

WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council (SRC) Meeting Notes

Zoom Video Conference || July 15, 2021 2:00 – 4:15p.m.

Members Present		
#	Name	Affiliation
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 Victoria Hunt	City of Issaquah
6)	CM Neal Black	City of Kirkland
7)	CM Adam Morgan	City of Mill Creek
8)	CM Vanessa Kritzer	City of Redmond
9)	CM Ted Frantz	Town of Hunts Point
10)	CM Carl Scandella	Town of Yarrow Point
11)	Corinne Helmer	Cedar River Council
12)	Larry Franks	Friends of Issaquah Salmon Hatchery (F.I.S.H)
13)	Kirstin Haugen	King Conservation District
14)	Noel Gilbrough	Mid Sound Fisheries Enhancement Group
15)	Tor Bell	Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust
16)	Katie McGillvray	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
17)	Hank Myers	Washington Policy Center
18)	Cleo Neculae	Washington State Department of Ecology
19)	Terry Lavender	Water Tenders
Alternates Present		
20)	CM Laura Johnson	City of Edmonds
21)	Mike Mactutis	City of Kent
22)	CM Lorri Bodi	City of Lake Forest Park
23)	David Bain	Sno-King Watershed Council
24)	Sarah Heerhartz	Mid Sound Fisheries Enhancement Group
25)	Miles Penk	Washington State Department of Fish & Wildlife
Other Attendees		
26)	Cheryl Paston	City of Bellevue
27)	Christi Cox	City of Bothell
28)	Allen Quynn	City of Issaquah
29)	Rachel Konrady	City of Kirkland
30)	Mike Todd	City of Mill Creek
31)	Peter Holte	City of Redmond
32)	Kristina Lowthian	City of Renton
33)	Toby Coenen	City of Sammamish
34)	Stephanie Sullivan	City of Sammamish
35)	Toby Thaler	City of Seattle
36)	Carol Volk	City of Seattle
37)	Patricia Wangen	Beach Naturalist
38)	Larry Reymann	Environmental Science Center
39)	Jim Loring	Friends of Issaquah Salmon Hatchery (F.I.S.H)
40)	David St. John	King County
41)	Joan Lee	King County
42)	Jim Bower	King County
43)	Judy Blanco	King County
44)	Ingrid Lundin	King County
45)	Mike Murphy	King County

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46)	Mike Burger	Muckleshoot Indian Tribe
47)	Jim Adams	National Park Service
48)	Elizabeth Mooney	People for an Environmentally Responsible Kenmore
49)	Angela Harris	Port of Edmonds Commissioner
50)	Alexandra Doty	Puget Sound Partnership
51)	Rob Plotnikoff	Snohomish County
52)	Jeff Jensen	University of Washington Bothell
53)	Lily Cason	University of Washington Bothell
54)	Tara Wilson	Washington State Department of Natural Resources
55)	Whitney Neugebauer	Whale Scout
56)	Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz	WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Manager
57)	Lauren Urgenson	WRIA 8 Technical Coordinator
58)	Jason Wilkinson	WRIA 8 Project Coordinator
59)	Carla Nelson	WRIA 8 Administrative Coordinator

I) Call to Order / Introductions

Councilmember (CM) John Stokes (Chair) called the July Salmon Recovery Council (the “SRC,” or “Council”) meeting to order at 2:02 pm. Chair Stokes welcomed everyone and conducted introductions.

II) Public Comment – No public comment.

III) Consent Agenda – The SRC Meeting Minutes from [May 20, 2021](#) were discussed.

Action: The Salmon Recovery Council unanimously approved the May 20, 2021 meeting minutes.

IV) [Updates & Announcements](#)

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

- Puget Sound regional update; Lake Washington Ship Canal roundtable to develop goals and solutions to address elevated temperature and low dissolved oxygen; PUGET SOS bill to establish a Puget Sound Recovery National Program Office in the Environmental Protection Agency to oversee allocation of \$50M annually for five years to advance recovery and implementation of priority actions; Increased pinniped predation at Ballard Locks. WRIA 8 will remain in communication with WDFW and Muckleshoot Indian Tribe to track and support efforts to address increase in pinniped predation at the Locks.

Updates Discussion:

- Mike Burger (Muckleshoot Indian Tribe) announced that a meeting is taking place to discuss possible actions to address pinniped predation.
- Larry Franks (F.I.S.H) asked when will the viewing window be open at Ballard Locks. Katie McGillvray (Army Corps of Engineers) stated that the window is currently open to the public, and she will keep the SRC apprised of the celebration to mark its official opening.
- Jeff Jensen (UW Bothell) asked for more information on the sockeye and tagging methods on fish being trapped and taken to the Cedar River. Mike Burger (Muckleshoot Indian Tribe) said that trapped sockeye are not clipped, or wire tagged. They are otolith-marked at Cedar River Hatchery. He continued that there are differences in run times and he will continue to monitor the runs.

V) [King County Conservation Futures Tax \(CFT\)/ Park Levy \(PL\) Advisory Committee 2022 Funding Recommendations](#) – Terry Lavender, Chair, King County CFT/PL Advisory Committee

Chair, John Stokes introduced Terry Lavender to present the Conservation Futures Advisory Committee’s 2022 funding recommendations related to WRIA 8. Terry noted that this is the third year that CFT has been implementing the [Land Conservation Initiative \(LCI\)](#) in the form of a [match waiver program](#) to fund natural infrastructure that targets the most under-served areas. The Advisory Committee received \$52M in requests, with 40% of the \$45M recommended for funding containing a strong salmon recovery nexus. Terry provided

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details on three CFT recommended restoration projects: Piper’s Crest; East Fork Issaquah Creek; Middle Bear and Cottage Lake Creeks which included highlights from King County Executive, Dow Constantine’s visit to Bear Creek in May. Terry concluded the presentation by providing an overview of a series of marine nearshore projects, including an update on Frog Holler at Camp Sealth; Vashon-Neill Point/Morningside Farm and the Vashon Island marine shoreline projects that total \$4.8M.

Discussion:

Jason M-K said he appreciates the strong connection between WRIA 8 salmon recovery priorities and CFT projects.

CM Vanessa Krizter (City of Redmond) was pleased to learn more about the Bear and Cottage Creek investments.

VI) 2022 WRIA 8 Management Committee Recommended Budget and Work Plan – Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz

The WRIA 8 Management Committee (MC) met on June 7 to discuss two proposed ILA cost share budget options. Proposed option A included increasing the ILA cost share by Consumer Price Index for Wages (CPI-W) 2.5%, which would increase the total WRIA 8 ILA cost share by ~\$16,138. Proposed option B does not include a cost share increase in 2022. Jason M-K presented the Management Committee’s recommendation to approve option A - increasing the ILA cost share by 2.5% per the [2022 proposed budget and work plan](#) and thanked the Management Committee members for their time, engagement, and budget recommendation.

Discussion:

- Chair Stokes said he appreciates WRIA 8 staff’s suggestion to identify programs or projects to fund using the \$387,442 carry forward balance. He also noted the importance of the SRC supporting the cost share increase, as it demonstrates confidence and approval of the organization and its goal.
- CM Vanessa Krizter (City of Redmond) agreed with proposed option A and the show of confidence to invest more in this great work. CM Krizter asked when WRIA 8 staff would come back to the Council with suggestions to spend the carry forward balance. Jason explained how this information will be provided over the course of several SRC meetings in installments throughout this year and 2022.
- CM Adam Morgan (City of Mill Creek) asked for more details on the ILA cost share table to provide this information to City of Mill Creek’s Council. Jason M-K explained that the cost share formula is updated every three years which calculates the population, assessed land value, and land area. Jason noted the cost share table was provided as part of the meeting packet.

***Action:** The Salmon Recovery Council unanimously approved the 2022 budget and staff work plan as proposed by the Management Committee.*

VII) [2021 Salmon Recovery Funding Board Grant Round Funding Recommendations](#) – Jason Wilkinson, WRIA 8 Projects and Funding Coordinator

Jason explained how the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) grant program funds habitat restoration, protection, acquisition, and monitoring efforts. He gave details how the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) administers the statewide program using federal and state dollars and noted that State legislature increased funding for the SRFB program this year, which modestly increased WRIA 8’s allocated amount to ~\$435,000, which is the largest amount since 2010. He explained how the funding recommendations are developed by the WRIA 8 Project Subcommittee, and this year the subcommittee recommended to allocate the full balance of grant funding in support the City of Issaquah’s Lower Issaquah Creek Restoration project. The other two projects were lower priority and/or had some additional design questions that needed to be addressed. One of the projects - Bear Creek Restoration at Friendly Village (Phase 3 design) – received some funding through WRIA 8’s King County Flood Control District’s (FCD) Cooperative Watershed Management (CWM) grant round to help better refine the project scope and answer some critical feasibility questions. Jason concluded by noting that although monitoring projects are eligible for SRFB funds, WRIA 8 has made habitat restoration and land acquisition the priority focus of these grant funds.

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Discussion:

- CM Vanessa Kritzer (City of Redmond) explained that she hoped the project sponsor for the Bear Creek at Friendly Village project could resolve the design/feasibility issues and understands the recommendation. Jason Wilkinson stated that the project was awarded funds for some conceptual design tasks through a CWM grant.
- Chair Stokes asked if the SRC can consider applying carry forward funds to support the Bear Creek at Friendly Village? Jason M-K replied that the project is at a stage where it could be considered to receive some of those funds through a potential project development small grant round WRIA 8 staff are considering, but allocations would need to be no more than \$25K. Jason Wilkinson added that WRIA 8 can work with project sponsors to develop a scope to fit within such a funding cap.
- CM Ted Frantz (Town of Hunts Point) sought to clarify if there will be a larger pool of grant funds next year with the addition of Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) funds. Jason Wilkinson stated that WRIA 8 expects its full \$1.4M allocation from PSAR next year. That amount is part of the recently passed biennial budget and provides an opportunity to entertain larger projects.

Action: The Salmon Recovery Council unanimously approved the 2021 Salmon Recovery Funding Board Recommendation as presented.

VIII) [Salish Sea Marine Survival Project Findings](#) – Michael Schmidt, Long Live the Kings

Michael reviewed the scope of the Salish Sea Marine Survival Project findings from 7+ years of data collection. He provided the caveat that this work is still on-going, but he wanted to provide a snapshot of where Chinook, coho, and steelhead juvenile survival rates currently stand. He noted there is a 10X decline in juvenile survival rates since the studies began in the early 1980s. He then explained how declining trends through the 80s and 90s received no real rebound compared to coastal population. The [Synthesis of Findings report](#) documents the juvenile survival issue by describing the multiple pathways of impacts to salmon, each factor's interrelationships with other factors, and the results of comprehensive ecosystem modelling.

Discussion:

- Jason M-K expressed how interesting these findings are and was glad to see the data is being considered in regional management considerations.
- CM Carl Scandella (Town of Yarrow Point) asked how the data could be used to support recovery of Puget Sound salmon population, and if there was any insight on the mathematical techniques used to better understand what is on the horizon to bolster the declining populations. Michael replied noting a caveat is necessary to understand that a correlation today may not be relevant tomorrow. He continued to explain how the ecosystem models are used to assess strategies in predicting patterns and outcomes. He reminded the SRC that these processes are imperfect. Data sets are focused on salmon, but salmon interact with their entire ecosystem and the data provided correlational work and the hope is that a broader spectrum of aspects can be viewed and deemed helpful.
- CM Ted Frantz asked if their studies provided insight into whether seals could thrive from a modified diet to reduce their predation on salmon. Michael answered that there are some signs of seals responding to other fish coming into the ecosystem. However, seals are opportunistic feeders. He noted how there are some thoughts to relocate seal populations rather than get them to eat something else.
- Chair Stokes commented that the data is interesting but with so many caveats there it's difficult to know how to change the course of the decline of salmon. He asked if their data could provide more clarity to inform management actions. Michael commented that recommendations are in place to push for more diversity of salmon populations, reinforcing importance on estuary restoration, the need for additional resolution on the Snohomish River to lower the level of contaminants at wastewater facilities. He added they are currently developing implementation strategies for steelhead. So, Michael suggested, these data sets do support actions; however, the recovery process takes time. Jason M-K noted that there are

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discussions with watersheds and the Puget Sound region about how to use this information to inform recovery actions.

- Corinne Helmer (Cedar River Council) asked if the timing for the release of hatchery fish could be adjusted to reduce predation? Corinne also asked for additional insight on the audio deterrents for pinniped predation, and if there were any other methods that could be helpful.
- David Bain (Sno-King Council) asked about how kelp and eel grass abundance and status of beach-spawning forage fish populations affect salmon, and . Michael commented that more work was done with eelgrass and kelp in the Strait of Georgia as opposed to Central Puget Sound. However, emerging findings indicate that eelgrass is less of a concern from a habitat perspective, but kelp is a concern. But, the relationship between kelp and salmon isn't well understood.
- CM Victoria Hunt (City of Issaquah) added that having specific actions and best practices related to the project's findings would be very useful for local governments to consider in local codes and model ordinances.

IX) [“Mystery Nerka” in North Lake Washington Streams](#) – Jeff Jensen, PhD, University of Washington Bothell

Mark Phillips introduced Dr. Jeff Jensen and thanked him for his work to reestablish kokanee populations and establish a citizen salmon watcher program. Dr. Jensen began by providing an overview of his 2017 discovery of a kokanee-like fish while following fall salmon runs in tributary streams to the Sammamish River. These smaller fish found predominantly in Lake Washington and Sammamish and were originally thought to be hybrids or from stock kokanee and sockeye introduced to the basin. Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) conducted some genetic work on these fish, which was compared to more than 60 populations of kokanee throughout the Northwest. The genetic data indicated these “mystery” fish were genetically distinct, with a very limited spawning distribution. Jeff concluded by sharing next steps to further document the origins of these fish, including continuing to comparing genetics of “mystery nerka” with native kokanee; conducting otolith microchemistry; continuing North Lake Washington Salmon Watcher program. The long-term goal is to re-establish native kokanee in previously occupied streams by stocking remote site incubators in several streams beginning in 2023.

Discussion:

- Whitney Neugebauer (Whale Scout) asked for a list of streams that would be the best fit for kokanee reintroduction? Dr. Jensen stated that **McAleer Creek** and Lion Creek were highest on his list. Also, would consider May Creek and Swamp Creek. Horse Creek in Bothell is also a possibility. She also asked about the likelihood for kokanee to be listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Dr. Jensen explained that there was an attempt to list Lake Sammamish kokanee under the ESA, but the attempt was ultimately unsuccessful and is very challenging.
- Larry Reymann noted he was on site when a kokanee was documented in May Creek. He commented on his interest in anglers that are catching kokanee on the south end of Lake Washington. He is interested in whether kokanee could potentially use May Creek. Dr. Jensen stated he will get GPS coordinates of where anglers are catching what fish. He encouraged Mr. Reymann or anyone to become a Salmon Watcher on May Creek.
- CM Carl Scandella (Town of Yarrow Point) asked what Dr. Jensen hoped to learn from the high-level DNA sequencing – trying to establish a family tree or evolutionary relationships? Dr. Jensen stated that species levels is not as interesting biologically, but it is harder and harder to distinguish populations the further you try to slit them. The genetic work allows a lot more sensitivity to recognize genetically distinct populations and to establish that they are native to the basin.
- Jason M-K commented on management implications and how this work will be important to WRIA 8 recovery work.

IX) **Next Meeting:** Chair Stokes noted the next SRC meeting is September 16, 2021, 2:00 – 4:15 pm, via Zoom.

Meeting Adjourned at 4:36 pm.