



WRIA 8 Updates and Committee Reports

May 20, 2021

- **Puget Sound Regional Update** – The Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council (PS SRC) last met on March 25 and held a virtual retreat on March 26. The meeting focused on:
 - Legislative update
 - Discussion of the basis to the current regional allocation formula for distributing grant funding to watersheds
 - Status of the update to the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Plan
 - Funding Subcommittee update on work to engage two counties as pilots in improving integration of salmon recovery into their Conservation Futures Tax funding programs
 - Presentation on the HEAL Act and state Environmental Justice Task Force recommendations

The March 26 retreat focused on:

- Watersheds sharing priorities and implementation strategies and challenges
- Discussing whether recovery actions are being implemented in the right places
- Discussing options to consider adjusting the regional investment strategy

The PS SRC is scheduled to meet next on May 27. Diane Buckshnis, Edmonds City Councilmember, and Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz represent WRIA 8.

The **South Central Action Area Caucus** (Local Integrating Organization (LIO)) has not met since the March SRC meeting. Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz represents WRIA 8 on the LIO.

- **Lake Washington Ship Canal temperature and dissolved oxygen roundtable process** – WRIA 8 finalized the report “Synthesis of Best Available Science: Temperature and Dissolved Oxygen Conditions in the Lake Washington Ship Canal and Impacts on Salmon”. The purpose of this report is to:
 - Bring together distributed information and data in a single resource.
 - Support a common understanding of the problem.
 - Inform decision-making to identify specific management goals and priorities.
 - Ultimately, help guide recruitment of innovative solutions.

Next steps are to convene a Lake Washington Ship Canal Salmon Roundtable including representatives from organizations with management jurisdiction in the Lake Washington Ship Canal (LWSC) or are responsible for its ecological condition. Outcomes of these initial meetings will guide a series of workshops to vet action alternatives. WRIA 8 is partnering with Long Live the Kings on the roundtable meetings and next steps.

- **Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Sockeye Workgroup** – Recognizing the steep decline in the Lake Washington sockeye salmon population, the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife convened a workgroup to determine the state of the science on sockeye and to develop recommendations for management actions to improve

survival. The WDFW Sockeye Workgroup is due to release its report with recommendations in June. Several proposed management action parameters may align with WRIA 8's priorities for improving survival of Chinook salmon, including addressing elevated temperatures and low dissolved oxygen in the Ship Canal, predation by invasive predatory fish, and effects of artificial light at night. The recommendations may also be relevant to discussions in the Ship Canal roundtable process focusing on solutions to elevated temperature and low dissolved oxygen. WRIA 8 will invite WDFW to present the work of the Sockeye Workgroup at a future SRC meeting.

- **Legislative session recap on WRIA 8 priorities** – The 2021-2023 state biennial legislative session ended on April 25. Funding for WRIA 8's salmon recovery priorities fared relatively well, including strong investments in the State Salmon Recovery program, Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration, and Floodplains by Design capital funding programs. Please see the table in the meeting packet summarizing funding for priority state programs.
- **WRIA 8 meetings with members of Congress to support federal priorities** – WRIA 8 convened partners for meetings with Congresswoman Kim Schrier and Congresswoman Susan DelBene to highlight and support WRIA 8's federal salmon recovery priorities. The meetings emphasized the importance federal investment in the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund, funding for critical facility improvements at the Ballard Locks particularly in any infrastructure package Congress passes, and the value of habitat restoration as part of a stimulus funding package to creates jobs and support local community economies.
- **Salmon Recovery Conference highlights** – The biannual state Salmon Recovery Conference occurred April 28-30. Two conference sessions included WRIA 8 related presentations:
 - [DEI Subcommittee presentation](#): Salmon and People Living Together – Cities Working to Build Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Salmon Recovery
 - [Rainbow Bend Floodplain Restoration video](#): Telling the success story of a large multi-benefit floodplain restoration project on the Cedar River.
- **Regional Stormwater Summit** – On May 18-19 King County will host a Regional Stormwater Summit to discuss ideas for managing stormwater differently, in a more coordinated, integrated, and equitable way, with the intent of achieving more impactful environmental outcomes, including improved water quality and recovery of salmon populations. WRIA 8 staff participated in the summit and will share highlights from the discussions.
- **WRIA 8 E-News** – The April edition of the WRIA 8 E-news included the following topics and updates: Springtime marine life surge in Puget Sound thanks to conservation efforts; a study on the season diet of Southern Resident orca; King County Executive Dow Constantine visits Bear Creek restoration sites; a study on the increased amount of summertime low flow streams in Puget Sound; Northern Pike found in Lake Washington; Op-Ed on North of Falcon and its challenges; an article on shoreline armoring; Washington Department of Ecology toxic cleanup efforts; a study on 6PPD in coho pre-spawn mortality; Tl'uk, the transient white orca returns to Salish Sea; how Floodplains by Design help the Stillaguamish Tribe; and funding and conference announcements. The next edition is scheduled for release on Friday, June 18. Please submit topics by Friday, June 11, to Carla Nelson (carnelson@kingcounty.gov).

WRIA 8 Committee Reports

WRIA 8 SRC Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Subcommittee meeting – The April and May Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Subcommittee meetings discussed outcomes of updated DEI language and subject matter expert review in the 2021 grant round, adaptive decision-making in preparation for future funding cycles, and next steps for the subcommittee. Anyone interested in joining the WRIA 8 DEI Subcommittee should contact Carla Nelson (carnelson@kingcounty.gov).

WRIA 8 Technical Committee – The WRIA 8 Technical Committee met in April and May. The April meeting focused on presentations from Cooperative Watershed Management (CWM) grant applicants in the monitoring and assessment category. Technical Committee review of monitoring and assessment proposals was particularly exciting this year. To help advance our understanding of critical limiting factors in salmon recovery, the WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council approved an increase in the amount of funds available for monitoring and assessment activities. Additionally, we used a newly updated [WRIA 8 Prioritization for Monitoring and Assessment Funding](#) to help guide project selection. Due to the increase in CWM funding allocation and response to the funding opportunity, we adapted our approach to proposal review. As in previous years, the WRIA 8 Technical Committee heard presentations from grant applicants and had an opportunity to ask questions of the applicants. For the first time this year, a subset of Technical Committee members was also involved in a full review of the written proposals and advised the WRIA 8 Project Subcommittee on the funding recommendation.

The May meeting included review and discussion of two ongoing Technical Committee efforts and next steps, including the Lake Washington Ship Canal temperature and dissolved oxygen science synthesis and roundtable discussion and amendments to Chinook and habitat monitoring metrics included in the 2020 Progress Report. Following up on last month's Cooperative Watershed Management monitoring and assessment proposal presentations, the Committee reviewed the Project Subcommittee's funding recommendation, and discussed initial thoughts on the Technical Committee's prioritization document and the [grant review criteria](#) including whether to consider revisions to these documents prior to next year's proposal solicitation. Laurie Devereaux, Bellevue's Streamteam Coordinator, provided information on Bellevue's native peamouth chub (*Mylocheilus caurinus*) monitoring program, which spawn conspicuously along the shores of Lake Washington and tributaries in spring.

WRIA 8 Implementation Committee – The Implementation Committee met on May 4. Meeting topics included general WRIA 8 updates, discussion of the concept of using Implementation Committee meetings to convene discussions of habitat acquisition and restoration strategies for each of WRIA 8's four Tier 1 stream basins (Cedar River, Sammamish River, Issaquah Creek, and Bear Creek), review the draft 2022 WRIA 8 budget and work plan, hear a presentation on Department of Ecology's draft Water Quality Assessment tool and review how the tool categorizes WRIA 8 Tier 1 and 2 streams and lake areas to identify areas of concern using a variety of water quality parameters, and review of the May 20 Salmon Recovery Council meeting topics.