

# WRIA 8 Updates and Committee Reports

November 16, 2017

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- **Puget Sound Regional Update** – The **Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council (PS SRC)** last met on September 28. The meeting focused on discussion and approval of ‘bold actions’ for Chinook salmon recovery recommended by a PS SRC Subcommittee for inclusion as part of the regional Chinook Implementation Strategy, and reviewing and discussion proposed improvements to the Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) state grant funding program. The PS SRC next meets on November 30. Diane Buckshnis, Edmonds City Councilmember, and Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz represent WRIA 8.
- The **South Central Action Area Caucus** last met on November 1. The meeting focused on the 2018 Action Agenda near-term action (NTA) solicitation and review process and the role of local integrating organizations (LIOs); status updates on 2016 NTAs that received funding; presentation on the 2017 State of the Sound report; and general updates from Puget Sound Partnership. Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz currently attends to represent WRIA 8. The Caucus Group meets next on January 3.
- **2018 WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council meeting schedule** – In 2018, the WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council will meet at the Mercer Island Community Center (8236 SE 24th Street, Mercer Island). The meetings are scheduled on the third Thursday of every other month, beginning in January, and will run from 3:00 – 5:15pm. Please see the 2018 meeting schedule in the meeting packet.
- **Status of final Plan Update and common resolution for partner ratification** – The WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council approved the final draft of the WRIA 8 Chinook Salmon Conservation Plan update in September. The final Plan Update is available online, hard copies will be presented to Salmon Recovery Council members, and a formal hard copy will be sent to each local government partner to the interlocal agreement. The ‘common resolution’ in the meeting packet is available and suggested for partners to use in ratifying the Plan Update at their respective city/county council.
- **WRIA 8 letter re: Locks priority repairs** – In September, the Council approved sending a letter to Corps leadership in Washington, D.C. and the Northwest Division emphasizing the need to allocate funding for critical Locks infrastructure repairs to improve fish passage and safe facility operation. The letter references the recent economic impact study done on behalf of a consortium of marine trade industry groups that documented the value of the Locks and the impacts of a Locks failure. While this study helps document the value of the Locks, the Council recognized the impacts of a Locks failure would likely be orders of magnitude greater than indicated by the study. The letter supports conducting a comprehensive study of impacts from a Locks failure. The draft letter was reviewed and approved to send by the Management Committee. Please see a copy of the letter in the meeting packet.

- **2018 Federal and State Legislative Priorities (DECISION)** – At the end of each year, the Council reviews and approves initial federal and state legislative priorities for the coming year. Please see the proposed 2018 legislative priorities are included in the meeting packet. The priorities are similar to 2017, since the capital funding needs are fairly consistent year-to-year, and the state legislature has not yet passed a capital budget, so the funding needs remain heading into 2018. The Implementation Committee recommended the following additions:
  - Include support for \$90 million funding request for the Stormwater Financial Assistance Program.
  - Add policy legislation that supports seeking legislation to amend existing state law to include immunity from liability for entities that implement habitat restoration projects that include placing large wood.
  - Add policy legislation to track and consider support for proposed regulatory improvements that seek greater protection for salmon habitat.
  - Add policy legislation to track the issue of net pen aquaculture and consider support for greater restrictions or a ban on such activity if a clear nexus with Chinook recovery exists.
  
- **Salmon Tour debrief** – The WRIA 8 Salmon Tour took place on Friday, October 27. Over 40 people joined the tour, and were lucky to have amazing sunny fall weather including one state legislator, staff from Rep. Jayapal’s office, several state legislative staff, local elected officials, and partners from local governments, state and federal agencies, and community organizations. The Tour started at the Ballard Locks to show participants first-hand some of the critical facility repair needs. From the Locks, participants hopped on a yellow school bus and visited three habitat restoration sites, including Wayne Golf Course on the Sammamish River in Bothell, the Sammamish River Side Channel project in Bothell, and the Bear Creek Doyle project on the border of unincorporated King County and the City of Redmond. We also took the opportunity over lunch to highlight the WRIA 8 Plan Update and provide a brief summary of the habitat goals and recovery strategies. The tour was very successful in highlighting recent progress on salmon habitat protection and restoration, legislative/policy priorities, and implementation challenges. WRIA 8 staff will continue to evaluate the effectiveness of these tours in terms of timing and reaching our intended audiences.
  
- **Fish Returns** – Each year, WDFW and the Muckleshoot Tribe begin their annual salmon counts at the Locks on June 12 and end on October 1. In 2017, the following totals were reported (totals are still subject to revision):

<b>Species</b>	<b>Estimate</b>	<b>% of 20-year average</b>
Chinook	7,236	71%
Sockeye	133,019	74%
Coho	14,527	62%

Salmon are now moving up through our rivers and streams. Biologists have begun annual spawning ground surveys in North, Little Bear, May, Kelsey, and Bear/Cottage Lake creeks and the Cedar River. While official numbers are not yet official, biologists are reporting larger than expected runs of Chinook salmon on the Cedar River and elsewhere in WRIA 8. *In fact, this may be the second-largest run in the Cedar River since before 2000.*

- **E-news** – The WRIA 8 E-news sent out October 18 included information about the approval of the WRIA 8 Plan Update, update on 2017 salmon returns, Salmon SEEson program, video of spawning salmon in the Cedar River, notice of the annual “I Love the Cedar River” public meeting in Maple Valley, New Zealand mud snail prevention efforts, Green Shores for Homes training program, and links to several relevant news stories, education resources, and funding opportunities. Although we no longer have outreach and communications staff support, we will attempt to continue to produce the WRIA 8 E-news as we are able. Please send ideas for the December edition of the E-news to Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz at [jason.mulvihill-kuntz@kingcounty.gov](mailto:jason.mulvihill-kuntz@kingcounty.gov) by December 11. E-news distribution now includes over 800 recipients.

### **WRIA 8 Committee Reports**

- **WRIA 8 Technical Committee** –The Technical Committee met on October 11 and November 8. The meeting topics included TC recommendations to the SRC for funding basic technical data gaps, new project scoring criteria for grant rounds, and the 4 Year Work Plan additions for 2018.
- **WRIA 8 Implementation Committee** – The Implementation Committee met on November 7. Meeting topics included general WRIA 8 updates, discussion of programmatic priorities to consider for using available carryforward funding in the WRIA 8 budget, discussion of draft 2018 legislative priorities, and review of agenda topics for the November 16 Salmon Recovery Council meeting.