

WRIA 8 Updates and Committee Reports

July 16, 2020

- **Puget Sound Regional Update** – The Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council (PS SRC) last met on May 28. The meeting focused on providing input on the development of the update to the regional chapter of the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Plan, deciding whether to adopt a policy for when and under what conditions the SRC will support projects designated as “projects of concern” in the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) grant round process, providing input on the Puget Sound Vital Signs revision project, providing input on the proposed vision for the 2022 Action Agenda for Puget Sound recovery, adopt the allocation formula for the 2020 SRFB grant round and 2021-2023 Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration grant round, hearing a legislative update, and an update on the Funding Subcommittee’s recommended approach to assess how well county-based Conservation Futures Tax programs integrate salmon recovery priorities. The PS SRC is scheduled to meet next on July 30. Diane Buckshnis, Edmonds City Councilmember, and Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz represent WRIA 8.

The **South Central Action Area Caucus** (Local Integrating Organization (LIO)) last met on June 3. The meeting focused on reviewing near-term action funding recommendations, an update on the Shore Friendly King County program to engage and provide technical assistance to shoreline property owners interested in removing shoreline armoring, reviewing the two-year LIO work plan, presentation on King County’s Clean Water Healthy Habitat initiative to guide outcome driven investments in clean water and habitat protection and restoration, and review of LIO bylaws and membership. Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz currently represents WRIA 8 on the South Central Caucus LIO.

- **Snohomish County Council approves WRIA 8 ILA amendment enabling the County to return as a cost share partner** – On June 24, Snohomish County Council approved the WRIA 8 interlocal agreement (ILA) amendment for the County to return as an ILA cost share partner in 2020. Now that the amendment is signed by Snohomish County, it needs to be signed by the other 27 local government cost share partners. WRIA 8 staff will work with partners to secure signatures on the amendment.
- **Convening conversations to examine WRIA 8 salmon recovery work with an equity and social justice lens** – Recognizing the social unrest locally and across the country regarding the persistence of systematic racism and related injustices, the WRIA 8 Management Committee discussed and supports the idea of WRIA 8 convening a series of conversations or a work group of interested Salmon Recovery Council members to use an equity and social justice lens to examine our salmon recovery and watershed health work and identify possible opportunities to adjust how we think about and implement our work and the priorities that guide salmon recovery in WRIA 8. Salmon Recovery Council members who are interested in participating in this work should let Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz know.

- **WRIA 8 Technical Committee comments on environmental assessment of proposed emergency flood-related scour repairs at Ballard Locks** – The WRIA 8 Technical Committee submitted comments to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Seattle District (Corps) on proposed urgent interim scour repairs to the Hiram M. Chittenden Locks (Locks) stilling basin apron, spillway ogee, and fish ladder. During the proposed late-September to October 15 work window, the urgent interim Locks repairs will overlap with migration of a substantial number of returning coho and potentially, some late migratory Chinook. In addition to the important conservation measures listed in the *Notice of Preparation*, the TC requested the following:

 - Extend the adult Locks count data beyond the typical end date of October 1 until October 15th to include the entire in-water repair work window. Extended monitoring is critical to track impacts on Chinook and coho migrating through the Locks and to determine whether salmon use an alternative pathway through the large lock.
 - Monitor to assess delays in migration resulting from the repair work and potential increased risk of predation by pinnipeds.
 - Conduct more frequent large lockages (i.e. false lockages) during times when the ladder is inaccessible. Extended adult Locks counts and monitoring could also inform the frequency and timing of false lockages.
 - The Corps consider improvements and upgrades to the fish ladder as part of planning and implementation of ongoing Locks facility repairs and improvements. Modifications to the fish ladder entrance are critical to improve fish passage and help minimize the risk of pinniped predation.
 - An urgent need to design a system for monitoring flows and gate openings so issues with the attraction flow and fish passage barriers can be promptly identified and addressed.

- **Adequate flows in the Ballard Locks fish ladder** – In June (during initial sockeye returns), there were significant difficulties maintaining adequate flows in the Ballard Locks fish ladder. WRIA 8 reached out to the Army Corps of Engineers and learned that the Programmable Logic Controller that manages ladder flow malfunctioned causing difficulties with flow calibration and regulation. The response time for identifying, monitoring and repairing these issues have been difficult with limited personnel on site. Ongoing problems with fish ladder flow can delay migration and trap salmon at the ladder entrance and increase risk of predation by seals and sea lions. There is an urgent need for updates to the fish ladder entrance and to improve the system for monitoring flows and gate openings so fish passage barriers at the Locks are identified and addressed promptly.

- **King County Flood Control District approves 2020 Cooperative Watershed Management grant recommendations** – On July 8, the King County Flood Control District Board of Supervisors unanimously approved the WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council's 2020 Cooperative Watershed Management grant funding recommendations. The approval awards more than \$3.7 million in support of 13 habitat restoration projects, four monitoring and assessment efforts, and five education and outreach programs.

- **Salmon SEEson program status** – WRIA 8 staff are reaching out to local government and community partners to coordinate and determine what the Salmon SEEson program might look like this year given the current uncertain and challenging times related to COVID-19 precautions and restrictions. We are seeking feedback on partners' plans for their salmon viewing sites and outreach programs, and any creative ideas for communicating important salmon recovery messages to the community despite the possibility of a more limited set of viewing sites and program events.
- **WRIA 8 E-News** – The June edition of the WRIA 8 E-news included the following topics and updates: Information on "Puget Sound Days on the Hill"; American Rivers new economic study on floodplain restoration; the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust's Education Program "Forests and Fins" virtual education offerings; a Snoqualmie Indian Tribe's Kokanee children's workbook; article on how the Seattle seawall improve migratory pathway for young salmon; invitation to participate in a "Climate Change in the Time of Coronavirus" webinar; a new Low Impact Development Guidebook for local governments; article on Mass Extinctions Are Accelerating, Scientists Report; article from a California watershed on Habitat Restoration Effort Supports Record Number of Salmon Nests; a BioScience article on Bending the Curve of Global Freshwater Biodiversity Loss: An Emergency Recovery Plan; and announcing the 2020 NEP Coastal Watershed Grant Request for Proposals. The next edition will be released on **Friday, August 21st**. Please submit topics for the August edition by August 14 to Carla Nelson (carnelson@kingcounty.gov).

WRIA 8 Committee Reports

- **WRIA 8 Technical Committee** – The Technical Committee (TC) met on June 10 and July 8. In June, the TC reviewed design alternatives for the Bear Creek Little Bit Habitat Enhancement Project. This year, King County was selected for WRIA 8 Cooperative Watershed Management grant funding to support design, permitting, and construction of the project which includes approximately 650 lineal feet of the Little Bit Reach of Bear Creek. The TC heard a presentation from Snohomish County Surface Water Management on a habitat restoration and 5-year post-treatment effectiveness monitoring project in North Creek.

In July, the TC reviewed and provided feedback on large woody material placement alternatives for the Holder Creek Large Wood Project. King County received WRIA 8 Cooperative Watershed Management grant funding for this project in 2019. The project is located at the confluence of Holder, Carey, and Issaquah Creek on 120 acres of King County protected land acquired in 2019 from WA DNR. Additionally, WRIA 8 Technical Coordinator Lauren Urgenson and King County Science and Technical Services staff Josh Kubo presented an overview of the draft Best Available Science Document on Temperature and Dissolved Oxygen Conditions in the Lake Washington Ship Canal and impacts to salmon. The TC discussed components of the report which will be available for partner review mid-July through September.

- **WRIA 8 Implementation Committee** – The Implementation Committee met on July 7. Meeting topics included general WRIA 8 updates; review of the WRIA 8 Project Subcommittee's 2020 Salmon Recovery Funding Board and Puget Sound Acquisition and

Restoration grant funding recommendations; review of the WRIA 8 Management Committee's 2021 budget and work plan recommendation; feedback on the draft 2021 WRIA 8 state and federal legislative priorities; and, review of planned agenda items for the July 16 Salmon Recovery Council meeting.