

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

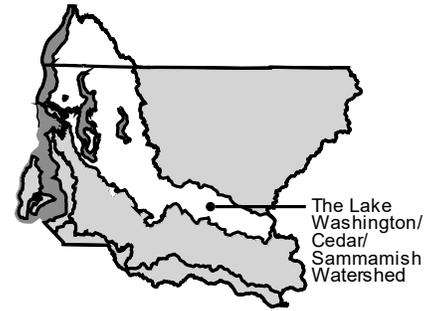


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Greenway Trust  
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Atmospheric Administration  
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Washington Policy Center  
Water Tenders

May 16, 2022

Jeff Breckel, Chair  
Salmon Recovery Funding Board  
c/o Recreation and Conservation Office  
PO Box 40917  
Olympia, WA 98504-0917



RE: 2022 Supplemental funding decision – approach for allocating salmon habitat restoration funding

Dear Chair Breckel,

On behalf of the Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed (WRIA 8) Salmon Recovery Council (Council), we wish to share our input on the approach for distributing the recent \$75 million legislative appropriation to the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) for salmon habitat restoration projects. We understand the legislature intends for \$50 million of the funding to support large projects over \$5 million and \$25 million to support projects of any size. We thank all who worked hard to secure additional funding for salmon recovery. We understand the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) may decide on the allocation of these funds at its June 2 meeting, and we appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on how this much-needed investment can be most effectively allocated to support salmon habitat protection and restoration.

As the local salmon recovery Lead Entity, WRIA 8 guides salmon recovery planning, prioritization, and implementation. Our membership is comprised of 29 local government partners, and representatives from state and federal agencies, non-profit organizations, and other stakeholders with an interest in salmon recovery and watershed health. The WRIA 8 Council recommends that the \$25 million for habitat restoration projects of any size be allocated based on the existing regional allocation percentages and Lead Entity process, and that these funds be available to projects included on the 2022 or 2023 project lists as recommended by the regions. Lead Entities would receive funding for projects based on each region's existing sub-allocation process. Regions would work with their constituent Lead Entities to identify the amounts to apply to each year's project list(s), with any funding a region does not utilize in 2022 available to that region for allocation in 2023.

This proposed approach appropriately utilizes the existing region/Lead Entity process and structure. It allows regions and Lead Entities to use some or all their portion of the \$25 million in 2022, in case they have robust project lists with funding needs beyond available funding amounts, but also allows regions and Lead Entities the flexibility to defer some funding for use next year if they determine that would result in better, more fully developed projects. WRIA 8 would likely take a hybrid approach, allocating some funding to projects on this year's list and holding some for a larger grant round next year when we anticipate significant funding requests for several priority projects.

Regarding the \$50 million intended for projects with funding requests greater than \$5 million, WRIA 8 understands the intention is to allocate some of this funding to unfunded projects on existing grant program project lists such as the PSAR Large Capital Program. We support this direction but also encourage the SRFB to consider allocating funding to other important projects not on existing project lists from previous grant rounds. The Puget Sound Partnership maintains a list of “legacy projects,” which are large, complex, and beyond the scope of traditional grant funding programs and could be supported with this funding. In addition, a future round of the Targeted Investment program, if expanded to allow for more than one submission per region, could be an effective method of allocating this funding to priorities such as orca recovery. We encourage the SRFB to make this funding available for acquisition and design projects as well as restoration-only projects to support the pipeline of project development.

We urge the SRFB to decide on the process for using the \$25 million at its June 2 meeting, so that Lead Entities can finalize 2022 project lists accordingly and initiate 2023 project development work with project sponsors as soon as possible. To inform decision-making for how to most effectively allocate the \$50 million, we encourage the SRFB to share and provide an opportunity to comment on alternatives under consideration.

WRIA 8 appreciates the challenges involved in determining how to allocate scarce resources. Thank you again for your work to continue Washington State’s commitment to salmon recovery. If you have any questions, 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



Vanessa Kritzer  
Vice-Chair, WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council  
Councilmember, City of Redmond

Cc: Erik Neatherlin, Governor’s Salmon Recovery Office  
Jeannie Abbott, Governor’s Salmon Recovery Office  
Megan Duffy, Recreation and Conservation Office  
Scott Robinson, Recreation and Conservation Office  
Brock Milliern, Recreation and Conservation Office  
Marc Duboiski, Recreation and Conservation Office  
David Troutt, Chair, Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council  
Laura Blackmore, Puget Sound Partnership  
Amber Moore, Puget Sound Partnership  
Alex Conley, Chair, Council of Regions  
Mike Lithgow, Chair, Washington Salmon Coalition  
WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council members