

WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council Meeting Notes

Department of Ecology Northwest Regional Office

January 19, 2017 3:00-5:15 p.m.

Members/Jurisdictional Staff Alternates Present		
#	Name	Affiliation
1.	Mayor Andy Rheume, Chair	City of Bothell
2.	David Bain	Sno-King Watershed Council
3.	Councilmember (CM) Eileen Barber	City of Issaquah
4.	Tor Bell	Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust
5.	CM Diane Buckshnis	City of Edmonds
6.	Bea Covington	King Conservation District
7.	Don Davidson	Citizen At Large
8.	CM Bruce Dodds	City of Clyde Hill
9.	Nancy Eklund	The Boeing Company
10.	CM Ted Frantz	Town of Hunts Point
11.	Noel Gilbrough	Mid-Sound Fisheries Enhancement Group (MSFEG)
12.	Mike Grady	NOAA Fisheries
13.	Garrett Holbrook	King County
14.	Kathy Minsch	City of Seattle
15.	CM Hank Myers	City of Redmond
16.	Joan Nolan	WA Department of Ecology
17.	Susan O'Neil	Long Live the Kings
18.	Deputy Mayor Dana Parnello	City of Maple Valley
19.	CM Mark Phillips	City of Lake Forest Park
20.	Stewart Reinbold	WA Department of Fish & Wildlife
21.	CM Jesse Salomon	City of Shoreline
22.	Mayor Pro Tem Carl Scandella	Town of Yarrow Point
23.	Gary Smith	Water Tenders
24.	Frank Urabeck	Cedar River Council
25.	Deputy Mayor Allen Van Ness	City of Kenmore
Additional Alternates Present		
26.	Jeanette Dorner	MSFEG
Others Present		
27.	Laura Blackmore	Puget Sound Partnership
28.	Brianna Bland	Herrera
29.	Gretchen Glaub	Snohomish County
30.	Janne Kaje	King County
31.	Josh Kubo	King County
32.	Dr. Tara Luckie	Environmental Science Center (ESC)
33.	Kit Paulsen	City of Bellevue
34.	Alexa Ramos	Snohomish County
35.	Larry Reymann	ESC
36.	Jerallyn Roetemeyer	City of Redmond
37.	Ron Straka	City of Renton
38.	Linda Grob	WRIA 8 Team
39.	Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz	WRIA 8 Team
40.	Scott Stolnack	WRIA 8 Team
41.	Jason Wilkinson	WRIA 8 Team

WRIA 8 SRC Meeting Notes

January 19, 2017

Chair Andy Rheume opened the Salmon Recovery Council (SRC) meeting, inviting all attendees to introduce themselves.

1. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

2. Proposal to Restructure Puget Sound Local Integrating Organization Functions at Watershed Scale

Andy Rheume explained that Puget Sound Partnership (PSP) created local integrating organizations (LIOs) in 2009 to help engage local entities in Puget Sound recovery. WRIA 8 is a member of the South Central Caucus LIO, which over time has become process-intensive and has not helped significantly advance implementation or resulted in much additional funding for recovery actions. He introduced Fred Jarrett, Senior Deputy King County Executive and South Central LIO Chair, to present a proposal for potentially restructuring the LIOs to improve effectiveness in achieving meaningful progress on implementation.

Fred Jarrett said he was involved in putting together PSP during his time in the Legislature. The first iteration of PSP was organized around “Action Areas” instead of by watershed because back then it was thought money was the biggest issue, not organizational coordination. Over the last year and half the LIO has done a lot of planning and process to identify near term actions (NTAs) instead of doing real implementation. Fred said the idea to restructure LIOs around watershed boundaries is based on the notion that the WRIAs can do the work better and be more effective and efficient with funding. He said he would like SRC feedback today on this proposal or ideas sent to him later. Other WRIAs he has presented to have generally been positive about the concept of reorganization.

Discussion:

- Hank Myers said his only concern is that the WRIA 8 team and great technical staff will get bigger and become less dedicated as a result of this proposal. Fred Jarrett said that is why they are looking at restructuring the LIO, which may mean being able to send more money to WRIAs.
- Mark Phillips questioned the structure of PSP, and why Fred Jarrett is raising the issue at the SRC. Fred explained that his role is as Chair of the South Central LIO, which he has done for seven years, and as part of that role he represents the LIO at the Ecosystem Coordination Board (ECB).
- Diane Buckshnis agreed with the concern about increasing size and adding other priorities and members to WRIA 8. Fred Jarrett said that’s not what he’s suggesting. He said the basic issue is there is a group out there – the LIO – doing what the WRIA is doing, but not doing it as well.
- Don Davidson asked if the state legislature is looking at streamlining the process. He suggested they look at getting rid of all the layers that prevent us from getting work on the ground. Fred Jarrett reported there is a multiplicity of fragmented organizations working on cleaning up Puget Sound. Restructuring LIO functions along watershed boundaries is not creating another regulatory body or layer of government, but establishing a way to have all the agencies that are responsible in some way integrate their work. PSP is close to having strategies that are actionable now. He said they have to figure out how they can provide value to the cities so they can have a part in cleaning up Puget Sound (roads, stormwater, etc.). He is proposing we take advantage of the culture of watersheds to do that work.
- Mike Grady said he completely agreed with the proposal, calling it a way for Fred Jarrett to use a LEAN process improvement approach. Mike commented that we have an uncanny way to turn great ideas into meetings. The issue is consistency, and right now we have multiple groups doing

WRIA 8 SRC Meeting Notes

January 19, 2017

the same thing. He noted that if we treat stormwater and eliminate armoring and pile driving, we will clean up Puget Sound.

- Andy Rheaume reported that he has represented the Sound Cities Association on the South Central LIO, as one of the few electeds at the table. WRIA 8 has the biggest stormwater impact on Puget Sound. WRIA 8 has an ILA to fund staff, and he asked if we take on the LIO work with more meetings, where will the funding come from. He commented that there's no "there" there without additional resources for coordination and implementation. Elected officials are at the table to make funding decisions. PSP currently updates the Puget Sound Action Agenda every two years, but if it became every four years it would be way more palatable and relieve some of the process fatigue.
- Fred Jarrett responded that the legislature is working reducing the Action Agenda update schedule, but some environmental groups want to keep to every two years. As far as funding goes, the state provides some money and a contract to do LIO work, and he assumes the WRIA would negotiate a contract as well. He suggested that we need to look at funding differently. Fred said we should assume that WRIA 8 would directly get the bulk of funding for projects that currently goes to the LIO area, which could expand the amount of projects WRIA 8 would be able and want to do.
- David Bain remarked that another function of LIOs related to policy, which he thinks aligns well with WRIA 8's work. Also, making the LIO watershed-based makes sense for projects. Fred Jarrett noted that the LIOs have no role in securing funding for projects. There will still be Puget Sound-wide work that PSP will do, but at the local level he thinks the WRIAs do implementation better.
- Hank Myers said he was looking for a little more specification regarding what the additional requirements and return would be if we accept this proposal. Fred Jarrett explained that the federal government and the state haven't decided who makes decisions for Puget Sound. The basic process regardless of the lead agency is putting together the technical panel of experts to rate projects. The LIO spent no time ranking projects and a lot of time ranking NTAs. LIOs had \$250,000 over the last two years to do this work and he thinks that is too low.
- Hank Myers commented that our WRIA is mostly inland from Puget Sound, and most people here face Lake Washington and not Puget Sound. Fred Jarrett said there are things that are Puget Sound water body-based and PSP has to do those, but locally stormwater and freshwater habitat are huge issues.
- Jesse Solomon said he supports looking into this restructuring option.
- Andy Rheaume inquired if anyone has concerns about restructuring and/or is not interested. There were no objections, but Council members wanted more information as the conversation evolves.
- Laura Blackmore said she works as the Partner Engagement Director at PSP and manages coordination of the LIOs. She agreed with the approach Fred is proposing.

Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz (Jason MK), Salmon Recovery Manager, thanked everyone for their comments. He noted this will not be a quick decision and will require more discussion. He said he is also concerned about capacity and funding to take on additional work load, because existing WRIA 8 staff can't take it on. He will stay engaged in the South Central LIO and pass on more details as the conversation develops.

3. Approval of Meeting Notes for November 17, 2016

<p><i>The Salmon Recovery Council unanimously approved the meeting notes for the November 17, 2016 meeting.</i></p>

WRIA 8 SRC Meeting Notes

January 19, 2017

4. Updates & Announcements

General Announcements:

Jason MK requested that SRC members review the Updates & Announcements handout, and he highlighted the following items:

▪ **Legislative Priorities Update –**

- **Governor’s Budget Summary:** The Governor’s budget was released on December 14. None of WRIA 8’s capital budget priorities are proposed for full funding. This table summarizes how WRIA 8 capital budget priorities fared:

Program	Agency Request / WRIA 8 Supporting	Governor’s Budget
Salmon Recovery (SRFB-State)	\$55,300,000	\$30,000,000
Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR)	\$80,000,000	\$50,000,000
Floodplains by Design	\$70,000,000	\$20,300,000
Lead Entity	\$907,000	\$907,000

Jason MK said Floodplains by Design funding was seriously less than we wanted, and our Riverbend project ranked seventh on the funding list, which would require Floodplains by Design program to be funded at just over \$36 million to receive funding. On the PSAR side, the money proposed would support the WRIA 8 grant round and implementation of a few large regionally significant projects outside WRIA 8. He said we don’t have a project on the PSAR Large Capacity list now, but he is sure we will in the future.

- **WRIA 8 Letter to State Legislators Highlighting Legislative Priorities:** Letters from the SRC to 51 legislators in the watershed and leadership of key House and Senate committees went out January 18, 2017. A copy of the letter is included in the meeting packet. Jason MK said we heard from partners down in Olympia that it’s a tough time for natural resources funding, and legislators are looking at all funding to fill the education funding gap.
- **Addition of Washington Wild Futures Budget Request:** The WRIA 8 state legislative priorities have been updated to include the Washington’s Wild Futures request of \$2.72 million in the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife’s (WDFW) budget to “increase fishing opportunities”. This request includes \$290,700 for Lake Washington sockeye and Chinook conservation that will continue monitoring and assessment. The request will provide capacity for continuing to fund the predation study in Lake Washington.
 - Hank Myers inquired if we asked for what we needed or greater than what we usually get, and if we are to the point of slashing our wrists. Jason MK said not yet, and that the Governor’s budget is a mixed bag.
 - Jeanette Dorner, new Executive Director, Mid-Sound Fisheries Enhancement Group, thanked WRIA 8 for putting Washington’s Wild Futures budget request in its legislative priorities. Mid-Sound is in danger of losing funding, and she said she just talked to our budget person in Olympia who said it is a really tough time for natural resource funding.
- **WRIA 8 2017 Grant Round –** The announcement was emailed January 9, 2017, and the deadline to submit is March 8 for Cooperative Watershed Management (CWM) funding, and March 17 for Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB). We have roughly \$2.3 million in CWM and roughly \$700,000 in SRFB to allocate. WRIA 8 will host a Grant Information Workshop for project sponsors on January 25, 2017, 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM, King Street Center, Seattle.
- **State of Salmon in Watersheds Report –** On January 5, the Governor released the biannual 2016 State of Salmon in Watersheds report. The report, which is online, provides a big picture overview of salmon recovery in the state.

WRIA 8 SRC Meeting Notes

January 19, 2017

- **2017 State Salmon Recovery Conference** – The biannual conference is April 25 to 27, in Wenatchee. Jason MK said this is a good conference, WRIA 8 staff are going, and he encouraged others to attend. Susan O’Neil reported that the early bird reservation amount is \$260 and we are looking for other sponsors.
- **Salmon SEEson Tenth Year Completed** – Thousands of people visited Salmon SEEson sites this fall at 14 locations in WRIAs 8 and 9. The website featured photos and video of returning salmon spotted around the county, and was viewed by 38,000 people.

5. WRIA 8 Plan Update Status

Scott Stolnack, Technical Coordinator, reported that in the last few months the elements of the WRIA 8 Chinook Conservation Plan (Plan) update have started to converge. He outlined the steps the Plan update has taken so far:

1. Identify species and habitats we care about, and the things that will bring the biggest benefit to salmon recovery in the watershed (e.g., reconnecting floodplains in the Cedar; fish passage at the Locks, etc.). He said we have to focus in on what’s important (life stage, timing, and geography).
2. Identify human impacts and pressures and rank them.
3. Set clear quantitative goals for the species and habitat. The 2005 Plan didn’t have habitat goals, and for the update we are focusing on what we can realistically be accomplished in the next 10 years while also setting longer-term goals.
4. Develop strategies to reduce human impacts and reach our goals. The WRIA 8 Technical Committee (TC), Implementation Committee (IC), and outreach folks, have all been working on this. Some examples of goals are setting back levees on the Cedar to reconnect floodplains, and putting wood back in the rivers where appropriate.

Scott described some of the key takeaways so far:

- The pace of habitat restoration since 2005 is too slow.
- The top pressures in the watershed are: the Locks (ship canal is too warm in late summer/fall; Locks are challenging for juveniles to navigate); land conversion (connections to stormwater, impervious surfaces, water temperature, etc.); levees on the Cedar River (floodplains and climate change issues); and shoreline armoring on our streams, lakes, and the Ship Canal.
- The most risk is seen at the juvenile life stage; river floodplains are key for Cedar survival; and migration through the lakes and Ship Canal appears to be especially treacherous for juveniles.

Susan O’Neil summarized how we started pulling these pieces together over the last few months, and are now at the point where we are tying things together through the strategies. Strategies are really where the work lies for updating the Plan, and about twenty WRIA 8 strategies were identified that are necessary for Chinook recovery. A simple diagram was created to explain the logic underpinning the strategies, and she went through the diagram for the strategy related to floodplain connectivity: Protect/restore flood plain connectivity (actions: Rainbow Bend levee setback; River Bend acquisition; Cedar River Salmon Journey; Stewardship in Action) which reduces the impacts of land conversion/development and levees/revetments; leading to an increase in channel complexity/braiding, formation of rearing habitat and refuge habitat; in order to reach the 2025 goal specific to the Cedar (example: 1,170 total acres of connected floodplain acres between Lake Washington and Landsburg Dam). This will benefit the juvenile stream rearing life stage.

Scott Stolnack concluded with “where we are going” in the Plan update process:

5. Identify actions to implement the strategies.
6. Complete the monitoring plan.

WRIA 8 SRC Meeting Notes

January 19, 2017

He then listed issues that still need to be addressed:

- Tier designations: The Land Cover Change Report and Status and Trends Report uncovered that a lot of our Tier 2 areas in urban growth areas are in danger of declining so that they no longer support even small numbers of Chinook. In some areas (May Creek) we are seeing more Chinook spawning, while in North and Kelsey Creeks we are seeing less.
- The Locks: We need to figure out how we can engage with the Corps on the issues of temperature and improving fish passage at the Locks facility.
- Hatchery issues: If we didn't have the hatchery some creeks wouldn't have fish, but in others creeks we have too much hatchery straying.
- Predation and light: these issues need more research, though we know enough to be able to start improving conditions for Chinook.

Discussion:

- Carl Scandella said staff have set up an attractive model but it is not without some flaws. He asked how we know the goal of 1,170 acres of floodplain is enough, and how it's a key factor. Scott Stolnack responded that all the monitoring done over the last ten years identifies floodplains on the Cedar River as a key bottleneck for Chinook in WRIA 8. We know we now have just over 1000 total acres of connected floodplain, and we reconnected 65 acres in the last decade. Restoring twice that amount in the next eight years is ambitious yet feasible. This goal is pushing us forward in the direction we need to go. The TC believes in creating goals that are possible and realistic given conditions in the watershed. We will course-correct as we go – recommending more or less restoration as the monitoring results come in.
- Ted Frantz asked about why the pace is so slow. Scott Stolnack replied that funding is always a challenge. Plus, properties are not always available. Projects like Rainbow Bend and Riverbend are once-in-a-generation opportunities. Wood in the river is important yet controversial.
- Frank Urabeck said a lot of this has to do with harvest management as well. He asked if staff are mindful and tracking the North of Falcon process and WDFW/tribal decisions to make sure enough fish are making it back into the system. Scott reported that the Harvest Management Plan is updated regularly and WRIA 8 provides comments. In fact, WRIA 8 fish populations are driving some of the decisions in the Harvest Management decision-making, and he agreed it is something we will continue to keep an eye on.
- Mike Grady said given we have a new administration coming in tomorrow, we should work on replacing the Locks and focus more on packaging and presenting a replacement. If the Locks fail during an earthquake the consequences would be major.
- Diane Buckshnis said we also have the human element, and she asked if it could be its own category. Jason MK said we are presenting a small group of issues today, and the human element will come out in the strategies and programmatic actions.
- Noel Gilbrough said he still thinks impervious surfaces need to be included as its own issue. Scott Stolnack said it is included under land conversion and solutions to pressures from people, not just habitat solutions.
- Larry Reymann, Environmental Science Center (ESC), said that for the people elements, Cedar River Salmon Journey and the ESC help build significant support in the people who will vote on this issue.
- Dana Parnello reported that King County's Regional Trails Policy requires large sections of pavement, which are great in some areas, but not appropriate in many others. He suggested that maybe County Parks could listen to local constituents and the science. CM Parnello said the WRIA 8 Plan can help local governments understand what's needed for salmon recovery and how to consider that in making land use decisions.

WRIA 8 SRC Meeting Notes

January 19, 2017

Jason MK went over the “what’s next” steps for the Plan update: complete work on habitat goals and strategies; update lists of project and programmatic actions (to be complete April 2017); and complete monitoring plan and final draft Plan update for SRC approval (July/September 2017). He said tier designations may change based on conditions, which is a policy call we will need to make upon receiving recommendations from the Technical and Implementation committees. He mentioned Jason Wilkinson is working with different government/non-profit staff to update the project list, which includes a lot of culling of projects that weren’t explained well in the Plan, identifying gaps, and adding new projects. Several sub-basin meetings have happened and more are scheduled. Jason MK said the monitoring plan is an important piece we’ve never had before, which will enable us to more regularly assess progress. A consultant is assisting the WRIA 8 team on drafting the Plan update, which should be available for an initial review at the July 2017 meeting.

Jason MK asked for input on two proposed options for SRC review/approval of Plan update elements:

1. Reviewing Joint TC/IC recommendations OR creating a new SRC subcommittee to review products and develop recommendations.
2. Reviewing/approving final draft products OR Reviewing/approving drafts of Plan update elements separately.

Discussion:

- Don Davidson suggested using the Management Committee (MC) to review draft products and recommendations.
- Carl Scandella said he doesn’t have a sense of what the products are. Jason MK said we are figuring that out now, but we are envisioning creating one-pagers for discussion or integrated projects.
- Diane Buckshnis commented that she thought it could work either way. She said the WRIA 8 technical expertise should look at products first, followed by a small group weighing in as needed.
- Andy Rheume said he thought we should get draft information for review instead of waiting for the final draft.
- Kathy Minsch said she thought a subgroup and not the MC would be the better group to review Plan update products.
- Dana Parnello suggested the hybrid option would work best, with the SRC weighing in on questions that arise.

Jason MK said he is not hearing strong support for creating a subgroup. He said we will plan to use the IC/TC process to develop joint committee recommendations for major elements of the Plan update for SRC review and approval.

6. Success Story: Bear Creek Juvenile Chinook Habitat Use Study

Josh Kubo, Environmental Scientist, King County, reported results from a recent juvenile salmon habitat use study in Bear Creek. He noted that Bear Creek supports six salmonid species and spawns the most Chinook in the Sammamish Watershed. King County undertook this study as part of the development of its Bear Creek Watershed Stormwater Plan. Study objectives included characterizing and mapping instream habitat types, sampling habitat types for juvenile salmonids, and evaluating juvenile salmon habitat use based on relative abundance. For study purposes, Bear Creek was broken down into three sub-basin areas: Cottage, Upper Bear, and Lower Bear, with three sample sites per sub-basin area.

WRIA 8 SRC Meeting Notes

January 19, 2017

Josh said using backpack electrofishing we caught a lot of cutthroat trout and also quite a few Chinook and coho. The majority of Chinook were found in the Cottage sub-basin. Bear Creek has two juvenile Chinook life stages: fry, which hatch in January, and larger parr, which leave two months later. A combination of genetic predisposition and food availability is determining when juveniles leave. In February to March in Cottage Lake Creek, fry are found in side-channels, backwaters, and runs. In April to June parr are seen in side-channels, pools, and glides. Juvenile Chinook are using a variety of habitat and need a suite of habitat types.

Josh reported that in recent years we are seeing an increase in juvenile productivity, which is great, but the proportion leaving earlier as fry is increasing. He noted that small fry have a lower survival in nearshore and ocean conditions, and one reason they are leaving early could be because of limited rearing habitat. Possible solutions include: supporting a suite of rearing habitats and increasing overall rearing habitat availability; well-functioning riverine, floodplain, and riparian processes; protecting properly functioning areas and restoring degraded ones; and spatial prioritization based on existing conditions.

Discussion:

- Gary Smith called it a great detailed analysis. He noted that Cottage Lake Creek is colder, and he asked how important that was for higher Chinook production. Josh Kubo said it is very important, and the largest number of Chinook spawning is in that creek.
- Hank Myers asked if the study looked at the benthic index to see if that's why fry are leaving earlier. Josh said will be incorporating benthic index into our fish data.

7. Next Meeting:

The next Salmon Recovery Council meeting is March 16, 2017, 3:00 – 5:15 p.m., Ecology's Northwest Regional Office in Bellevue.