



## WRIA 8 Updates and Committee Reports

July 21, 2022

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- **Puget Sound Regional Update** – The **Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council (PS SRC)** last met on May 26. The meeting focused on:
  - Legislative Subcommittee update and discussion on potential legislative priorities for the 2023-2025 state legislative session.
  - Review and update on the Puget Sound Legacy Project Portfolio, and development of a work group.
  - Presentation from Department of Ecology on the science and management of nutrient pollution in Puget Sound.
  - Discussion and recommendations for addressing of Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration grant-funded project cost increases.
  - Review of the draft 2022-2026 Action Agenda for Puget Sound recovery.
  - Presentation and discussion of Puget Sound Partnership efforts to explore private sector financing for riparian conservation.
  - Presentation of the final 2022-2026 Action Agenda for Puget Sound recovery and recommendation of approval to the Leadership Council.

The PS SRC is scheduled to meet next on July 28. Diane Buckshnis, Edmonds City Councilmember, and Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz represent WRIA 8.

The **South Central Action Area Caucus** (Local Integrating Organization (LIO)) last met on June 2, and focused on a briefing from Washington SeaGrant on a new sea level rise vulnerability tool, Puget Sound recovery updates, and a work planning discussion on the priorities for the 2023 LIO contract. Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz represents WRIA 8 on the LIO.

- **Congresswoman Schrier tour of Riverbend Levee Setback and Floodplain Restoration project** – On June 7, WRIA 8 staff collaborated with King County project managers to lead a tour for Congresswoman Kim Schrier of the Riverbend Levee Setback and Floodplain Restoration Project on the Cedar River. The Riverbend Project is currently in the final phase of construction, reconnecting the Cedar River to its floodplain at a 52-acre site. The project builds upon a long-term effort to protect public safety and restore salmon habitat by acquiring property and relocating residents from a flood-prone portion of the Cedar River floodplain. The project will achieve 40% of WRIA 8's goal to reconnect 130 acres of Cedar River floodplain by 2025. The site is expected to provide immediate habitat benefits for salmon and is designed to evolve over time as ecological processes re-establish themselves. The tour included participation from Puget Sound Partnership, American Rivers, and the Floodplains by Design collaborative, which helped emphasize the multiple benefits provided by floodplain restoration, federal funding alignment, and permit/regulatory streamlining. Larry Phillips, Cedar River Council representative and former King County Councilmember, also attended and shared the community engagement efforts done to raise awareness and support for this project and the overall effort to restore habitat and

reduce flood risk in the Cedar River. Congresswoman Schrier thanked the project team and construction crew for their excellent work and expressed her strong support for these kinds of projects. She is interested in tracking the implementation of the project and wants to return in the future to see the project's outcomes first-hand.

- **Panning for additional WRIA 8 site visits** – WRIA 8 staff are planning to coordinate a series of site visit opportunities this summer/fall for Salmon Recovery Council partners, state legislators, members of Congress, and funders. WRIA 8 staff would appreciate Salmon Recovery Council feedback on sites/locations of interest. Please see a draft list of potential project sites and locations for site visits in the meeting packet. Please contact Carrie Byron ([cbyron@kingcounty.gov](mailto:cbyron@kingcounty.gov)) to provide feedback and suggestions.
- **Draft 2023 WRIA 8 state and federal legislative priorities and convening Legislative Subcommittee** – Each year WRIA 8 identifies state and federal legislative priorities to support. WRIA 8 staff have prepared draft proposed ideas for 2023 legislative priorities for partner feedback, which are included in the meeting packet. These initial draft priorities are intended to be umbrella topics/concepts WRIA 8 would support, understanding specific related bills, initiatives, budget provisos, etc. would emerge ahead of and during legislative session for which WRIA 8 would need to consider support. To enable WRIA 8 to act more nimbly in reviewing and considering support for specific legislation or funding proposals, WRIA 8 staff plan to convene a Legislative Subcommittee of interested partners to revise draft legislative priorities for Salmon Recovery Council consideration, and to review emerging legislation and determine WRIA 8 support (i.e., does it align with “approved” priorities) and any possible action. The Salmon Recovery Council will consider approval of legislative priorities in September. Contact Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz ([Jason.mulvihill-kuntz@kingcounty.gov](mailto:Jason.mulvihill-kuntz@kingcounty.gov)) if you have feedback on the draft proposed ideas for legislative priorities or would like to participate on the Legislative Subcommittee.
- **King County Flood Control District approves WRIA 8 Cooperative Watershed Management grant recommendations** – On Tuesday, July 12<sup>th</sup>, the King County Flood Control District Board of Supervisors approved the 2022 Cooperative Watershed Management grant recommendations from each of the four King County WRIAs. This included \$3,866,618 in funding recommended by the WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council, which will support 7 habitat restoration projects, 8 outreach and education projects, and 9 monitoring and assessment projects. King County staff are now working to place each of these projects under contract so work can get underway.
- **Pilot Project to address effects of artificial lighting on Lake Sammamish** – At the request of state Representative Bill Ramos, WRIA 8 worked with other interested parties to develop a budget proposal during the 2022 legislative session for a pilot effort to implement a series of actions to address the harmful impacts of artificial light at night on native salmon along the shoreline of Lake Sammamish. The legislature awarded \$125,000 to support the pilot project. The planning group is revising the scope of work and schedule for implementation. Rep. Ramos expressed interest in building on this initial pilot phase of work to support future legislative policy and budget requests on this topic.

- **Lake Washington Ship Canal temperature and dissolved oxygen roundtable process** – The goal of the Roundtable is to act urgently to improve juvenile and adult salmon health and survival in the Lake Washington Ship Canal by lowering water temperatures, increasing dissolved oxygen, and reducing abrupt transitions in those conditions. WRIA 8 and Long Live the Kings (LLTK) are working on a write-up of prioritized alternatives to be completed this summer. LLTK is seeking funding for feasibility analysis and modeling of top-tier alternatives with WRIA 8 support.
- **WRIA 8 E-News** –The [June edition](#) of the WRIA 8 E-news included the following topics and updates: Review of WRIA 8’s 2022 grant funding recommendations, article discussing racial inequities in U.S. aquatic food system, proposal from King County Executive Constantine to increase the Conservation Futures Levy in support of protecting open space and natural lands, climate change impacts on sewer system infrastructure in King County, film highlighting juvenile salmon outmigration, and announcements of recent funding opportunities and project updates . The next edition is scheduled for August. Please submit proposed topics to Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz ([jason.mulvihill-kuntz@kingcounty.gov](mailto:jason.mulvihill-kuntz@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 WRIA 8’s DEI Strategic Plan. The DEI Subcommittee met in June with the Local Integrating Organization’s Cascadia subcontractor team to discuss project priorities for a funding opportunity to support WRIA DEI work.

**WRIA 8 Technical Committee** – The WRIA 8 Technical Committee met in July to hear a salmon returns update from WDFW staff, identify priority improvements to the Cooperative Watershed Management monitoring and assessment grant round, and discuss revisions to WRIA 8’s lakeshore habitat goals.

**WRIA 8 Implementation Committee** – The Implementation Committee met on July 5. Meeting topics included updates on the status of the pilot project to reduce impacts to salmon from artificial lighting on Lake Sammamish, Salmon Recovery Funding Board decision on process to allocate additional \$75M for salmon habitat restoration projects, 2023 legislative priorities and formation of a legislative subcommittee, discussion of the draft 2023 WRIA 8 budget, presentation from American Rivers on a recent report using a series of case studies to assess the economic outcomes of floodplain restoration for Puget Sound communities, and discussion of potential locations for WRIA 8-coordinated site visits this summer/fall, and review of Salmon Recovery Council meeting topics.