WASHINGTON STATE BUDGET PRIORITIES

Support core salmon recovery programs within the Capital Budget. These core state programs are critical to leveraging significant local and federal investments to advance salmon recovery.

- **$82 million - Salmon Recovery Funding Board** (SRFB) in the Recreation and Conservation Office budget: SRFB supports annual grant rounds for salmon habitat protection and restoration projects in watersheds around the state and provides Lead Entity program funding for coordinating watershed-based salmon recovery efforts.

- **$65.4 million – Puget Sound Acquisition & Restoration** (PSAR) in the Recreation and Conservation Office budget: PSAR funds biennial investments in both locally and regionally significant salmon habitat projects within Puget Sound watersheds. It also provides Lead Entity program funding for coordinating salmon recovery efforts.

- **$70.4 million – Floodplains by Design** (FbD) in the Department of Ecology budget: FbD supports state-wide multi-benefit floodplain projects around the state that enhance salmon habitat and protect public health and safety.

- **$29 million – Estuary & Salmon Restoration Program** (ESRP) in the Recreation and Conservation Office budget: ESRP supports nearshore ecosystem restoration and protection within Puget Sound. A $29 million funding level would fund the McSorley Creek restoration project at Saltwater State Park.

- **$94 million - Brian Abbott Fish Barrier Removal Board** (FBRB) in the Recreation and Conservation Office budget: FBRB supports state-wide fish barrier removal projects.

Support $3.186 million request for salmon recovery Lead Entities in the Recreation and Conservation Office Operating Budget. Funding would increase base funding for Lead Entities to coordinate watershed-based salmon recovery efforts and prioritize projects for state Salmon Recovery Funding Board funding (per RCW 77.85). Lead Entities – including WRIA 9 – currently receive $60,000 annually in capacity funds and have not received a cost-of-living adjustment since their inception in 1999. This request represents an increase of $2,212,000 in funding above the previous biennium funding level and will enhance capacity to develop projects and proposals to secure available federal resources for projects in Washington State.

Support $115 million in MTCA Remedial Action Grant funding for contaminated sediment clean-ups. A growing body of research highlights that bioaccumulation of contaminants in urbanized estuaries is negatively impacting Chinook salmon. Reducing contaminant exposure pathways is needed to improve juvenile salmon marine survival and increase Chinook salmon productivity. WRIA 9 should encourage the legislature to fully fund Ecology’s request for $115 million in the upcoming biennium and advocate for limiting MTCA funding to purposes outlined in statute.
WASHINGTON STATE POLICY PRIORITIES

Track and support efforts to improve regulatory protections and conservation incentives for salmon habitat within the regulatory framework for shorelines and critical areas. Habitat protection is fundamental to long-term watershed restoration efforts to ensure ongoing development pressures do not undermine restoration efforts. Legislative policy bills were introduced in the 2021-2022 Legislative Session to enhance riparian buffer protection and restoration and integrate the concept of “net ecological gain” into the Growth Management Act. Similar policy proposals represent important opportunities to work with stakeholders to address previous concerns and improve the regulatory frameworks for protecting and restoring salmon habitat.

Support innovative efforts to streamline regulatory review and permitting to support habitat restoration project implementation. Build on the pilot efforts from the previous legislative session to support improvements to the permitting process to streamline review and permitting for restoration.

Track and support efforts to improve existing and explore new fundings authorities to support salmon recovery. Salmon recovery needs continue to outpace available funding, and additional funding is necessary to accelerate progress towards regional recovery goals. Despite an estimated need of $4.7 billion in 2011 to fully implement salmon recovery plans, only $1 billion – or approximately 22 percent of the total need – has been invested in salmon recovery (State of Salmon in Watershed, 2020). Improving funding authorities that support salmon recovery and Puget Sound restoration and/or pursue new watershed-based or regional funding authorities will help accelerate implementation of multi-benefit projects.

Support legislation and funding requests to advance watershed scale coordination in stormwater management and accelerate investments in green stormwater infrastructure to minimize the impacts of stormwater pollution on salmon. Stormwater runoff continues to be regionally recognized as one of – if not the top – threat to aquatic ecosystems. Stormwater retrofits and green infrastructure investments are necessary to address both lethal and sublethal impacts to salmon, including coho mortality events observed across urbanized portions of the watershed. Support advancing research and policy/product changes to address impacts of the tire dust chemical 6PPD-quinone on salmon survival.

Support legislation to increase watershed resiliency and minimize the impacts of climate change impacts on Pacific salmon. Projected climate change impacts will adversely impact native salmonids across Puget Sound. Achieving science-based greenhouse gas reduction targets will be critical to minimizing the severity of projected climate shifts. WRIA 9 supports policies that enhance watershed resiliency and mitigate the negative impacts associated with the projected increases in both regional temperatures and extreme weather events.