

Considering Lake Sammamish kokanee recovery in WRIA 8 Chinook recovery implementation

Background

The WRIA 8 Chinook Salmon Conservation Plan (Plan) is a chapter of the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Plan, which is focused on recovering Chinook salmon listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. In developing the Plan, the WRIA 8 Steering Committee recognized that recovery actions for Chinook inherently benefit habitat needs for multiple species, including Lake Sammamish kokanee. Two projects that benefit both Chinook and kokanee were identified and included in the WRIA 8 Plan 10-Year Start List.

The current WRIA 8 interlocal agreement focuses on implementing the WRIA 8 Plan for Chinook salmon recovery, and does not specifically address Lake Sammamish kokanee recovery. At the September 18, 2014, WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council (SRC) meeting, a suggestion was made for the SRC to consider including recognition of kokanee recovery in the draft 2016-2025 WRIA 8 interlocal agreement.

The SRC has previously considered if and how to align with the Lake Sammamish kokanee recovery effort. Given the limited resources available for Chinook implementation, resulting in WRIA 8 having completed just 21% of the projects on the Plan's 10-Year Start List in the first eight years of implementation, the SRC's position to date has been to maintain the focus on recovering threatened Chinook, while recognizing the importance of recovering kokanee and supporting actions that benefit both species. To this end, in 2009 WRIA 8 provided a King Conservation District grant to King County to identify and implement projects that benefit Chinook and kokanee. This work was done under the oversight of the Kokanee Work Group (KWG), which was formed in 2007 to identify the causes for the decline of kokanee in Lake Sammamish and to implement key actions to reverse the decline. The KWG is an ad hoc collaborative group comprised of interested watershed residents, the five local governments in the Lake Sammamish watershed (all are also WRIA 8 ILA partners), Snoqualmie Tribe, state and federal agencies, and business and community groups. The KWG used the 2009 WRIA 8 grant to create a list of near-term priority projects to recover kokanee that also benefit Chinook. Based on this list, WRIA 8 has provided six additional grants to projects identified to benefit both kokanee and Chinook. King County has staffed the KWG to date and is not seeking to reduce its allocation of resources or commitment to the effort.

Discussion

WRIA 8 coordinates with kokanee recovery efforts to advance priority projects and programs that benefit both Chinook and kokanee. Does the WRIA 8 SRC want to specifically address kokanee recovery in the draft 2016-2025 WRIA 8 ILA? If so, how?

Below for SRC consideration is a status quo option describing how WRIA 8 currently addresses kokanee recovery, as well as three options for the SRC to consider that would increase WRIA 8’s acknowledgement of kokanee recovery and/or increase the WRIA 8 scope and mission to include kokanee recovery:

Options	Pros/Cons for Consideration
<p>Option 1 – Status Quo: Do not directly reference Lake Sammamish kokanee recovery in the draft 2016-2025 WRIA 8 ILA. Continue coordinating with the Kokanee Work Group to identify and implement projects that benefit both Chinook and kokanee, as well as seek opportunities to advance overlapping programmatic priorities.</p>	<p><u>Pros:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains focus on the Endangered Species Act listing of threatened Chinook as WRIA 8’s priority. • Continues coordination between WRIA 8 and Kokanee Work Group on project and program implementation where priorities overlap. <p><u>Cons:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not explicitly acknowledge importance of kokanee recovery in WRIA 8, and the opportunities to coordinate efforts remain limited to instances where priorities align (e.g., multiple-benefit projects, outreach and education programs, etc.).
<p>Option 2: Maintain status quo coordination between WRIA 8 and Kokanee Work Group, and include a WHEREAS statement in the draft 2016-2025 WRIA 8 ILA that recognizes efforts in the watershed to protect and restore habitat for multiple species, specifically including Lake Sammamish kokanee, and states WRIA 8 will seek opportunities to coordinate with these other efforts where priorities align.</p>	<p><u>Pros:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continues coordination between WRIA 8 and Kokanee Work Group on project and program implementation where priorities overlap. • Explicitly acknowledges kokanee recovery efforts • Recognizes existing efforts to coordinate priorities between WRIA 8 and Kokanee Work Group, including WRIA 8’s Salmon SEEson program and the emerging opportunity to participate in shaping implementation of

	<p>the newly designated federal Lake Sammamish Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership, specifically to advance common salmon recovery outreach and education priorities/messaging in the watershed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverages additional resources available for kokanee recovery to help advance WRIA 8 priorities. <p><u>Cons:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not explicitly incorporate kokanee recovery as a priority into WRIA 8 scope/mission.
<p>Option 3: Add Lake Sammamish kokanee recovery as part of WRIA 8’s scope/mission in a renewed 2016-2025 WRIA 8 ILA with existing ILA cost-share resources.</p>	<p><u>Pros:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absorbs kokanee recovery as a priority into the functional WRIA 8 regional coordination structure. • Provides opportunity to bring in funding from other sources that do not address Chinook. <p><u>Cons:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deflects efforts from Endangered Species Act-driven focus. • No additional staffing or capacity resources to accompany expanded scope - dilutes limited capacity resources available for Chinook recovery. • No additional capital resources directly allocated for kokanee project implementation, and existing capital funding sources may not fund Kokanee implementation. • Potentially dilutes limited capital resources for Chinook recovery. • WRIA 8 Plan does not contain a technical/scientific foundation for Kokanee recovery, which would form the basis for identifying and prioritizing recovery actions.

<p>Option 4: Add Lake Sammamish kokanee recovery as part of WRIA 8’s scope/mission in a renewed 2016-2025 WRIA 8 ILA and increase annual WRIA 8 cost share to provide staffing/capacity resources to cover additional scope.</p>	<p><u>Pros:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absorbs kokanee recovery as a priority into the functional WRIA 8 regional coordination structure. • Provides staffing/capacity resources to cover additional scope/mission <p><u>Cons:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deflects efforts from ESA-driven focus. • No additional capital resources directly allocated for kokanee project implementation, and existing capital funding sources may not fund Kokanee implementation. • Potentially dilutes limited capital resources for Chinook recovery. • WRIA 8 Plan does not contain a technical/scientific foundation for Kokanee recovery, which would form the basis for identifying and prioritizing recovery actions.
<p>Additional Consideration: As part of any of the above options, the SRC could also consider encouraging the coalition of jurisdictions and other entities involved in kokanee recovery to explore creating a sub-ILA to generate additional staffing/funding/resources to support kokanee specific recovery actions.</p>	<p><u>Pros:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engages entities involved in kokanee recovery to be responsible for generating resources to support the effort. <p><u>Cons:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires identifying staff/capacity resources to coordinate exploring the creation of a sub-ILA.