

WRIA 9 Salmon Recovery Manager Report

April 23, 2019

National Planning Conference—San Francisco Bay Restoration

I attended the National Planning Conference in San Francisco April 12-16. Spending time with thousands of planners from all over the globe was quite overwhelming. There is a lot of innovative community and regional planning and implementation happening on the ground, especially planning for climate change. Of particular applicability to Puget Sound salmon recovery were discussions with professionals associated with the creation and administration of the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority. The California Assembly authorized creation of the Authority; the Authority placed a measure (Measure AA) on the ballot for voters to determine to create a property tax specifically to restore the Bay. Over 70 percent of voters in the 9 counties that encompass San Francisco Bay voted in the affirmative. San Francisco County topped 77 percent. The lowest yes vote was Solano County at 53 percent. Via an annual flat \$12 per parcel tax per year, the revenue collected for restoring San Francisco Bay over 20 years is \$500 million.

10 years of effort led to this result, including attitude surveys, extensive public outreach, and, most notably, the business community underwriting the campaign on Measure AA with a very specific, convincing message, “The Economy of San Francisco Bay is San Francisco Bay”. I will be continuing conversations with the people I made contact with and others who they recommended I talk with. I toured a 937 acre estuary restoration project in San Pablo Bay in Sonoma County (partially funded by the San Francisco Bay Authority) and a 90 acre estuarine habitat restoration project undertaken on private property in San Pablo Bay by Viansa Winery.

Salmon Recovery Conference

On April 9th, I was a member of a panel of speakers at the Salmon Recovery Conference held in Tacoma. The topic of the panel was “Urban Stormwater Threats and Clean Water Strategies to Conserve and Recover Salmon”. Panel members and their presentations included: Jenifer McIntyre (Green stormwater infrastructure to improve water quality in salmon habitats); Sandra O’Neill and Andrea Carey (Elevated contaminants in resident Chinook salmon pose a threat to salmon reproduction and to people and whales that eat them); Edward Kolodziej (Using high-resolution mass spectrometry to identify organic contaminants linked to urban stormwater mortality syndrome); Jay Davis (The urban mortality syndrome: juvenile coho salmon as surrogates for adult spawners); Blake Feist (Current and future vulnerability mapping for the coho urban mortality syndrome in Puget Sound); Jessica Lundin (Aligning land use and water quality across a gradient of coho mortality in Puget Sound); Zhenyu Tian (Suspect and Non-Target Screening for contaminants of emerging concern in Puget Sound); and Doug Osterman (New science informing endangered species management in WRIA 9).

Seattle University (SU) Senior Project Sponsor—Desimone Oxbow

The SU senior project to develop habitat restoration concepts for the Desimone Oxbow property on the Duwamish River is moving along. A draft report with design concepts will be presented to restoration

experts on February 14th. The student team is presenting its progress to the Watershed Ecosystem Forum at its May 9th meeting.

Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council (PSSRC)

Dennis Robertson and I attended the March 28th meeting of the PSSRC held at the Port Gamble S’Kallam Longhouse near Kingston. A very good overview of the recently completed salmon recovery plan for the Skokomish River was provided by Skokomish Tribe representatives and staff. Of particular note, the recovery plan incorporates the operations of the two Tacoma dams on the Skokomish, a good case study for WRIA 9 as we continue working with the Corps of Engineers, Muckleshoot Tribe, and Tacoma on flow management at Howard Hanson Dam.

WRIA 9 and 8 Local Integrating Organization (LIO)

The LIO met on March 6th at the King Conservation District office in Renton. The major topics were a discussion on the Puget Sound Partnership performance management initiatives and potential alignment with LIO priority actions, a “deep dive” presentation on shoreline armoring, and lingering boundary issues associated with WRIA 10’s split from the WRIA 8 and 9.

Our Green Duwamish Stormwater Strategy

A workshop of the Our Green Duwamish Stormwater Stakeholders group was held at the Tukwila Community Center on April 11th. Discussion included breaking into smaller working groups that meet outside of stakeholder meetings to enhance more co-design and collaboration, working toward solutions to challenges and meeting OGC goals, and decision making frameworks. The homework assignment is to identify programs and projects that are planned in the next five years that address reducing priority toxics.

Stewarding Public Lands and Water with Encampments Workshop

Matt Goehring attended the February 25th Green/Duwamish Workshop designed to analyze the growing challenges associated with homeless encampments on restoration sites. The workshop’s goal was to introduce available resources and collaboration to help maintain habitat restoration sites (and other open space areas) and the health of those encamped on them. The workshop included a variety of talks on mitigating the environmental impacts of encampments, promoting safety, reducing maintenance costs, and connecting people to available support services.

Watershed Restoration and Enhancement Committee (WREC)

The WREC met on April 23rd to discuss sub-basin delineation to be helpful in identifying projects to offset consumptive use of ground water, potential project site visits, and rural residential growth projections.

Lower Green River Flood Hazard Reduction Plan and Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement

From October 24, 2018 Salmon Recovery Manager Report: The first meeting of the Advisory Committee was held on October 12th at the City of Renton Council Chambers. Dennis Robertson, Management Committee Chair, attended to represent WRIA 9. WRIA 9, Flood Control District, King

County Water and Land Resources Division, Auburn, Kent, Renton, and Seattle staff attended. Operating guidelines, draft EIS scoping notice and fact sheet, study area characterization, and maps of three alternatives were distributed and presented. Six meetings are anticipated over two years, the time estimated to complete the programmatic environmental impact statement. The stated goal of the Lower Green River Corridor Flood Hazard Management Plan is to “provide a long-term approach to reduce flood risk and improve fish habitat while supporting the economic prosperity of the region”.

The City of Tukwila is convening a meeting of the mayors of the four cities of the Lower Green and King County administrative officials with WRIA 9 on November 2nd to discuss WRIA 9’s development of a “fourth alternative” that more strongly integrates salmon recovery needs. The goal is to garner support for an alternative by the four cities and King County to be submitted for evaluation of impacts. Three other alternatives to be evaluated by the programmatic environmental impact statement include: “No Action”; “Moderate Geographic Extent of Increased Level of Protection”; and “Greater Geographic Extent with Increased Level of Protection, Integrated Habitat and Recreation, Agricultural Protection Facilities, And Habitat Restoration Project Partnerships”. A scoping notice is anticipated in mid-November.

2/12 SRM Report: The DPEIS scoping notice occurred on November 26, 2018. WRIA 9 worked collaboratively with the staff of the Lower Green Cities (focused on Tukwila, Kent, Auburn which all straddle the river) and King County to develop a “4th Alternative” to include with scoping comments by the January 29, 2019 deadline for comments. The Management Committee met on January 11th to review and discuss the 4th Alternative and other DPEIS scoping comments to submit to the Flood Control District. The Management Committee supported modifications to the existing pre-scoping letter (of August 2018 which was sent to the FCD), and agreed to a timeline and approach for review by the WEF. Drafts of the 4th Alternative, which includes a facility map and corresponding narratives, were distributed to the Mayors of the three river cities and King County Executive as the work was completed in the area of each jurisdiction (on or before January 18th). The Map and Narratives were updated as feedback was provided by the jurisdictions. The draft scoping letter, comments, and 4th Alternative were distributed to the WEF for review on January 23rd. The WEF was asked to provide feedback by January 28th. Comments from King County, Renton, Kent, and Seattle were received by February 1st (as the comment period was extended from January 29th to April 1st, correspondingly the time for WEF review was extended). The documents were revised pursuant to the comments, and distributed to the Management Committee for review on February 7th for discussion at its February 12th meeting.

4/12 Update: On February 21, the WEF co-chairs submitted a letter and WRIA 9 comments, including a 4th alternative map and narratives, to the SEPA Official. Other entities also submitted comments that are consistent with and supportive of WRIA 9’s comments. The PDEIS comment period was extended to May 1 this year. American Rivers listed the Green River as America’s 4th most threatened river on April 16th, in large part due to flood control management of the Lower Green.

Congressional, Legislative, and Related Activity

Current state legislature capital budget proposals for funding programs critical to WRIA 9 are:

- Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration: \$43.6 million (House) and \$45.9 million (Senate)
- Estuary and Salmon Restoration (ESRP): \$10 million (House) and \$10 million (Senate)
- Salmon Recovery Funding Board: \$25 million (House) and \$25 million (Senate)
- Floodplains by Design: \$50.4 million (House) and \$42.8 million (Senate)
- Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA): \$4.3 million (House) and \$6.6 million (Senate)

At these funding levels, the following WRIA 9 habitat legislative priorities WILL NOT be funded:

- Lones levee setback and floodplain restoration project in unincorporated King County near Auburn
- Downey Farmstead restoration in Kent

The WRIA 9 habitat project that WILL LIKELY BE funded by program:

- McSorley Creek pocket estuary and shoreline restoration design in Des Moines/Saltwater State Park (ESRP)
- Maury Island Aquatic Reserve Armoring Removal 3 (ESRP)
- Lowman Beach Park Restoration in West Seattle (ALEA)
- Chinook Wind Public Access in Tukwila (ALEA)