

WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council Briefing Memo: Project List Update

May 18, 2017

The 2005 WRIA 8 Chinook Salmon Conservation Plan (2005 Plan) offered an extensive list of salmon habitat protection and restoration projects. Named the “Comprehensive List,” the range of actions include protecting habitat and natural processes that support salmon, restoring degraded habitat to create conditions more suitable for salmon, and acquiring land to facilitate future restoration projects.

As part of the 2017 update to the 2005 Plan, WRIA 8 convened groups of partners to re-evaluate the Comprehensive List, with a goal being to ensure the list reflects the current thinking about recovery needs in the watershed. Meetings focused on individual geographic areas and offered an opportunity for partners to update existing projects with new information, as well as suggest new project concepts that align with the suite of updated WRIA 8 recovery strategies.

The Comprehensive List in the 2005 Plan contains over 600 projects. In many cases, the projects lack specificity—they highlight types of actions that should occur across large geographic areas. Under the framework of the 2017 update, these general activities are more appropriately captured along with the updated recovery strategies rather than as specific projects. An emphasis of the project list update is to focus projects on relatively specific capital actions at particular locations. Importantly, while we are striving to make the project list more specific, the intent is also to retain the flexibility to enable project sponsors to continue to propose new project additions as opportunities emerge.

The major changes/updates to the project list include:

- Removing completed projects or projects that no longer remain viable
- Cataloging certain non-specific actions with the strategies
- Removing duplicate project references
- Removing programmatic actions
- Adding new projects that align with WRIA 8 recovery strategies
- Revising project descriptions to add clarity and to reflect current status and objectives

As a result of these changes, the updated WRIA 8 habitat restoration and protection project list will contain approximately 300 projects, and the list will be an appendix to the updated WRIA 8 Plan.

In addition to the Comprehensive List, the 2005 Plan also identified a “Start List,” which was envisioned as the focus of the first ten years of plan implementation. In the absence of habitat goals, the Start List was developed in part to measure and track implementation progress. We now have habitat goals, which are a more effective mechanism for measuring progress than the number of projects implemented. Due to the adoption of goals and the degree to which projects are often implemented opportunistically (rather than by following a prescriptive list), the Start List concept is not anticipated to be carried forward in the 2017 Plan. We will continue to maintain the WRIA 8 Four-Year Work Plan.