WRIA 8 Update and Committee Reports

March 19, 2015

- **Puget Sound Regional Update –** The **Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council** (PS SRC) last met on January 22. Agenda topics included approving the process and policy for updating watershed three-year work plans, an update on Puget Sound salmon recovery legislative priorities, presentation on a recent study of contaminants in juvenile salmon, discussion of regional technical support needs, and a presentation on progress to identify common regional marine and freshwater indicators for monitoring and adaptive management. The PS SRC next meets on April 2, and Andy Rheaume, WRIA 8 Vice Chair and Bothell Councilmember, and Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz plan to attend.

  The **South Central Action Area Caucus** has met on February 9 SRC meeting. Agenda topics included discussion of a new funding model for Environmental Protection Agency funding for Puget Sound recovery priorities, 2015 Caucus Group work plan and meeting schedule, and member legislative priorities. WRIA 8 does not currently have a SRC member representative on the Caucus Group. The Caucus Group meets roughly bi-monthly. Anyone interested in representing WRIA 8 on the Caucus Group should let Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz know. The next Caucus Group meeting is on May 13.

- **2015 Legislative Priorities update –** On January 23, the letter from the WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council was distributed to all 42 state legislators in the watershed conveying WRIA 8's state priorities for salmon recovery. The State House of Representatives is expected to release its capital budget at end of March, which will be the first indication of how well salmon recovery priorities are reflected in the budget. The State Senate will follow with their budget, and then the two houses will work with each other and the Governor's Office to produce a final budget before the session ends on April 26. As in years past, the legislature may need an additional "special session" to finalize the budget, which would delay when we will know what capital funding is available for projects in the 2015 WRIA 8 grant round. Now is a good time for WRIA 8 partners to continue to support the state salmon recovery priorities. Puget Sound Partnership is working with the state's Congressional members of the Congressional Puget Sound Caucus to identify topics for a Puget Sound Day in Washington, D.C. on March 25. WRIA 8 staff participated in a planning call to support the Ballard Locks facility improvements as a priority topic to include as part of the messaging for this event.

- **Ballard Locks stakeholder meeting –** On March 4 the Army Corps of Engineers hosted a Ballard Locks stakeholder meeting to reach out to various groups with an interest in the operation of the Locks, in order to share the status of the Locks facility, the critical improvement needs, and build the constituency of interested groups to support the Corps' efforts to implement the improvement projects. The meeting included substantial discussion of possible partnering opportunities, including public-private partnerships to support some of the important improvement projects. WRIA 8 has partnered with the Corps in the past to share the costs of the smolt flumes that were installed to improve juvenile salmon getting through the Locks on their way to Puget Sound. WRIA 8 is currently supporting King County in

partnering with the Corps to use the fish in/fish out grant as match for Corps funding to install additional pit tag readers at the Locks to improve salmon counts. WRIA 8 staff, partner organizations, and some SRC members attended the meeting, in addition to marine industry representatives and Congressional staff. It was a good first step in building a broader coalition supporting the Corps to implement priority improvements, and to advocate Congress and Corps Headquarters to allocate the necessary funding. The Corps indicated they plan to host additional stakeholder meetings in the future, and probably at least one or two per year.

- **Letter of support for City of Bothell capital budget request to acquire Wayne Public Golf Course –** The City of Bothell submitted a state capital budget request for $5 million to acquire a portion of the Wayne Public Golf Course along the Sammamish River in Bothell. Bothell and its community partners requested a letter of support from WRIA 8. In order to submit a letter in a timely way and in accordance with WRIA 8 correspondence policy for sending letters between Salmon Recovery Council meetings, the WRIA 8 Management Committee reviewed and approved sending letters on behalf of the Salmon Recovery Council to the leadership of the House Capital Budget Committee and the Senate Ways and Means Committee (see letters in meeting packet). Acquisition of the Wayne Golf Course is a rare opportunity to protect substantial acreage in a primarily urban area, and protection would provide a significant opportunity to implement the restoration priorities identified in the WRIA 8 Plan for this reach of the river on a large scale.

- **Addressing use of mitigation funding to implement salmon habitat restoration projects –** Recently, the Muckleshoot Tribe submitted comments to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) regarding King County's proposed mitigation project in the Elliott Bridge Reach of the Cedar River. The Washington State Department of Transportation used the King County In-Lieu Fee Mitigation Program to identify the Elliott Bridge Reach project as a site to secure mitigation credits for a portion of the unavoidable impacts to wetlands and aquatic areas associated with the State Route 520 Bridge Replacement Project. The Muckleshoot Tribe's comments expressed concern that this mitigation project should not count towards progress to restore salmon habitat in WRIA 8, and requested WRIA 8 acknowledge that mitigation-funded projects do not count towards recovery goals in this watershed and that this project be removed from the WRIA 8 Plan.

  WRIA 8 staff submitted a letter to address the Muckleshoot Tribe's comments in the near-term and enable the County to move forward with project construction this summer (see letter in meeting packet). The letter acknowledges the concern about counting mitigation towards restoration progress, clarifies that a restoration project at the Elliot Bridge Reach site is not in the WRIA 8 Plan and therefore will not be part of any reporting on habitat restoration progress, and commits to presenting the topic to the WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council at an upcoming meeting to seek their input and guidance on the appropriate way to address this policy issue in the update to the WRIA 8 Plan, which is intended to commence in late 2015.

- **Presentations to WRIA 8 partner local governments –** To provide WRIA 8 partners with background and information as they review the draft WRIA 8 interlocal agreement (ILA),

Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz has made several presentations to local government partner councils. As of this meeting, Jason has presented to 11 partner councils. The presentations have gone well, and the councils have been very interested in the information, supportive of the effort and objectives, and asked good questions about implementation progress, priorities, and the outlook moving forward. Jason has several more presentations scheduled through early May, and is working to schedule others. Partner local governments will review and provide feedback on the draft ILA to WRIA 8 staff by the May 21 SRC meeting. WRIA 8 staff will work with partners to address and incorporate feedback into a proposed final ILA for SRC consideration at the July 16 SRC meeting, which, if approved, will be available for partners to sign between July and December.

- **2015 Grant Round –** In the 2015 grant cycle, we expect to have approximately $3,476,000 available to allocate to priority salmon recovery actions within WRIA 8. This includes funding from the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB – projected to be $433,356), the Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration Fund (PSAR – projected to be $1,457,542) and the King County Flood Control District's Cooperative Watershed Management Grant Program (CWM – $1,585,227). WRIA 8 staff is currently working with sponsors on the development of grant applications and is preparing for site visits and proposal presentations with the WRIA 8 Project Subcommittee. Grant pre-applications for SRFB and PSAR are due on April 1, with final applications due on August 14. Final applications for CWM are due on April 3. The Project Subcommittee will conduct site visits, review and score applications, and develop funding recommendations for both programs in late April/early May. The Subcommittee's funding recommendations will be presented to the Salmon Recovery Council at the May 21st meeting.

- **Stream habitat status and trends grant report –** The WRIA 8 wadeable stream status and trends monitoring project is nearing completion. The final report has undergone technical review and the project team is incorporating review comments into the final draft. A presentation to the Technical Committee and SRC will be forthcoming.

- **Cedar River Corridor Plan Advisory Committee –** The first meeting of the Cedar River Corridor Plan Advisory Committee was held on February 24. Agenda topics included a an overview and discussion of the history of human activity in the Cedar River, highlighting efforts to reduce flood risk and restore salmon habitat, the purpose and role of the Advisory Committee, the various management plans focusing on the Cedar (including the WRIA 8 Plan), and physical characteristics of and human uses in the Cedar River basin. Bellevue Councilmember John Stokes represents WRIA 8 on the Committee, and Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz serves as the WRIA 8 alternate. This planning effort is being coordinated by the King County Flood Control District, and is intended to develop an integrated plan for managing flood risk, habitat restoration and recreational use along the Cedar River.

- **Green Shorelines outreach –** After reviewing the Green Shorelines website for currency, staff are working to fix broken links, make other updates, and add two new blog posts – one on Seattle's Lower Mapes Creek restoration project and one about the South Lake Washington

shorelines restoration project. SRC members may be interested in the statistics for visits to the website in 2014 (public use only) at http://dnr-web.metrokc.gov/stats/analytics/misc/2014-greenshorelines.pdf (Thanks to King County's Fred Bentler for this info!) With help from a local realtor, we sent "It's a Shore Thing" postcards to 144 homeowners who bought lakefront property in 2014, hoping to "drive" them to the website and encourage fish-friendly practices on their new shoreline property. Polly Freeman emailed the Green Shorelines Steering Committee to update them and solicit input on other ideas for promoting Green Shorelines materials and practices.

- **Lake Sammamish kokanee fry release event –** The annual Lake Sammamish kokanee fry release event is scheduled for Friday, April 24th from Noon-2:00, at the Hans Jensen area of Lake Sammamish State Park, along Laughing Jacobs Creek in Issaquah (see event flyer in meeting packet). Please let Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz know if you are interested in attending.

- **WRIA 8 E-news –** The third WRIA 8 e-newsletter was published on February 19, leading off with information on the final SRFB and PSAR grants that were approved in December. Other topics covered were the recently-completed South Lake Washington shoreline restoration project, the cool new story map about WRIA 8, upcoming grant opportunities and more. Check out the February newsletter at http://www.govlink.org/watersheds/8/news/ and please send any story ideas for the mid-April e-news to Polly Freeman (polly.freeman@kingcounty.gov) by March 30.

WRIA 8 Committee Reports

- **WRIA 8 Technical Committee –** The Technical Committee met on February 4 and March 4. Agenda items included meeting with the Puget Sound Recovery Implementation Technical Team (RITT) representative to WRIA 8 to discuss the RITT review of our Adaptive Management planning process (Miradi Phase I) and 3-Year Work Plan (review was very positive); updates to the 2015 3-Year Work Plan projects list; discussion with Corps of Engineers biologists on opportunities to re-design the smolt flumes and PIT tag readers at the Chittenden Locks; and initial discussions on upcoming technical needs for supporting the WRIA 8 Chinook Conservation Plan update.

- **WRIA 8 Implementation Committee –** The Implementation Committee met on February 3 and March 3. Meeting agenda topics included updates on legislative priorities, discussion of 2015 committee work priorities, opportunities to better align stormwater management and salmon recovery, budget principles and terms for the memorandum of understanding between the SRC and King County as WRIA 8 Service Provider, the draft 2016 WRIA 8 budget and work plan, and review of agenda topics for the March 19 SRC meeting. The Committee next meets on April 7, 2015.