



## WRIA 8 Updates and Committee Reports

September 15, 2022

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- **Puget Sound Regional Update** – The **Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council** (PS SRC) last met on July 28. The meeting focused on:
  - NOAA federal funding opportunities.
  - Decision on allocation of supplemental funding through the state Salmon Recovery Funding Board.
  - Decision on how to rank the Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration Large Capital project list.
  - Presentation on tribal treaty rights.
  - Presentation from Puget Sound Regional Council on salmon connections with their long-range regional planning.
  - Review of Puget Sound Partnership’s “Restore Salmon Runs” budget decision package.
  - Decision on next steps to develop a suite of “Legacy Portfolio Projects”.
  - Update from the Legislative Committee in preparation for the upcoming legislative session.
  - Presentation from NOAA on the Chinook Five-Year Status Review.

The PS SRC is scheduled to meet next on September 29. 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. Currently, discussions are focused on work planning priorities for the 2023 LIO contract. Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz represents WRIA 8 on the LIO.

- **WRIA 8 staffing** – Renee Leichter was hired in August to join the WRIA 8 team as the new Administrative Coordinator. She looks forward to meeting WRIA 8 partners and supporting salmon recovery efforts in the watershed. Partners should expect to see communications from Renee. She can be reached at [reicher@kingcounty.gov](mailto:reicher@kingcounty.gov) or 206-848-0836. Please join us in welcoming Renee to WRIA 8!
- **WRIA 8 sponsored tours and site visits** – WRIA 8 is coordinating a series of site visit opportunities this summer/fall for Salmon Recovery Council partners, state legislators, members of Congress, and funders. WRIA 8 sponsored a tour of the Ballard Locks in partnership with Long Live the Kings on Friday, September 9<sup>th</sup>. We are hosting two more events – a tour of the Issaquah Salmon Hatchery on September 20<sup>th</sup> and a gathering for Salmon Recovery Council members at Lake Sammamish State Park on September 28<sup>th</sup>. Please RSVP for those if you have not already and contact Carrie Byron ([cbyron@kingcounty.gov](mailto:cbyron@kingcounty.gov)) with any questions.

- Small funding award program** – WRIA 8 is rolling out a small grant awards program later this month using carryforward funds and PSAR capacity funds to support an additional funding round (please see the memo in the meeting packet). The purpose of this program is to support innovative or conceptual projects with smaller grant awards, and to fund projects that might not compete well in our traditional Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB)/Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) and Cooperative Watershed Management (CWM) grant rounds. We are encouraging proposals that contribute to early stages of future capital project development and/or incorporate equity and environmental justice principles into salmon recovery work. We plan to release the RFP for this program on September 16 and will bring a list of funding recommendations to the SRC in November for approval. Please reach out to Carrie Byron ([cbyron@kingcounty.gov](mailto:cbyron@kingcounty.gov)) if you have any questions about this program.
- 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. As of September 5, the sockeye run is ~100% complete, the Chinook run ~94% complete, and the coho run ~14% complete. Although returns remain below recovery targets, the locks counts are substantially higher than was forecasted for the year, as follows:

	<u>Forecasted</u>	<u>Count as of 9/5</u>	<u>10-Yr Average</u>	<u>5-Yr Average</u>
sockeye	~10,200	43,289	72,702	48,787
Chinook	~5,200	15,942	8,409	8,882
coho	~14,300	405	2,442	1,866

\*\*Note In recent years, numbers predicted by the locks count data have been much higher than what is observed reaching the hatcheries and spawning grounds. There are many potential reasons for this discrepancy, but right now the cause(s) are unknown.

- Salmon SEEson** – The WRIA 8-led Salmon SEEson program kicked 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 in-person interpretive viewing opportunities. Salmon SEEson is coordinated 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.
- WRIA 8 E-News** – The [August edition](#) of the WRIA 8 E-news included the following topics and updates: Recap of project tours with Congresswoman Kim Schrier, highlighting the 2022 Salmon SEEson program, information about the King County Flood Management Plan update and opportunities to participate in a partner planning committee, news about volunteer restoration efforts at the Edmonds Marsh, EPA approval of the 2022-2026 Puget Sound Action Agenda, media stories about salmon, and announcements of recent funding opportunities and project updates . The next edition is scheduled for October. Please submit proposed topics to Renee Leichliter ([rleichliter@kingcounty.gov](mailto:rleichliter@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 August to consider DEI aspects of the proposed WRIA 8 small-grant round.

**WRIA 8 Technical Committee** – The WRIA 8 Technical Committee met in July and August. The July meeting included discussion of our approach to setting monitoring and assessment priorities, proposal review, and funding decisions; feedback on proposed changes to WRIA 8’s lake shoreline habitat goals; and sharing updates from around the basin. The August meeting included a presentation by Dave Beauchamp on his team at USGS on studies of artificial light at night levels in WRIA 8 and their effects on predation threats to juvenile salmon in the watershed; and feedback on Technical Committee meetings moving forward including the possibility of meeting in-person, meeting frequency, the potential for combining with Implementation Committee meetings, and any other suggestions for future meetings.

**WRIA 8 Implementation Committee** – The Implementation Committee met on September 6. Meeting topics included updates and announcements, review of the WRIA 8 Management Committee’s 2023 budget and work plan recommendation, discussion of a new WRIA 8 small project development funding program, review of the Legislative Subcommittee’s 2023 legislative priorities recommendation, feedback and discussion on future in-person meetings and the possibility of combining the Implementation and Technical committees into a single committee, and review of Salmon Recovery Council meeting topics.

**Legislative Subcommittee** – The newly formed WRIA 8 Legislative Subcommittee met on August 29 to review draft proposed 2023 legislative priorities and develop a recommendation for Salmon Recovery Council approval. The Subcommittee also reviewed draft letters to the Governor and to members of the Washington State Congressional delegation to communicate state and federal priorities, respectively. The Subcommittee will continue to meet periodically and as needed during the 2023-2025 state legislative session to discuss emerging legislation and funding proposals to assess how they align with WRIA 8’s priorities and recommend taking action in support.