WRIA 8 Monitoring and Adaptive Management framework, including gaps and opportunities. Discussed priority indicators for monitoring habitat health, as identified in the M&AM project. Also discussed Seattle University senior capstone project opportunity for 2014-2015 and how this might help gather information on our priority indicators. (Note: Technical Committee meetings are on summer hiatus while members concentrate on field work – meetings will resume in September.)

- **WRIA 8 Implementation Committee** – The Committee met on July 8. Agenda topics at the July meeting included WRIA 8 Project Subcommittee Salmon Recovery Funding Board and Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration grant round funding recommendations, review and discussion of the draft WRIA 8 2016-2025 interlocal agreement, update on the hiring process for temporary WRIA 8 outreach and education staff support, and review of agenda topics for the July 17 Salmon Recovery Council meeting. The Committee next meets on September 9.
- **Green Shoreline Steering Committee Meeting** – The Steering Committee did not meet since the last SRC meeting. WRIA 8 has not had the resources to continue coordination of the Steering Committee, but hopes to resume this function as part of the work plan for anticipated additional outreach and communications staff support. In the meantime, the Steering Committee will continue to coordinate meetings in conjunction with Salish Sea Shoreline Forums.