

# WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council (SRC) Meeting Notes

Zoom Video Conference || September 17, 2020 2:00 – 4:15p.m.

<b>Members Present</b>		
<b>#</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
1)	Councilmember (CM) John Stokes, Chair	City of Bellevue
2)	CM Mark Phillips, Vice-Chair	City of Lake Forest Park
3)	CM Tom Agnew	City of Bothell
4)	CM Bruce Dodds	City of Clyde Hill
5)	CM Diane Buckshnis	City of Edmonds
6)	CM Ted Frantz	Town of Hunts Point
7)	CM Victoria Hunt	City of Issaquah
8)	CM Melanie O'Cain	City of Kenmore
9)	CM Neal Black	City of Kirkland
10)	CM Varisha Khan	City of Redmond
11)	CM Ryan McIrvin	City of Renton
12)	CM Pam Stuart	City of Sammamish
13)	CM Carl Scandella	Town of Yarrow Point
14)	Connie Grant	Army Corps of Engineers
15)	Corinne Young	Cedar River Council
16)	Cleo Neculae	Washington Department of Ecology
17)	Stewart Reinbold	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
18)	Joe Miles	Washington Department of Natural Resources
19)	Eli Tome	Forterra
20)	Larry Franks	Friends of Issaquah Salmon Hatchery (FISH)
21)	Kirstin Haugen	King Conservation District
22)	Eric Adman	Sno-King Watershed Council
23)	John Sherman	The Boeing Company
24)	Gary Smith	Trout Unlimited
<b>Alternates Present</b>		
25)	CM Jeanne Zornes	City of Bothell
26)	CM Susan Paine	City of Edmonds
27)	Mike Mactutis	City of Kent
28)	CM Lorri Bodi	City of Lake Forest
29)	CM Valerie O'Halloran	City of Redmond
30)	Michele Koehler	City of Seattle
31)	Brandy Reed	King Conservation District
32)	Garrett Holbrook	King County
33)	Joshua Thompson	Snohomish County
34)	David Bain	Sno-King Watershed Council
<b>Other Attendees</b>		
35)	Jim Vanden Brook	Citizen
36)	Julia McDonald	Citizen
37)	Janet Geer	City of Bothell
38)	Allen Quynn	City of Issaquah
39)	Richard Sawyer	City of Kenmore
40)	Rachel Konrady	City of Kirkland
41)	Kim Jones	City of Newcastle
42)	Peter Holte	City of Redmond
43)	Tom Hardy	City of Redmond
44)	Kristina Lowthian	City of Renton

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45)	Kathy Minsch	City of Seattle
46)	John Featherston	City of Shoreline
47)	Diana Hart	City Woodinville
48)	Larry Reymann	Environmental Science Center
49)	Joanna Stodden	Environmental Science Center
50)	Eli Tome	Forterra
51)	Robin Kelley	Friends of Issaquah Salmon Hatchery (FISH)
52)	Perry Falcone	King County
53)	Lucas Hall	Long Live the Kings
54)	Megan Mueller	Mid Sound Fisheries Enhancement Group
55)	Erin Ashe	Ocean's Initiative
56)	Rob Williams	Ocean's Initiative
57)	Alexandra Doty	Puget Sound Partnership
58)	Charlotte Spang	Seattle Aquarium
59)	Rob Plotnikoff	Snohomish County
60)	Whitney Neugebauer	Whale Scout
61)	Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz	WRIA 8
62)	Lauren Urgenson	WRIA 8
63)	Carla Nelson	WRIA 8

## I) Call to Order / Introductions

Council Member (CM) John Stokes (Chair) called the meeting to order at 2:03 pm and welcomed everyone.

II) **Public Comment** – Larry Franks asked if someone could mount an outdoor camera to capture jumping fish at the Issaquah hatchery. Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz, Salmon Recovery Manager (Jason MK) agreed to provide Larry with a contact for those who coordinated the kokanee fish camera.

III) **Consent Agenda** - SRC Meeting Minutes from July 16, 2020 were discussed.

*Action: The Council unanimously approved the July 16, 2020 meeting minutes.*

## IV) Updates & Announcements

Jason MK highlighted the following updates:

- **Puget Sound Regional Update** – The Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council (PS SRC) met on July 30, and discussed updates to the regional Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Plan; the 2021-2023 Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) ranked list of large capital projects; 2021 legislative priorities and developing policy framework to identify budget and policy priorities; proposed federal approval of Washington state's Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Program; status of 2020 Salmon Recovery Funding Board 'projects of concern' and request for PS SRC support; the concept for developing the 2022-2026 Action Agenda for Puget Sound recovery; and Puget Sound Alternative Futures Scenario Analysis to help consider uncertainty in Puget Sound recovery planning.
- **The South-Central Action Area Caucus** Local Integrating Organization (LIO) last met on August 11, to review and finalize LIO operating principles and work plan and discuss priority focus area(s) for LIO work plan.
- **WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council leadership selection** – Chair and Vice Chair selections will be held at the November 17 meeting for the 2021-2023 term. Members of the SRC who are interested in serving in either of these leadership roles should contact Jason MK by October 23.
- **Updated legislative priorities and draft letter to Governor** – In July, the SRC approved 2021 state and federal legislative priorities. WRIA 8 staff are working to produce brief information sheets to help convey the 2021 priorities. The SRC also approved drafting a letter to the Governor to share WRIA 8's state priorities to inform development of the Governor's budget this fall.

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- **Virtual tour for legislators of Cedar River floodplain restoration projects** – On August 20, WRIA 8 coordinated with Puget Sound Partnership to host a virtual tour to update key legislators on conditions at the Rainbow Bend and Riverbend project sites after significant flooding in early February. The tour offered an opportunity to discuss how investment in these projects, and floodplain restoration in general, supports multiple benefits for people, infrastructure, and the environment in lead-up to the 2021-2023 legislative session.
- **WRIA 8 SRC Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Subcommittee meeting** – At the July meeting, the SRC approved convening a subcommittee to review and strengthen WRIA 8 language and actions focused on DEI. The role of the subcommittee is to develop an initial roadmap and set of recommendations for discussion and approval by the full WRIA 8 SRC. A tentative plan is to present recommendations to the full SRC in November 2020 or January 2021.
- **WRIA 8 comment letter on Army Corps of Engineers update to Lake Washington Ship Canal Master Plan** - The Army Corps of Engineers is updating the Lake Washington Ship Canal (LWSC) Master Plan. WRIA 8 staff drafted a comment letter prior to the 7/31/20 deadline to comment. The SRC's letter emphasizes the importance of the Locks and Ship Canal for monitoring salmon populations and the need to improve fish passage and salmon survival.
- **Salmon SEEson program status** – The 14th annual Salmon SEEson program launched in early September, promoting salmon viewing opportunities and resources for the public throughout King County watersheds. WRIA 8 manages the program with sponsorship from the Saving Water Partnership, Duwamish Alive!, King County, the Green/Duwamish and Central Puget Sound Watershed, and the Snoqualmie/Skykomish Watershed.
- **WRIA 8 E-News** – The August edition of the WRIA 8 E-News included topics surrounding climate change, Salmon SEEson, restoration projects and funding opportunities. The next edition will be released Friday, October 23. Anyone with a topic to submit for the October edition should contact Carla Nelson on the WRIA 8 team.

## Updates Discussion:

- **CM Mark Phillips** noticed a typo in the letter to the Governor regarding the amount of funding for the Lead Entity program, which was listed as \$228,000 million instead of \$228,000. Jason MK said the error would be fixed before sending the letter.
- **CM Pam Stuart** asked if there were COVID-19 adjustments in the priorities based on budget challenges. Jason MK said that the approach is acknowledged in the letter, but still emphasizes the importance to fund and support funding levels state agencies have requested. The economy and COVID-19 related challenges will certainly be a focus of the legislature this session; however, we need to continue to advocate for salmon recovery funding needs. CM Stuart also asked, where can we provide details related to the economic benefit to communities from salmon recovery? Jason MK highlighted the section of the letter to the Governor that shows the economic impact of habitat restoration, and CM Stuart asked if we could provide more information with additional bullets. Jason MK agreed to provide additional information on specific funding programs or projects that partners are interested in.

## **V) Status of 2020 Salmon – Lauren Urgenson, WRIA 8 Technical Coordinator**

Lauren Urgenson, WRIA 8 Technical Coordinator, provided an update on the status of the Chinook, sockeye, and coho salmon returns through the Ballard Locks, as well as issues like predation that may be affecting their survival.

## Fish-In Discussion:

- **CM Pam Stuart** asked if Chinook and sockeye counts were above forecast and where can she find that information. Lauren explained that the relatively high Chinook count at the Locks is a positive surprise. Lauren added that spawner surveys on the Cedar River and other streams will provide additional understanding of this year's returns, including determining the number of hatchery fish vs. natural origin fish. While there is not any direct evidence, the low female return may be related

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to pinniped predation. Pinnipeds seem to prefer the protein rich females, and this greatly diminishes the number of eggs that are deposited at their spawning grounds.

- **Larry Franks** added that fish coming from the sea typically have a 50/50 sex ratio of males to females until the salmon make it back to freshwater, or back to their origin hatchery, when males seem to dominate at 60/40 ratio. This supports the idea that predators prefer females. Larry recommended a Muckleshoot report that explains how the Locks counts are calculated.
- **CM Ted Frantz** asked, what is the return count comparison for the Columbia River vs. WRIA 8? Lauren was not sure of the Columbia River Chinook returns but will follow-up. CM Frantz commented that sockeye season is open on the Wenatchee, and with sockeye decline in WRIA 8 so dramatic, he was curious about the health of Chinook elsewhere in Puget Sound.
- **CM Carl Scandella** asked, based on this current return count, what are we learning? Lauren explained that WRIA 8 population goals are not based on the fish going through the Locks. Studies are looking at abundance and birth productivity between hatchery vs. natural origin fish, as well as where there might be survival bottlenecks. They can also answer what the productivity is for egg to juvenile escapement, in addition to the return coming through the Locks. Also, they can determine what phases should be targeted for the best recovery yield with ocean conditions being such a uncertain variable. CM Scandella then asked, are we gaining or losing ground in recovery? Lauren said WRIA 8 Chinook population levels are stable and not declining as rapidly as they would be without our recovery work.

## VI) Cooperative Watershed Management (CWM) Grant Funding Guidance Options – Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz

Jason MK presented a list of six options for revising the Salmon Recovery Council's CWM funding guidance for Council review and discussion. He explained that the King County Flood Control District's (FCD) decision to double the available annual CWM funding and the information gaps and new priorities identified in the WRIA 8 Plan, combined with regular unmet funding needs, presents an opportunity to review the SRC's funding guidance and consider revisions. He reviewed WRIA 8's current CWM activities and spending caps: monitoring and assessment/studies-\$300K cap; outreach and education-\$96K cap; and habitat restoration and protection/acquisition receiving the balance of available funding. The funding guidance is used by the WRIA 8 Project Subcommittee in reviewing proposals and recommending grant funding to the SRC. Revising the funding guidance could expand the reach of WRIA 8 salmon recovery work by utilizing the following options:

- Option 1: Status Quo / No Change;
- Option 2: Designating 10% for monitoring/assessment and 5% for education and outreach;
- Option 3: Designating 15% for monitoring/assessment and 10% for education and outreach;
- Option 4: Designating 20% for monitoring/assessment and 10% for education and outreach;
- Option 5: Designating 20% for monitoring/assessment and 5% for education and outreach; or
- Option 6: Doubling designated funding caps for monitoring/assessment and education and outreach.

Under all options, the Project Subcommittee would retain discretion to deviate from the guidance in any category based on proposal merit. The SRC will approve a preferred option in November.

### CWM Guidance Discussion:

- **CM John Stokes** added that he appreciates the funding guidance is being reviewed, and that it should take into consideration how the FCD is funding projects.
- **CM Ted Frantz** asked, in the past, how were funding guidance percentages determined? He continued, if we are changing the percentages, he would like to hear the rationale for changing the monitoring cap. Which is the greater need, monitoring/assessment or outreach/education? Jason MK answered that there is a need in the monitoring category to help fill in information gaps and address technical priorities and related non-capital projects that focus on addressing limitations to survival. He used elevated water temperature in the Ship Canal as an example. Lauren added that PIT tagging studies have been done for 20 years at the Locks and data shows worsening survival in Lake Washington Ship Canal. There is a need to support those kinds of proposals and the increase in CWN funding provides

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an opportunity to direct some funding to these efforts. CM Frantz agreed with this logic for increasing those limits.

- **CM Carl Scandella** commented that COVID-19 has hit education hard and Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (i.e., STEM) programs are going forward but with limitations. He supports opportunities to increase involvement with students in WRIA 8's work, perhaps through partnerships with other agencies, organizations, or schools. The SRC should be alert to such opportunities. Jason MK agreed and explained that the Subcommittee tries to proactively work with sponsors to ensure programs seeking funding reflect WRIA 8's priorities.
- **CM Neal Black** noted that City of Kirkland would have benefitted from research addressing information gaps such as predation when they were doing their shoreline management plan update. CM Black agreed that additional data is needed. He said he supports option #5, which provides a higher percentage increase for research and monitoring. Jason MK also added that providing more data and science to support and inform regulatory updates is an important focus for WRIA 8. Providing additional resources in this category supports those efforts.
- **CM Diane Buckshnis** said she supports option #6. She noted that WRIA 8 funds can serve as important seed money. With more education/outreach funding, program sponsors can seek partnerships to bring additional funding to match with WRIA 8 resources. She suggested that perhaps WRIA 8 becomes a conduit through which other funding can flow to support various program/project priorities. She agreed that monitoring and assessment is needed to know what is going on in the environment.
- **Megan Mueller** said she supports options that increase education/outreach funding to 5% and added that Mid Sound Fisheries Enhancement Group's Community Action Training School benefitted greatly from WRIA 8's support. Jason MK agreed said the WRIA 8 Technical Committee and Implementation Committee would discuss the options further, to develop a recommendation to present to the SRC for decision in November.

## VII) Communications and Outreach Framework – Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz

Jason MK presented the draft WRIA 8 Communications and Outreach Framework (Framework) recommended for approval by the Implementation Committee. The Framework provides the vision, goals, and strategies to guide WRIA 8 communications and outreach through 2025. The Framework's purpose is to direct investment of resources to highest communications and outreach priorities, coordinate salmon recovery messaging, inform local partners' communications and outreach programs, and guide ongoing WRIA 8 staff communications. Jason MK emphasized that the Framework is different from a communication plan as it frames overall WRIA 8 communications and outreach priorities but doesn't provide a plan with detailed actions. The Framework identifies key audiences including WRIA 8 partners; people who live, work and play in the watershed; decision-makers; and, shoreline and waterfront property owners. The Framework's goals include: 1) establish and maintain shared watershed salmon recovery messaging and integrate messages into communications and outreach for related priority topics (e.g., stormwater management, Orca recovery, open space protection, etc.); 2) build and sustain decision-maker support for salmon recovery funding and policy priorities; 3) raise awareness of people who live work, and play in the watershed about salmon recovery needs and priorities; and 4) motivate people who live, work and play in the watershed to take actions supporting salmon recovery needs and priorities. The SRC will consider approval of the Framework in November.

### Communication Framework Discussion:

**CM Mark Phillips** noted the overlap with the previous conversation about outreach/education funding. Jason MK agreed that having the Framework inform outreach funding priorities is exactly the desired outcome. CM Stokes agreed that this is something that will be helpful to the grant funding process. Jason MK asked the Council to provide any additional feedback in advance of the November meeting.

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## VIII) Success Story: Installing Acoustic Deterrence to Reduce Pinniped Predation at Ballard Locks – Rob Williams and Erin Ashe, Ocean’s Initiative

Lucas Hall, Senior Project Manager from Long Live the Kings, introduced Rob Williams, Chief Scientist from Ocean’s Initiative. University of St. Andrews in Scotland created Targeted Acoustic Startle Technology (TAST), which has shown remarkable success in deterring harbor and grey seals from fish farm operations in the United Kingdom. Ocean’s Initiative, in partnership with Long Live the Kings, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Puget Sound Partnership tested the TAST’s effectiveness in reducing harbor seal predation on returning salmon at Ballard Locks.

Rob described how pinniped predation on salmonids at the Ballard Locks has been a conservation issue for decades. Previous acoustic deterrents have demonstrated to be relatively ineffective and some were even harmful to pinnipeds, rendering them completely deaf. TAST is specifically designed to elicit a fear response in a seal’s brain, has fewer environmental side effects, and is less likely to lead to habituation than traditional acoustic deterrent or harassment devices. The underwater test occurred in August to collect effectiveness data during the Chinook run, and in September during the coho run. Preliminary findings show that TAST is an effective tool against seal predation on salmon. There will be another test cycle at the end of 2020, and full data analysis available in 2021.

### TAST Discussion:

- **CM Ted Frantz** asked if more devices could be deployed in front of the Locks? Rob said yes. Ocean’s Initiative would also like to determine what is the optimal distance and added that the proper distance ratio is still being testing.
- **CM Valerie O’Halloran** asked if this could potentially harm orcas? Rob explained that while orcas can hear it, scientists can adjust it to the range that will not impact the orcas’ hearing.
- **Larry Reymann** asked if any seals stayed in the ladder while the TAST was on? Also, did more fish enter the ladder while TAST was on and the seals were absent? Rob said that with smoke from recent wildfires and inclement weather, there were no daily fish counts, but they plan to look at the fish count data. Seals were observed in the ladder, and that those seals in the ladder may already be deaf from prior noise deterrent devices. He explained that this product will not be effective on seals that are deaf, and that while this product is not a cure-all, it is effective.
- **CM Carl Scandella** asked, what way can they monitor the seals’ behavior? Could tags or drones be used? Rob said yes, but those options are costly and arduous. Drones will work and have been used in the past. CM Scandella asked about the use of a GoPro to gain perspective on equipment effectiveness. Rob replied there is no evidence of seal habituation to the TAST. The product was tested on seals near Atlantic salmon net pens, and they do not eat Atlantic salmon. He concluded by saying that this study was not long enough to study habituation. He noted that is a future research need.
- **CM Carl Scandella** asked about the Lake Washington yellow perch predation, and if this technology could be useful with that issue. Rob explained that hearing frequency in fish is too low for the TAST to be effective at this time.

**IX) Next Meeting:** Chair Stokes noted the next SRC meeting is November 19, 2:00 – 4:15 pm, via Zoom.

**Meeting Adjourned at 4:20 pm.**