



**RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR WRIA 8
EDUCATION & OUTREACH STRATEGY**

**Lake Washington/Cedar River/Sammamish
Watershed (WRIA 8)
Chinook Salmon Conservation Plan**

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Purpose of this report

Local governments participating in the Chinook Salmon Conservation Plan for the Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed (WRIA 8) are engaged in a number of actions to help salmon recovery in the watershed. Some of these actions relate to public education and outreach. WRIA 8 asked Sage Enviro to do research and analysis to help answer the following questions:

- Where are the gaps in implementation of the WRIA 8 salmon recovery plan's communications and outreach recommendations?
- What can WRIA 8 do to improve implementation of these recommendations?

Gap analysis

A separate report describes research undertaken to identify current actions in WRIA 8 related to education and outreach. Here is a brief summary of the gap analysis methodology.

Step 1. The big picture: What is most important?

We developed a matrix that included key salmon recovery issues and key behaviors. WRIA 8 staff did an informal, rough ranking of which behaviors were more important to salmon recovery. The result was a list of key behaviors to be addressed, such as support for salmon recovery, alterations to lakeshore habitat and voluntary stewardship.

Step 2. Completing the matrix

The strategy matrix also included columns on:

- Key audiences
- Ease of behavior change
- Can partners work together?
- Can the WRIA 8 team affect?
- Who is working on the issue or behavior?

The first four columns were completed by Sage Enviro and Frause, the WRIA 8 Communications Committee and the WRIA 8 team.

Step 3. Who is doing what? Where are the gaps?

Several sources were used to get a better picture of which jurisdictions were working on the issue or behavior and what they were doing:

- The survey that most jurisdictions completed for the *WRIA 8 Implementation Progress Report 2006-2007*.
- Follow-up interviews with jurisdictions that completed the survey to gather more details.
- Additional interviews with a few key people and jurisdictions.

The results of the research are described in a separate document titled "Gap Analysis."

Step 4. How could WRIA 8 support or enhance current efforts?

We looked at this in various ways: What could WRIA 8 do in 2009 with existing funds? Where could WRIA 8 have the greatest impact on salmon recovery? What are priority behaviors that should be addressed with additional funds, such as grants, in the future? Recommendations are outlined below.

Recommendations

The WRIA 8 team discussed the draft recommendations and selected several to pursue in 2009. These will be discussed with the WRIA 8 Implementation Committee and Communications Committee. The activities are listed in suggested priority order. WRIA 8 has limited resources for public outreach and education, so setting priorities is critical.

Proposed activities for WRIA 8 for 2009

1. Alterations to lakeshore habitat

In 2007 several jurisdictions around Lake Washington worked with students at the University of Washington to survey lakeshore homeowners and identify barriers to changing their properties to include a more natural shoreline. Seattle recently developed a comprehensive handbook to address the barriers called “Green Shorelines: Bulkhead alternatives for a healthier Lake Washington.” Seattle has sent copies of the handbook to communities surrounding the lake for their use.

The WRIA 8 team is currently co-hosting four workshops with private landowners, permit staff from participating cities and others to discuss barriers and other issues affecting lake shorelines. The workshops should lead to recommendations and tangible ideas for a strategy, such as methods to reach shoreline property owners, distribution methods for the guidebook and ways to change the behavior of property owners. The work should be completed by June 2009.

WRIA 8 should use the results of these workshops to develop a lakeshore strategy. Possibilities include:

- Develop and hold workshops for lakeshore homeowners. This would increase the visibility of the handbook and help answer homeowners’ questions about changing their shorelines. WRIA 8 should assess the interest of King Conservation District or individual cities to develop workshops.
- Distribute copies of the guidebook to consultants, such as landscape architects, doing work on shorelines. They may be willing to distribute it to clients or potential clients; it could help increase their expertise and credibility. Distributing the guidebook through personal contact is also likely to have more impact on recipients.
- Use the handbook to update and enhance the Lakeshore Living information on the WRIA 8 website information. WRIA 8 could suggest that participating jurisdictions link to the website.

2. Support for salmon recovery

The WRIA 8 plan includes hundreds of recommendations addressing education and outreach for salmon recovery, but does not include recommendations to encourage overall support for salmon recovery. For the plan to be successful in the long run, it is important to grow and maintain support for funding, regulations, salmon-friendly behaviors and voluntary restoration. WRIA 8 should reach out to both watershed residents and to local, state and federal governments.

Watershed residents

Messaging: In order to get the attention of a wider audience, it will be necessary to reframe the message. WRIA 8 could develop and frame key messages so they resonate with key audiences, connect with their personal interests and priorities, and thus have greater impact. Messages could address, for example: Why is salmon recovery important? How does it relate to other things people may care about, such as clean water, personal health, children's future, climate change, Puget Sound cleanup, increased population growth or green development? WRIA 8 may want to identify salmon as the canary in the coal mine, an indicator of larger environmental issues that affect the quality of life in the region. It may want to include messages about why forest cover is important and how it connects to salmon recovery, global warming and quality of life.

It would be useful to work with participating jurisdictions to frame messages for all to share and use in education and communication projects. Messages could also be shared with community groups working in the watershed. WRIA 8 should assess the interest of the jurisdictions; Snohomish County and Redmond have both expressed an interest in joint messaging.

There are several ongoing efforts to increase awareness and change behaviors in ways that will benefit salmon, such as those by the Puget Sound Partnership, STORM and Natural Yard Care Neighborhoods. The WRIA 8 team should work with them to incorporate key messages into their strategies, materials and products.

Salmon SEEson: WRIA 8 participants have been working together to promote viewing of adult salmon returning to spawn and encourage support for salmon recovery. Joint promotion has apparently increased the number of people visiting salmon sites. WRIA 8 should continue to refine and improve Salmon SEEson, such as pursuing media opportunities, perhaps writing an op-ed. Salmon SEEson participants should also discuss the option of producing a giveaway item (such as a tote bag) and asking people to sign a pledge at viewing sites in order to receive it.

Key behaviors: WRIA 8 could work with participating jurisdictions to develop a list of key behaviors and actions for people to take that could help salmon recovery *and* address other key priorities. This could help focus efforts on the most important behaviors. STORM (see below) has recently gone through this exercise to develop a list of target behaviors for stormwater. This list could be a good starting point.

Elected officials and participating jurisdictions

The WRIA 8 team is planning to reach out to elected officials, decision makers at state and federal agencies and others who are involved in making decisions about funding and other support for salmon recovery. Strategies discussed include developing a PowerPoint for city council meetings and continuing to sponsor an annual tour of habitat restoration projects in the watershed. Staff at participating jurisdictions could benefit from simpler messages about which actions are the most important focus for the WRIA 8 salmon recovery effort.

3. Alterations to habitat on rivers and streams

This is a priority for WRIA 8, and only a few local governments have done recent work in this area. The WRIA 8 team and interested jurisdictions could play an important role in moving this forward in the watershed.

Development of a strategy to reach streamside property owners should begin with research into their current beliefs, knowledge, behaviors, barriers to behavior change, and what would encourage them to have shorelines that better protect salmon. WRIA 8 could work with participating cities to do the research. There may be budget in 2009 to begin research, with a goal to develop a strategy in 2010.

Snohomish County has done extensive research into streamside landowners; their research could be a place to start. However, the county asked very few questions on habitat, and it is also not clear how similar residents in rural Snohomish County are to urban and suburban residents of King County. Perhaps another class at the University of Washington would be interested in taking on this project (similar to the lakeshore property owner research). This could save significant sums of money.

As a first step, the WRIA 8 team could explore streamside property owners with the WRIA 8 Implementation Committee: What are they currently doing with this audience? What do they think is needed? This could determine the interest of jurisdictions and build a foundation for survey work later in the year.

Future work with streamside landowners could potentially be grant funded. For example, perhaps a non-governmental organization could obtain a grant to develop and present workshops based on the research.

Other actions could include:

- Work with Bellevue to adapt the information in its Critical Areas handbook for the WRIA 8 website and/or for use by other jurisdictions.
- Work with Snohomish County to adapt its web site information for WRIA 8 residents or link the WRIA 8 site to existing Snohomish County information.
- Update the *Streamside Savvy* booklet and make it available online or in printed form; develop a PowerPoint or other workshop materials to support the information.
- Develop a strategy and supporting materials to encourage participation in the Public Benefit Rating System, which provides a property tax reduction as an incentive to preserve open space on private property.

4. Retention of forests; planting trees

Protecting forest cover, like many of the activities in the WRIA 8 plan, will likely require a combination of education and outreach, regulations and incentives. Outreach activities suggested in the WRIA 8 Plan that are specifically related to trees include:

- Work with green builders, nurseries, garden centers, community groups and/or others to promote the benefits of forest cover to protect water quality and reduce flooding.
- Encourage maintenance practices that protect trees.
- Increase awareness about native vegetation and trees through signage, brochures and web site information.
- Recognize businesses that plant or restore trees through awards or publicity.

A key role for WRIA 8 could be developing messages about the importance of trees and how they relate to salmon recovery, global warming and quality of life (see “Support for Salmon Recovery” above). WRIA 8 could encourage participating jurisdictions to use these messages in their outreach on LID, streams and lakes, natural yard care and other issues.

5. Woody debris in rivers and streams

This is an important issue, but it is also politically contentious. Recreational boaters, in particular, are opposed because they are concerned about boater safety. There is a current controversy about woody debris in the Cedar River.

WRIA 8 could develop key messages about why woody debris is important and how to balance boater safety and salmon recovery. The team could provide these messages to supporters who are willing to talk to elected officials. WRIA 8 could also revise the existing brochure on large woody debris and distribute it more widely.

Suggested future activities

Voluntary stewardship and restoration

A number of participating jurisdictions and community groups sponsor events to plant trees and remove invasive plants. WRIA 8 could play a useful role in helping make the work of its partners more effective, such as through building skills, improving coordination and/or doing research on key audiences.

WRIA 8 could help cities, counties and nonprofit groups by doing research to find out more about people who participate in restoration events and how events could be more successful. Research questions could include, for example: What brings them to events? What types of promotion and recruitment are most effective? Would incentives help increase participation? If yes, what types of incentives? Is it more effective to recruit people as individuals or as groups? If the latter, what types of groups? What do we know about people who participate? Are they already the choir? As a result of participating, do they become more willing to change other behaviors? How effective is education done during the event? Is follow-up education useful?

WRIA 8 could follow the Salmon SEEson model (promoting salmon viewing opportunities throughout the watershed) and coordinate joint promotion of stewardship events. Local governments have found Salmon SEEson's joint promotion to be helpful, and it appears to have increased participation at their events. The jurisdictions may also find joint promotion of volunteer opportunities to be helpful. WRIA 8 may want to explore whether local governments would be interested in joint promotion.

WRIA 8 could create a web portal where the local governments and organizations sponsoring restoration events could post their own events. This could help to increase the level of awareness and participation in events. This is similar to work WRIA 8 did in the past, with the refinement that the WRIA 8 team would not be responsible for postings.

Low-impact development

Several cities and counties are working on low-impact development. This includes pilot development projects, changes in building codes and other regulations, seminars for builders and developers, and information about new ordinances.

In 2008 the WRIA 8 team found many jurisdictions were willing to work together to write an EPA grant to advance LID in WRIA 8, so there is clearly interest in joint projects related to LID. The WRIA 8 team could coordinate work on another LID grant that would include a range of activities, including education and outreach.

WRIA 8 could coordinate cities to jointly produce, educational resources on why LID is important, what elements are included, and how to install and maintain low-impact landscapes. Information and materials could be aimed at builders, developers, landscapers and/or homeowners. It could include workshops, PowerPoint presentations, handbooks, brochures and/or information for websites.

WRIA 8 could build on existing activities. For example, Stewardship Partners is working with several local agencies to present workshops for homeowners on why and how to build rain gardens. Perhaps the organization would be interested in presenting more rain garden workshops in WRIA 8 and/or develop workshops on other related topics.

At a minimum, WRIA 8 should link to Puget Sound Partnership's web site information about LID. WRIA 8 could also coordinate existing efforts by posting or emailing a calendar about LID-related activities. If other funding is not available, any or all of these activities could be part of a grant proposal.

As a first step, the team could talk to LID experts to find out what tools are needed and how WRIA 8 could help develop the tools. A Salmon Recovery Council meeting could include representatives from the Puget Sound Partnership and others discussing their LID activities and how they relate to salmon recovery.

Natural yard care and salmon-friendly design

More than half of the jurisdictions in King County either run a Natural Yard Care Neighborhoods program or participate in the county's program. This includes several cities in WRIA 8: Bellevue, Kent, Kirkland, Redmond, Seattle and Sammamish. In 2008

a design focus was incorporated into the Natural Yard Care Neighborhoods program. It is not specifically salmon-friendly design (such as stream-bank armoring), but the principles of amending soil and using mulch, reducing water and pesticide use, and similar actions are likely to protect salmon.

It could be relatively simple and inexpensive to adapt existing information related to salmon-friendly design and provide it to King County, STORM and participating cities for use in outreach to homeowners about natural yard care. It would take advantage of existing education and outreach efforts to spread the word about how to protect salmon.

King County may not have access to long-term funding for the Natural Yard Care program. King County has requested that WRIA 8 and other county WRIsAs include natural yard care on their priority list to help ensure that education on natural yard care continues to happen.

Stormwater BMPs for businesses

Several cities are doing business outreach on stormwater best management practices. King County and all of the cities will need to do business outreach on stormwater as part of the implementation of the NPDES phase 2 stormwater permit.

WRIA 8 could play an important role in moving this effort forward. This could potentially be an ambitious project, including audience definition, audience research, technical research, strategy development and materials. Any strategy should combine regulation, incentives and education. Cities could customize strategies and materials for their own business sectors and ordinances. This would require significant resources, so could be an option for a grant proposal.

Before undertaking this ambitious project, WRIA 8 would need to determine both if the business audience is a high priority and if existing activities need to be enhanced.

Auto maintenance and car washing

Many local governments are already actively working on outreach related to car washing, and auto maintenance is one of STORM's priorities. This could be delayed to future years and take a primarily supportive role with residential audiences, such as promoting the use of car wash coupons. If desired, WRIA 8 could play a lead or coordinating role for a project aimed at businesses with vehicle fleets.