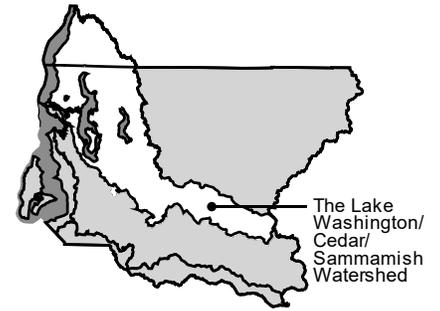




September XX, 2021



The Honorable Jay Inslee
Office of the Governor
PO Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

RE: Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed (WRIA 8) Salmon Recovery Council State Legislative Priorities

Dear Governor Inslee:

On behalf of the Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed (WRIA 8) Salmon Recovery Council, we wish to share our enclosed priorities for the upcoming state legislative session. Your leadership is critical to ensuring we can continue our efforts—and Washington State’s commitment—to protect and restore habitat for salmon listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. Additionally, salmon habitat restoration is essential to ensuring the long-term availability of Chinook as prey for critically endangered Southern Resident Orcas. Our priority restoration work also benefits streamflows, improves fish passage, supports tribal treaty fishing rights, protects and provides public access to open space, and makes our watersheds and communities resilient to a changing climate.

The state’s investment to date in salmon recovery and Puget Sound ecosystem restoration is enabling watersheds and the region to make significant progress on our highest priorities. Despite these investments and progress, our state’s salmon populations continue to decline. To reverse this trend, we need to increase the pace of protecting and restoring habitat and improving water quality through additional investment. In the 2021 biennial budget session, you proposed and the legislature appropriated funding increases for some important state salmon recovery funding programs, which is helpful in working towards addressing the funding need to enhance our science-based salmon recovery efforts and implement priority habitat restoration and protection projects. Thank you for supporting these programs, the results of which are in progress.

During the upcoming legislative session, we encourage you to accelerate the progress and momentum for salmon recovery and watershed health in Puget Sound and statewide. Below are the WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council’s priorities for the 2022 legislative session.

- Foremost, we strongly support the priorities contained in the Governor’s Salmon Package, which are currently in development.
- Support funding for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife to support and lead monitoring of salmon populations, and for studies and management of predation, disease, and other issues that affect WRIA 8 salmon populations.

Beaux Arts Village
Bellevue
Bothell
Clyde Hill
Edmonds
Hunts Point
Issaquah
Kenmore
Kent
King County
Kirkland
Lake Forest Park
Maple Valley
Medina
Mercer Island
Mill Creek
Mountlake Terrace
Mukilteo
Newcastle
Redmond
Renton
Sammamish
Seattle
Shoreline
Snohomish County
Woodinville
Woodway
Yarrow Point

Alderwood Water and Wastewater District
The Boeing Company
Cedar River Council
Forterra
Friends of the Issaquah
Salmon Hatchery
Mid-Sound Fisheries Enhancement Group
Mountains to Sound
Greenway Trust
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Sno-King Watershed Council
Trout Unlimited
US Army Corps of Engineers
Washington Departments:
Ecology
Fish and Wildlife
Natural Resources
Washington Association of Sewer and Water Districts
Washington Policy Center
Water Tenders

- Track and support legislation that seeks to improve regulatory protections for areas that are important for salmon habitat, including proposals to define and implement “net ecological gain,” and regulatory improvements that enhance protection of riparian areas and lake and marine shorelines.
- Track and participate in efforts to improve existing funding authorities to support salmon recovery and Puget Sound restoration priorities and to develop new watershed-based and/or regional funding authorities to support multiple-benefit projects that address salmon recovery and Puget Sound restoration priorities.
- Support legislation and funding requests that promote stormwater management planning, coordination, and implementation at a watershed scale, address critical data/information needs, and that seek innovative solutions to achieve multiple benefits from integrating stormwater management and habitat protection and restoration. Champion legislation that prioritizes implementation of natural drainage systems, such as low impact development and green stormwater infrastructure, at the watershed scale.
- Support efforts to address effects of climate change on salmon and salmon habitat. WRIA 8 recognizes that recovering salmon requires planning for and adapting to changing watershed conditions resulting from climate change. WRIA 8 supports policies and programs that address temperature impaired water bodies to improve salmon migration and survival, increase the pace of salmon habitat protection and restoration to improve ecosystem resiliency, and that mitigate projected effects of climate change on salmon.

WRIA 8 appreciates the challenges involved in making state budget decisions and applauds your leadership, especially during these challenging times. Thank you again for your work to continue Washington State’s commitment to salmon and orca recovery, restoring the health of Puget Sound, and working to address effects of climate change.

If you have any questions about projects funded in WRIA 8 or how these priorities advance our salmon recovery objectives, please feel free to contact Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz, Salmon Recovery Manager for the Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed, at 206-477-4780 or jason.mulvihill-kuntz@kingcounty.gov. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

John Stokes
Chair, WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council
Councilmember, City of Bellevue

Mark Phillips
Vice-Chair, WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council
Councilmember, City of Lake Forest Park

cc: Laura Blackmore, Director, Puget Sound Partnership
Megan Duffy, Director, Washington State Recreation and Conservation
Office
Hillary Franz, Director, Washington Department of Natural Resources
Kelly Susewind, Director, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Laura Watson, Director, Washington Department of Ecology
Justin Parker, Executive Director, Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission
JT Austin, Natural Resources Policy Advisor, Office of the Governor
Jim Cahill, Senior Budget Assistant, Natural Resources, Office of Financial
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Leslie Connelly, Budget Assistant, Natural Resources, Office of Financial
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Myra Baldini, Capital Budget Assistant, Office of Financial Management
Linda Steinmann, Budget Assistant, Natural Resources, Office of Financial
Management
Jeff Breckel, Chair, Washington State Salmon Recovery Funding Board
David Troutt, Chair, Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council
Erik Neatherlin, Executive Coordinator, Governor's Salmon Recovery Office
Suzanna Smith, Chair, Washington Salmon Coalition
Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed Salmon Recovery Council
members
Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz, Salmon Recovery Manager, Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish
Watershed