



2025 Legislative Priorities for Salmon Recovery and Puget Sound Watershed Health

Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed (WRIA 8) Partners

Federal Priorities (Fiscal Year 2026)

- **Support at least \$110 million in base funding for Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund (PCSRF) in Departments of Commerce and Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill.** The PCSRF program is the primary federal funding for salmon recovery and supports annual grants for priority salmon habitat protection and restoration projects.
- **Support funding for priority repairs and upgrades to the Hiram M. Chittenden (Ballard) Locks that improve fish passage and survival and address impacts of sea level rise, including:**
 - Design and construction of an exclusion structure for the saltwater drain intake system to keep adult salmon from becoming trapped.
 - Replace failing smolt slide(s) to ensure continued juvenile salmon passage.
 - Upgrades and improvements to the fish ladder to improve fish passage and reduce impacts of pinniped predation and elevated water temperatures.
 - Funding to support the Corps' continued engagement in the multi-partner Lake Washington Ship Canal Roundtable process to identify and advance alternatives to address elevated water temperatures and low dissolved oxygen in the Ship Canal.
- **Support key Puget Sound restoration funding programs and policy priorities, including:**
 - **\$57 million for Puget Sound Geographic Program in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.** This program provides key funding to support Puget Sound recovery priorities, implementation of voluntary actions, and adaptive management. Funding supports local and regional partner efforts, including ten local integrating organizations and seven Marine Resources Committees. The program supports innovative approaches to addressing stormwater, habitat, shellfish, flooding, water quality and quantity, and endangered species recovery, including Chinook salmon and Southern Resident orcas.
 - **\$50 million for National Estuary Program (NEP).** This is core program funding for Puget Sound Partnership and for competitive Puget Sound recovery grants.

- **Support directing funding from the Infrastructure and Jobs Act and Inflation Reduction Act to priority habitat restoration and water infrastructure improvements in WRIA 8 and Puget Sound.** Aligning this funding with state and local project priorities and/or through existing state programs supports and supplements existing salmon recovery priorities.
- **Support innovative efforts to streamline regulatory review and permitting to support habitat restoration project implementation.**
- **Support federal funding for research and management of stormwater to reduce impacts to salmon.** Stormwater is the largest source of pollution to the Puget Sound and many developed areas do not have stormwater treatment. Chemicals from tire dust, specifically 6PPD-quinone, affect salmon survival. Coho have been shown to be most sensitive and succumb to “urban runoff mortality syndrome” within hours of exposure. Federal funding is needed to support local governments in implementing critical stormwater retrofit projects to capture and treat toxic runoff. Federal infrastructure funding provides a once in a generation opportunity to effectively address stormwater management.
- **Support and create mechanisms to enable innovative funding approaches, including public-private partnerships, that engage federal agencies and private funding sources to implement projects, especially those under federal authority.**

State Priorities

Fully fund Capital Budget grant programs

Funding Program	Amount	Agency	Description
Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration	\$110 million	Recreation and Conservation Office	Grants for salmon habitat projects in all Puget Sound watersheds and a prioritized list of large salmon recovery projects
Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB)	\$125 million	Recreation and Conservation Office	Grants for salmon habitat projects in watersheds around the state, as well as half of the operating costs of the salmon recovery Lead Entity program to coordinate implementation of salmon recovery
SRFB Riparian	\$25 million	Recreation and Conservation Office	Grants for priority riparian protection and restoration projects/programs
Floodplains by Design	\$84 million	Department of Ecology	Grants for multi-benefit floodplain projects around the state that enhance

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			salmon habitat and protect public health and safety
Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program	\$27.5 million	Department of Fish and Wildlife	Grants to restore priority shoreline and nearshore habitats critical to salmon and other species
Brian Abbott Fish Barrier Removal Board	\$77 million	Recreation and Conservation Office	Grants for removal of identified and prioritized fish passage barriers
Stormwater Financial Assistance	\$80 million	Department of Ecology	Grants to local governments to finance stormwater retrofit projects that treat polluted stormwater in priority areas

- **Support additional capital investments in habitat protection and restoration and climate resiliency, including:**
 - \$30 million for **riparian buffer incentives** in Department of Ecology’s budget to fund riparian protection and restoration incentives to accelerate riparian buffer establishment.
 - \$40 million for **streamflow restoration** in Department of Ecology’s budget to fund local watershed planning and projects that will improve instream flows.
 - \$31 million for **Community Forest Program** in Recreation and Conservation Office’s budget to help communities protect and enhance important forest lands, including stream headwaters and areas promoting healthy stream conditions for salmon.
 - \$67.5 million for **Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program – Habitat Conservation Account** in Recreation and Conservation Office’s budget to protect and restore priority salmon habitat.

Operating Budget

- **Support state agency budget requests for monitoring salmon populations, and for studies and management of issues affecting salmon survival**, including predation, elevated water temperatures, artificial light at night, disease, and other issues. Specific requests to support include:

Budget request	Amount	Agency	Description
Lake Washington predator suppression	\$1.4 million	Department of Fish and Wildlife	Continue important work to control predatory fish in Lake Washington basin to support salmon survival.
Reduce toxic tire chemical exposure	\$8.9 million	Department of Ecology	Continue work to identify effective stormwater treatments, find safer alternatives, and conduct monitoring.
Accelerate floodplain resilience	\$1 million	Department of Ecology	Update flood risk maps, provide technical support to communities, and help move salmon recovery projects forward.

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Policy Legislation

- **Address effects of climate change on salmon and salmon habitat.** Recovering salmon requires planning for and adapting to changing watershed conditions resulting from climate change. WRIA 8 supports policies and programs that address temperature impaired water bodies to improve salmon migration and survival, increase the pace of salmon habitat protection and restoration to improve ecosystem resiliency, and that mitigate projected effects of climate change on salmon.
 - Guide funding from State Climate Commitment Act – Natural Climate Solutions Account (RCW 70A.65.270) to support investments in existing grant programs supporting salmon habitat protection and restoration and climate resiliency priorities.
- **Advance streamlining regulatory review and permitting to support habitat restoration project implementation.** Build on the Habitat Recovery Pilot Program at the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and the federal and state Multi-Agency Review Team to establish and support a coordinated and streamlined permitting process for ecologically beneficial projects.
- **Improve regulatory protections for important salmon habitat,** including regulatory improvements that enhance protection of riparian areas and lake and marine shorelines.
- **Increase funding to regulatory entities for permit enforcement of land use regulations.** Lack of adequate regulatory permit enforcement enables continued unpermitted development and loss of habitat and critical areas.
- **Improve integration of salmon and Puget Sound recovery into land use planning and policies.**
- **Promote and fund stormwater management planning, coordination, and implementation at a watershed scale, address critical data/information needs, and seek innovative solutions to achieve multiple benefits from integrating stormwater management and habitat protection and restoration.**
 - Advance research, policy/product changes, and treatment actions to address impacts of the tire dust chemical 6PPD-quinone on salmon survival.
 - Support implementation of low impact development, green stormwater infrastructure, and retrofits to older stormwater facilities.
 - Seek a dedicated funding source for local government stormwater retrofits.
 - Create a new funding source or modify an existing one to support multiple benefit stormwater projects that integrate stormwater management and salmon habitat restoration (modeled on the Floodplains by Design funding program).

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- **Align investments in equity and environmental justice with salmon recovery priorities** to achieve multiple benefits for salmon populations and human communities.
- **Support outreach, education, and stewardship projects and programs** that raise awareness, empower the next generation to continue salmon recovery and climate change mitigation work, and promote and engage private landowners in using best available science to guide decisions in how they manage their property to protect and restore important habitats and improve environmental conditions.
- **Increase investment in salmon recovery and Puget Sound restoration priorities through existing funding authorities, and support innovative funding approaches**, including new watershed-based and/or regional funding mechanisms and public-private partnerships that engage state agencies and private funding sources to support multiple-benefit projects.

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