

# WATER RESOURCE INVENTORY AREA (WRIA 8) SALMON RECOVERY COUNCIL

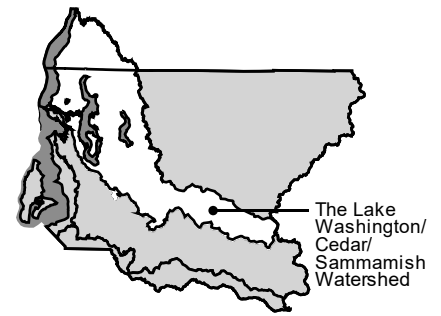


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Fish and Wildlife  
Natural Resources  
Washington Association of  
Sewer and Water Districts  
Washington Policy Center  
Water Tenders

January 13, 2022

The Honorable  
**Senator/Representative**  
**Address**  
**Address**  
Olympia, WA 98504



RE: Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed (WRIA 8) Salmon Recovery Council state legislative priorities

Dear Senator/Representative:

On behalf of the Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed (WRIA 8) Salmon Recovery Council, we wish to share our 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, protects and restores riparian and shoreline habitats, 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.

Legislative support for salmon recovery and watershed health programs enhances our science-based salmon recovery efforts and supports implementing priority projects that achieve multiple benefits—restored salmon habitat, reduced flood hazards, and improved water quality. State funding also provides important leverage and match to federal and local funding. Despite these investments and progress, the majority of our state’s salmon populations continue to decline. To reverse this trend, we need additional investment to increase the pace of protecting and restoring habitat and improving water quality. The recently updated state salmon recovery strategy and associated proposed investments for this legislative session are a significant and important step in addressing the need. Additional future investments and support for critical funding programs will be necessary to make progress on the state’s salmon recovery strategy and specific recovery goals in watersheds throughout the state.

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.

- Support the following elements of **the proposed salmon recovery package**:
  - Support increased riparian area protection and restoration by **creating and funding a new Riparian Habitat Conservation Grant program** and **passing SB 5727 / HB 1838 – the “Lorraine Loomis Act”** – and associated funding to:

- protect and restore riparian areas through creating a new salmon habitat standard for the width of riparian areas based on the height of trees that grow in that area, incorporate the new standard into local land use plans, provide financial assistance to landowners to meet the new requirement, and establish a statewide riparian plant propagation program at public and private nurseries to supply plants to meet restoration needs.
- Funding for community-based, public-private stormwater partnerships to develop local capacity and secure private investment for stormwater retrofits.
  - Statewide prioritization of fish passage barriers and fish passage rulemaking.
  - Strengthening investments in science and monitoring.
- 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:
    - **Support the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's (WDFW) Supplemental Budget Freshwater Monitoring request** to monitor salmon populations in targeted watersheds, including Lake Washington, to inform management actions and track the status and trends of populations towards meeting recovery goals. In addition to the proposed funding, WDFW should be funded to establish a statewide freshwater monitoring program for critical salmon populations in watersheds throughout the state.
  - 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.
  - Support 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:
    - **Support passage of HB 1672 – Clarify County Authority Over Conservation Futures Levy (CFL)** to clarify that the CFL is not subject to the levy limit of 1% annual growth and thereby restore the authority of elected county boards and commissions to establish the local CFL rate for the program up to the existing legislative cap of 6.25 cents/\$1,000 of assessed value.
  - **Support passage of SJR 8219 / HJR 4209** to amend the Washington state Constitution by adding a new section regarding the conservation and protection of the state's natural resources.

WRIA 8 appreciates the challenges involved in making state budget decisions and applauds your leadership. Thank you again for your work to continue Washington State's commitment to salmon recovery and restoring the health of Puget Sound.

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, the WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Manager, at 206-477-4780 or [jason.mulvihill-kuntz@kingcounty.gov](mailto:jason.mulvihill-kuntz@kingcounty.gov). Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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

NOTE: This letter was sent to all legislators in the following legislative districts: 1, 5, 11, 21, 32, 36, 37, 38, 41, 43, 44, 45, 46, 48, as well as the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Senate Ways and Means Committee, Senate Energy, Environment, and Telecommunications Committee, House Capital Budget Committee, and House Environment Committee.

cc: Laura Blackmore, Director, Puget Sound Partnership  
Megan Duffy, Director, Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office  
Hillary Franz, Commissioner of Public Lands, Washington State Department of Natural Resources  
Kirk Robinson, Director, Washington State Conservation Commission  
Kelly Susewind, Director, Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife  
Laura Watson, Director, Washington State Department of Ecology  
Justin Parker, Executive Director, Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission  
Jeff Breckel, Chair, Salmon Recovery Funding Board  
David Troutt, Chair, Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council  
Erik Neatherlin, Executive Coordinator, Governor's Salmon Recovery Office  
Mike Lithgow, Chair, Washington Salmon Coalition  
Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed Salmon Recovery Council members  
Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz, Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Salmon Recovery Manager