



Chapter 7: Capital Projects

Salmon recovery capital projects preserve, enhance, create or restore the habitats and physical processes that support salmon. Projects include acquisition, restoration, and/or enhancement approaches.

Although significant progress has been made implementing projects identified in the 2005 Salmon Habitat Plan, many projects remain unfunded and under-resourced. Since 2005, 165 projects have been completed or are in progress, totalling over \$160 million of investments. While many of the remaining projects identified within the 2005 Plan are still viable, other opportunities have been lost to development and/or a change in ownership.

This update provides a current, comprehensive list of potential capital projects that align with established goals for Chinook salmon recovery in WRIA 9. A couple of plan amendments added new projects to the 2005 Plan, including: a 2007 plan amendment; and the 2014 Duwamish Blueprint. As part of the 2020 update, all projects described in the plan (and its amendments) or the appendices of the plan were evaluated for inclusion in updated project list.

WRIA 9 staff developed an updated list of capital projects in partnership with ILA member jurisdictions, non-profit partners, state agencies, and others

engaged in salmon recovery. Partners were asked to submit projects and provide specific project information including a project sponsor, location, scope, goals, alignment with recovery strategies, and projected habitat gains. In some cases, an identified project did not have a clear sponsor, but was included due to the perceived importance of the project. The request for projects primarily targeted Chinook salmon-focused projects, but several coho salmon projects were accepted.

A few additional project guidelines were developed in refining the project list:

- **Policies and Programs** – Project submittals were not required for actions that fell within the scope of larger programmatic actions (e.g., fish barrier removal).
- **Discrete footprint** – Projects were required to articulate a specific project footprint to support evaluation of feasibility and magnitude of ecological benefit.
- **Implementable within 10-15 years** – Project sponsors were directed to submit projects that could be implemented within a 10-15-year timeframe, provided adequate funding and landowner willingness.

Project Prioritization

A team of subject matter experts was recruited to review, evaluate and tier projects for inclusion in the Plan. This four-person prioritization team brought expertise in restoration ecology, fish biology, and habitat project management, and over 50 years of knowledge from working in the Green/Duwamish River and Central Puget Sound. A balance of interests was represented to eliminate bias for specific projects. The review process evaluated all conceptual projects based on their full potential to provide habitat lift. Future constraints identified during design and feasibility could impact overall project scope and associated benefits.

Project prioritization was based on subject matter expert evaluation of:

- **Habitat Quality (lift):** the relative importance and value of a specific proposed habitat; and
- **Habitat Quantity (size):** the potential amount (acreage and shoreline length) of habitat created or enhanced based on the entire project footprint.

The scoring process was weighted so that habitat quality comprised 75 percent of the score and habitat quantity comprised 25 percent of the score. The tiering process assumes habitat benefits are positively correlated with size. Larger projects not only provide more habitat, they allow increased habitat heterogeneity. Smaller, more homogeneous habitats, are less resilient to perturbations, and site constraints can be problematic for optimizing habitat. A small modifier was added to allow consideration of high-value geographic locations (e.g., proximity to existing restoration sites, feeder bluff, etc.). Potential lift reflects the projected immediate and long-term habitat benefits to addressing limiting factors for Chinook salmon recovery. Process-based restoration was considered to provide more certainty of long-term benefits.

A total of 118 projects were submitted and ranked as part of the project solicitation process. Projects were ranked within a specific subwatershed – not across subwatersheds. Given the large number of projects, projects were tiered based on overall benefit and to provide an indication of priority for financial support from the WRIA. Tiers were defined as follows:

- **Tier 1** - high potential; substantially contribute to recovery goals in each subwatershed.
- **Tier 2** - moderate potential; clear alignment with Chinook salmon recovery goals.
- **Tier 3** - limited potential; associated with Chinook recovery (or not primary species impacted); compliments broader recovery efforts in the subwatershed.

A simplified scoring methodology based on habitat quantity and quality provides a foundation for long-term planning by setting high-level implementation priorities within each subwatershed. Tiers were assigned to projects by identifying natural breakpoints in the full list of projects within a subwatershed. These established breakpoints serve as a scoring baseline for projects received through future biennial calls for projects. Future proposed projects will be scored under the same criteria and assigned a tier. The proposed project will be added to the tiered list for future funding, with near-term funding priority given to those projects previously identified as in need of funding.

The final list of projects was approved unanimously by the Implementation Technical Committee and Watershed Ecosystem Forum in 2019 and will serve as the comprehensive list of recovery actions that help achieve recovery goals, and ultimately toward the delisting of Chinook salmon in Puget Sound.

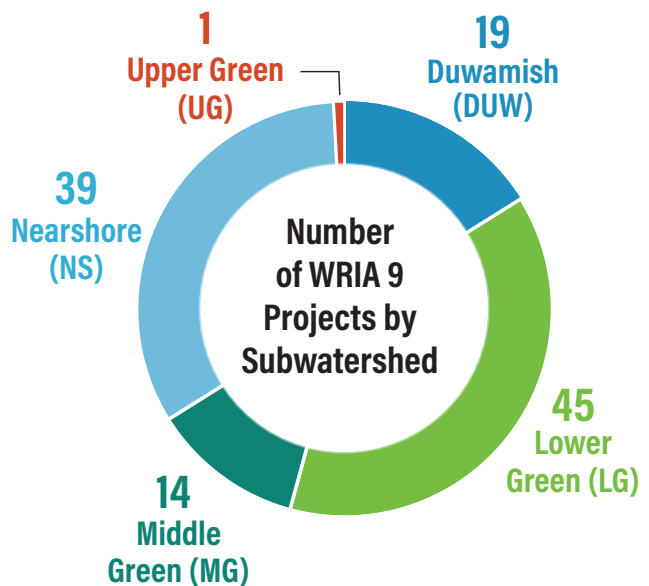


Figure 25. Number of projects by subwatershed.

Capital Project Information by Subwatershed containing:

- Subwatershed project location maps
- Subwatershed project listings with tier rankings
- Project fact sheets with site maps

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