



WRIA 8 Updates and Committee Reports

September 16, 2021

- **Puget Sound Regional Update** – The Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council (PS SRC) last met on July 29. The meeting focused on:
 - Update on development of the 2022-2026 Puget Sound Action Agenda update
 - Status of the update to the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Plan
 - Legislative update focusing on salmon priorities
 - Assessment of fish passage improvement opportunities at stream mouths along BNSF railway
 - Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Duckabush restoration project proposal
 - Discussion of “project of concern” designation for Point No Point Estuary Restoration and potential PS SRC support in appealing to the Salmon Recovery Funding Board
 - Options for 2023-2025 Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration large capital grant program project prioritization
 - Criteria and funding strategy for a list of salmon recovery “mega projects” (NOTE: WRIA 8 is working on a public-private funding strategy for critical Ballard Locks infrastructure repairs as a pilot project for this effort.

The PS SRC is scheduled to meet next on September 23. Diane Buckshnis, Edmonds City Councilmember, and Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz represent WRIA 8.

The **South Central Action Area Caucus** (Local Integrating Organization (LIO)) met on August 26. Meeting topics included Puget Sound recovery updates, presentation from The Nature Conservancy on the “Green Bridges Project” to design treatment for stormwater off the I-5 Bridge over the Ship Canal, co-design training development, and discussion of ideas for 2022 Puget Sound recovery funding. Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz represents WRIA 8 on the LIO.

- **WRIA 8 staffing** – In August, Jason Wilkinson, WRIA 8 Projects and Funding Coordinator, took a special duty assignment with King County as the Project Manager for the King County Flood Plan Update. This temporary position is intended to last up to three years, and WRIA 8 is in the process of hiring to backfill the position. With Jason’s departure, the WRIA 8 staff team will be short-handed for a time. The job will be posted soon, and we encourage partners to share the opportunity with their networks.
- **Lake Washington Ship Canal temperature and dissolved oxygen roundtable process** – On June 3 and July 7, WRIA 8 and Long Live the Kings convened a Lake Washington Ship Canal Salmon Roundtable with over 35 attendees from 16 partner organizations to begin the process of establishing common goals and objectives and identifying possible feasible solutions to address elevated water temperatures and low dissolved oxygen conditions that are impacting the migration and survival of salmon. Following initial roundtable meetings,

attendees organized into smaller, focused work groups to establish project goals, criteria to evaluate alternatives, brainstorm and research conceptual alternatives, and rank alternatives. Phase 1 of the process is expected to be complete by January/February of 2022 and will produce a small number of the highest priority alternatives to advance for additional feasibility study. [See summary sheet in meeting packet for additional details]

- **Status of fish returns** – Each year Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe count numbers of salmon returning through the Ballard Locks between June 12 and October 2. Sockeye are the first to return. Between mid-June – late August sockeye counts were 38,612 this year, higher than the past few years but still substantially below the 10-year average of 73,217 sockeye. Chinook began their return July 2. As of September 9, the run is 97% complete with a count of 13,910 Chinook, above the 10-year average of 8,015 Chinook. The first coho were detected at the Locks on August 27. As of September 9, 2,896 coho have passed through the Locks.
- **Salmon SEEson** – The WRIA 8-led Salmon SEEson program kicks off in September. When salmon return each fall, the program coordinates with partners to highlight and promote opportunities for the public to see salmon in local streams and rivers. This fall, the Salmon SEEson [website](#) provides a map and details for several self-guided viewing locations as well as virtual viewing opportunities. Like last year, Salmon SEEson is encouraging the public to “recreate responsibly” and follow current public health guidelines when visiting salmon viewing locations. Salmon SEEson is sponsored by WRIA 8 with additional sponsorship support from the Saving Water Partnership, Duwamish Alive Coalition, the Green/Duwamish and Central Puget Sound Watershed, the Snoqualmie Watershed Forum, and King County.
- **Tours of Cedar River floodplain restoration projects** – In August, WRIA 8 hosted a tour of the Riverbend Floodplain Restoration project site on the Cedar River for WRIA 8 Technical Committee and Implementation Committee members. King County project managers updated attendees on the revised project design precipitated by altered site conditions from the breach of the levee during the flood of February 2020. At the request of staff from Congresswoman Schrier’s office, WRIA 8 also hosted site visits with Congressional staff and state and regional floodplain restoration partners to the Rainbow Bend Floodplain Restoration project and Riverbend project sites to deepen their understanding of the value and multiple benefits of floodplain restoration and opportunities for the federal government to provide support.
- **WRIA 8 E-News** – The August edition of the WRIA 8 E-news included the following topics and updates: Effects of elevated water temperatures on salmon, Unleash the Brilliance’s program to engage at-risk youth in conservation-related projects and work, the challenge of meeting the needs of humans and salmon in developed areas, Minke whales of Puget Sound, Indigenous Plant Forum efforts to preserve and maintain plants and preserve traditional knowledge, community group work to restore Edmonds Marsh, progress to replace a failing culvert and restore Meadowdale Beach Park, an alert about invasive African Clawed Frogs found in areas of WRIA 8, and the importance of conserving water to protect salmon habitat. The next edition is scheduled for release in October. Please submit topics to Carla Nelson (carnelson@kingcounty.gov).

WRIA 8 Committee Reports

WRIA 8 SRC Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Subcommittee meeting – The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Subcommittee continues to focus on implementation of actions outlined in the Strategic Plan Action Framework. Strategies include revising grant round materials based on our strengthened DEI emphasis last year, incorporating DEI principals into WRIA 8 communications and outreach, and strengthening connections with community-based organizations with a focus on environmental equity. 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 August and September. The August meeting was a field tour of King County’s River Bend project site on the Cedar River. The September meeting included a mini-monitoring workshop to identify near term monitoring and assessment priorities to address critical limiting factors in WRIA 8 salmon recovery.

WRIA 8 Implementation Committee – The Implementation Committee met on September 7. Meeting topics included general WRIA 8 updates, review of draft 2022 federal and state legislative priorities, review of a draft letter to the Governor to share 2022 state legislative priorities, overview of the “Roads to Ruin – Will Water Quality Retrofits Save Salmon?” project, update on Lake Sammamish kokanee recovery activities, and review of the September 16 Salmon Recovery Council meeting topics.