

**WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council (SRC) Meeting Notes**  
**Mercer Island Community Center, Mercer Island || September 19, 2019 2:00 – 4:15 p.m.**

| <b>Members Present</b>    |                                     |  |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| #                         | Name                                | Affiliation                              |
| 1)                        | Eric Adman                          | Sno-King Watershed Council               |
| 2)                        | Councilmember (CM) Diane Buckshtnis | City of Edmonds                          |
| 3)                        | Bea Covington                       | King Conservation District               |
| 4)                        | Don Davidson                        | Washington Policy Center                 |
| 5)                        | Larry Franks                        | Friends of Issaquah Fish Hatchery (FISH) |
| 6)                        | CM Ted Frantz                       | Town of Hunts Point                      |
| 7)                        | Noel Gilbrough                      | Mid-Sound Fisheries Enhancement Group    |
| 8)                        | CM Victoria Hunt                    | City of Issaquah                         |
| 9)                        | CM Ryan McIrvin                     | City of Renton                           |
| 10)                       | Joe Miles                           | WA State Department of Natural Resources |
| 11)                       | CM Hank Myers                       | City of Redmond                          |
| 12)                       | CM Dana Parnello                    | City of Maple Valley                     |
| 13)                       | CM Mark Phillips, Vice-Chair        | City of Lake Forest Park                 |
| 14)                       | Stewart Reinbold                    | WA State Department of Fish & Wildlife   |
| 15)                       | Gary Smith                          | Water Tenders/Trout Unlimited            |
| 16)                       | CM John Stokes, Chair               | City of Bellevue                         |
| 17)                       | CM Pam Stuart                       | City of Sammamish                        |
| <b>Alternates Present</b> |                                     |  |
| 18)                       | David Bain                          | Sno-King Watershed Council               |
| 19)                       | Garrett Holbrook                    | King County                              |
| 20)                       | Michelle Koehler                    | City of Seattle                          |
| 21)                       | Jordanna Warneck                    | WA State Department of Natural Resources |
| <b>Others Present</b>     |                                     |  |
| 22)                       | Judy Blanco                         | King County                              |
| 23)                       | Carrie Byron                        | Puget Sound Partnership                  |
| 24)                       | Trina Contreras                     | WA State Department of Natural Resources |
| 25)                       | Stephanie Eckard                    | Mid-Sound Fisheries Enhancement Group    |
| 26)                       | Gregg Farris                        | Snohomish County                         |
| 27)                       | Kirstin Haugen                      | King Conservation District               |
| 28)                       | Alex Herzog                         | City of Woodinville                      |
| 29)                       | Peter Holte                         | City of Redmond                          |
| 30)                       | Joan Lee                            | King County                              |
| 31)                       | Paulina Levy                        | WA State Department of Ecology           |
| 32)                       | Kristina Lowthian                   | City of Renton                           |
| 33)                       | Kathy Minsch                        | City of Seattle                          |
| 34)                       | Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz               | WRIA 8                                   |
| 35)                       | Brandon Parsons                     | American Rivers                          |
| 36)                       | Kit Paulsen                         | City of Bellevue                         |
| 37)                       | Stephanie Potts                     | WA State Department of Ecology           |
| 38)                       | Audrie Starsy                       | City of Newcastle                        |
| 39)                       | Lauren Urgenson                     | WRIA 8                                   |
| 40)                       | Laura West                          | WRIA 8                                   |
| 41)                       | Jason Wilkinson                     | WRIA 8                                   |

**I) Call to Order / Introductions**

Chair Stokes called the Salmon Recovery Council (SRC) meeting to order and attendees introduced themselves. Chair Stokes read aloud an email from Seattle Councilmember Teresa Mosqueda in which she expressed support for Seattle Public Utility’s multi-benefit Cedar River Royal Arch Floodplain Reconnection project.

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## II) Public Comment

Noel Gilbrough announced Mid-Sound Fisheries Enhancement Group's "Salmon Shindig" event on October 3. Larry Franks announced that Friends of Issaquah Salmon Hatchery (FISH) will be holding an elected officials' day on October 1.

## III) Consent Agenda

*The Salmon Recovery Council unanimously approved the meeting notes for the July 18, 2019 SRC meeting.*

## IV) Updates & Announcements

Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz (Jason MK), WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Manager, highlighted the following updates:

- **Snohomish County's status as a WRIA 8 cost share partner** – On September 5, Chair Stokes, Councilmember (CM) Buckshnis, and Jason MK met with Snohomish County Executive Dave Somers for a follow-up discussion regarding the County's status as a cost share partner in 2020. Executive Somers explained that he plans to include a surface water management rate increase as part of his 2020 budget proposal to the County Council for consideration at the end of September, which includes funding for Snohomish County to re-join the WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council as a cost share partner. Once Executive Somers' budget is transmitted to the County Council, communications from the WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council to Snohomish County Councilmembers to express support for the funding for the County's participation in WRIA 8 will be important. Jason MK will develop key messaging for WRIA 8 representatives. Gregg Farris, Snohomish County Surface Water Utility Director, confirmed that the proposed budget does include funding for the County to rejoin the WRIA 8 Interlocal Agreement.
- **Washington Congressional Representatives Co-Sponsor PUGET SOS Bill** – Washington State Congressmen Denny Heck and Derek Kilmer are co-sponsors on House Bill 2447, the Promoting United Government Efforts to Save Our Sound (PUGET SOS) Act. Many partners in Puget Sound recovery, including WRIA 8 and partners, recently signed onto a Puget Sound Partnership letter of support for the bill, prior to review by the U.S. House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. The bill authorizes Puget Sound to receive up to \$50 million per year in federal funds (a significant increase over the current \$28 million funding level), codifies the Puget Sound Federal Task Force to implement the Puget Sound Action Agenda, and establishes a Program Office in the Environmental Protection Agency. WRIA 8 will track the bill's progress moving through committees.
- **Salmon returns update** – Historically, 100% of the sockeye salmon run has passed through the Ballard Locks by this time. Sockeye salmon numbers are the lowest since counting started in 1972: as of September 19, about 17,411 sockeye are estimated to have entered the Lake Washington system. The 10 year average is around 87,561 by this time, so this year the run is just 20% of average. The WRIA 8 team is preparing a sockeye 101 presentation for the November SRC meeting along with a discussion on kokanee. Chinook salmon typically are about 99% through the Locks by this time. As of September 19, around 5,934 Chinook have been estimated to have passed into the Lake Washington system. The 10 year average for Chinook at this time is 7,641 individuals.
- **Salmon SEESon** – The 13th annual Salmon SEESon program is underway, coordinating and promoting salmon viewing opportunities for the public throughout King County watersheds. New sites this year include Flaming Geyser State Park and the new pedestrian bridge over the Duwamish River in Tukwila. 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. The program is being promoted through press releases, a photo contest, social media, and distribution of posters, brochures, and signs.
- **Annual Kokanee Release Event**- The Lake Sammamish Kokanee Work Group is hosting an annual ceremonial release of kokanee on October 9 at the Lake Sammamish State Park boat ramp at 5:30pm. This is a good opportunity to learn about the challenges kokanee are facing in the watershed.
- **FISH transition** – Larry Franks announced that the Friends of the Issaquah Salmon Hatchery (FISH) is in the process of shifting their focus to increase advocacy efforts. Larry thanked WRIA 8 for their support.

## V) Project Subcommittee Recommendations – 2019 Salmon Recovery Funding Board Grant Funding

Jason Wilkinson (Jason W), WRIA 8 Projects and Funding Coordinator, overviewed the 2019 Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) grant applicants and Project Subcommittee funding recommendations. Jason W thanked the Project

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Subcommittee members for their input and time. SRFB is an annual funding source that comes from a combination of federal and state dollars and focuses on implementing habitat restoration projects through acquisition and restoration. Jason W walked through the available funding amounts and requests. The requests are comprised of a new project, the Royal Arch Reach Floodplain Reconnection Design project, and additional funds needed to fully fund King County's Riverbend project. Riverbend received funding from the state legislature this year, but there was an unexpected funding gap that needs to be filled. The Project Subcommittee recommends fully funding the Royal Arch project and using the rest of the available funding to pitch in to cover Riverbend's gap. Puget Sound Partnership is committed to finding the other \$502,872 needed to fully fund the Riverbend project. Carrie Byron, Puget Sound Partnership, confirmed that they've committed to funding the gap using return funds and other funds. Jason W highlighted the Royal Arch Reach Floodplain Reconnection Design project from Seattle Public Utilities (SPU). SPU has been acquiring parcels in this reach for a number of years with the intent of restoring the whole floodplain area. This project removes riprap and floodplain fill, enhances a floodplain side channel, and improves the side channel connection to the river. SPU aims to start construction as early as 2021.

*The Salmon Recovery Council unanimously approved the 2019 Salmon Recovery Funding Board Grant Funding recommendations.*

## VI) Value of Our Rivers

Brandon Parsons overviewed American Rivers' study to research the economic impacts of floodplain restoration on property values and community revenue in watersheds across the Puget Sound region. Brandon is seeking feedback from the Salmon Recovery Council to make sure the study would be useful to local governments. American Rivers looked at other examples of economic growth following restoration, including Austin, Tacoma, Pittsburg, Denver, and Bend. There is evidence that access to open space and recreational amenities increases property value but salmon restoration provides unique challenges, the impact of which, is not well understood. This study will be the first in our region to focus on long term community value and economic growth. CM Stuart asked about the goal of the study and if the study would help leverage other funding. Jason MK shared that multiple legislators expressed a need for data on the economic value of doing restoration work. Chair Stokes commented that this study might lead to new development options at Boeing near the mouth of the Cedar River. Brandon added that this study could show that it's a lot more economical to protect our aquatic resources than develop them and then have to restore them later. Bea Covington encouraged American Rivers to stay away from benefit transfer as a methodology, because applying transfers to diverse areas diminishes the effectiveness. CM Hunt suggested including the business community as an audience. Brandon acknowledged that barriers to restoration in WRIA 8 include a lack of adequate funding and available land. CM Buckshnis suggested looking at Portland as another example of revitalization based on their riverfront restoration. The target audience for the study includes local elected officials, local government staff, state legislators, and community members. American Rivers expects the study to be completed by the end of 2020.

## VII) Monitoring WRIA 8 Salmon Populations – “Fish In/Fish Out”

Lauren Urgenson, WRIA 8 Technical Coordinator, presented on the status of WRIA 8 salmon populations. Lauren explained that there are two Chinook populations in WRIA 8: the Cedar population and the Sammamish population. WRIA 8 uses multiple sources of collected data to monitor these populations, and the sources can be divided into “fish in,” or in-migrating data and “fish out,” or out-migrating data. WDFW and the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe collect “fish-in” data from the Ballard Locks between June and October. From September through November, “fish-in” redd and carcass surveys are conducted to collect the number of live fish spawning, the number of carcasses, and the number of redds. Overall numbers are extrapolated from these data. Juvenile screw traps on the Cedar River and Bear Creek provide “fish-out” data from January through July. WRIA 8 can use the trap numbers to calculate the egg to outmigrating juvenile ratio. Jason MK commented that the SRC decided not to support funding on the Bear Creek trap beginning in 2020, hoping the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) will start funding those data collection. CM Myers commented that Sound Transit light rail development might impact the trap on Bear Creek. Stewart Reinbold confirmed that WDFW is looking at other locations for the trap. “Fish-out” data is also collected through PIT tag monitoring of parr. The PIT tags are transmitted at the Ballard Locks to track the proportion of outmigrants that make it to the Ballard Locks and are heading out to the ocean.

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WRIA 8's goals are based on Viable Salmonid Populations (VSP) metrics. Abundance, productivity, spatial distribution, and diversity all contribute to the metrics. Lauren walked through the most recent Locks count as of September 17, 2019. Chinook are at 80% of the 10 year average. Sockeye are at 15% of the 10 year average. Lauren walked through the Cedar and Sammamish spawning escapement numbers and goals and commented that the Technical Committee is looking into the reasons for low spawner abundance. WRIA 8 goals for natural-origin spawners migrating in to the watershed are 2,000 to 8,000 in the Cedar population and 1,000-4,000 in the Sammamish, consistent with tribal treaty rights and recreational harvest. For Fish-Out, WRIA 8's productivity goal is to increase the egg to migrant survival. WRIA 8's diversity goal is to put more emphasis on parr migrants, as they have a better chance of making it out to the ocean and back to WRIA 8 to spawn. In the Cedar, only 6% of juveniles are leaving the system as parr and the goal is to increase the percentage of parr to 40% by creating more rearing habitat. CM Myers asked about the role of lamprey predation on juvenile survival in the Sammamish River. Lauren will look into that. On Bear Creek, 54% of juveniles are leaving the system as parr. Lauren walked through the PIT tag data and explained that there is a sharp drop in survival in late spring/early summer and the Technical Committee is looking into potential causes. Lauren thanked the partners involved in the data collection.

## VIII) Success Story: Community Action Training School

Stephanie Eckard, Mid-Sound Fisheries Enhancement Group, presented on the Community Action Training School. The purpose of the school is to bring together people of all backgrounds to learn about the watershed and empower them to become stewards in their communities. Mid-Sound Fisheries collaborated with Sound Salmon Solutions to offer this course for 21 students at no cost, in exchange for 50 community service hours from each student. Students heard presentations from experts on habitat, tribal perspectives, historical and current conditions, water quality, stormwater pollution, and guiding regulations and took field excursions in both King County and Snohomish County. Students are now working on proposals to implement projects to meet their community service hours. Proposed projects include restoration on North Creek, rain garden installations, film and speaker series, and activism to stop proposed development in local wetlands. Stephanie thanked WRIA 8 and other partners. Noel Gilbrough thanked Jeanette Dorner for her leadership and development of programs like this one.

## IX) Next Meeting

The next SRC meeting is November 21, 2019, 2:00 – 4:15 pm, at **Mercer Island Community Center**.