

Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed (WRIA 8)

Project Subcommittee Report

2014 Grant Round – Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) & Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR)

Project Subcommittee Members:

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2014 Funding Summary: For the 2014 Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) and Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) grant round, \$783,356 is available for allocation in WRIA 8. This includes an anticipated 2014 SRFB allocation of \$433,356 and \$350,000 in 2013 – 2015 PSAR funds that were withdrawn from a 2013 grant recipient due to the project being unable to meet a condition placed on the award in the necessary timeframe. Both SRFB and PSAR grant funds are administered by the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO). Four pre-applications were received by WRIA 8 this grant round (see Table 2 for summary), and requests exceeded available funding by \$161,190.

Table 1. Summary of 2014 Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) and Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) Grant Funds			
		Match	Total Cost
2014 SRFB/PSAR Funding Requested	\$944,546	\$140,210	\$1,084,756
2014 Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) Allocation (Anticipated)	\$433,356		
2013-2015 Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) Funds Remaining	\$350,000		
Total Funding Available	\$783,356		
<i>Requested Funds Exceeding Available Funds</i>	<i>(\$161,190)</i>		

Project Eligibility and Match Requirement: Projects considered for SRFB and PSAR grants must meet the criteria and policies outlined in RCO’s Manual 18, and projects must be on the WRIA 8 Three-Year Work Plan. Projects on the Three-Year Work Plan are: 1) a sub-set of the WRIA 8 Plan’s 10-Year Start List of Actions (Volume I, Chapter 9), 2) have been evaluated for benefits to Chinook and relative likelihood of being successfully implemented, and 3) are the highest priority projects for Chinook recovery. The Three-Year Work Plan is reviewed annually by the Puget Sound Recovery Implementation Technical Team (RITT), and the RITT will review each watershed’s 2014 SRFB/PSAR project list to ensure all projects proposed for funding are consistent with priority recovery strategies identified through the recent Puget Sound monitoring and adaptive management project.

A 15% match is required for SRFB and PSAR funding, with the exception of design-only projects under \$200,000, which require no match.

Project Subcommittee Process: The WRIA 8 Project Subcommittee (Subcommittee) is charged with reviewing grant proposals and developing funding recommendations for WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council consideration. To conduct their review, the Project Subcommittee receives: 1) SRFB/PSAR pre-applications; 2) grant criteria, narrative guidance for applying criteria, and scoring sheets; and 3) a conflict of interest statement. On May 21, Project Subcommittee members, SRFB Project Manager Elizabeth Butler, SRFB Review Panel Members Paul Schlenger and Tom Slocum, and WRIA 8 staff visited the four proposed project sites, as well as the site of one project being submitted for PSAR large capital project consideration (see program description below). Project sponsors gave brief presentations and responded to questions.

Each project proposal is evaluated using WRIA 8’s review criteria, and this tool evaluates the alignment of proposals with WRIA 8 Plan priorities by assessing benefits to Chinook and the certainty of successful implementation. The Project Subcommittee scored and ranked the proposals using these criteria on May 21. Subsequent communication involved several email conversations and personal phone calls, and funding recommendations were finalized through email and a conference call on June 16. Table 2 summarizes the Project Subcommittee’s final ranking and funding recommendations, and the following pages provide an overview of the proposals, presented in rank order, with highlights from the Subcommittee discussions.

PSAR Large Capital Projects: In order to develop a PSAR legislative budget request for the 2015 – 2017 biennium that consists of vetted and regionally-ranked large capital project proposals, the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council and the Puget Sound Partnership directed Puget Sound lead entities to evaluate large project proposals as part of the 2014 grant round. These projects should be larger than what can be funded using regular grant round funding and must address high priority salmon recovery needs. As part of the review process, the Project Subcommittee reviewed one proposal for PSAR large capital project consideration (shown in Table 3 and described later in this document).

TABLE 2: Summary of 2014 WRIA 8 Project Subcommittee Funding Recommendations for Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) and Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) Grant Funds

Rank	Project Name, WRIA 8 Plan #, Project Sponsor	Grant Request	SRFB Funding Recommendation	PSAR Funding Recommendation	Matching Funds	Total Cost
1	Cedar River Stewardship-in-Action Plan Project #: C005A Seattle Public Utilities	\$332,245	\$206,025	\$95,000	\$53,499	\$354,524
2	Riverbend Levee Setback/Removal Preliminary Design Plan Project #: C220 King County	\$255,000	\$0	\$255,000	\$45,000	\$300,000
3	Willow Creek Daylighting Preliminary Design Plan Project #: M233 City of Edmonds	\$157,331	\$157,331	\$0	\$36,160	\$193,491
4	Squire's Landing Restoration Preliminary Design Plan Project #: N335 Sno-King Watershed Council	\$199,970	\$70,000	\$0	\$0	\$70,000
	TOTALS	\$944,546	\$433,356	\$350,000	\$134,659	\$918,015
	Available SRFB and PSAR Funds	\$783,356				
	Difference between requested and available funds	(\$161,190)				

TABLE 3: PSAR Large Capital Project Submittal

Project Name, WRIA 8 Plan #, Project Sponsor	PSAR Large Cap Request	Matching Funds	Total Cost of Current Phase
Evans Creek Relocation Plan Project #: N432A City of Redmond	\$2,500,000	\$500,000	\$3,000,000

Project Descriptions and Discussion Highlights (projects listed in rank order)

1. Cedar River Stewardship-in-Action (Plan #: C005A)

Seattle Public Utilities

Seattle Public Utilities seeks to expand the ongoing collaboration with Forterra and King County's Noxious Weed Control Program known as "Cedar River Stewardship-in-Action" (SiA). This effort controls knotweed and other invasive plant species and restores native riparian plant communities in the lower Cedar River. SiA, which began treating knotweed in 2008, has reduced knotweed to 20% of the original area of infestation. This grant will continue treatment of untreated knotweed and re-growth of previously treated areas on the Cedar River mainstem and tributaries, from River Mile 21.7 to 5.6, and will replant treated areas to prevent reinfestation. Work involves annual surveys and treatment of all knotweed found. Outreach to river-front property owners will support the installation of native plants and will teach riparian stewardship practices.

Discussion

The reduction in knotweed throughout the lower Cedar River basin is substantial, and preventing reinfestation requires continued treatment. SiA is an ongoing effort that effectively engages private property owners to eradicate knotweed and other invasive species and replant riparian habitat, as well as teaches private property owners how to be long-term stewards of this habitat. The proposal requested three years of implementation funding, and the funding recommendation reflects the scalable nature of the proposal and the desire of the Subcommittee to fund other priorities in this grant round.

Recommend \$301,025 in SRFB and PSAR funds (90% of request, with \$53,499 match)

2. Riverbend Levee Setback/Removal Preliminary Design (Plan #: C220)

King County

In 2012, King County purchased the 18.6 acre parcel underlying the Riverbend Mobile Home Park along the Cedar River for habitat restoration and flood risk reduction (including \$1.05 million in WRIA 8 grant funds). Setting back or removing existing levees will allow for restoration of natural floodplain functions and will provide critical off-channel habitat for Chinook. This grant will explore restoration options and select a preferred alternative for reducing channel confinement and reconnecting the river and floodplain.

Discussion

Large-scale floodplain reconnection projects are among the most important actions for salmon recovery, and this project has the potential to offer significant benefits due to its location in the watershed and its connection to restored and protected areas upstream and downstream. Even though the mobile home park tenant relocation process is still years away from being completed, initiating the design process now will position this project well for future regional funding requests.

Recommend \$255,000 in PSAR funds (100% of request)

3. Willow Creek Daylighting Preliminary Design (Plan #: M233)

City of Edmonds

The City of Edmonds seeks funding to initiate design of the Willow Creek Daylighting project, which is intended to restore tidal inflow and improve fish passage into Edmonds Marsh. When implemented, this project will improve access to 28 acres of estuarine marsh habitat, providing a juvenile Chinook rearing habitat type that is rare in central Puget Sound due to human modification of the shoreline environment. Edmonds Marsh is the only remaining salt marsh along the WRIA 8 nearshore.

Discussion

This project is technically complex, and the Subcommittee provided extensive feedback to the sponsor during the 2013 SRFB/PSAR grant round and recommended a revised scope focused on additional investigation of outstanding technical questions prior to initiating design. The information developed in response to previous feedback and the refinements to the project approach have strengthened the overall outlook for successful restoration.

The Subcommittee agreed that this is an important and unique restoration opportunity along the WRIA 8 nearshore that offers the potential to benefit Chinook populations from numerous WRIAs. Funding for this grant will build on the feasibility work already completed and is appropriately sequenced in the context of the overall restoration of Edmonds Marsh.

Recommend \$157,331 in SRFB funds (100% of request)

4. Squire's Landing Restoration Preliminary Design (Plan #: N335)

Sno-King Watershed Council

Sno-King Watershed Council seeks funding to complete preliminary design for the Squire's Landing Park Restoration Project. Squire's Landing is a 42-acre park located in the City of Kenmore that borders the Sammamish River and through which flows Swamp Creek. This proposal seeks to update and refine conceptual drawings of a preferred restoration alternative developed in 2010, specifically including modification of the Swamp Creek channel, installation of large wood within the channel, creation of wetland habitat, and riparian restoration.

Discussion

The Subcommittee expressed concern with two primary components of the Squire's Landing application—the focus of the proposed scope and the level of support within the City of Kenmore for eventual implementation and maintenance of the future restoration project. Regarding the scope, the Subcommittee discussed that the present focus should be limited to comprehensive riparian restoration rather than the heavily engineered approach proposed. The project location is identified as Tier 1 in the WRIA 8 Plan due to its importance as a potential juvenile rearing area, and the Subcommittee commented that the greatest gains for juveniles could be achieved through intensive replanting of the riparian zone and the introduction of small amounts of instream structure near the Swamp Creek – Sammamish River confluence.

The Subcommittee's second primary concern related to City of Kenmore support for the project. Squire's Landing Park is a city-owned park property, and the City developed a park master plan in 2010. Kenmore City Council did not adopt the park master plan, and while the grant application contained a letter of support from the City Manager, the lack of City Council support for the master plan raised questions about the level of commitment among city government to providing funding for future implementation and maintenance.

Due to the stated concerns, the Subcommittee recommended the sponsor revise the project scope to focus design on riparian restoration and light amounts of instream structure at the downstream end of Swamp Creek near the Sammamish River confluence. Additionally, the Subcommittee wants to see formal documentation from Kenmore City Council or other appropriate parties within city government that they are supportive of the initial phase of work being proposed and will preserve any work implemented through the current design process in future development of the park. Documentation should be provided prior to the development of a grant agreement with the Recreation and Conservation Office. Furthermore, the Subcommittee recommended check-ins with the WRIA 8 Technical Committee as draft design deliverables are produced to ensure the project is developing in a way that is consistent with the objectives of the WRIA 8 Plan.

Recommend \$70,000 in SRFB funds (35% of request)

PSAR Large Capital Project Review – Evans Creek Relocation (N432A)

City of Redmond

Following the direction of the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council and the Puget Sound Partnership for lead entities to evaluate large capital projects for a 2015 – 2017 PSAR legislative funding request as part of the 2014 SRFB grant round, the WRIA 8 Project Subcommittee considered a proposal from the City of Redmond to fund construction of the Evans Creek Relocation Project.

This project will return a ditched reach of Evans Creek to its historic location in an adjacent open space, in turn enhancing in-stream and riparian habitat for Chinook and Coho salmon. Presently, Reach 2 of Evans Creek is impacted by industrial development with a constricted channel, isolated floodplain, simplified in-stream habitat and very limited buffers. The project will build upon work completed in 2013 by the Washington Department of Transportation, who constructed the lower 1,100 feet of this project as part of their 32-acre Evans Creek mitigation site. Redmond's project will construct 3,200 feet of creek, completely restore over 10 acres of riparian buffer, and enhance another 12 acres of existing wooded wetland near the channel. WRIA 8 funded a portion of the project design in 2013 (\$228,300).

Discussion

Evans Creek is a Tier 2 sub-basin in the WRIA 8 Plan, but this project is a high priority and has the potential to offer significant benefit to Bear Creek Chinook (a Tier 1 sub-basin) for

juvenile rearing. The present condition of this reach of Evans Creek is highly degraded, and the project offers an opportunity to relocate the channel into an area where it can function more naturally and does not face the continued threats posed by heavy industrial activity. This project was not ranked by the Subcommittee since there were no other candidates for PSAR large capital project funding and since ranking will occur at the regional level, but the Subcommittee agreed this is a solid candidate to put forth for regional consideration.

Conclusion

All of the projects recommended for funding in the 2014 grant round are in Tier 1 areas, and three of the four will build on work in progress to restore important habitat in some of the highest priority areas for Chinook salmon recovery in WRIA 8. The Cedar River Stewardship-in-Action proposal will get boots on the ground to control invasive plants on private property and replant the riparian corridor of the Cedar River with native species. The Riverbend, Willow Creek, and Squire's Landing proposals are all in the design phase, and in the case of Riverbend and Willow Creek, advancing the designs will set the stage for large-scale restoration projects in high priority locations. The restoration proposed for Squire's Landing Park offers potential juvenile rearing habitat for outmigrating Sammamish River Chinook, and due to the significantly modified nature of the Sammamish River, this is a unique opportunity for restoration in this important migratory area. Finally, the Evans Creek PSAR large capital project proposal, while not competing directly for WRIA 8 grant funds, is a valuable restoration opportunity that will provide significant benefit to juvenile Chinook in the greater Bear Creek system.