

WRIA 8 Updates and Committee Reports

November 15, 2018

- **Puget Sound Regional Update** – The Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council (PS SRC) last met on September 27. The meeting focused on an Orca Task Force status update and feedback on initial recommendations, presentation and discussion of the 2019-2021 Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration large capital projects list, presentation and discussion of recommendations from the Regulatory and Incentives Subcommittee and the Funding Subcommittee, and further discussion on a strategy and vision for reinvigorating the region’s salmon recovery effort. The PS SRC meets next on November 15. Diane Buckshnis, Edmonds City Councilmember, and Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz represent WRIA 8.
- **The South Central Action Area Caucus** (Local Integrating Organization) last met on November 7. The meeting focused on reviewing the Caucus’ comment letter on the draft 2018-2022 Action Agenda for Puget Sound, approving the recommended near-term action to receive Caucus-direct funding, discuss draft 2018-2019 work plan, celebrating accomplishments and discussing transitions and next steps, and general updates from Puget Sound Partnership and members. Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz currently attends to represent WRIA 8. The Caucus Group meets next on January 9.
- **Governor’s Orca Task Force** – Puget Sound’s endangered Southern Resident Orca population is at grave risk. In March, the Governor signed an executive order creating an Orca Task Force to develop policy recommendations at the regional, state, and federal level to reduce major threats and improve conditions for Orcas. Final recommendations are due November 1. The three primary threats to Orca survival are lack of Chinook salmon, their primary prey; toxic contaminants; and, vessel traffic and noise. Salmon recovery actions are key to what is being considered for the prey availability recommendations. Initial draft Task Force recommendations were released for public comment in late September. WRIA 8 staff proposed comments, which were reviewed and approved for submittal on October 7 by the WRIA 8 Implementation Committee and Management Committee (see comments in meeting packet). Revised draft recommendations were released for comment on October 24. WRIA 8 staff reviewed the revised comments, which reflected WRIA 8 comments on the initial draft. WRIA 8 staff continue to track the development of the recommendations, and supporting, as a member of the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council, a strong emphasis on habitat restoration in the Task Force’s development of recommended actions.
- **Draft 2018-2022 Action Agenda for Puget Sound** – Puget Sound Partnership released a draft 2018-2022 Action Agenda for Puget Sound for public comment by October 15. WRIA 8 staff developed a comment letter (see letter in meeting packet) that was reviewed and approved by the Implementation Committee and the Management Committee, highlighting the following:
 - Improved clarity over previous interactions of the document.

- Improved integration of salmon recovery and Puget Sound recovery, with recommendations to strengthen the reference to salmon recovery Lead Entities and more clearly refer and link to watershed-based salmon recovery project lists as a large component of priority recovery actions.
 - Ensure the recovery effort is science-based and grounded in adaptive management.
 - Strengthen the description of the contribution of “ongoing programs” to Puget Sound recovery.
 - Prioritize developing a funding strategy to meaningfully increase funding for recovery.
- **2019 Washington State Salmon Recovery Conference** – Every two years, the Washington State Salmon Recovery Funding Board holds a conference to highlight topics spanning the spectrum of salmon recovery—project implementation, emerging research, and future directions. The 2019 conference theme is “Facing the Future Together,” and the event marks 20 years since the passage of Washington’s Salmon Recovery Act. The conference intends to explore: what we have learned and what has changed in the last 20 years, how knowledge is being applied, what is on the horizon, and what actions conference participants can take. *The 2019 conference will be held April 8 – 9 at the Greater Tacoma Convention Center.* Session proposals are being accepted through November 20, 2018. For more information on submitting a session proposal, visit <https://src.confex.com/src/2019/cfp.cgi>.
 - **Salmon SEEson** – The 12th annual Salmon SEEson program continues through early December, coordinating and promoting salmon viewing opportunities for the public throughout King County watersheds. The program expanded in 2018 with new sites in multiple watersheds across King County, increased social media promotion of the program, and a new photo contest. WRIA 8 manages the program with sponsorship from the Saving Water Partnership. The program receives additional support from Duwamish Alive, King County, the Green/Duwamish and Central Puget Sound Watershed, and the Snoqualmie/Skykomish Watershed.
 - **Salmon returns update** – Annual salmon counts at the Ballard Locks ended on October 2, as most of the Chinook, sockeye and coho salmon migrating into WRIA 8 have moved through the Locks and have begun the freshwater chapter of their spawning migration to their natal streams. Returns were poor for all three species: Salmon counters from WDFW and the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe Fisheries Division estimate that about 6,700 Chinook, 32,100 sockeye and 11,000 coho migrated through the Locks between June and October 2. Those numbers are about 66%, 18%, and 48% of the long-term averages for Chinook, sockeye and coho salmon. Chinook spawner numbers on WRIA 8 streams and rivers have also been below average this year. NOAA data indicate that ocean conditions in the Pacific Northwest in the last few years have been poor for salmon.
 - **E-news** – The October 19 WRIA 8 E-news included information about upcoming restoration events, workshops, and tours, salmon return numbers through the Ballard Locks, Salmon

SEEsion, orca recovery efforts, citizen tools to identify invasive species and stormwater runoff-related salmon deaths, grant opportunities, and links to several relevant news stories. Please send ideas for the December edition of E-news to Laura West at lwest@kingcounty.gov by November 30. E-news distribution now includes over 900 recipients.

WRIA 8 Committee Reports

- **WRIA 8 Technical Committee** – The Technical Committee met on October 10 and November 14. Meeting topics included a presentation on the Bellevue stream assessment program, kokanee status, wood monitoring program status, fish in/out monitoring status, discussion regarding a draft letter on monitoring and research from WRIA 8 to WDFW, and ongoing discussions regarding implementing the WRIA 8 monitoring and assessment plan (MAP) and monitoring priorities in WRIA 8.
- **WRIA 8 Implementation Committee** – The Implementation Committee met on November 6. Meeting topics included general WRIA 8 updates, presentation on the King County Waterworks grant program, presentation on the King County Fish Passage Program, review and discussion of four draft letters in preparation for presenting them to the Salmon Recovery Council for consideration on November 15, and review of the agenda topics for the September 20 Salmon Recovery Council meeting.