AGENDA
Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed
WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council
Thursday, July 17, 2025, 2:00-3:40PM and
Project Site Visit 3:50-4:45PM

Meeting Location: Tibbetts Creek Manor
750 17th Ave. N.W.
Issaquah, WA 98027

(This is a hybrid meeting, but in-person attendance is encouraged.
See bottom of agenda for link to join the meeting virtually)

		Meeting Packet Page		
1.	**Welcome and Review Participants**		Vanessa Kritzer, Chair Councilmember, City of Redmond	**2:00-2:10**
2.	**Public Comment**		Vanessa Kritzer	**2:10-2:15**
3.	**Consent Agenda:** • Approval of Meeting Notes for May 15, 2025	**3**	Vanessa Kritzer	**2:15-2:20**
4.	**Updates & Good of the Order Announcements**	**10**	Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz, WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Manager WRIA 8 partners	**2:20-2:30**
5.	**Draft 2026 WRIA 8 Budget and Work Plan** (Information/Discussion) Review and discuss draft 2026 budget and work plan to inform Management Committee development of a recommendation for Council approval in September.	**27**	Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz	**2:30-2:50**
6.	**Review Draft WRIA 8 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)** (Information/Discussion) Review and discuss draft MOU between the WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council and King County as the staffing and fiscal agent service provider to WRIA 8. The MOU is called for in the WRIA 8 Interlocal Agreement.	**40**	Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz	**2:50-3:05**
7.	**Funding Requests** (Decision) • **Support 25-year salmon summit** • **Large wood surveys**	**47**	Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz Mary Ramirez, WRIA 8 Technical Coordinator	**3:05-3:20**

8.	**Overview of Issaquah Creek basin habitat protection and restoration** **(**Information/Discussion) Hear a presentation from King County and City of Issaquah about the strategy to protect and restore habitat along Issaquah Creek, including highlights of priority projects, which provides context for the post-meeting site visit to the lower Issaquah Creek Restoration Project in Lake Sammamish State Park.		Judy Blanco, King County Basin Steward Allen Quynn, City of Issaquah	**3:20-3:40**
9.	**Adjourn Meeting – Site visit to Lower Issaquah Creek Restoration project** • 3:40-3:50 – Travel to project site (Sunset Beach, Lake Sammamish State Park) • 3:50-5:00 – Site visit with Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust		Mackenzie Dolstad, Mountain to Sound Greenway Trust	**3:40-5:00**

Next Meeting: September 18, 2025, 2:00-4:15PM

***Microsoft Teams** virtual meeting link*

Join the meeting now
Meeting ID: 259 563 472 202 5
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Tenant key: kcsc@m.webex.com
Video ID: 116 674 962 6
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For organizers: Meeting options | Reset dial-in PIN

WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council (SRC) Meeting Notes
Zoom Video Conference | May 15, 2025, 2:00 pm – 4:15 pm

Members Present		
#	**Name**	**Affiliation**
1)	Councilmember (CM) Vanessa Kritzer, Chair	City of Redmond
2)	CM Carston Curd, Vice Chair	City of Bothell
3)	CM Michelle Dotsch	City of Edmonds
4)	CM Penny Sweet	City of Kirkland
5)	CM Tracy Furutani	City of Lake Forest Park
6)	CM Lisa Anderl	City of Mercer Island
7)	CM Valerie O'Halloran	City of Renton
8)	CM Roisin O'Farrell	City of Sammamish
9)	CM Annette Ademasu	City of Shoreline
10)	CM Ted Frantz	Town of Hunts Point
11)	CM John Brock	Town of Woodway
12)	John Sherman	The Boeing Company
13)	Larry Reymann	Environmental Science Center
14)	Larry Franks	Friends of the Issaquah Salmon Hatchery (FISH)
15)	Tor Bell	Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust
16)	David Kyle	Trout Unlimited
17)	Dr. Jeffrey Jensen	Washington Association of Sewer and Water Districts
18)	Cleo Neculae	Washington State Department of Ecology
19)	Stewart Reinbold	Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife
Alternates Present		
20)	Mike Mactutis	City of Kent
21)	Meiring Borcherds	City of Mukilteo
22)	Mayor Karen Howe	City of Sammamish
23)	Martha Neuman	City of Seattle
24)	Steven Schauer	King County Flood Control District
25)	Tracy Banaszynski	Mid Sound Fisheries Enhancement Group
26)	David Bain	Sno-King Watershed Council
27)	Carl Scandella	Town of Yarrow Point
28)	Mike Krautkramer	Washington Association of Sewer and Water Districts
Other Attendees		
29)	Eric LaFrance	City of Bellevue
30)	Lacey Jane Wolfe	City of Bellevue
31)	Allen Quynn	City of Issaquah
32)	Richard Sawyer	City of Kenmore
33)	Rachel Konrady	City of Kirkland
34)	Chris Korwel	City of Lake Forest Park
35)	Reece Hobday	City of Mill Creek
36)	Peter Holte	City of Redmond
37)	Kristina Lowthian	City of Renton
38)	Toby Coenen	City of Sammamish
39)	Kathryn Hoffman	City of Sammamish
40)	Maya Garber-Yonts	City of Seattle
41)	Christa Heller	City of Seattle
42)	Alison Agness	King County
43)	Denise Di Santo	King County
44)	Kristina Logsdon	King County
45)	Elizabeth Loudon	King County

46)	Danielle Devier	Green Seattle Partnership
47)	Don Gourlie	Puget Sound Partnership
48)	Yordanos Tesfazion	Seattle Parks Foundation
49)	Ashley Townes	Seattle Parks Foundation
50)	Armaye Eshete	Serve Ethiopians Washington
51)	Calvin Jones	Staff to Representative Victoria Hunt
52)	Pete Lundberg	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
53)	Whitney Neugebauer	Whale Scout
54)	Paul Nelson	Public
55)	Carrie Byron	WRIA 8 Projects and Funding Coordinator
56)	Renee Leichliter	WRIA 8 Administrative Coordinator
57)	Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz	WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Manager
58)	Mary Ramirez	WRIA 8 Technical Coordinator

I. Welcome and Introductions - Councilmember (CM) Kritzer, Chair, called the May 15, 2025 Salmon Recovery Council (SRC) meeting to order. Chair Kritzer welcomed everyone and established quorum by conducting roll call.

II. Public Comment: No public comment.

III. Consent Agenda: SRC meeting minutes from the March 20, 2025 meeting were discussed. No edits were received prior to this meeting.

> ***Action****: The SRC voted unanimously to approve the March 20, 2025 meeting minutes.*

IV. Updates & Announcements – *Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz, WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Manager*

- Jason reminded the Salmon Recovery Council (SRC) that WRIA 8 remains an active partner at the regional level as a watershed member of the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council (PS SRC). Recent meetings focused on the legislative session and a recently approved addendum and implementation plan.
- Jason updated the SRC on the progress of the Interlocal Agreement (ILA) approval and signatures. Eighteen jurisdictions have signed, and other partners have consideration of approval scheduled. WRIA 8 is still aiming to secure all signatures by the end of September.
- Mary provided information on large wood surveys that will be conducted this fall as part of a 5-year progress report on key status and trends of Chinook populations and salmon habitat. In 2018 a consultant was hired to complete similar work, and it is possible this route will be explored again.
- This year marks the 25th year of collaborative salmon recovery in response to the 1999 listing of Chinook salmon as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. Salmon recovery teams in the region are thinking about potentially celebrating this milestone. Partners should share feedback or input with Jason.
- Dave Kyle shared that Trout Unlimited just finished kokanee fry trapping, and volunteers counted over 36,000 fry.
- Tor Bell shared that the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust's Issaquah Creek project is underway and they will be adding over 400 logs into the creek along the lower reaches. Tours will be scheduled once construction begins!
- CM Ted Frantz shared an update from recent PS SRC meetings that discussions included improvement of shellfish beds, a note that Southern Resident Orca population numbers are below target, and natural origin salmon indicators are increasing.

- Meiring Borcherds shared that Mukilteo elementary schools released 300 coho salmon at Big Gulch at the end of April. Mukilteo's stormwater utility is sponsoring elementary schools to raise salmon in classrooms through Sound Salmon Solutions. Additionally, the last part of the feasibility study to remove fish barrier in Chennault Beach Creek has started.
- Jason shared a recent video by King County highlighting Lake Sammamish kokanee recovery https://vimeo.com/1083585511/cacfaab8a6?share=copy

V. 2025 Grant Round Funding Recommendations (Decision) – *Carrie Byron, WRIA 8 Projects and Funding Coordinator and Mary Ramirez, WRIA 8 Technical Coordinator*

Carrie presented an overview of the WRIA 8 Grant Review Committee's 2025 funding recommendations and provided information on funding sources. The first funding source for this grant round are the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) and Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) funding programs which are administered by the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO). Eligible activities for these funding sources include habitat restoration, protection/acquisition, and a riparian funding program. PSAR is typically available in even years, but all PSAR money wasn't allocated last year so it was rolled over into this grant round. The 2025 allocations for these sources are:

- SRFB - $391,711 - *estimate*
- SRFB Riparian - $350,000 - *estimate*
- PSAR rollover funds - $1,151,987
- Total SRFB/PSFAR - $1,893,698
- *Total funding requested from these sources this year* - $2,175,722

The second funding source supporting this grant round is the Cooperative Watershed Management (CWM) grant program which is administered by King County Flood Control District. Eligible activities for this grant source are habitat and riparian restoration, protection/acquisition, monitoring/assessment, and outreach and education. Carrie shared the CWM funding guidance that was adopted by the SRC in November of 2024. Monitoring projects receive up to 20% of funds ($872,606), outreach up to 5% ($218,151), habitat projects receive the remaining 75% ($3,272,271) with up to 15% of that going to riparian projects and the remainder to restoration and acquisition projects. Typically return funds get rolled back into the habitat projects pool.

The 2025 CWM funding amounts are:

- CWM allocation- $4,363,028
- Returned funds - $167,991
- Total CWM - $4,531,019
- *Total funding requested from this source this year* - $5,187,089

Carrie shared some points of note for the 2025 grant round. There has been continuous improvement to Foundant, the King County grant management software program, and it remains an efficient tool for managing and reviewing applications. The Project Innovation and Community Grants program has been successful in starting up smaller projects and for the first time work started under that program will continue to advance in this grant round with Phase II of Community Defined Salmon Recovery. Lastly, there has been some shifts in federal and state

funding climate this grant round. There is going to be SRFB Riparian funding again this year, but allocations are still being finalized in the budget and project sponsors have been dealing with uncertain awards from federal agencies. Carrie thanked the Grant Review Committee members for their time and effort in reviewing projects.

SRFB/PSAR habitat restoration and acquisition and riparian projects received two proposals with a total requested amount of $2,175,722. The Grant Review Committee recommends both of those proposals for a total recommended funding amount of $1,893,698. CWM habitat restoration and acquisition and riparian projects received thirteen proposals with a total requested amount of $3,381,277. The project review subcommittee recommends all proposals for a total recommended funding amount of $3,340,757.

CWM outreach and education projects received seven proposals with a total requested amount of $335,868. The Grant Review Committee recommends five of those proposals for a total recommended funding amount of $221,022, which is slightly more than the funding allocation guidance ($218,151). These projects all align with the goals of outreach and education programs of establishing and maintaining shared messaging, sustaining decision-maker support, raising awareness, and motivating action to support recovery of salmon in the watershed.

Mary shared that 15 CWM monitoring and assessment proposals were received with a total requested amount of $1,443,862.35. The Grant Review Committee recommends eleven of these proposals for a total recommended funding amount of $969,240.35, which is more than the funding guideline allocation amount ($872,606). All recommended projects align with WRIA 8 monitoring and assessment priorities of Chinook status, habitat use, and survival, predation, artificial light at night, high water temperatures, project effectiveness, and emerging concerns.

The total recommended funding amount for the 2025 WRIA 8 grant round is $ 6,424,711.

Discussion:

- CM Frantz asked why is the funding for Issaquah Creek instream restoration different on the presentation than what is in the packet? Where are those funds coming from? Carrie clarified the amount shifted several times because the state numbers were changing. The intention is to award the balance of available funds to Issaquah Creek Stream and Riparian Restoration so that's why they're different between the memo and presentation.
- CM Frantz asked what is going to be worked on for the Lake Washington Ship Canal Riparian Restoration project, since the Ship Canal shoreline is mostly concrete? Carrie clarified the project is assessing the areas under the jurisdiction of USACE. The thought is they could do more native vegetation planting and removal of invasive species and there is an opportunity to educate folks on what they could do in their areas of the watershed. It is a small amount of money for this planning with the hope that the USACE could fund a lot of the installation themselves. Jason added there is also an opportunity for some of the restoration sites to address some stormwater management needs given the urban environment.
- Chair Kritzer asked if some outreach and education grants were 2-year grants? It doesn't seem like there were a lot submitted this year. Carrie clarified some were and other typical projects are missing this year, including \the Beach Naturalist Program and Cedar

River Salmon Journey through Seattle Aquarium. Typically, they receive a good amount of funding, but the Aquarium is reimagining the program this year. Larry Reymann shared he is looking forward to future discussions about the Cedar River Salmon Journey program and what will become of it.

Action: *The SRC voted unanimously to approve the WRIA 8 2025 grant round funding recommendations.*

VI. Federal Priorities Update (Information) – *Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz, WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Manager*

Jason shared an update from his time in Washington D.C. at Puget Sound Day on the Hill, a coalition put together by Puget Sound Partnership and Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission to support Puget Sound restoration and salmon recovery priorities. The coalition spent time meeting with Washington's Congressional delegation and key Congress members from other states, including Idaho and Alaska, to broaden bipartisan support for Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund and the needs of Puget Sound and salmon recovery.

Jason also shared that the Washington Congressional delegation noted they don't have a lot of power right now in terms of legislation or funding, but they are interested in highlighting stories of impacts from funding and federal staff reductions. Partners should share any stories or information with Jason, and he will share it at the regional and state level to communicate back to members of Congress. Jason shared information about staff changes at the federal level in the region. Some long-time federal employees have taken early retirement offers or were part of the reduction in force efforts. This represents a huge loss in institutional knowledge and scientific expertise.

Discussion:

- Tor Bell added Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust is dealing with the effects of all this in project implementation. Earth Corps lost all 35 AmeriCorps members and are unable to work.

VII. State Legislative Priorities Update (Information) – *Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz, WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Manager and Don Gourlie, Puget Sound Partnership*

Jason shared an update on the state legislative session. Jason attended Floodplains by Design Legislative Day in Olympia and WRIA 8 staff and partners attended Salmon Day in Olympia, where attendees were able to meet with legislators and staff about WRIA 8 salmon recovery priorities. The WRIA 8 Legislative Subcommittee continued to meet throughout the legislative session to keep up with what was happening and react to opportunities to support identified priorities. Jason shared one piece of legislation of note that passed, which will enable Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to provide direct sales of large wood to sponsors of habitat restoration projects.

Don shared that this legislative session had a significant budget deficit that legislators have been grappling with along with changing leadership and an election year. The Climate Commitment Act isn't included in the forecast or in the bond capacity for the Capital Budget as revenue, it will continue to be a revenue source this year but the legislature used a revenue forecast from last year that is relatively conservative.

Normally, most top requests to the operating budget get funded at least partially if not fully. This is not the case this year due to continued pressure on the operating budget. Additionally, there were several reductions to Puget Sound recovery programs. The capital budget is in better shape and the numbers are consistent or higher than what was seen in the past, including good funding numbers for PSAR, Floodplains by Design, ESRP, and SRFB. Some issues popped up in the capital budget this year that were new including the Senate proposing a $30 million dollar transfer from an account that funds salmon recovery projects back to the general fund to address the budget deficit. However, all of that $30 million is completely obligated to projects, so if the transfer were to occur all those projects would be at risk. Fortunately, in the final budget that transfer did not go through. Some items that did not get fixed in the final budget include the legislature changing the project lists for ESRP, FBD, and some other capital budget grant funding programs, addressing the wrong admin rate, and limiting reappropriations.

VIII. Be'er Sheva Shoreline and In-Water Restoration and Monitoring Project (Information) – *Ashley Townes, Technical Advisor for Seattle Parks Foundation and Mapes Creek Project Lead and Community Member with Rainier Beach Link2Lake Steering Committee*

Ashley presented on the Be'er Sheva Shoreline and In-Water Restoration and Monitoring Project sponsored by Seattle Parks Foundation. This project started in 2019 when a grant proposal was submitted to WRIA 8, and obtained in 2020, to restore salmon habitat in south Lake Washington at Be'er Sheva Park. In 2024 six anchored logs with root wads were installed for juvenile salmon refuge and an in-water earth mount structure with native plants were built. The two-year post-construction monitoring of salmon behavior and plant success (funded by a 2024 WRIA 8 CWM Monitoring and Assessment grant) has begun and will continue through 2026 using snorkel surveys and remote-operated vehicles (ROV).

Fish habitat monitoring surveys are being conducted twice per month at night during the salmon outmigration season (January-June) as part of the two-year monitoring. Snorkel surveys count fish along the shoreline that transects new environmental elements and observers record species, behavior, and habitat associations. ROV surveys are also being conducted and use underwater video to assess deeper or difficult to access areas. Some preliminary results from surveys conducted from January-April 2025 have shown over 80 individuals recorded. Logs and cobble features appear to support diverse fish use, some juvenile Chinook were observed hovering near chains, logs, and under plant frames. Beaver, heron, ducks, waterfowl, and other species like sculpins, dace, and bass also commonly observed.

Community engagement and stewardship activities have begun to deepen public connection to urban water restoration and foster intergenerational stewardship through art, ecology, and science. The Engage, Educate, Discover (EED) Program at Mapes Creek started in 2024 as well as various community centered events and initiatives. The vision for the future is to continue to build on the success at Be'er Sheva Park and explore opportunities to further daylight Mapes Creek and reconnect more of its historic flow to Lake Washington by restoring natural creek flow and creating accessible green space for community gathering, reflection, and play.

Discussion:

- CM Frantz asked if using the ROV scares the fish? Ashley clarified it hasn't been an issue.

Next Meeting: Chair Kritzer adjourned the meeting and noted the next SRC meeting is July 17, 2025, from 2:00 p.m. – 4:15 p.m., and will be held in person.

WRIA 8 Updates and Committee Reports

July 17, 2025

- **Puget Sound Regional Update** – The **Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council** (PS SRC) last met on May 22, 2025. The meeting focused on:
    - Briefing on Puget Sound Partnership's community engagement strategy and integration with salmon recovery efforts
    - Update and discussion of the Implementation Plan for the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Plan addendum
    - Approving Puget Sound riparian funding policy to allocate riparian restoration funds to watersheds
    - Discussion and review of Tribal consultation draft of 2027-29 PSAR Large Capital Projects request for proposals
    - Debrief on the 2025 legislative session
    - Update and discussion of federal funding and policy issues

  The PS SRC meets next virtually on July 31, 2025. Ted Frantz, Hunts Point Councilmember and Melanie O'Cain, Kenmore Deputy Mayor, represent the WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council on the PS SRC. Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz also attends as a WRIA 8 staff alternate.

  The **South Central Action Area Caucus** (Local Integrating Organization (LIO)) met on July 8. The meeting included general partner updates and a presentation and discussion of the Washington Department of Ecology's Shoreline Management Act rulemaking process. The LIO next meets on September 16. Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz attends to represent WRIA 8.

- **WRIA 8 Interlocal Agreement (ILA) approval and signature –** The Salmon Recovery Council approved the final ILA at the January meeting. WRIA 8 staff are working with individual ILA parties to approve and sign the ILA by September 30. As of the July meeting, 25 of 28 partners have approved and signed the ILA, and the remaining partners have scheduled approval with their city/county council in July/August.

- **2025 Cooperative Watershed Management grant funding recommendations approved by King County Flood Control District –** The King County Flood Control District approved CWM grants totaling $12.3M for all four King County watersheds at their meeting on July 8, 2025. This includes $4.4M in grants for WRIA 8 as approved by the Salmon Recovery Council in May. Project sponsors may now begin incurring expenses on those grants and King County will be in touch soon regarding contracting. Thank you to everyone who participated in the grant round this year! The SRFB will approve those awards at their September meeting.

- **Four-Year Work Plan updated –** The annual Four-Year Work Plan (4YWP) update includes two new projects, East Fork Issaquah Creek Restoration and Friendly Village Bear Creek Reach 6. It also clarifies the policy around when fish passage barrier removal projects are included as stand-alone entries vs. bundled under the programmatic entry. Please see memo for details.

- **Tour of Royal Arch Reach Floodplain Restoration project with state Salmon Recovery Funding Board –** On June 3, WRIA 8 joined Seattle Public Utilities to host a tour of the recently-completed Royal Arch Reach Floodplain Restoration project on the Cedar River for the state Salmon Recovery Funding Board. The project restored approximately 16 acres of riparian and aquatic habitat for Chinook and other salmon, creating new side channel and backwater areas for juvenile salmon rearing. Seattle Public Utilities also recently acquired an adjacent 20-acre parcel, including support from WRIA 8-directed grants, to extend floodplain restoration immediately downstream. WRIA 8 Chair, Vanessa Kritzer, shared with the group the importance of restoring floodplains to achieve WRIA 8's salmon habitat restoration goals and described the challenges WRIA 8 partners face in restoring habitat in such an urbanized watershed.

- **Proposed rule change to definition of "harm" under the Endangered Species Act –** The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service have proposed a rule change to rescind the definition of "harm" under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), which would reduce protections for listed species from actions that significantly modify or degrade habitat or disrupts where and how species migrate and reproduce. Washington State natural resource agencies submitted a letter to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service opposing the proposed rule change and sharing concerns about legal, scientific, economic, and programmatic impacts the change would have. See the letter in the meeting packet.

- **Salmon SEEson –** The WRIA 8-led Salmon SEEson program is gearing up to start for the 2025 year, and its 19th season! This program coordinates with program partners to highlight and promote opportunities for the public to see salmon in local streams and rivers when they return this summer and fall. The Salmon SEEson website provides a map and details for several self-guided viewing locations as well as in-person interpretive viewing opportunities. Look out for more information as we get closer to kick off! Salmon SEEson is coordinated by WRIA 8 with additional sponsorship support from the Saving Water Partnership, the Green/Duwamish and Central Puget Sound Watershed (WRIA 9), the Snoqualmie Watershed Forum, and King County.

- **Celebration of 25 years of salmon recovery –** This year marks the 25th year of collaborative salmon recovery efforts in WRIA 8 in response to the 1999 listing of Chinook salmon as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. Staff from salmon recovery watershed groups, including WRIA 8, are planning a cross-watershed celebration event for the fall/early winter, possibly to coincide with the completing the signing of the new interlocal agreements demonstrating the shared commitment to continue our collective salmon recovery efforts for another 10 years. WRIA staff will send a link to a brief survey to gather partner feedback and input on content, timing, venue, etc. Thanks in advance for taking time to provide your thoughts to make this a successful event!

- **WRIA 8 E-News –** The June edition of the WRIA 8 E-news included the following topics and updates: partner project and program updates, media stories related to salmon, upcoming events in the watershed and volunteer opportunities, and notice of recent funding opportunities. The next edition is scheduled for August. Please submit proposed topics to Renee Leichliter (rleichliter@kingcounty.gov) by August 9th.

WRIA 8 Committee Reports

Implementation Technical Committee – The Implementation Technical Committee (ITC) July meeting focused on juvenile Chinook monitoring. The ITC heard an overview from WDFW on Juvenile Chinook Outmigrant Monitoring and from King County on their Juvenile Chinook growth-diet-food study. The next ITC meeting will be on September 10th.

Technical Committee – The Technical Committee (TC) met in June to discuss plans for the upcoming WRIA 8 5-year Progress Report which will report on status and trends of population and habitat indicators and goals through 2025. WRIA 8 shared a proposed approach and timeline for reporting and heard feedback from the TC on indicator objectives, data sources, and methods. The TC will continue to meet as needed.

State of Washington

May 19, 2025

Public Comments Processing
Attn: FWS-HQ-ES-2025-0034
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
MS: PRB/3W
5275 Leesburg Pike
Falls Church, VA 22041-3803

Re: Proposed rule to rescind the definition of "harm" under the Endangered Species Act [Docket No. FWS-HQ-ES-2025-0034; FXES11110900000-256 FF09E23000; 250411-0064]

The State of Washington writes to express its grave concerns with the proposed changes to regulations implementing the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA, Act). The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), Washington Department of Ecology, Washington Recreation and Conservation Office, Washington State Governor's Salmon Recovery Office, Washington Department of Natural Resources (WA DNR), Puget Sound Partnership, and Washington State Parks collaborated on these comments to the proposed rule change under 50 CFR Part 17 and 50 CFR Part 222 in the April 17, 2025 Federal Register notice 90 FR 16102–16105, wherein the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) (hereafter, "the Services") propose to rescind the definition of "harm" from regulations that implement Section 9 of the ESA.

As currently written, "[h]arm in the definition of "take" in the Act means an act which actually kills or injures fish or wildlife. Such an act may include significant habitat modification or degradation which actually kills or injures fish or wildlife by significantly impairing essential behavioral patterns, including, breeding, spawning, rearing, migrating, feeding or sheltering." 50 C.F.R § 222.102.

We provide these comments as agencies who have the legal and scientific expertise and authorities for permitting and implementation as well as lived experience with partners and tribes in restoration and recovery of ESA-listed species. We share the common goal with the federal government of preventing ESA listings and delisting species due to recovery. We also share the common commitment to uphold federal and state responsibilities for treaties with Native American Tribes. In Washington, natural resources covered by treaty commitments include ESA-listed species. We ask the Services to withdraw this proposal in consideration of our four main concerns highlighted here (and expanded upon in the attached comments):

1. ESA Purpose: The proposed rule contravenes the statutory purpose of the ESA to conserve listed species and ecosystems by undermining the law's clear intent to protect habitat. The proposed rule is inconsistent with the statutory direction of the ESA for federal agencies to "utilize the authorities in furtherance of the purposes of this Act" to conserve the ecosystems upon which listed species depend.

2. Science and Logic: The proposed rule is inconsistent with a plain interpretation of harm, and it ignores science and common sense explicitly articulated in the Act that habitat loss and degradation is the single greatest threat to listed species. If habitat protection is deprioritized in the ESA, species recovery will be undermined, extinctions will be accelerated, and the number of listed species will increase.

3. Legal and Programmatic Impact: The proposed rule would upend existing landowner certainty based on state regulations and agreements reliant on the current regulatory definition of harm, as well as collaborative programs that work to recover listed species.

4. Economic Disruption: The proposed rule will disrupt billions of dollars in economic activity tied to listed species, and tens of thousands of jobs that are a central piece of Washington's recreational economy. Thus, rescinding the definition of harm threatens both environmental and economic sustainability.

In summary, finalizing the proposed rule to rescind the definition of harm will directly contradict the intent and purpose of the ESA, will accelerate extinction, and will undermine productive state-federal partnerships, effective conservation, and economic sustainability. The proposed rule will work against the common goals of delisting species and preventing new ESA listings. Consistent with the State of Washington's comments below, we strongly urge the Services to withdraw this proposal.

Sincerely,

Kelly Susewind
Director, Department of Fish and Wildlife

Casey D. Sixkiller
Director, Department of Ecology

Megan Duffy
Director, Recreation and Conservation Office

Erik Neatherlin
Director, Governor's Salmon Recovery Office

Dave Upthegrove
Commissioner of Public Lands

Diana Dupuis
Director, Washington State Parks

Larry Epstein
Deputy Director, Puget Sound Partnership

1. **<u>ESA Purpose</u>: The proposed rule contravenes the statutory purpose of the ESA to conserve listed species and ecosystems by undermining the law's clear intent to protect habitat. The proposed rule is inconsistent with the statutory direction of the ESA for federal agencies to "utilize the authorities in furtherance of the purposes of this Act" to conserve the ecosystems upon which listed species depend.**

<u>The proposed rule is completely counter to the express purpose of the ESA, its central focus on habitat, and the fundamental goal of conserving species facing extinction.</u>

Rather than focusing narrowly on protecting individuals within a species, ESA Section 2(b) "Purposes" explicitly frames the intent of the law to protect listed species habitat: "The purposes of this Act are to provide a means whereby the ecosystems upon which endangered species and threatened species depend may be conserved…" The proposed rule contravenes this purpose statement and is therefore wholly inconsistent with the intent of the law.

The proposed rule states that "The Services' promulgation of rules that govern their implementation of the Act is not an action that is in itself subject to the Act's provisions, including section 7(a)(2)" (90 FR 16105). However, ESA Section 2(c) states that "…all Federal departments and agencies shall seek to conserve endangered species and threatened species and shall utilize their authorities in furtherance of the purposes of this Act" and Section 7(a)(1) reiterates that "The Secretary [of the Interior] shall review other programs administered by him and utilize such programs in furtherance of the purposes of this Act. All other Federal agencies shall…utilize their authorities in furtherance of the purposes of this Act by carrying out programs for the conservation of endangered species and threatened species…" – there are no listed exceptions, including the Services. Further, ESA Section 7(a)(2) referenced in the proposed rule states that "Each Federal agency shall…insure that any action authorized, funded, or carried out by such agency…is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any endangered species or threatened species…" The proposed rule states without justification that in promulgating rules, the Services do not need to follow the law that mandates not only the conservation of listed species, but also the habitats on which they depend.

<u>The ESA has a central focus on habitat as the key mechanism for preventing extinction.</u>

The word "habitat" appears 38 times in the ESA, repeatedly connecting it to affected species. The first finding made by Congress in Section 2(a) focuses on habitat destruction: "various species of fish, wildlife, and plants in the United States have been rendered extinct as a consequence of economic growth and development untempered by adequate concern and conservation." Furthermore, "critical habitat" is defined in Section 3(5)(A) as "essential" to the conservation of the species, and Section 4(a)(1)(A) lists "the present or *threatened* [emphasis added] destruction, modification, or curtailment of its habitat or range" as the first factor for determining whether a species is endangered or threatened.

A framework narrowed to prohibit solely direct injury or mortality is both impractical and irresponsible and knowingly disregards substantial, unjustifiable risks to species.

Prohibiting only direct injury or mortality as a means to protect endangered species defeats the congressional intent of including the word "harm" in the definition of "take." The definition of "take" in ESA Section 3(19) separately lists "harm" from actions, or attempted actions, that would "wound" or "kill." Thus, the plain language of the law must recognize that "harm" is included to signify a different concept. This point comports with the U.S. Supreme Court's majority reasoning supporting its ruling in Babbitt v. Sweet Home Chapter of Communities for a Great Oregon, 515 U.S. 687 (1995). The Services lean on Justice Scalia's *minority* dissenting opinion and the *noscitur a sociis* canon. However, *noscitur a sociis* cannot be applied nefariously in a way that makes other words redundant, as it would here, nor in cases where a word is deliberately used to widen the scope of the list. Given the express intent of the ESA to provide a means for conservation of the ecosystems on which endangered and threatened species depend, and the express addition of "harm" to the definition of "take" as a clarifying amendment aimed to "help achieve the purposes of the bill" during congressional deliberations, a best meaning of the term harm would extend to actions like habitat destruction that "actually"—in reality, in fact, per scientifically observable mechanisms—lead to injury or death beyond directly wounding or killing.

Making protections contingent upon evidence of injury/death means waiting for the nail in the coffin before intervention is possible. For highly endangered populations, losing even one individual with a critical role or reproductive potential could be the final straw in population collapse. Plus, the enforcement and data collection needed to demonstrate and prove the source of injury or death is often impractical, and it may itself cause further injury that imperils the survival of the species.

Example: Southern Resident killer whale (SRKW)
With only 73 individuals remaining (2024 census), the loss of even one whale—especially a reproductive female or calf—could irreversibly alter the population's trajectory (Lacy et al., 2017). Demonstrating direct physical harm is rarely feasible: killer whales cannot be captured for hearing tests without risk, connecting acoustic trauma and resulting starvation to a specific actor is implausible, and carcasses are seldom recovered to assess cause of death. By setting an evidentiary standard that cannot be met without additional injury or delay, the rule would effectively preclude timely intervention. For acoustically sensitive species like SRKW, waiting for proof of direct take before acting ensures that protective measures will come too late to prevent population collapse.

2. **Science and Logic: The proposed rule is inconsistent with a plain interpretation of harm, and it ignores science and common sense explicitly articulated in the Act that habitat loss and degradation is the single greatest threat to listed species. If habitat**

protection is deprioritized in the ESA, species recovery will be undermined, extinctions will be accelerated, and the number of listed species will increase.

Access to food, water, shelter, and mates are fundamental necessities for every living thing, endangered species and humans alike. The goal of recovering species and preventing extinction cannot be met if a species cannot survive and reproduce.

Under any definition, legal or otherwise, it is plain that interfering with or destroying any of those necessities for life harms the species. Furthermore, whether "harm" is the intent of the action or a result of it, if the action is intrinsically linked to the harm by logic, science, or human reasoning, the "but for" approach—i.e. asking, "but for this action, would the injury have occurred?"— should be used, and the action should be considered "harm."

The wellbeing of species and their habitat are inextricably interconnected. A population will decline to functional extinction if the members of that population die without reproducing at adequate rates; therefore, actions that impede or reduce the ability of individuals to survive and reproduce undeniably harm (injure, kill, deplete) the species. Defining harm to include indirect effects that inhibit a listed species' ability to feed, breed, and shelter is a foundational mechanism by which listed species are conserved and saved from extinction. "Conservation" was specifically defined in ESA Section 3(3) as using "all methods and procedures which are necessary" to recover species to the point where they are no longer threatened or in danger of extinction. These methods and procedures were specifically defined to include "habitat acquisition and maintenance." Hundreds of years of traditional ecological knowledge and scientific evidence recognize habitat modification's deleterious impacts on survival and reproduction—i.e., as "harm" that depletes fish and wildlife populations.

Addressing impacts to protected species' habitat is not an expansion of the ESA's reach as the proposed rule contends— habitat impairment is indisputable biological harm.

Habitat loss and degradation is the single greatest threat to listed species in Washington and one of the top threats to biodiversity worldwide. The ESA uses five factors to determine whether a species is threatened or endangered, the first of which is "the present or threatened destruction, modification, or curtailment of its habitat or range." This factor affects the continued existence of every listed species in Washington, and habitat protection is one of the primary actions identified in federal and state Recovery Plans and implemented to advance species recovery. Excluding fundamental needs like habitat from the regulatory definition of "harm" under the ESA will significantly impact the state of Washington's ability to recover listed species and could lead to extirpations. Furthermore, the loss of protection of habitat upon which ESA-listed species depend will almost certainly result in a growing list of federally protected species. Washington is home to 268 Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN), and the ecosystems upon which federally threatened and endangered species depend host dozens of other SGCN and state imperiled rare plants and animals associated with those habitats (WDFW 2015). If the unique habitats federally listed species need for survival and recovery are further degraded, states will be hampered in their efforts to recover listed and non-listed species. The following are illustrative examples from Washington.

Terrestrial wildlife

Many federally listed wildlife species in Washington are habitat specialists, entirely dependent on a specific type of habitat. For example, federally threatened marbled murrelets and northern spotted owls nest almost exclusively in old growth forests. In Washington, marbled murrelet detections increased when old growth/mature forests comprised more than 30 percent of the landscape; detections decreased when the percentage of clear-cut/meadow in the landscape increased above 25 percent (Hamer and Cummins 1990). Similarly, northern spotted owls rely on mature and old-growth forests because these habitats contain the structures and characteristics required for nesting, roosting, and foraging. Other species vulnerable to federal listing closely associated with these habitat conditions include the cascade torrent salamander, Pacific marten, great gray owl, Keen's myotis, and western gray squirrel (WDFW 2015).

Large-scale loss and fragmentation of native shrubsteppe habitat in Washington was a primary driver in the long-term decline and emergency listing of the Columbia Basin pygmy rabbit in 2001. Recovery actions to protect the shrubsteppe habitat on which they depend not only prevented the extinction of this species and promotes their recovery, but also supports conservation of more than 32 shrubsteppe wildlife species that are state-listed and/or SGCN, including greater sage grouse, Columbian sharp-tailed grouse, black- and white-tailed jackrabbits, sage thrasher, ferruginous hawk, and pygmy short-horned lizard (WDFW et al. 2024).

Federally endangered butterfly species such as the Taylor's checkerspot, island marble, and Oregon silverspot depend on specific host and nectar plants to carry out their life cycles. Harm to these plants is synonymous with harm to the butterfly itself. Primary recovery actions for these species include propagation and seeding of their host and nectar plants and restoration and protection of areas where those plants exist. Taylor's checkerspot butterfly, as well as the federally threatened Mazama pocket gopher and streaked horned lark, are emblematic of Washington's few remaining native prairies. Protection of Washington's prairie ecosystems undoubtedly has precluded the need to list more species dependent on this ecosystem, such as the Oregon branded skipper, mardon skipper, Sonora skipper, Puget Sound fritillary, and valley silverspot (WDFW 2015).

Salmon

Across Washington state, the most frequent and impactful listing factor for salmon and steelhead was, and still is, habitat loss and degradation. Wide-spread habitat degradation from historic land use practices has resulted in an "actual injury" to salmon by impairing their ability to breed, feed, and shelter. Without the ability to consider habitat modification as "harm" to ESA-listed species, the Services will lack the authority to address some of the most pressing limiting factors to salmon survival.

In response to the first ESA listings of salmon in the 1990s, Washington passed the Salmon Recovery Act (RCW 77.85) and developed the statewide salmon recovery strategy in 1999. Recovery plans identify restoration projects to rebuild habitat and rely upon regulatory

protections to ensure that further harm to salmon habitat does not occur. Taken together, effective protection and meaningful restoration of aquatic, estuary, and marine habitats have allowed fisheries to continue in Washington State and the Pacific Ocean. Without habitat protection and restoration salmon populations would become more imperiled leading to threatened populations becoming endangered and endangered populations becoming extirpated.

Bull trout

The integration of habitat loss and degradation in the viability of bull trout has been highlighted in each bull trout recovery document created to date. The Bull Trout Recovery Plan (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 2015) and recent 5-Year Review (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 2024a) indicated habitat loss and fragmentation are one of the most significant primary threats affecting bull trout. In addition, the Bull Trout Species Status Assessment (SSA) (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 2024b) considered evaluations of habitat condition in the assessment of viability.

The recent 5-Year Review 5-Factor Analysis stated that, "most threats described in the recovery plan and [Recovery Unit Implementation Plans] RUIPs fall into the category of destruction, modification, or curtailment of habitat. Many of these impacts, such as dewatering, sedimentation, thermal modification, and water quality degradation, are a consequence of specific land and water management activities." Bull trout recovery is directly tied to habitat protection and mitigation.

Southern Resident killer whale

The proposed narrowing of the ESA's definition of "harm" would significantly limit the ability of federal and state agencies to manage threats to the SRKW population and their ESA designated critical habitat using best-available science. Threats to their survival include finding enough salmon (their primary diet) to eat, vessel noise in the ocean, and water pollution. Southern Residents need healthy and sustainable salmon stocks to survive. Harm to salmon habitat limits salmon survival, hindering recovery efforts. Research by Holt et al. (2021a, 2021b) and Tennessen et al. (2024) has shown that vessel noise measurably reduces foraging efficiency, contributing to nutritional stress and reproductive failure in this critically endangered population. Current ESA interpretation allows regulation of such disruptions as "harm" or "harassment" because they impair essential behaviors linked to survival. Excluding habitat degradation from "harm" would undermine agencies' authority to mitigate underwater noise—one of the most consistently documented threats to SRKW and other endangered marine mammals—and undermine evidence-based policies such as vessel speed limits and buffer zones.

3. **Legal and Programmatic Impact: This proposed rule would upend existing legal agreements, state regulations reliant on the current regulatory definition of harm, and collaborative programs that work to recover listed species.**

The proposed rule specifically solicits comments on whether there are legitimate reliance interests on the current regulatory definition of harm. Several legal agreements, such as Habitat Conservation Plans (HCP) and Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances (CCAAs) that protect Washington's interests and work to recover ESA-listed species rely on this definition. In addition, there are Washington state laws and regulations for its conservation programs that were developed in reliance on the current structure and interpretation of the ESA.

The proposed rule would undermine effective collaborative agreements under ESA that protect and enhance habitat and work to improve species status and preclude listing

Collaboration of state, federal, and local partners, landowners, and tribes to protect and restore habitat has led to listed species status improvements, delistings, and precluding the need to list. The proposed rule could undermine these efforts.

WDFW holds two programmatic CCAAs, which have been successful in improving species status and provide regulatory assurance to landowners enrolled though certificates of inclusion. The fisher CCAA has over 60 large and small forest landowners enrolled, effectively protecting over 3.5 million acres of fisher habitat. This agreement was instrumental in the USFWS's decision to not list fishers in Washington. The endangered island marble butterfly CCAA has incentivized habitat creation on private lands and it is working to expand the butterfly population.

In south Puget Sound, protection of unique prairie habitats supporting listed species has occurred through collaborative agreements such as local HCPs and the Joint Base Lewis-McChord Integrated Natural Resource Management Plan. These collaborations are leading to the active recovery of ESA-threatened Mazama pocket gopher subspecies.

The WA DNR Natural Heritage Program carries out activities through a cooperative agreement with USFWS and collaboration with numerous partners that led to the delisting of three plants in recent years (golden paintbrush, water howelia, and Bradshaw's lomatium). These recoveries were successful because of a focus on habitat protection, including the protection of south Puget Sound prairie soils, which led to successful conservation efforts for golden paintbrush by DNR's Natural Areas Program and partners and the subsequent delisting of this plant in 2023.

State programs and regulations were built upon the foundation of ESA habitat protections. The proposed rule will create uncertainty and could compromise state programs.

Washington State Forest Practice Rules

Washington's Forest Practices HCP is a 50-year agreement between WA DNR and the Services that aligns state forest practices with federal ESA requirements, particularly concerning aquatic species. Under this agreement, actions that are consistent with state rules are covered for any incidental take of federally listed species that may result from that action.

In addition, there are numerous individual landowner HCPs. Forest practices consistent with those agreements are exempt from certain state forest practice rules (WAC 222-12-041). The proposed federal change could reduce regulatory certainty that landowners enjoy arising from these HCPs.

Coastal Zone Management Program

When the Washington Department of Ecology makes decisions under Clean Water Act sec. 401 and the state Coastal Zone Management Program, they are made with the awareness that the project will also undergo a separate federal review that accounts for impacts to listed species and critical habitat under the ESA. For this review, the Services developed a calculator to determine the appropriate level and type of mitigation needed based on project specifics. That mitigation reduces the impact of projects on critical habitat for ESA-listed species. When the overall scope of the Services' review is limited or decreased, there may be an adverse impact on critical habitat and protections provided under the current analysis. To maintain an equivalent level of protection, the responsibility for conducting this review shifts to the agency issuing permits and approvals without shifting resources or authority.

Puget Sound Nearshore Conservation Credit Program

The Puget Sound Partnership administers the state's Nearshore Conservation Credit Program, an in-lieu fee program that sells conservation credits to help federal permit applicants meet obligations to offset impacts to critical habitat. This program supports – and is underpinned by – ESA Section 7 consultations undertaken by the Services related to federal actions in the marine nearshore and estuarine ecosystems of Puget Sound. Like with reviews under the Coastal Zone Management Program, impacts to critical ESA species and their habitats are assessed with a NMFS-developed calculator to determine appropriate mitigation. The program simultaneously delivers both accelerated permitting pathways for the regulated community and effective, large-scale habitat restoration that prevents the extinction of federally listed Chinook salmon and Southern Resident killer whales. The functional revocation of habitat protections under ESA, as proposed in this rule, would completely undermine this successful program.

4. **Economic Disruption: The proposed rule will disrupt billions of dollars in economic activity tied to listed species and tens of thousands of jobs that are a central piece of Washington's recreational economy. Thus, rescinding the definition of harm threatens both environmental and economic sustainability.**

The conditions that help imperiled species thrive, such as clean air, clean water, natural spaces, and unique habitats, have innumerable benefits to people and the economy. Millions of Washingtonians and visitors enjoy fish and wildlife related recreation in the state. In 2022, 6.2 million participated in wildlife watching, 1.2 million participated in fishing, and approximately 291,000 participated in hunting activities (Van Deynze 2024). Fishing, hunting, and wildlife watching accounts for approximately $9 billion in trip-related and equipment expenditures in Washington annually (Van Deynze 2024). Spending on fish and

wildlife recreation and associated activities supports approximately 50,000 jobs across the state (American Sportfishing Association 2024, Sportsmen's Alliance 2024, USFWS 2024).

Beyond recreation, protecting habitat for ESA-listed species supports commercial seafood harvest and production, an important component of Washington's seafood industry which supported nearly 88,000 jobs and accounted for $11.2 billion in sales in 2022 (National Marine Fisheries Service 2024). Across the west coast, commercial and recreational fishing supports nearly 720,000 jobs, many of which are in rural areas. Without the ability to consider habitat modification as "harm" to ESA-listed species, the Services will lack the authority to address some of the most pressing limiting factors to ESA-listed salmon survival. Without meaningful habitat protections in the ESA, the fishing industry will suffer because the burden of conserving and recovering endangered species would fall on the use sector and could result in the closure or severe decline of billion-dollar industries.

In another example, Washington's whale watching industry is responsible for $80.3 million in annual sales revenues and serves approximately 167,000 customers each year (Martin Associates 2024). Washington has worked diligently to consider the economic viability of this industry while also supporting Southern Resident killer whale recovery. Without the benefits of habitat protections supporting endangered species across the marine foodweb, sustainable whale watching opportunities will dwindle, threatening over 1,000 jobs and millions in tourism revenue.

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Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed (WRIA 8)

2025 Four-Year Work Plan Update

July 2025

This memo provides an overview of changes to WRIA 8's Four Year Work Plan for 2025. The 2024 Four Year Work Plan can be found here. Puget Sound Lead Entities develop Four Year Work Plans to identify priority salmon recovery actions within their watersheds. These plans outline the status of active salmon recovery projects and identify future actions proposed to occur in the next four years that are necessary to advance salmon recovery in each watershed. For WRIA 8, this list represents the highest priority salmon recovery projects that are aligned with our recovery strategies and helps focus our limited resources toward projects on the list.

Added to Work Plan – Tier 1 Locations

Project Name (Location and Sponsor)	Description
East Fork Issaquah Creek Habitat Restoration, King Country WLRD	Conduct a synthesis of technical information needs (fish use, water quality, fish passage barriers, vegetation surveys) and a system-wide study of potential ecological lift in restoring a 3-mile stretch of Issaquah Creek along High Point Way. Additional acquisition or conservation easements necessary.
Friendly Village Bear Creek Reach 6 Habitat Restoration, Adopt A Stream Foundation	Work throughout the Friendly Village Mobile Home Park along Bear Creek to restore riparian areas and increase in-channel complexity for juvenile rearing habitat.

Policy Regarding Fish Passage Barrier Correction Projects on 4YWP:
In 2023, WRIA 8 added a programmatic item to the 4YWP which read:

> "Address priority fish passage barriers through replacement or removal that have been identified through fish passage barrier prioritization efforts such as those conducted by King County or other jurisdictions. In addition, support the development of plans and prioritization schemes to facilitate capital planning for barrier removal."

This was intended to cover smaller-scale projects on tributary streams. Occasionally, larger scale projects may rise to the level of calling out as individual line items in the 4YWP, when they are multi-phase, expensive, or located on priority streams in the watershed. WRIA 8 staff will use best professional judgment when deciding whether to include the projects as stand-alone line items on the 4YWP. Staff will also maintain a list of funded projects that fall under the programmatic entry in the 4YWP for fish passage barrier correction projects and other programmatic entries (such as those for riparian projects or landowner engagement projects).

Draft 2026 WRIA 8 Budget and Work Plan Memo

July 17, 2025

Background

Budget:
Per the WRIA 8 Interlocal Agreement (ILA), the WRIA 8 partner cost share increases for the 2026 WRIA 8 budget based on the estimated Consumer Price Index for Wages (CPI-W) rate to keep pace with annual staffing and operating cost increases. See attached draft 2026 ILA cost share table reflecting individual WRIA 8 partner cost shares based on the proposed cost share amount in the draft 2026 budget.

Estimated base expenditures in 2026 are anticipated to increase approximately $46,390 over 2025 expenditures. The WRIA 8 ILA partner cost share reflecting a 3.5% CPI-W rate increase, annual state salmon recovery Lead Entity grant, and additional revenue sources would cover the estimated increase in base expenditures in 2026.

Budget highlights:
- Amount of Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration grant funding in 2026 reflects half of WRIA 8's 2025-2027 allocation.
- An estimated $30,499 in general year-over-year salary and benefit increases reflect current labor agreements.
- Increase in estimated overhead costs based on several drivers: shift in share of rent costs, unexpected General Wage Increase at the end of the 2025 budget cycle, and increases in additional shared staffing costs.
- Estimated supplies and services costs are based on 2024 and 2025 (to date) actual costs and anticipated 2026 needs.
- Under "Additional Expenditures," additional funding priorities will be developed and brought to the SRC for consideration, which would utilize available PSAR project development grant funding and/or carry forward fund balance.

WRIA 8 team work plan highlights:
- Overall, reflects similar level of services and products as previous years.
- Notable additions:
  - Completing 5-Year Implementation Progress Report
  - Initiating and completing 10-Year update to the WRIA 8 Chinook Salmon Conservation Plan
  - Updating WRIA 8 Communications and Outreach Framework, as necessary.
- Participating in the biannual Washington State Salmon Recovery Conference.

Next Steps:
The WRIA 8 Management Committee will meet in August to develop a 2026 budget and work plan recommendation for SRC approval in September. Current Management Committee members include:

- King County
- Snohomish County
- City of Bothell
- Town of Hunts Point
- City of Redmond
- City of Renton
- City of Seattle

WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Program - 2026 Preliminary Budget

REVENUES	2025 Approved (reflects 3.6% CPI-W rate forecast)	2026 Proposed (reflects 3.50% CPI-W rate forecast
WRIA 8 ILA Partners Cost Share	760,366	786,979
State Lead Entity grant[1]	86,000	86,852
Salmon SEEson Sponsorship	7,000	7,000
Base Revenues subtotal	**853,366**	**880,831**
Additional Revenue		
Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration project development grant[2]	49,000	49,000
Additional Revenue subtotal	**49,000**	**49,000**
TOTAL REVENUE	**902,366**	**929,831**
EXPENDITURES		
Staffing: Salary and Benefits[3]		
Salary and Benefits for 3.4 FTE (Salmon Recovery Mgr, Projects and Funding Coord., Techncial Coord,, and Admin Coord.)	581,296	611,795
Overhead[4]	184,856	219,985
Total Salaries, Benefits, and Overhead subtotal	**766,152**	**831,780**
Supplies and Services[5]		
Meeting & event support	3,151	1,500
Consultant/professional/technical services	40,000	30,000
Training & misc. supplies	5,436	2,500
Mileage & vehicle use	3,151	1,500
Visual communications/GIS services	15,000	12,000
Printing	1,500	1,500
Total Supplies & Services subtotal	**68,238**	**49,000**
Expenditures subtotal	**834,390**	**880,780**
Additional Expenditures[6]		
Project Innovation and Community Funding grants Advacing early project development, salmon recovery planning, and integrating equity and environmental justice	**100,000**	**150,000**
Initiatives to advance WRIA 8 recovery priorities (e.g., address survival bottlenecks, project development, science/research gaps, DEI Strategic Plan implementation, outreach and education activities)	**41,896**	**50,000**
Total Additional Expenditures subtotal	**141,896**	**200,000**
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	**976,286**	**1,080,780**
Carryover ILA		
BEGINNING CARRY FORWARD FUND BALANCE[7]	**492,968**	**277,402**
Anticipated/committed discretionary investments	**234,542**	**200,000**
BUDGET RESERVE (10% of Base Revenues for unanticipated staffing/operating costs)	84,637	88,083
ENDING CARRY FORWARD FUND BALANCE[8]	**277,402**	**77,453**

[1] The annual state Lead Entity funding in 2025-2027 biennium is $86,852. This funding is dependent upon state legislative appropriation.

[2] Funding supports project development activities. Amount includes state legislative appropriation in 2025-2027 biennium and unspent balances from prior biennium appropriations.

[3] Salaries and benefits calculation, please refer below.

[4] Overhead is calculated based on estimate of King County administrative cost distribution. Overhead cost includes Department of Natural Resources Director's Office, Water and Land Resources Division Director's Office, Water and Land Resources Division section services, computer services and support, Human Resources, Financial management, Office Support Services, and King Street Center building rent and maintenance charges.

[5] Supplies and services calculation based upon discretion of WRIA 8.

[6] Additional expenditures for 2026 will be dependent on availability of carry forward fund balance and/or external grants secured and based on priorities approved by the Salmon Recovery Council (SRC).

[7] Carry forward balance is from staff salary savings and ILA funding offset by grants and sponsorships carried forward from previous years.

[8] Carry forward fund balance is available for use at the discretion of the Salmon Recovery Council to advance priority actions identified in the WRIA 8 Plan and/or to fill revenue gaps. Salmon Recovery Council approved reserving 10% of base revenue in carry forward funds for unanticipated operating/staffing

Exhibit A - WRIA 8 Interlocal Agreement

Regional Watershed Salmon Recovery Funding
2026 WRIA 8 Cost-share - *DRAFT*

Note: Per the WRIA 8 Interlocal Agreement, each year the WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council approves a partner cost share budget to support the services of the WRIA 8 staff team and program. The cost share reflects and annual increase based on the Consumer Price Index for Wages (CPI-W) estimate. The cost share table below reflects a CPI-W estimae of 3.5% (March 2025) .

WRIA 8 Jurisdiction	Population (Pop)		Assessed Value (AV)		Area (Sq. Mi.)		2026 Cost Share (reflects 3.5% CPI-W estimate) (Average of Pop, AV, Area)		WRIA 8 Jurisdiction
Beaux Arts	315	0.02%	$285,891,000	0.04%	0.08	0.02%	0.03%	$199	Beaux Arts
Bellevue	154,600	8.91%	$96,339,979,101	13.67%	33.53	7.12%	9.90%	$77,918	Bellevue
Bothell	49,550	2.85%	$17,957,876,264	2.55%	13.67	2.90%	2.77%	$21,791	Bothell
Clyde Hill	3,115	0.18%	$4,389,953,700	0.62%	1.06	0.22%	0.34%	$2,694	Clyde Hill
Edmonds	43,370	2.50%	$16,549,900,400	2.35%	8.97	1.91%	2.25%	$17,717	Edmonds
Everett	33,485	1.93%	$6,381,442,800	0.91%	5.20	1.11%	1.31%	$10,336	Everett
Hunts Point	460	0.03%	$1,783,212,000	0.25%	0.29	0.06%	0.11%	$896	Hunts Point
Issaquah	41,290	2.38%	$17,493,815,787	2.48%	12.11	2.57%	2.48%	$19,502	Issaquah
Kenmore	24,230	1.40%	$7,459,653,182	1.06%	6.15	1.31%	1.25%	$9,866	Kenmore
Kent	0	0.00%	$12,761,000	0.00%	0.45	0.10%	0.03%	$255	Kent
King County (Uninc.)	102,707	5.92%	$35,458,579,530	5.03%	163.04	34.65%	15.20%	$119,613	King County (Uninc.)
Kirkland	96,920	5.58%	$45,311,849,550	6.43%	17.84	3.79%	5.27%	$41,459	Kirkland
Lake Forest Park	13,660	0.79%	$4,237,895,040	0.60%	3.51	0.75%	0.71%	$5,598	Lake Forest Park
Maple Valley	5,022	0.29%	$1,155,422,680	0.16%	0.94	0.20%	0.22%	$1,712	Maple Valley
Medina	2,925	0.17%	$6,866,863,700	0.97%	1.41	0.30%	0.48%	$3,785	Medina
Mercer Island	25,800	1.49%	$21,056,678,532	2.99%	6.30	1.34%	1.94%	$15,248	Mercer Island
Mill Creek	21,630	1.25%	$6,848,308,200	0.97%	4.68	0.99%	1.07%	$8,428	Mill Creek
Mountlake Terrace	23,810	1.37%	$5,911,042,400	0.84%	4.16	0.88%	1.03%	$8,119	Mountlake Terrace
Mukilteo	21,221	1.22%	$7,572,645,200	1.07%	5.99	1.27%	1.19%	$9,363	Mukilteo
Newcastle	13,610	0.78%	$5,376,208,083	0.76%	4.46	0.95%	0.83%	$6,545	Newcastle
Redmond	77,490	4.46%	$36,605,924,250	5.19%	16.56	3.52%	4.39%	$34,568	Redmond
Renton	70,904	4.08%	$18,024,891,468	2.56%	14.01	2.98%	3.21%	$25,235	Renton
Sammamish	61,452	3.54%	$26,240,200,285	3.72%	19.09	4.06%	3.77%	$29,699	Sammamish
Seattle	556,865	32.08%	$233,153,890,428	33.09%	53.00	11.26%	25.48%	$200,497	Seattle
Shoreline	61,120	3.52%	$16,722,153,900	2.37%	11.58	2.46%	2.79%	$21,920	Shoreline
Sno. Co. (Uninc.)	213,926	12.32%	$55,882,188,800	7.93%	55.38	11.77%	10.67%	$84,004	Snoh. Co. (Uninc.)
Woodinville	13,830	0.80%	$6,429,716,438	0.91%	5.66	1.20%	0.97%	$7,638	Woodinville
Woodway	1,340	0.08%	$1,112,962,100	0.16%	1.09	0.23%	0.16%	$1,227	Woodway
Yarrow Point	1,135	0.07%	$2,075,804,200	0.29%	0.36	0.08%	0.15%	$1,147	Yarrow Point
Totals	1,735,781	100.0%	$704,697,710,018	100.0%	470.56	100.0%	100.0%	$786,979	
							2025 TOTAL	**$786,979**	

Population:

• Population estimates are based on 2023 OFM April 1st Estimates and 2023 OFM Small Area Estimate Program (SAEP) data for census blocks.

• Jurisdictions entirely within a WRIA are assigned the 2023 OFM April 1st Estimate directly. Jurisdictions that straddle WRIA boundaries are assigned the percent share of the

Note: This method was tested against the 2021 ILA Cost Share tables using 2020 OFM data and was determined to be highly comparable for estimating population breakdowns. As OFM releases data every year, and the data spans both King and Snohomish Counties, this is a consistent and repeatable analysis across the entire study area.

• The portion of Kent in WRIA 8 is solely the Kent Watershed and has no population allocated to it.

***Assessed Value & Area:**

Snohomish County: Assessed value is based on Snohomish County Assessor's data March 2021, for market land value + market improvements value
King County: Assessed value is based on King County Assessor's data February 2021, land + improvements value
Assessed value and area (sq. miles) excludes the Upper Cedar River subwatershed.

DRAFT 2026 WRIA 8 Staff Work Plan

Topic	Task	Staffing
WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council & Regional/State Coordination		
WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council Schedule and staff WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council (SRC) meetings. Coordinate overall WRIA 8 implementation effort at the direction of the WRIA 8 SRC. Schedule and staff WRIA 8 Management Committee for annual budget and work plan review. Identify and inform SRC of emerging issues/topics affecting salmon recovery (e.g., climate change, regulatory updates, capital/capacity funding, etc.).	• Up to 6 meetings of WRIA 8 SRC • 1 meeting of WRIA 8 Management Committee • 1 meeting of the WRIA 8 Membership Committee (if needed) • 2026 state and federal legislative priorities • Project tours for SRC members, funders, state legislators, Congressional delegation, etc. • Meeting materials – agendas, briefing documents, presentations, minutes, etc. • 2027 work plan and budget • New member briefings	0.25 FTE Salmon Recovery Manager 0.15 FTE Administrative Coordinator
Coordination with regional salmon recovery effort Represent WRIA 8 in regional work with the Puget Sound Partnership (PSP), Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council (PS SRC), Puget Sound Watershed Leads, South Central Puget Sound Local Integrating Organization (LIO), and other regional salmon recovery forums to seek funding, inform policy, and provide other appropriate assistance for WRIA 8 plan implementation. Coordinate with NOAA Fisheries, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Co-Managers, PSP and other watershed partners on implementation of overall Puget Sound Chinook Salmon Recovery Plan (of which WRIA 8 Plan is a chapter). Promote and advocate for benefits to WRIA 8 ILA partners and resources for plan implementation.	• Attendance at up to 6 PS SRC meetings, 12 PS Watershed Leads meetings and 4 South Central LIO meetings to represent WRIA 8's interests • Regular updates to WRIA 8 SRC on regional salmon issues • Responses to requests/tasks from the Puget Sound salmon recovery community • Coordination with other watersheds on shared interests and priorities • Inform updates to and ongoing implementation of the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Plan	0.15 FTE Salmon Recovery Manager 0.10 FTE Projects and Funding Coordinator 0.05 FTE Technical Coordinator

DRAFT 2026 WRIA 8 Staff Work Plan

Topic	Task	Staffing

Coordination with state Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) and Governor's Salmon Recovery Office (GSRO)
Implement and administer state Lead Entity contract as salmon recovery Lead Entity for WRIA 8. Participate on Washington Salmon Coalition (WSC) to coordinate with other Lead Entities across the state and advance items of shared importance.
	• Semi-annual Lead Entity grant progress reports and billings
	• Participation in up to 6 Washington Salmon Coalition meetings/conference calls
	• Participate in biannual Washington State Salmon Recovery Conference
	• Coordinate with other Lead Entities to:
	  ○ Increase capacity/funding for implementation and communicating salmon recovery messages
	  ○ Identify improvements to the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) funding process, address policy issues, and work with RCO and GSRO to implement actions
		0.05 FTE Projects and Funding Coordinator
		
		0.05 FTE Salmon Recovery Manager

Support Plan Implementation		
WRIA 8 10-Year Plan Update Coordinate with PSP, SRC, Implementation Technical Committee, and other WRIA 8 partners to update WRIA 8 Plan.	• Up to six meetings/workshops with Technical Committee, Implementation Technical Committee, and other partners to inform the Plan update • Update the WRIA 8 Plan project list with partner input • Regular SRC status reports on draft Plan update, including key milestones and policy decisions	0.15 FTE Technical Coordinator 0.10 FTE Projects and Funding Coordinator 0.10 FTE Salmon Recovery Manager
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Improve integration of DEI into WRIA 8 salmon recovery. Support the SRC DEI Subcommittee in implementing the WRIA 8 DEI Strategic Plan, including developing strategies and actions.	• Plan, coordinate, facilitate DEI Subcommittee to advance DEI Strategic Plan • Lead on planning and implementing DEI strategies	0.05 FTE Salmon Recovery Manager 0.05 FTE Technical Coordinator

DRAFT 2026 WRIA 8 Staff Work Plan

Topic	Task	Staffing
	• Report to SRC to facilitate engagement, shared learning, and coordination of priority action	0.05 FTE Projects and Funding Coordinator
WRIA 8 Implementation Technical Committee Coordinate with policy, planning, and science/technical staff from WRIA 8 ILA partners and other stakeholders to share information and inform ongoing salmon recovery planning and implementation in the watershed. Prioritize implementation actions, seek partnerships, and develop strategies to implement priority actions identified in WRIA 8 Plan update.	• Coordinate up to 6 WRIA 8 Implementation Technical Committee meetings • Develop recommendations for priority actions based on WRIA 8 Plan • Coordinate with partners to continue to advance project development and implement projects and programmatic priorities	0.10 FTE Technical Coordinator 0.10 FTE Projects and Funding Coordinator
Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) and Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) Grants Support the WRIA 8 SRC (in their role as citizen-based committee under RCW 77.85) in developing, prioritizing, and presenting grant proposals to the state's Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) for SRFB and PSAR funds. Track SRFB/PSAR policies and procedures.	• Maintain and update WRIA 8 Four-Year Work Plan • Issue request for proposals, conduct outreach to project proponents • Assist project sponsors with project development • Facilitate Grant Review Committee proposal review and ranking and development of funding recommendations • Present Grant Review Committee funding recommendations to SRC • Support applicants in the application process and in addressing program requirements • Assist applicants in responding to SRFB Technical Review Panel comments and RCO grant manager information needs	0.15 FTE Projects and Funding Coordinator 0.10 FTE Technical Coordinator

DRAFT 2026 WRIA 8 Staff Work Plan

Topic	Task	Staffing
	• Attend SRFB meetings, as necessary, to represent WRIA 8 interests and priorities • Review and document support for project amendments to PSP/RCO (e.g., cost increases, scope changes, time extensions, etc.)	
King County Flood Control District Cooperative Watershed Management (CWM) Grants Support the WRIA 8 SRC in developing, prioritizing, and presenting project and program grant recommendations to King County Flood Control District (FCD) for Cooperative Watershed Management grant funding. Track FCD policies and procedures and coordinate with King County as the grant program administrator.	• Secure approval of annual SRC funding guidance • Continue to review and update CWM grant round process and proposal review criteria • Issue request for proposals • Provide outreach, project development assistance and application support to sponsors • Lead Technical Committee review and recommendations for monitoring and research proposals • Lead and facilitate Grant Review Committee proposal review, ranking, and development of funding recommendations • Present CWM recommendations to SRC and the King County FCD • Work with FCD and King County grant administrator on grant review and management	0.20 FTE Projects and Funding Coordinator 0.10 FTE Technical Coordinator

DRAFT 2026 WRIA 8 Staff Work Plan

Topic	Task	Staffing
Project Innovation and Community Grants Support the WRIA 8 SRC in developing, prioritizing, and presenting recommendations for Project Innovation and Community grant. These grants support innovative or conceptual projects with smaller grant awards, and fund projects that might not compete well in our traditional grant rounds.	• Issue request for proposals • Provide outreach, project development assistance and application support to sponsors • Lead and facilitate review committee proposal review, ranking, and development of funding recommendations • Present funding recommendations to SRC • Work with sponsors and King County fiscal staff to contract grants • Administer grant contracts and track progress	0.10 FTE Projects and Funding Coordinator
Tracking and Reporting on Implementation Progress Track and report on implementation of habitat restoration projects (including approved WRIA 8 grants and actions from other regional funding sources as appropriate) to inform ongoing implementation, 5-year Progress Report, and 10-year update of the WRIA 8 Plan. Manage updates to the Four-Year Work Plan to ensure alignment with WRIA 8 recovery strategies/goals. Manage WRIA 8 data in state project tracking database(s) and improve WRIA 8 implementation tracking and reporting tools.	• Use implementation metrics to inform 5-year Progress Report and 10-year update of the WRIA 8 Plan • Assist project sponsors on CWM reporting to the King County Flood Control District and RCO/GSRO • Obtain information from project sponsors to update state project tracking database(s) and to support WRIA 8 project implementation tracking, consistent with the WRIA 8 Monitoring and Assessment Plan • Review and approve project additions to Four-Year Work Plan	0.05 FTE Projects and Funding Coordinator

DRAFT 2026 WRIA 8 Staff Work Plan

Topic	Task	Staffing
Report on progress implementing WRIA 8 Plan habitat goals and recovery strategies consistent with WRIA 8 Monitoring and Assessment Plan.		
Legislative Priorities and Outreach Coordinate with WRIA 8 partners and organizations, including Puget Sound Partnership, Recreation and Conservation Office and other watersheds regionally and statewide, to develop annual state and federal funding and policy priorities to support Plan implementation. Identify and share new grant and funding opportunities. Help establish partnerships and seek funding for priority projects. Identify grant funding opportunities that support multiple benefits, including salmon habitat protection and restoration. Track and report on funding and policy priorities. Brief partners and engage where appropriate to promote WRIA 8 interests.	• Develop state and federal legislative priorities • Convene and facilitate WRIA 8 Legislative Subcommittee to review and discuss legislative priorities and consider supportive actions • Briefings/emails to SRC and partners regarding legislative priorities • Promote potential grant funding sources on WRIA 8 website and through E-news and Email notifications • Support efforts to identify and develop alternative funding mechanisms • Report to SRC regarding funding strategy for WRIA 8 Plan implementation • Targeted meetings and tours to raise awareness among decision-makers	0.15 FTE Salmon Recovery Manager 0.05 FTE Projects and Funding Coordinator
Communications / Outreach & Education – Telling the Salmon Recovery Story Use WRIA 8 Communications and Outreach Framework to prioritize communication and outreach actions and focus available resources.	• Review and update WRIA 8 Communications and Outreach Framework, as necessary. • Develop and distribute up to 6 WRIA 8 E-news editions (every other month opposite SRC meetings) • Manage media communications • Develop project/program fact sheets	0.15 FTE Administrative Coordinator 0.10 FTE Salmon Recovery Manager 0.05 FTE Technical Coordinator

DRAFT 2026 WRIA 8 Staff Work Plan

Topic	Task	Staffing
Raise awareness about salmon recovery and WRIA 8 Plan update priorities with ILA partners and watershed stakeholders. Seek funding and partnerships with WRIA 8 jurisdictions and partners, agencies and non-profits to implement outreach and education efforts that support WRIA 8 Plan. Ongoing efforts include: • Salmon SEEson program to promote awareness and support for salmon recovery • Shore Friendly King County and Salmon Friendly Lakes programs to promote more salmon-friendly shorelines • Encouraging stewardship of riparian areas • Build public support for Cedar River restoration • Seek and support opportunities to improve integration of stormwater management and salmon recovery.	• Plan project tours, groundbreakings, and/or ribbon cutting events to highlight project milestones and share implementation progress with local and state elected officials, partners, and Congressional delegation • Manage annual Salmon SEEson program • Update WRIA 8 website • Support public outreach on restoration projects • Meet with local governments and other partners to maintain a working understanding of WRIA 8 Plan priorities and opportunities for implementing actions	0.05 FTE Projects and Funding Coordinator
Technical Coordination		
WRIA 8 Technical Committee Provide technical support and analysis to WRIA 8 SRC and Team. Coordinate and facilitate WRIA 8 Technical Committee (TC) meetings, as needed. Maintain focus on monitoring and assessment priorities detailed in the WRIA 8 Plan update (e.g., elevated water temperatures in Ship Canal and	• Up to 6 Technical Committee meetings to provide field and project site visit opportunities, address specific technical topics and emerging issues and to capitalize on opportunities to advance shared learning and adaptive management • Record Technical Committee decisions	0.10 FTE Technical Coordinator

DRAFT 2026 WRIA 8 Staff Work Plan

Topic	Task	Staffing
Sammamish River, artificial light at night, predation in Lake Washington and Ship Canal, etc.). Review and provide technical feedback on project concepts funded by WRIA 8 grants. Work with Implementation Technical Committee to assess overall progress in implementing plan.	• Analysis/reporting/presentations to TC, ITC, and SRC • Recommendations for priority research and monitoring investments • Review and incorporate relevant regional salmon recovery technical information (study findings, reports, etc.)	
Coordinate Monitoring and Adaptive Management Efforts Work with the Technical Committee (TC), Implementation Technical Committee (ITC), PSP, WRIA 8 jurisdictions, SRC and other partners to implement, inform, and adapt the WRIA 8 Monitoring and Assessment Plan (MAP). Provide input and recommendations based on best available science and on-the-ground observations to inform the WRIA 8 Plan -- including understanding of emerging challenges and identifying which actions offer the most benefit in meeting Plan goals and objectives. Support WRIA 8 jurisdictions to integrate best available science related to salmon habitat needs into local and regional planning, regulations, and permitting.	• Complete Progress Report capturing implementation efforts through 2025 • Maintain detailed understanding of key issues facing salmon recovery and watershed health • Assessments of existing habitat and salmon monitoring information to identify application to WRIA 8 recovery goals and recovery strategies • Reports, documentation, and presentations to WRIA 8 SRC on best available science to inform salmon recovery decisions • Products and deliverables related to addressing priority monitoring efforts and knowledge gaps • Pertinent data and technical study results posted on WRIA 8 website • Scopes of work, requests for proposals, and work products created by contractors • Grant proposals and other funding packages and partnerships to implement technical priorities	0.30 FTE Technical Coordinator

DRAFT 2026 WRIA 8 Staff Work Plan

Topic	Task	Staffing
Seek partnerships and funding to advance monitoring activities.	• Track and report on metrics for WRIA 8 salmon population and habitat goals. • Coordinate reporting to SRC, PSP, RCO, and others. • Coordinate and produce other technical products arising from implementing MAP (e.g., data summaries and reports focused key bottlenecks to salmon health and survival and recommended management actions) • Organize and oversee technical services contractors to carry out specific technical tasks (e.g., related to monitoring, studies, and data management).	
Administration		
Conduct general administration work in support of the WRIA 8 interlocal agreement (ILA) and memorandum of understanding. Supervise and lead WRIA 8 Team, hire staff and evaluate staff performance. Develop and manage WRIA 8 budget and staff team work plan, grant billings/reporting, and trimester billings and progress reports to ILA parties.	• Manage WRIA 8 team meetings • Staff hiring and supervision • Prepare and submit ILA trimester billings/reports • Prepare and submit grant billings/reports	0.15 FTE Salmon Recovery Manager 0.10 FTE Administrative Coordinator

Memorandum of Understanding between WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council and King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks for Provision of Chinook Salmon Conservation Plan Implementation Services (2026-2035)

This Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU") sets out the services to be furnished by the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks, hereinafter referred to as the "Service Provider" or "~~KCDNRP~~King County," to the Water Resources Inventory Area ("WRIA") 8 Salmon Recovery Council ("SRC"), pursuant to an interlocal agreement ("ILA") under which participating local governments in WRIA 8 ("Parties") have agreed to work together from 2026 through 2035. The services include annual work plans and staffing approved by the WRIA 8 SRC, dispute resolution procedures, budgeting principles, and billing and payment procedures. Unless modified by written agreement of the parties hereto, the provisions of this MOU shall carry forward for each year that the ILA remains in effect.

1. Work Plan and Budget for 2026

The Service Provider will provide services in 2026 consistent with the WRIA 8 SRC approved work plan described in Attachment A. ~~The 2026 scope of work was approved by the WRIA 8 SRC on XXXX, 2025. The 2026 scope of work includes the work of the SRC consisting of a combination of the WRIA 8 ILA Parties and other stakeholders.~~ The SRC functions as both: (1) an advisory body to the ~~WRIA 8 ILA~~ Parties to make recommendations concerning implementation of the WRIA 8 Plan which ~~and~~ protect~~sing~~ and restore~~sing~~ watershed health, including monitoring and adaptive management; and as (2) the local citizens committee, also known as the Lead Entity under state law (~~RCW~~ chapter 77.85 RCW), to develop prioritized habitat project lists for funding consideration by the Salmon Recovery Funding Board. The evaluation and ranking of habitat project lists will be done by a local technical team that also makes habitat project funding recommendations to the SRC.

Attachment B is ~~the organizational~~a chart that depicts the WRIA 8 organizational structure established through the ILA and this MOU and its associated work plan.

2. Work Plan for Services after 2026

For ~~the~~ each year~~s~~ after 2026 ~~for which the ILA remains in effect~~, the Service Provider will submit an annual proposed work plan and budget to the WRIA 8 SRC for approval~~, which shall be attached hereto and made a part hereof upon such approval without~~

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~~further action being required of the SRC~~. The annual proposed work program and budget will be reviewed and approved by the SRC by no later than October 1 of each year.

~~2.~~3. Revisions to the Work Plan

The WRIA 8 SRC, the Management Committee, or the Service Provider may ~~present~~ recommend~~ations for~~ changes or revisions to the approved work plan during each year. Any ~~C~~changes to the work plan ~~need to~~must be approved by the WRIA 8 SRC, pursuant to the terms of the ILA, and may in no event increase the total budget for the year without approval by the WRIA 8 SRC according to the terms of the ILA. Nothing in this MOU shall be construed to limit the Parties, the SRC, or the Service Provider from increasing the budget through third-party grant revenue.

~~3.~~4. Budget Principles and Terms

~~For the WRIA 8 program budget, the annual increases will stay within the Consumer Price Index for Wages (CPI-W) as a measure of inflation.~~ Parties agree that the forgoing principles will govern the development of WRIA 8's annual work program and budget. The ~~WRIA 8~~ Parties ~~to the ILA~~ may revisit this policy annually if the services needed by the SRC change or costs for existing services ~~exceed the CPI-W~~increase inconsistent with the below principles.

Principles governing development of annual WRIA 8 program budgets:

a) WRIA 8 annual budget increases will stay within the Consumer Price Index for Wages (CPI-W) as a measure of inflation.

~~a)~~b) The cost-share formula for implementing and adaptively managing the WRIA 8 Plan will be ~~WRIA 8 ILA Parties will continue to share the cost of implementing and adaptively managing the WRIA 8 Plan through a cost-share formula~~ based on each jurisdiction's population, assessed value and area;

~~b)~~c) T~~he WRIA 8 SRC recognizes that t~~he cost for salaries, benefits, overhead, and operation and maintenance are generally recognized to increase ~~generally increase~~ incrementally over time. Such costs include, and shall keep pace with, negotiated union wage rates and inflation over the term of the ILA~~Therefore, ILA cost shares will increase annually to keep pace with union negotiated wage rates and inflation over the 10 year period of the ILA~~;

c)d) Parties' proportional cost-share shall remain fair and reasonable for their rate payersILA Parties need to be able to show that their portion of the cost-share is a fair and reasonable share for their rate payers;

d)e) Increases to funding obligations will be conducted predictably with sufficient lead time and in close approximation to the Consumer Price Index for WagesILA Parties need predictability, sufficient lead time regarding cost share increases, and assurances that the increases will approximate the Consumer Price Index for Wages; and

e)f) The annual WRIA 8 budget will be based on the Service Provider's costs including, but not limited to, for the WRIA 8 team salaries, benefits, overhead and operations, and supplies, and services.

4.5. Description of Staff and Nature of Employment

Staff provided under this MOU shall be as established by the work plan approved by the SRC on XXXX, 2025. Staff are employees of the Service Provider and all matters concerning payroll, benefits, safety, leave, or other incidents of employment are the responsibility of the Service Provider. Certain responsibilities or tasks may be delegated/sub-contracted as appropriate.

5.6. Responsibilities of the Salmon Recovery Manager

The WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Manager shall:

a) Be responsible for the sSupervisecion of all Service Provider staff provided under the ILA in their performance of services under this MOU;

b) Be the primary point of contact between KCDNRP King County as the Service Provider and the WRIA 8 SRC, its members, and its Management Committee;

c) Work with the WRIA 8 SRC chair and vice chair or designees to schedule, plan, prepare materials for, and otherwise staff meetings of the WRIA 8 SRC, to be held

~~virtually or in-person within the watershed area~~;

d) Work with the WRIA 8 SRC and appropriate committees to schedule, plan, prepare materials for, and otherwise staff meetings of the WRIA 8 SRC and committees ~~to be held within the watershed area~~;

e) Report to the WRIA 8 Management Committee, as directed by the WRIA 8 SRC;

f) Coordinate with jurisdictions and others contributing technical and policy work in support of WRIA 8 Plan implementation;

~~f)~~g) Mediate or otherwise resolve any issues that arise between the WRIA 8 SRC or Parties and Service Provider staff. If unable to resolve the dispute, the Salmon Recovery Manager, in coordination with one or more members of the Management Committee of the WRIA 8 SRC, will refer the conflict to the King County Water and Land Resources Division Director; and

~~g)~~h) Perform other duties as described in each year's annual work plan and as defined by the WRIA 8 SRC.

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~~6.~~7. Dispute Resolution Procedures

The Service Provider and WRIA 8 SRC will use their best, good-faith efforts to cooperatively resolve disputes and problems arising from this MOU. The Parties will make a good-faith effort to continue without delay to carry out their respective responsibilities under this MOU and the WRIA 8 ILA while attempting to resolve any dispute. If resolution is not possible, the issue will be brought to the WRIA 8 SRC for a vote pursuant to Section 5 of the ILA. ~~The WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Manager shall be responsible for mediating or otherwise resolving any issues or problems that arise between the WRIA 8 SRC or its participating municipalities and staff provided under the ILA. If a dispute is unable to be resolved, the Salmon Recovery Manager and one or more members of the Management Committee of the WRIA 8 SRC should apply to the KCDNRP Water and Land Resources Division Director for assistance or relief.~~

~~7.~~8. WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council Decisions on Staffing

If decisions are made to hire new staff for positions jointly agreed to by the WRIA 8 SRC and the Service Provider, then interested WRIA 8 SRC representatives will be invited to participate directly in the hiring process. All hiring and staffing decisions are to be in accordance with King County labor contracts and King County personnel guidelines.

~~8.~~9. Billing and Payment Procedures

The following protocols for billing and payment shall be followed:

~~a) ILA Parties shall notify the Service Provider, as fiscal agent for the WRIA 8 SRC, of the amounts approved by their legislative bodies on or before December 31, of each year, for the following fiscal year;~~

~~b)~~a) Should any ~~ILA~~ Party fail to approve their assessments and insufficient revenues be available to fulfill the approved scope of work, then the Service Provider shall consult with the Management Committee of the WRIA 8 SRC and any other advisory bodies authorized by the WRIA 8 SRC, as soon as practicable, ~~for the purpose of~~to recommend~~ing~~ adjustments necessary to the approved work plan to meet the revenues anticipated;

~~c)~~b) The Service Provider, as fiscal agent, will provide participating municipalities with three invoices, each representing one-third (1/3) of the total of their respective portions of the approved annual budget. The billing trimesters end on April 30, August 31, and December 31, and invoices will be sent two to three weeks after the end of each trimester. Invoices will be considered past due if not paid within 45 days of invoice date. The Service Provider will disclose past due invoices or accounts at any time to the WRIA 8 SRC or its Management Committee. ~~ILA~~ Parties may make a single payment for their respective portion of the approved budget at the start of the year or upon receipt of their first invoice;

~~d)~~c) ~~By March 15 of each year, t~~The Service Provider, as fiscal agent, will maintain ~~provide ILA Parties~~ itemized records of actual costs expended pursuant to the annual WRIA 8 work plan and will track payments received from Parties

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providing credit for overpayment on subsequent invoices where applicable. Parties jointly may elect to carry over unspent funds into the following year's budget ~~invoices reconciling the total annual expenditures for the previous year – consistent with the approved budget - with payments received from participating municipalities during the year, and providing credit where applicable~~;

~~e)~~d) ~~ILA~~ Parties wishing to inspect and review records maintained in connection with costs, billing, and payments for services provided under the ILA should contact the manager of the Finance and Administration section of the Water and Land Resources Division of ~~KCDNRP~~King County, who will make the records available in a timely manner ~~at the offices of KCDNRP~~;

~~f)~~e) The billing and payment procedures of this section shall carry though year to year during the timeframe of the WRIA 8 ILA; and

~~g)~~f) The Service Provider will continue to provide regular reports and summary of services to ~~ILA~~ Parties when invoices are sent out.

~~9.~~10. Technical Data Release

Each ~~ILA~~ Party controls its data and may specify protocols for release of that data.

~~10.~~11. Amendment and Termination

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This MOU may be amended only upon written approval of both the WRIA 8 SRC and the Service Provider. This MOU will terminate automatically upon selection of a new Service Provider, pursuant to Section 4.3 of the ILA, or upon termination of the ILA, pursuant to Section 9.2 of the ILA. ~~This MOU may be terminated by the WRIA 8 SRC by an affirmative vote in accordance with the voting provisions of Section 5 of the ILA. The Service Provider may terminate this MOU by providing the WRIA 8 SRC written notice of its desire to terminate at least 90 days prior to the effective date of such termination. The WRIA 8 SRC and the Service Provider may mutually agree to terminate this MOU at any time by both signing a written termination agreement.~~ In the event of termination ~~by either or both signatories to this MOU~~, the Service Provider is to receive full payment for all services

rendered prior to the effective date of termination, within 30 days after such effective date of termination.

Signed:

For King County Department Natural Resources and Parks:	For WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council:
By: _____	By: _____
John Taylor, Director	Vanessa Kritzer, Chair Council President, City of Redmond
Date: _____	Date: _____

XXXX, 2025

Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed (WRIA 8)

Funding Requests – Staff Recommendations

July 17, 2025

WRIA 8 staff are seeking Salmon Recovery Council approval for two funding requests:

1. Support planning and implementation for a 25-Year Salmon Summit in fall 2025.
2. Support large wood surveys in priority streams and the Cedar River for the next 5-year WRIA 8 Progress Report

The WRIA 8 budget includes an additional expenditures category as a placeholder for priority salmon recovery investments identified by WRIA 8 staff and committees. These expenditures are typically supported using the carry forward fund balance in the WRIA 8 budget, which is available at the Salmon Recovery Council's discretion. As of June 2025, the WRIA 8 budget includes an available carry forward fund balance of $308,789.

STAFF RECOMMENDED FUNDING REQUESTS:

1) Support 25-Year Salmon Summit

Request: WRIA 8 staff seek Salmon Recovery Council approval to contribute up to $15,000 to support the 25-year salmon summit event, including planning, content development, and facilitation.

Background: For the past 25 years, an unprecedented level of regional partnership has focused on recovering salmon following their listing in 1999 as an endangered species. In fall 2025, King County, WRIA 8, WRIA 9, and the Snoqualmie Watershed will host regional partners to showcase and celebrate the regional salmon-recovery work over the past two and a half decades, the grassroots approach to locally-driven partnerships that make this work possible, review the state of salmon, and present plans for future work and strategies to address future needs and challenges.

In conjunction with the summit, tours of multi-benefit projects in WRIA 8, WRIA 9, and the Snoqualmie Watershed will offer an on-the-ground look at the elements of successful projects. Visitors will hear from ecologists, engineers, and funding partners. The event will be scheduled to coincide with the ratification of the renewed watershed interlocal agreements and the 2025 Salmon SEEson.

The summit is estimated to cost $50,000. The cost of the summit is intended to be shared between King County and the watersheds. Funding will support hiring a contractor to assist with event planning and logistics, communication, project management, and associated rental and refreshment costs.

Staff Recommendation: WRIA 8 staff recommend the SRC approve contributing up to $15,000 to support the 25-year salmon summit event.

Decision	Estimated Cost
Consider approval to authorize WRIA 8 staff to contribute up to $15,000 to support the 25-year salmon summit event in fall 2025.	$15,000

2) Support large wood surveys in priority streams and the Cedar River for the next 5-year WRIA 8 Progress Report

Request: WRIA 8 staff seek Salmon Recovery Council approval to invest up to $120,000 in technical assessments of large wood in priority streams and the Cedar River.

Background: The WRIA 8 Plan update (2017) sets goals for measurable improvements to key Chinook salmon habitat with a five-year interval for progress reporting. WRIA 8 is preparing a Progress Report to document status and trends of key indicators through 2025. Based on discussions with the Technical Committee, we are requesting funding for large wood surveys this fall to update assessments of instream conditions and track progress toward the 2025 habitat goal to increase wood volume. Information will be included in the upcoming 2025 Progress Report and will help answer the question: Are overall conditions in the watershed related to Chinook salmon habitat improving?

Surveys will be conducted under two categories of work:

- **Stream wood surveys** will update 2018/19 baseline estimates of wood volume and assess progress toward 2025 goals in a representative selection of important Chinook salmon streams including Bear, Cottage Lake, Coal, and Issaquah creeks. Work will be conducted in conjunction with Chinook redd surveys in fall 2025 and will involve partnerships with local jurisdictions, King County, the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe and WDFW. Staffing, travel, and supplies for stream surveys are expected to cost up to $20,000.
- **Cedar River wood survey** will update the 2018 baseline estimate of wood volume and assess progress toward 2025 goals in the river. After considering alternative methods, the WRIA 8 Technical Committee recommends a comprehensive field survey, consistent with the 2018 baseline approach and the guidance in the WRIA 8 Monitoring and Assessment Plan. This project will produce an inventory of large wood in the active channel of the Cedar River from Lake Washington to the Landsburg Diversion Dam (approximately 22 river miles). WRIA 8 is in early negotiations for a scope and budget with the environmental services team at HDR Inc. and we estimate the river survey will cost $100,000.

Staff Recommendation: WRIA 8 staff recommend the SRC approve investing up to $120,000 in WRIA 8 funds to support technical assessments of large wood in priority streams and the Cedar River.

Decision	Estimated Cost
Consider approval to authorize WRIA 8 staff to spend up to $120,000 for staff, travel, and supplies to support field surveys of large wood in priority streams and the Cedar River.	$120,000

Additional topics being developed for future funding consideration:

- **WRIA 8 Technical Forum –** Host a facilitated workshop-style Technical Forum to advance and adapt recovery strategies and priorities. The forum would assemble fisheries scientists and technical experts across the watershed to discuss the latest research on Chinook salmon recovery challenges and brainstorm priority actions and areas of investigation for consideration in the WRIA 8 10-Year Plan Update.
- **Predator Suppression in Lake Washington –** Support work by the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife and its contractor, Hickey Bros. Research, LLC, to continue gill netting as a strategy for reducing the abundance of predator fishes in Lake Washington, with the intent of achieving larger returns of salmon in future years.