Chapter 6: Recovery Strategies

WRIA 9 developed 11 overarching recovery strategies to organize watershed priorities and guide future investments. These strategies outline priority areas of focus intended to advance salmon recovery over the next 10-20 years. Recovery strategies are not prioritized. Implementation across the portfolio of recovery strategies is necessary to address priority pressures; increase salmon abundance, productivity, and diversity; and build long-term population resiliency. Successful implementation hinges on partner coordination and investment to ensure local land use planning, capital investment programs, and community outreach messaging are consistent with identified watershed priorities.

WRIA 9 hosted a series of subwatershed workshops to review and update policies and programs from the 2005 Salmon Habitat Plan. Revised policies and programs are organized by recovery strategies – as opposed to subwatershed – to reduce redundancy and improve alignment with other Puget Sound salmon plan updates. This structure is intended to provide project sponsors and other recovery partners a streamlined communication tool for a shared understanding of what needs to happen, where, and what policy considerations are necessary at the local and regional level to advance Chinook salmon recovery.

Strategy: Restore and Improve Fish Passage

Location: All Subwatersheds

Fish passage barriers block access to important spawning and rearing habitat and can exacerbate localized flooding issues. Legacy transportation and flood control infrastructure were not regularly designed for fish passage and/or elevated flood flows associated with climate change. Although addressing fish passage barriers was a priority in the 2005 Plan, a 2018 U.S. Supreme Court ruling affirmed that the State has a treaty-based obligation to address culverts under state-maintained roads in order to preserve tribal harvest rights within their usual and accustomed areas. This ruling has reinforced the need and elevated the urgency for addressing identified barriers in a systematic and strategic manner.

Figure 15. *Juvenile fish passage barriers block juvenile Chinook salmon access to important rearing habitat in non-natal tributaries. Photos: Mike Perfetti.*

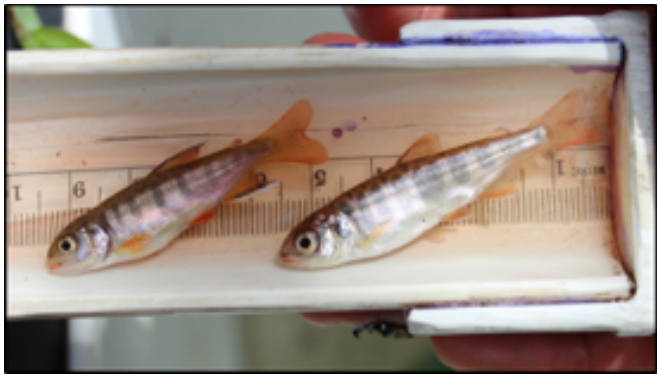


Figure 16. *Healthy juvenile Chinook (right) and coho (left) salmon sampled from a non-natal tributary in 2018. Photo: Chris Gregersen.*

Programs

» Fish Passage Barrier Removal

WRIA 9 partners should work towards a comprehensive inventory of fish passage barriers in the Green/Duwamish and Central Puget Sound Watershed, and prioritize barrier removal across the watershed to maximize the benefit of fish passage investments. Although the majority of existing barriers in the watershed impact coho salmon and steelhead, special consideration should be given to removing barriers to non-natal tributary rearing habitats. Recent fish monitoring studies have demonstrated the importance of non-natal tributaries to juvenile Chinook and remedying these barriers will expand available rearing habitat and increase Chinook productivity. Recent fish monitoring studies have demonstrated the importance of non-natal tributaries to juvenile Chinook (King County 2019; Tabor and Moore 2018) and remedying these barriers will expand available rearing habitat and increase Chinook productivity.

Many partner jurisdictions do not have the capacity to implement a programmatic approach to barrier identification and removal; instead, barrier removal is driven by infrastructure repair needs and local capital improvement programs. Some, such as the City of Seattle, have an inventory and prioritized list of fish passage barriers but lack sufficient funding for implementation. To support a more comprehensive approach to fish passage, WRIA 9 partners should leverage available technical assistance from Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) Fish Passage and King County Fish Passage Restoration Programs to assess and prioritize barriers for removal outside of their scheduled capital improvement programs to expedite high-priority barrier removals. Jurisdictions should apply for funding for high-priority projects through the Brian Abbott Fish Barrier Removal Board. Regional coordination among WRIA 9 partners on fish barrier removal priorities should help identify synergies and accelerate barrier removal in priority subwatersheds. Programmatic improvements within the County Fish Passage Restoration Program may support increased efficiencies within other jurisdictions. Fish passage accomplishments and lessons learned should be shared regularly to expedite barrier identification and increase coordination across the watershed.

Policies

» **Fish Passage (FP) 1:** Provide efficient and safe fish passage where built infrastructure (e.g., road crossings and flood control facilities) intersects instream habitats. Fish passage design considerations should not only facilitate adult upstream migration, but also ensure juvenile salmonid access to rearing habitat provided in non-natal tributaries. Project sponsors should use WDFW Water Crossing Design Guidelines (2013) to assess feasibility and support alternative development.

Strategy: Protect, Restore and Enhance Floodplain Connectivity

Location: Lower and Middle Green

The process of channel migration within the floodplain creates side channels, back-water sloughs, and other off-channel habitats that are critical for juvenile salmon rearing and refuge. Floodplains also facilitate an exchange of nutrients and organic material between land and water, and provide important flood storage capacity that can mitigate flood damages to adjacent communities. The historic loss of floodplain habitat within the Green/Duwamish watershed resulted in a loss of habitat complexity, increased peaks flows and water velocities, and a loss of groundwater storage and important cold water recharge during summer months. Flow regulation at Howard Hanson Dam and the diversion of the White River into the Puyallup River has reduced the frequency and magnitude of flood events and left much of the floodplain perched well above the current river channel. Reconnecting floodplains and restoring floodplain habitats is essential to increasing both the available rearing habitat and corresponding salmon productivity of the system.

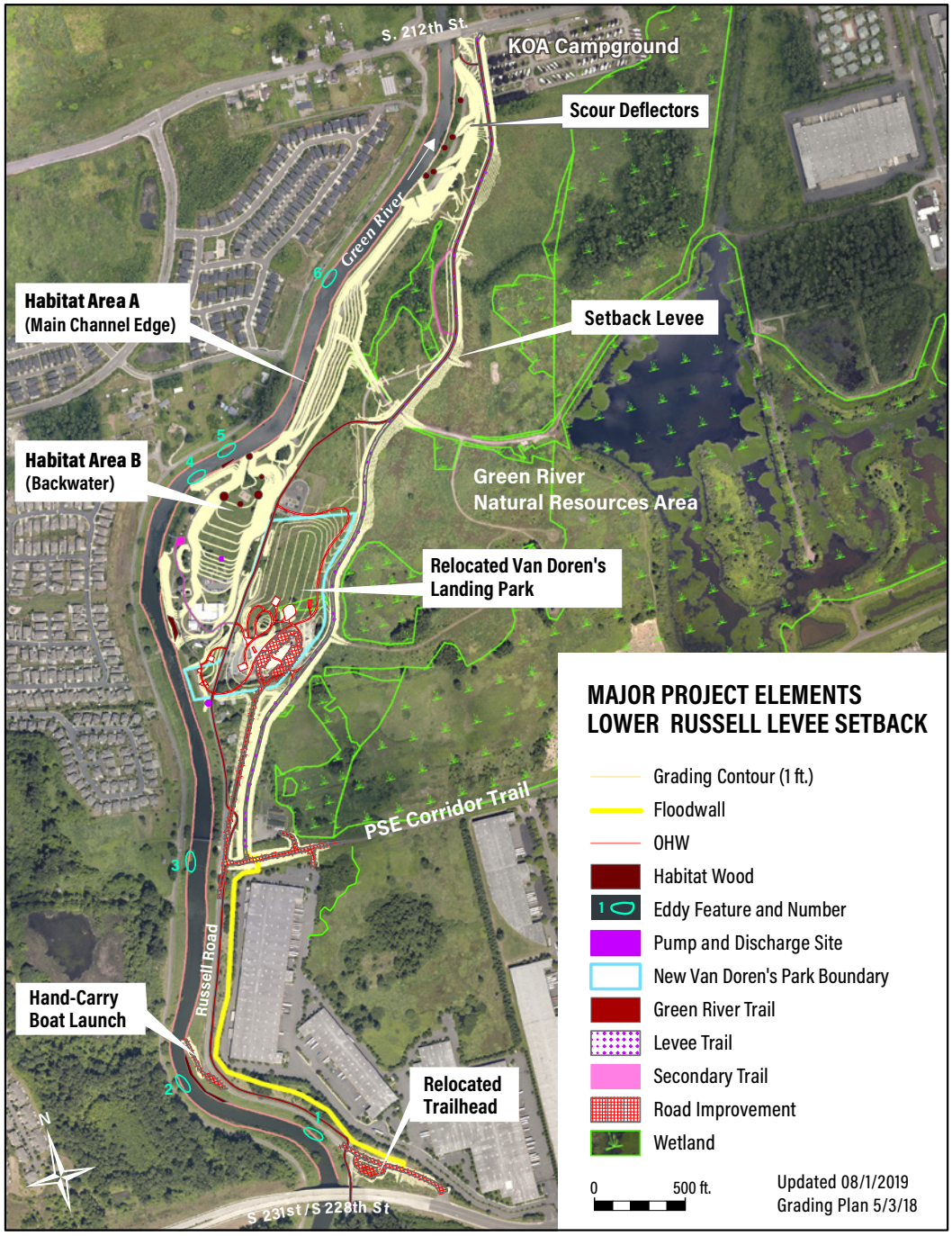


Figure 17. *The Lower Russell Road Levee Setback Project is a multi-benefit project that provides flood risk reduction, habitat restoration, and recreational enhancements.*

Programs

None identified. Implementation relies on individual capital projects that will be identified in project list.

Policies

» **Floodplain Connectivity (FC) 1:** Support multi-benefit flood risk reduction projects that also enhance salmon habitat by allowing rivers and floodplains to function more naturally. Multi-benefit projects can (1) reduce community flood risk; (2) provide critical salmon habitat; (3) increase floodplain storage; (4) improve water quality; (5) replenish groundwater; (6) expand public recreation opportunities; and (7) strengthen community and ecological resilience to extreme weather events due to climate change.

» **FC2:** Wherever possible, flood protection facilities should be (re)located away from the river edge to reconnect floodplains and re-establish natural riverine processes. During conceptual design of alternatives, project sponsors should evaluate opportunities to pursue relocation of existing infrastructure and real estate acquisition to support levee setbacks. A process-based approach to restoration is ideal for species recovery; however, where a levee setback is infeasible due to the constraints of past land use activity, alternative facility designs (e.g., levee laybacks) should strive to incorporate planting benches and wood structures that mimic lost ecosystem services and improve critically needed edge habitat.

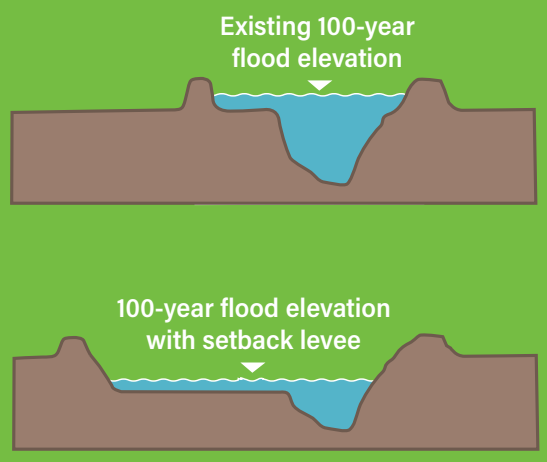
» **FC3:** Local government should utilize critical areas and shoreline regulations and associated land use policies to protect creek riparian areas and associated floodplains to increase the flood storage capacity of these areas.

» **FC4:** Vacating and relocating roads should be evaluated as tools to support salmon restoration priorities where impacts are negligible and/or can be mitigated. Coordinating transportation infrastructure improvements with salmon habitat needs (e.g., floodplain reconnection and fish passage) can improve outcomes and reduce project costs. Road vacation policies should be updated to consider level of use and road standards.

Strategy: Protect, Restore, and Enhance Channel Complexity and Edge Habitat

Location: Lower, Middle and Upper Green

Flood protection facilities (e.g., Howard Hanson Dam, revetments, and levees) and loss of riparian habitat have disrupted sediment transport, simplified habitat complexity, contributed to a loss of rearing and refuge habitat, and impeded natural recruitment of spawning gravels. Although process based restoration is preferred, ongoing intervention is necessary to replace/mimic natural processes where they cannot be restored.



Setback:
Relocation of the toe of the levee/revetment landward of ordinary high water to provide for increased erosion and channel migration.

Programs

» **Middle Green River Gravel and Wood Supplementation Program**

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Tacoma Public Utilities should continue gravel and wood supplementation in the Middle Green River to account for disruption of natural sediment transport and wood recruitment caused by Howard Hanson Dam. Up to 14,000 tons of spawning gravels are deposited annually at two sites located near river mile 60, just downstream of the Tacoma Headworks Facility. High flows during the winter months engage the deposited gravel and naturally distribute it downstream. Regular monitoring of gravel distribution should inform quantity, size gradation, and timing to maximize benefits for salmonids.

The U.S. Army Corps Corps should continue to transport large wood (> 12 in. diameter; > 20 ft. in length; >4 ft. diameter root ball) that is stranded in the reservoir to below the Tacoma Headworks Facility. Large wood increases channel complexity, provides habitat for juvenile fish, and provides nutrients and substrate for aquatic insects. The upper watershed is heavily forested and large wood is transported to the reservoir during high flow events, but is unable to move downstream of the dam without intervention. Existing quantities of large wood downstream of the dam remain significantly below recommended wood volumes (Fox and Bolton 2007) to support salmon recovery. Periodic surveys should be completed to monitor large wood volumes and ensure project success.

Policies

Channel Complexity (CC) 1: Project designs should incorporate best available science related to climate change predictions and anticipated changes to seasonal instream flow patterns to enhance channel complexity and edge habitat across a range of flows. Lower spring and summer flows could make restored rearing habitat inaccessible during juvenile Chinook outmigration. Special consideration should be given to project designs that ensure juvenile salmon rearing habitat remains accessible in low flow years.

» **CC2:** For habitat restoration projects calling for the addition of large woody debris, placement of wood should consider risk to river users, such as boaters and swimmers.

Strategy: Protect, Restore, and Enhance Riparian Corridors

Location: All Subwatersheds

Healthy riparian corridors provide a critical role in providing cool and clean water for salmon. Riparian vegetation shades instream habitat and moderates water temperatures; reduces erosion by stabilizing streambanks; captures rainwater and filters sediment and stormwater pollutants; provides terrestrial nutrient and food inputs; and is a source of large wood, which is critical to habitat complexity. Restoring riparian corridors is essential to addressing high summertime water temperatures and building long-term resilience to predicted changes associated with climate change. The Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) developed total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) for the Green River and Newaukum Creek in 2011 that outlined an implementation plan for improving temperatures. Another TMDL for Soos Creek is under development. Refer to the "Integrate Agricultural Protection and Salmon Recovery Initiatives" strategy for a discussion of riparian corridors within agricultural lands.

Programs

» **Re-Green the Green Revegetation Program**

The 2016 Re-Green the Green Strategy prioritizes riverine, estuarine and marine areas for revegetation, establishes interim goals, and outlines strategies for securing necessary funding. Riparian revegetation priorities are based on the solar aspect shade maps developed by the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe (2014). This effort identified and prioritized shorelines where shade is critically needed to reduce instream water temperatures that frequently exceed water quality standards.

WRIA 9 should continue to run an annual grant program that supports program implementation across priority shoreline areas. As of 2020, approximately $500,000 of annual Cooperative Watershed Management Funds provided by the King County Flood Control District have been set aside to support Re-Green the Green project implementation by WRIA 9 partners. This funding is intended to provide a baseline level of revegetation funding that can be leveraged to access other sources of funding. Riparian revegetation projects help improve water quality, lower water temperatures, stabilize shorelines, contribute insects (prey) for juvenile salmonids, increase stormwater infiltration, and improve aquatic habitat quality when trees fall into the river.

» **Implement coordinated and comprehensive approach to noxious/invasive weed removal along river and marine shorelines**

WRIA 9 partners should coordinate with the King County Noxious Weed Removal Program to prioritize and sequence weed removal efforts through the watershed. Noxious weed control should be conducted in parallel with priority riparian revegetation efforts. Ongoing invasive removal on restoration sites is critical until native plants become established (~ five years).

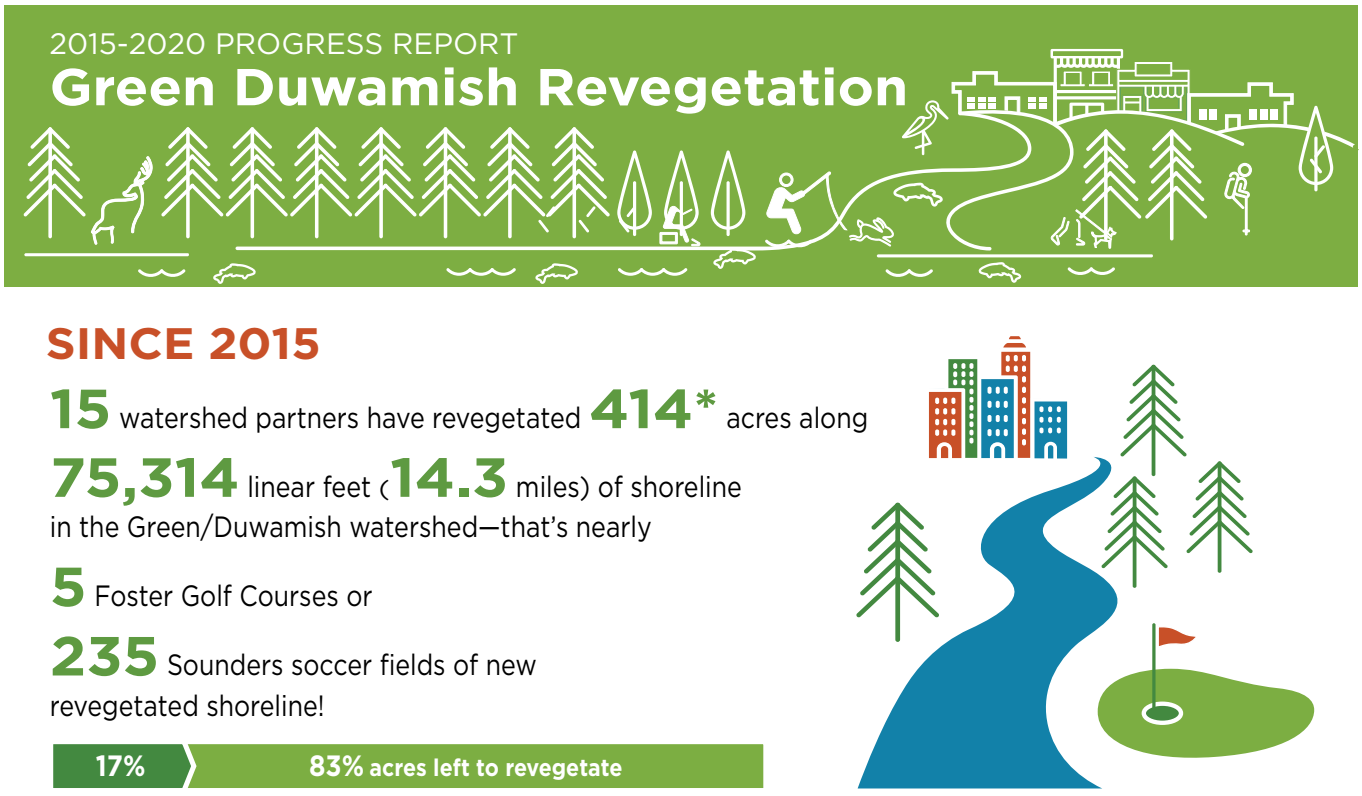
Invasive plants spread quickly, impede growth and establishment of natives, and degrade riparian habitats by destabilizing riverbanks and reducing tree canopy needed to help maintain cool water temperatures. Priority species impacting the riparian community in the Green/Duwamish include knotweed species (Class B), purple loosestrife (Class B), policeman's helmet (Class B), English ivy (Class C), Himalayan blackberry (Class C), and reed canary-grass (Class C).

» **Long-term Restoration Site Stewardship and Maintenance**

WRIA 9 partners should explore potential funding sources for a professional stewardship/maintenance crew to provide long-term site maintenance of restoration sites across the watershed. Salmon recovery funding generally does not provide for site maintenance beyond several years, and maintenance typically falls outside the scope of regular park maintenance operations. A shared maintenance crew would provide cost savings to jurisdictions for maintenance of the growing portfolio of restoration sites.

Priority tasks for a crew would include invasive species removal, planting as needed, and litter cleanup. In addition to these basic functions, this crew could play an important role in helping to manage the growing challenge of encampments within the Green River corridor. This program would ensure a regular staff presence at restoration sites to assist with outreach and public safety in addition to enhancing long-term ecological outcomes. In

Figure 18. *Progress towards the watershed revegetation goals established in the WRIA 9 Re-Green the Green Strategy.*



*414 (17%) acres out of the 2,384 acre goal established in the 2016 Re-Green the Green Strategy. The goal reflects a proportion of the total riparian buffer (developed and undeveloped) that has less than 50% tree cover.

addition, a shared crew would address stewardship and maintenance needs at sites that are not suitable for citizen volunteers.

Policies

» **Riparian Corridor (RC) 1:** Protect and enhance riparian corridors to help achieve temperature water quality standards established to protect salmon migration, spawning and rearing. Local governments should support implementation of the Green River and Newaukum Creek TMDLs by protecting and re-establishing mature riparian vegetation within established stream buffers.

» **RC2:** Revisit levee vegetation guidelines to improve revegetation opportunities along flood facilities. Guidelines must balance the critical need for riparian shade (i.e., Ecology TMDL) with the need to inspect the structural integrity of facilities and maintain public safety. Remote sensing (i.e., ground-penetrating radar, drones, or boat inspections) may provide a viable alternative to traditional visual inspections that require a clear zone.

» **RC3**: Project sponsors who receive WRIA 9 funding should request funding for up to three years post-construction maintenance funding for plant establishment, and should document the ability to maintain habitat restoration and protection projects to ensure long-term objectives are achieved. Maintenance may include, but is not limited to, noxious weed and invasive plant control, revegetation, and deterrence of undesired uses such as dumping and occupancy that can damage habitat.

» **RC4:** River corridor trails should be compatible with salmon recovery priorities. Trail design standards should balance the need for riparian tree canopy to maintain cooler water temperatures with needs for important recreational view corridors and sightlines for user safety. Trail design/placement should also not preclude reconnection of critically needed floodplain habitats. Trails offer residents an opportunity to connect with the river; interpretive signage should highlight the presence of salmon and the ecological importance of riparian and floodplain habitat.

» **RC5:** Encourage regional efforts to develop a Bonneville Power Authority (BPA) mitigation program for power transmission impacts across Puget Sound. The BPA has a significant footprint within the Upper Watershed and the Soos Creek Basin where vegetation management and tree removal under transmission lines precludes adequate riparian canopy cover. Although the BPA has established mitigation programs for Columbia basin operations, a comparable program does not exist within Puget Sound.

Strategy: Protect, Restore, and Enhance Sediment and Water Quality

Location: All Subwatersheds

Clean, cold water is essential for salmon growth and survival. A growing body of evidence suggests clean-up of legacy industrial contamination and stormwater pollution control may improve early marine survival and increase Chinook productivity. Recent scientific literature suggests contaminant exposure pathways (e.g., legacy industrial contamination, stormwater runoff, municipal wastewater discharges, etc.) are having sublethal and lethal impacts on juvenile Chinook salmon. Although the acute toxicity of stormwater runoff to coho salmon in urban watersheds is well documented, potential sublethal impacts to juvenile Chinook salmon as a result of contaminate exposure pathways are not well understood.

Programs

Green/Duwamish Watershed Pollution Loading Assessment (PLA)

Ecology should continue to lead development of a pollutant loading assessment (PLA) that will (1) include a watershed-based model to evaluate cumulative effects of pollution; (2) assess relative contribution of toxic pollutants from different sources/pathways in the watershed; and (3) help prioritize source control efforts. The PLA is essential to maximizing effectiveness of Lower Duwamish Waterway cleanup and avoiding subsequent recontamination.

The PLA is an interim strategy for improving water quality – it is not a TMDL or another regulatory

instrument. It represents a foundational effort that will inform future actions to address source control issues. Following its completion, WRIA 9 partners should coordinate with Ecology to address priority pollutant sources within their jurisdictions.

Implement Pollution Identification and Control (PIC) Programs

The Vashon-Maury Pollution Identification and Control (PIC) program provides incentives (technical support and financial) to replace or repair failing septic systems, and address other pollution sources (e.g., animal waste) contributing to water quality degradation in the marine nearshore. Failing or inappropriately sited septic systems have resulted in water quality concerns and closure of beach and shellfish harvest areas – especially within Quarter Master Harbor. While the direct impact on shellfish harvesting is a human health concern, the water quality pollution can negatively affect various parts of the nearshore ecosystem that supports Chinook salmon.

Although the 2005 Salmon Plan focused on Quarter Master Harbor, PIC programs should be expanded to other nearshore areas as warranted to identify pollution sources, provide technical support, and offer financial incentives to remedy failing septic systems and other sources of pollution. Over the last decade, investments made by Public Health—Seattle & King County and other partners have resulted in improved water quality and reopening of 493 acres of shellfish harvest areas.

Creosote Removal Program

WRIA 9 organizations should partner with the Washington Department of Natural Resources Creosote Removal Program to identify and remove creosote-treated debris and derelict structures from marine and estuarine waters. Creosote structures leach chemicals and can create toxic conditions for organisms that live within beach and marine sediments, as well as disrupt the marine foodweb. Studies have found creosote exposure can contribute to mortality of herring eggs and alter growth and immune function of juvenile salmonids. Derelict structures can also interrupt sediment transport and displace aquatic vegetation.

Since adoption of the 2005 Plan, the program has removed over 21,000 tons of creosote debris and 8.0 acres of overwater structures from Puget Sound. However, thousands of derelict creosote pilings remain within Puget Sound. WRIA 9 partners should continue efforts to inventory and prioritize focus areas based on concentration of creosote debris and potential impacts to forage fish and juvenile salmon rearing.

Policies

» **Water Quality (WQ) 1:** Promote Low-Impact Development (LID) and green infrastructure (natural and engineered systems) to address stormwater runoff. Given the magnitude of development constructed prior to existing stormwater controls, extensive stormwater retrofits are needed to address legacy sources of water pollution. LID techniques should mimic, where possible, pre-disturbance hydrological processes of infiltration, filtration, storage, evaporation and transportation. LID techniques include:

- *Vegetation conservation:* native vegetation and small-scale treatment systems;
- *Site design:* clustering of buildings and narrower and shorter roads;
- *Retention systems:* bioretention, bio-swales, rain gardens, wetlands and vegetated roofs;
- *Porous or permeable paving materials:* sidewalks, trails, residential driveways, streets, and parking lots; and
- *Rainwater catchment:* rain barrels and cisterns.

Green Infrastructure: Green infrastructure is an approach to water management that protects, restores, or mimics the natural water cycle. Green infrastructure is effective, economical, and enhances community safety and quality of life.

– American Rivers

» **WQ2**: Support local and regional watershed-based stormwater management initiatives (e.g., Our Green Duwamish, STORM, etc.) that prioritize programs and projects that can effectively demonstrate large-scale, watershed-wide, water quantity and water quality improvements that benefit salmon recovery. Potential priorities include:

  - Collaborative source control strategies such as education and outreach, business inspections, pollution prevention, and programmatic maintenance;
  - Regional retrofit programs focused on restoring natural hydrology and the removal of toxics; and
  - Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) incentive programs that promote the voluntary use of GSI.

» **WQ3:** Source control efforts across multiple sectors (commercial, industrial, and agricultural) should ensure that water and sediment quality support salmon growth and survival. Source control sufficiency is a critical milestone that must be achieved to initiate contaminated sediment cleanup. Ensuring implementation, maintenance, and enforcement, where necessary, of source control best management practices will help reduce pollutant loading into water bodies and ensure pollutants don't undermine sediment cleanup efforts in the Duwamish. Incentives to promote effective source control include spill prevention and response, technical support, and hazardous waste vouchers to local businesses.

» **WQ4:** Protect and enhance rural and urban forests, which provide diverse social, economic and ecological benefits. In Rural Areas of King County, at least 65 percent of each sub-basin should be preserved as natural forest cover and impervious coverage should not exceed 10 percent of a sub-basin. Where forest cover exceeds this threshold, the goal of no net loss in forest cover should be pursued. In Urban Growth Areas, local governments should adopt goals to achieve 30-40 percent ecologically healthy urban tree canopy coverage and reduce impervious surfaces. Adopting goals specific to riparian canopy could help prioritize riparian restoration. Local education, outreach, and incentive programs should be supported to increase urban forestry programs and associated tree canopy coverage.

Figure 19. *Stormwater-induced mortality in coho salmon in Miller Creek, Normandy Park. Although stormwater toxicity is not lethal to Chinook salmon, potential sublethal impacts are not well understood. Photo: Matt Goehring.*

» **WQ5:** Ensure cost-share agreements between the U.S. Forest Service, Washington Department of Natural Resources, Tacoma Water, and private landowners are maintained and that road maintenance and abandonment plans achieve sediment reduction goals. Support opportunities to abandon unnecessary forest roads as they are identified to reduce overall road density.

» **WQ6:** Support regional and state legislative efforts to reduce the risk of oil spills in Puget Sound and ensure the state remains a leader in oil spill prevention and response. Over 20 billion gallons of oil are transported through Washington each year by vessel, pipeline and rail. A catastrophic spill could cost the region over $10 billion and impact over 150,000 jobs. It would also cause significant harm to aquatic ecosystems and disrupt maritime industry, recreation, and tourism.

» **WQ7:** Local governments should adopt the Interagency Regional Road Maintenance Endangered Species Act Program Guidelines, as amended, for maintenance of existing infrastructure. Governments should participate in the associated Regional Forum to support ongoing adaptive management to improve outcomes.

Strategy: Protect, Restore and Enhance Marine Shorelines

Location: Marine Nearshore

Marine nearshore habitats, including beaches, pocket estuaries, eelgrass beds, inlets, and deltas, provide important rearing and migration habitat for juvenile Chinook salmon and many other animals in Puget Sound. They are also critical spawning habitat for forage fish – a key prey species for Chinook salmon. Decades of alteration and armoring of the Puget Sound marine shoreline has reduced shoreline length and habitat complexity, disrupted sediment supply and transport, and eliminated forage fish spawning habitat. Restoring natural shorelines will increase nearshore productivity and salmon growth and survival in the marine environment.

Programs

» **Develop/maintain a "Toolbox" of Shore Friendly Alternatives for Privately-Owned Shorelines (aka Do-it-yourself approach for residential shoreline improvement)**

WRIA 9 partners should develop a "shoreline toolbox" to provide shoreline owners guidelines for implementing shore friendly alternatives that clearly outline stewardship concepts and best management practices for private shorelines. It should not only outline the range of alternatives for different shoreline types (e.g., beach and bluffs), but also highlight important design, feasibility, maintenance, and permitting considerations when considering shoreline improvements. Topic areas should include native shoreline vegetation, erosion control, shoreline access, docks, and stormwater management.

The toolbox should be designed to supplement shoreline workshops and technical assistance programs and could be made available online to provide guidance to property owners who may elect to take a "do-it-yourself approach" to shoreline management. It should be tailored to reach private landowners and contractors and connect them with available local and regional resources. The toolbox should draw from regional efforts such as WDFW's Marine Shoreline Design Guidelines, the Shore Friendly King County collaborative, Green Shores for Homes, and Green Shorelines for Lake

Figure 20. *Before and after Phase II restoration of Seahurst Park in the City of Burien. Construction was completed in 2014. Photos: Hugh Shipman.*

Washington and Lake Sammamish, and highlight local examples of shore-friendly approaches within WRIA 9.

» **Expand Shore-Friendly Technical Assistance and Cost-Share Programs to Accelerate Armor Removal and Soft Shoreline Protection (aka Supported Approach for Residential Shoreline Improvement)**

Access to technical information about shoreline erosion and protection alternatives and the financial costs associated with marine shoreline armor removal have been identified as key barriers to motivating shoreline landowners to consider soft shoreline protection. Soft shoreline protection is less preferred than outright removal, but preferable to traditional hard armor in that it helps maintain and enhance some natural marine shoreline functions (e.g., sediment transport and delivery). Bulkhead removal is expensive and site-specific erosion risk is not conducive to the use of standard models or templates for soft shore protection. In addition, many landowners and consultants are unfamiliar with how to design/implement successful soft shoreline protection projects. Technical assistance to help landowners better understand risk, to provide design and permitting support, and to assist with access to cost-share funding should help to overcome existing barriers to armor removal on private property and promote expansion of soft shoreline protection alternatives.

The King Conservation District (KCD) has historically provided technical assistance on environmentally friendly ways to manage shoreline properties, including shore-friendly alternatives to traditional bulkheads. The KCD also has a cost-share incentive program to encourage revegetation and removal of existing armor and/or soft shore protection designs where site-specific conditions allow. In 2020, KCD established a Shore Friendly King County collaborative between multiple partners. This program is seen as part of a local adaptation of the regional Shore Friendly approach to reducing marine shoreline armoring. Although this is an existing program, additional resources are needed to expand capacity. Landowners are identified through parallel marine shoreline landowner workshops. Priority should be given to currently unarmored shorelines and armored properties where site-specific factors (e.g., structure location, fetch, bank/bluff geology, etc.) make armor removal and/or soft shoreline protection alternatives feasible.

» **Implement Acquisition Strategy to Protect and Restore Functioning Nearshore Habitats**

Acquisition of priority marine shorelines supports conservation and restoration of critical nearshore processes and rearing habitats used by multiple stocks of juvenile Chinook – including Green/Duwamish Chinook. A number of planning efforts have identified and prioritized conservation of nearshore habitats within WRIA 9, including the Prioritization of Marine Shorelines of WRIA 9 for Juvenile Salmon Habitat Protection and Restoration (2006), Vashon-Maury Island Greenprint (2007), and the Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project Strategies for Nearshore Protection and Restoration in Puget Sound (2012). Although many of the highest priority sites have been specifically identified as unique projects within the Habitat Plan, WRIA 9 should support opportunistic acquisition of other functioning nearshore habitats if they become available.

Although the bulk of the acquisition opportunities for functioning habitats are located on Vashon-Maury Islands, additional opportunities exist on the mainland nearshore. Successful implementation of a nearshore acquisition strategy requires consistent outreach to landowners and operational flexibility to capitalize on acquisition opportunities before they are lost. The sale of properties previously unavailable for decades frequently can represent a once in a generational opportunity to protect a priority stretch of marine shoreline. Individual acquisition opportunities should be evaluated based on ecological value/potential of nearshore habitat and risk of development. Available funding sources to support acquisition include King County Conservation Futures, King County Flood Control District Cooperative Watershed Management Program and Coastal Erosion Program, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program, and various Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office grant programs.

Policies

» **Nearshore (NS) 1:** Avoid shoreline infrastructure or stabilization except where demonstrated to be necessary to support or protect a legally-established primary structure, critical public infrastructure, or shoreline use in danger of loss or substantial damage. Support armor removal and alternative approaches to shoreline stabilization (e.g., setbacks and relocations) where feasible to reduce impacts to existing natural shoreline processes. Protection and restoration of important sediment sources (e.g., feeder bluffs) is needed to restore nearshore processes and sediment transport. Where the need for bank stabilization is supported by analysis of a geotechnical engineer, "soft" shoreline stabilization techniques (e.g., bioengineering techniques and vegetation enhancement) should be required where feasible. "Soft" stabilization measures should be designed to preserve or restore natural shoreline processes (e.g., sediment transport). "Hard" shoreline stabilization should only be allowed where softalternatives do not provide adequate protection. Refer to WDFW Marine Shoreline Design Guidelines, Green Shores for Homes, Integrated Streambank Guidelines, and Stream Habitat Restoration Guidelines for additional guidance.

Primary Structure: Structural improvement that is essential to the primary use of the property. Structures that function as secondary or subordinate to the primary use of a property are considered an accessory use.

» **NS2:** Encourage multiple family/neighborhood use of docks, boat ramps, and beach access stairs. Local jurisdictions should minimize impacts to the nearshore marine environment by encouraging consolidation/joint-use of structures that could serve multiple landowners. Opportunities to pursue joint-use should be evaluated during development and redevelopment. Boat docks, ramps and beach access stairs can shade aquatic vegetation, disrupt juvenile salmon migration and foraging, alter nearshore sediment transport and degrade nearshore habitats (e.g., eelgrass). Possible incentives include permit streamlining, fee reductions, and dimensional incentives (e.g., increased length, width, etc.).

» **NS3:** Jurisdictions should promote derelict vessel prevention and coordinate with Washington State Department of Natural Resources (WADNR) on derelict vessel removal. Derelict vessels can contribute to contamination of aquatic lands, degrade water quality, and damage sensitive aquatic habitats (e.g., eelgrass). Although the WADNR Derelict Vessel Removal Program has removed more than 580 vessels from marine waters, local efforts are critical to ensuring effective prevention and rapid response.

» **NS4:** Support beach nourishment, where appropriate, to offset interruption of natural sediment supply and transport caused from extensive shoreline modifications (e.g., bulkheads, etc.). Beach nourishment has been used successfully to protect shorelines, restore natural beach profiles, and enhance nearshore habitats.

» **NS5:** Support regional efforts to identify and test actions to increase juvenile survival during outmigration through Puget Sound and increase local efforts to stabilize or improve foodweb function such as forage fish habitat protection and restoration.

Strategy: Protect, Restore and Enhance Estuarine Habitat

Location: Duwamish

The Duwamish estuary provides critical rearing habitat for juvenile salmon as they make the physiological transition from fresh to saltwater habitats. Industrial development within the Duwamish valley drove extensive fill of tidal wetlands, armoring of shorelines, and navigational dredging. The modifications

straightened the estuary and eliminated 98 percent of the historic wetlands. Despite the magnitude of loss of habitat, the Duwamish continues to play a critical role in supporting juvenile Chinook salmon. Both cleanup of legacy industrial contamination within the Lower Duwamish Superfund Site and restoration of shallow water rearing habitat are needed to increase juvenile salmon survival and overall productivity within the watershed.

Program

» **Implement and Adaptively Manage the Duwamish Blueprint**

The Duwamish Blueprint outlines strategic guidance for governments, businesses, non-profit organizations and citizen groups working to improve the estuarine ecosystem and increase juvenile salmonid productivity. It identifies approximately 100 acres of shallow water habitat restoration potential within the Duwamish estuary transition zone (RM 1-10). Many of the habitat opportunities are conceptual and have not been prioritized. Periodic evaluation of conceptual opportunities is needed to elevate and refine project ideas as the Duwamish landscape changes (e.g., Superfund cleanup, Natural Resource Damage Assessment [NRDA], and real estate availability).

Restoration in the Duwamish is complex, expensive, and will require flexibility, innovation, and extensive coordination and collaboration to be successful. The former Duwamish Blueprint Working Group, which was convened to develop the Blueprint, would provide a framework to facilitate coordination across key partners. WRIA 9 partners should leverage the Blueprint Working Group to identify opportunities to enhance partnerships to (1) pursue larger project footprints; and (2) overcome barriers to implementation. Given limited land availability, WRIA 9 should opportunistically evaluate potential acquisitions and consider elevating conceptual projects as part of adaptive management based on habitat benefit, acquisition feasibility, and readiness.

Policies

» **Duwamish Estuary (DE) 1:** Engage in the Lower Duwamish Waterway (LDW) Superfund cleanup process to coordinate and sequence potential salmon habitat projects with Superfund activities to maximize benefits to salmon recovery. Strategic acquisition should be prioritized over habitat project construction prior to competition of the LDW cleanup to avoid potential contaminated sediments and minimize potential for re-contamination.

» **DE2:** Engage with NRDA trustees and potentially liable parties to inform project development and design and maximize potential benefit to salmon recovery. NRDA settlements within the Duwamish will result in large capital investments in habitat restoration that should provide a significant lift to salmon recovery. Coordination with the NRDA process will also support identification of potential synergistic opportunities, and help identify and resolve barriers to maximize restoration outcomes. For example, it may be possible to leverage NRDA settlements to expand existing and/or planned restoration projects.

Figure 21. *Duwamish Gardens created 1.3 acres of shallow water rearing habitat in a critically important transition zone of the Duwamish Estuary. Subsequent monitoring has documented extensive use of the site by juvenile Chinook salmon. Photo: Mike Perfetti.*

Although NRDA has a broader scope than Chinook salmon recovery, priority NRDA habitats significantly overlap with salmon recovery needs in the Duwamish (e.g., estuarine marshes, intertidal mudflats, and riparian habitats). Tracking NRDA project implementation will be important to understanding the status of habitat restoration efforts in the Duwamish. Given the existing uncertainty associated with juvenile Chinook survival in the Duwamish, WRIA 9 should engage with the trustees to share emerging research, exchange lessons learned in restoration, inform adaptive management of restored sites, and identify priority sites for restoration.

» **DE3:** Encourage the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Port of Seattle to identify strategies for dredging that: (1) minimize impacts to salmon habitat and (2) improve salmon habitat through use of beneficial re-use where suitable. Soil contamination may limit opportunities for re-use.

Strategy: Protect, Restore and Enhance Instream Flows and Cold Water Refugia

Location: Lower, Middle and Upper Green

Green River flows are regulated to support both flood control and water supply needs. The Tacoma Water Habitat Conservation Plan requires maintenance of minimum instream flows during summer months. Although water capture and storage behind Howard Hanson Dam (HHD) support maintenance of minimum instream flows and periodic flow augmentations during summer and early fall, it can also reduce the frequency of high flow events that drive lateral channel migration (i.e., habitat forming flows) and availability of juvenile Chinook rearing habitat throughout spring. Low snowpack and drought conditions exacerbate already difficult tradeoffs in timing of water release designated for fish conservation purposes. Water temperatures also regularly exceed established water quality standards for Salmon Core Summer Habitat and Spawning Habitat.

Climate change forecasts predict the watershed will experience reduced snowpack, lower summer time flows, and elevated instream temperatures. These changes will impact the already difficult reservoir refill strategies at HHD, potentially putting greater stress on refilling earlier and having a bigger impact on juvenile Chinook habitat. Prolonged low flows can cutoff access to critical rearing habitats and exacerbate high instream temperatures. High water temperatures can delay adult migrations, contribute to increased susceptibility to disease, and even be lethal above 23°C. Protecting instream flows and cold water refugia is essential to strengthening watershed resilience to climate change. Cold-water refugia are characterized as being at least 2°C colder than the daily maximum temperature of adjacent waters.

Programs

» **Develop Watershed Management Plan to Address Permit-Exempt Well Development**

WRIA 9 partners should coordinate on development of the Ecology's Watershed Restoration and Enhancement Plan to assess and offset potential consumptive impacts of new rural, domestic water use on stream flows in the Green/Duwamish watershed. Maintaining legally established minimum instream flows has proven challenging during recent years with below average precipitation. Climate change models indicate that changes in precipitation patterns could exacerbate streamflow issues and further stress salmon.

Implementation of the plan is required to not only offset permit exempt domestic water use, but also provide for a net ecological benefit. The legislature plans to direct $300 million in funding through 2035 to benefit fish and streamflows. WRIA 9 should position itself to leverage this funding source to support implementation of appropriate projects in this plan that meet the flow or net ecological benefit guidance and/or develop additional project elements that do so. If instream flows remain problematic in the future, additional consideration should be given to integrating other categories of water use into an expanded Watershed Management Plan and implementation program.

» **Develop a Strategy to Protect and Restore Habitat in the Upper Green River and its Tributaries**

Conduct a planning effort to develop a long-term, comprehensive approach to protecting and restoring ecosystem processes in the Upper Green River subwatershed. Current checkerboard ownership

Figure 22. *Before (2013) and after (2019) restoration photos of the Big Springs Creek. The project protected cool waters from a natural spring.*

complicates land management and a strategic approach is needed to leverage the relatively intact upper watershed to maximize benefits for salmon and steelhead recovery. Access to the upper watershed has long been identified as critical to long-term salmon recovery. However, the delay of fish passage and the degraded condition of the lower watersheds have resulted in limited investments in the upper watershed.

Projected shifts in temperature and precipitation patterns associated with climate change further emphasize the critical importance of this landscape to long-term salmon recovery. A number of assessments should be completed to inform a strategic approach to management of the upper watershed, including:

- Visualizing Ecosystem Land Management Assessments (VELMA): Quantify long-term effects of forest management and climate scenarios on salmon habitat (i.e., hydrological flow regimes and instream temperatures);
- Model intrinsic habitat value of stream segments within the upper watershed to inform conservation and restoration priorities;
- Beaver Assessment: Assess current activity, model potential benefits, and explore potential reintroduction if warranted; and
- Assess important wildlife migratory corridors and key landscape level linkages to inform acquisition priorities.

The results of these assessments should be used to prioritize salmon recovery investments in the upper watershed with respect to potential land consolidation, land use management changes, and potential road abandonment.

Policies

» **Stream Flows (SF)1:** Support reevaluation of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers water storage schedule and Fish Conservation Guide Curve at HHD to increase benefits for salmonids while maintaining downstream flood control benefits. The current water capture period overlaps the juvenile Chinook rearing period and impacts accessibility and/or amount of important rearing habitats during outmigration. Utilize the existing Green River Flow Management Coordination Committee to assess fish habitat needs based on best-available science and basin-specific climate change projections.

» **SF2:** Protect existing cold water refugia and enhance water storage and hyporheic exchange by reconnecting historic floodplain habitats to instream habitats. These habitats facilitate heat dissipation and provide an influx of cooler waters to moderate seasonal fluctuations in stream tem-

peratures and flows, providing physiological and ecological benefits for cold-water salmonids.

» **SF3:** Support forest management and harvest rotation programs that increase hydrologic function and improve base flows to minimize impacts on salmonid habitat, support climate change resiliency, and maintain viable silviculture. Additional research is necessary to quantify potential benefits.

» **SF4:** Manage groundwater in conjunction with surface water withdrawals to provide instream flows and water temperatures that support adult salmonid spawning and juvenile rearing. Local governments, water purveyors, and state and federal regulators should:

- Protect groundwater resources and critical aquifer recharge areas;
- Manage groundwater and surface water withdrawals seasonally to maximize the benefits to salmonid habitat;
- Develop drought management plans to supply safe and reliable drinking water while minimizing impacts to salmonids during periods of drought;
- Ensure rural domestic use does not adversely impact salmonid habitat;
- Support water rights acquisition programs that can augment chronic low flows; and
- Limit or preclude mining and other significant excavation activities that could adversely impact groundwater hydrology.

» **SF5:** Support expansion of reclaimed/recycled wastewater to reduce demands on stream and ground withdrawals. Reclaimed wastewater can be used safely and effectively for non-drinking water purposes such as landscape and agricultural irrigation, heating and cooling, and industrial processing. Reclaimed water is available year-round, even during dry summer months or when drought conditions can strain other water resources.

See also policies SW4-6 above.

Strategy: Expand Public Awareness and Education

Location: All subwatersheds

Education and outreach are fundamental to protecting and restoring salmon. It raises awareness, builds political support, and promotes positive behaviors that benefit salmon. Long-term salmon recovery will not be successful without public support. Broad-based community support provides political leverage to protect and expand local, state and federal investments in habitat restoration. It is also helps promote positive behavior change and minimize behaviors that can negatively impact salmon or undermine recovery investments. For example, ecological gains associated with marine shoreline restoration in WRIA 9 have been predominantly offset by new armor installations. General outreach is not sufficient to drive widespread and long-lasting behavior change. Targeted social marketing strategies must identify and overcome both real and perceived barriers to promote positive behaviors that contribute to salmon recovery.

Programs

» **Implement a Comprehensive Communications Plan to Promote Behavior Change that Expedites Salmon Recovery in WRIA 9**

Integrate lessons learned from the regional Shore Friendly programs into a locally adapted communication plan designed to increase implementation of behaviors that support salmon recovery. Key outcomes include:

- Increased public recognition of the urgency around salmon recovery and connection to southern resident orcas;
- Improved public understanding and stewardship of riverine and nearshore ecosystem processes that support salmon and forage fish;
- Technical assistance provided to interested shoreline residents;
- Target audiences make informed decisions based on knowledge of Shore Friendly practices, climate resilience, and adaptation;
- A suite of tools and incentives developed to address identified barriers to adoption of desired behaviors;

- Messaging and outreach tailored to contractors and realtors;
- The value of riparian vegetation is communicated to the public, including riverside landowners, elected officials, and trail/park users; and
- Partners conducting outreach and education receive positive reinforcement and feedback from the salmon recovery community.

Additional effort is needed to refine target audiences and develop associated social marketing approaches. The intent of the communication plan should be to build awareness, expand stewardship, and promote advocacy. A regional Social Marketing Strategy to Reduce Puget Sound Shoreline Armoring was developed for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife in 2015. A Green/Duwamish River Revegetation Outreach and Engagement Plan was developed in 2019. These plans provide an existing framework that can be expanded to integrate other priority salmon recovery issues.

» **Expand Volunteer Stewardship**

Increase citizen participation through new stewardship programs and by expanding and supporting existing stewardship programs that engage volunteers in restoring, maintaining, and monitoring habitat protection and restoration projects. These projects not only benefit salmon recovery, but also improve stormwater retention, carbon sequestration and wildlife habitat and include important themes and messages for participants to change behavior at home. Local volunteer programs should:

- Foster environmental stewardship and personal connection to salmon recovery;
- Educate people about threats to salmon and the role of habitat in salmon recovery;
- Leverage additional resources to implement recovery actions; and
- Expand the constituency to advocate for salmon recovery.

The Green/Duwamish Watershed has a number of volunteer stewardship programs that play an instrumental role in invasive vegetation removal and native revegetation. Many of these programs provide long-term stewardship of large capital restoration sites. Traditional salmon recovery funding is not available to fund long-term (beyond two to three years) stewardship and maintenance of restoration sites. As a result, local funding or creative partnerships are essential to ensure restoration projects achieve desired outcomes into the future.

» **Expand Community Science Monitoring**

Develop and implement community science programs to address data gaps and foster watershed stewardship among residents. Community science programs can provide capacity to collect important long-term monitoring data while serving as an outreach tool to educate residents about local natural resource issues. They can also create opportunities to introduce students to scientific research and provide important data for resource managers.

Since 2005, citizen science programs include:

- Beach Nearshore Ecology Team (BeachNet): The Vashon Nature Center coordinates a forage fish monitoring program that collects data on forage fish presence/absence, spawning timing, beach substrate preferences, and intertidal and upland habitat conditions within the marine reserve. Data are shared with WDFW and is used to inform protection of spawning beaches. BeachNet also contributes to shoreline restoration monitoring in partnership with University of Washington, King County, and the Washington State Department of Natural Resources.
- Miller-Walker Basin Community Salmon Investigation (CSI): The CSI program has conducted 10 years of salmonid spawning surveys to assess long-term trends in salmon abundance and the urban runoff mortality syndrome in coho salmon. Data are shared with local jurisdictions and resource managers. A partnership with the UW Tacoma Center for Urban Waters has helped identify both the suite of toxic chemicals contributing to coho mortality and priority areas within this watershed to focus future stormwater improvements.

» **Shoreline Workshops and Technical Assistance**

Implement workshops to educate target audiences (landowners, landscapers, contractors) about shoreline stewardship and common misconceptions about shoreline erosion. Promote alternative approaches to shoreline management that provide for the use and enjoyment of property in a manner that benefits fish and wildlife. Priority focus areas include:

- Shoreline processes and salmon habitat;
- Erosion control;
- Noxious/invasive weed control;
- Revegetation guidance;
- Natural yard care; and
- Stormwater management.

Workshops should connect target audiences with local and regional resources (e.g., technical assistance) designed to overcome barriers to improving shoreline stewardship. Materials and messaging should be tailored to specific subwatersheds and groups of landowners to increase effectiveness. The Green Shores for Homes program developed in 2015 is an available tool to guide the design of improved shoreline conditions for Puget Sound properties.

Policies

» **Education and Stewardship (ES)1**: Support educational programs that integrate watershed science and salmon into problem-based learning exercises for school children. These programs instill a sense of place, encourage appreciation of natural resources, and promote environmental literacy among the next generation of future decision makers.

» **ES2:** Support diverse outreach and education programs that promote awareness of salmon recovery and positive behavior change. Programs should employ community-based social marketing to identify and overcome barriers to targeted behaviors. Priority focus areas include shoreline stewardship, riparian revegetation, and stormwater management.

Strategy: Integrate Agricultural Protection and Salmon Recovery Initiatives

Location: Lower and Middle Green

Salmon recovery and the preservation of viable agriculture are two regional priorities that intersect in the Middle and Lower Green floodplain and along Newaukum Creek. King County designated over 16,295 acres of land within the Green River watershed for agriculture within three Agricultural Production Districts (APD). Some additional, but relatively small amounts of agricultural activities occur within the cities of Kent and Auburn. Over 5,763 acres of land within the APD have been enrolled within the Farm-

Figure 23. *A community volunteer examines a salmon carcass as part of the Miller/Walker Basin Community Salmon Investigation. The program has leveraged community support and a partnership with the University of Washington to advance our understanding of stormwater runoff impacts on local salmon. Photo: Miller/Walker Stewardship Program.*

land Preservation Program (FPP). Restrictive covenants on FPP properties are designed to permanently protect agricultural use and open space.

The 2005 Plan acknowledged that salmon recovery and agricultural production operate within a shared landscape along the Green River valley. It prioritized sequencing of restoration projects over the first 10 years of plan implementation to focus first on existing public lands, then on lands within the rural and urban growth areas, and finally on lands within the APD, but not enrolled in the FPP. The plan acknowledged that projects that negatively impact tillable surface may need to be reconsidered at a later date.

This Plan Update acknowledges that the implementation of high-priority salmon projects critically needed to advance salmon recovery will result in localized loss of existing farmland. Research indicates that rearing habitat availability in the Lower and Middle Green River is the primary limiting factor for Chinook productivity within the watershed. Collaboration between agricultural and salmon recovery interests will be necessary to identify and advance shared priorities and ensure salmon and agriculture can coexist productively within a shared landscape. Lessons learned from other watersheds should be reviewed for applicability within the Green River watershed.

Programs

» **Farm Conservation Planning**

Farm conservation plans can help landowners protect natural resources while achieving their land use goals. They can also help access and leverage agricultural incentives to improve conservation practices on agricultural lands. Priorities include stream and wetland buffer revegetation and livestock management. Agriculture is widespread throughout the Middle and Lower Green and farmland preservation is a regional priority. Expanding riparian buffer revegetation on Green River valley farms has the potential to greatly benefit salmon recovery, especially where agricultural lands overlap with high priority areas identified by the Muckleshoot solar aspect shade maps (2014). Limiting livestock access to stream buffers can also greatly improve water quality and riparian conditions.

Available incentive programs include:

- King Conservation District rural services programs (e.g., Land Owner Incentive Program, Farm Conservation Technical Assistance, and Agricultural Drainage Program)
- King County Small Habitat Restoration Program
- USDA Farm Service Agency Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program
- King County Livestock Program (i.e., BMP cost share)

Landowner recruitment is essential to program success. Additional resources and strategies are needed to expand participation.

Policies

» **AG1:** Protect, enhance, and restore high quality salmon habitat in the Agricultural Production Districts in a manner that strives to reduce loss of viable agricultural land and ensure the long-term viability of agriculture. Projects that displace tillable farmland should strive to provide benefits to adjacent farm lands in attempt to offset impacts.

Local governments, state and federal agencies, non-profits, and special purpose districts should work with agricultural landowners in the Agricultural Production Districts to:

- Correct water quality problems resulting from agricultural practices;
- Implement best management practices for livestock and horticulture;
- Prevent additional degradation or clearing of forested riparian buffers;
- Encourage landowners to pursue voluntary sustainable actions for fish, farms, and soils;
- Conduct compliance monitoring and regulatory enforcement where necessary to protect critical habitats;
- Identify opportunities where salmon recovery projects can provide parallel benefits (e.g., flood risk reduction and drainage improvements) to adjacent agricultural lands; and
- Limit the extent of actively farmed lands displaced by priority salmon restoration projects.

» **AG2:** Evaluate the effectiveness of the regulatory flexibility given to agricultural landowners that obtain a farm plan from the KCD. If the flexibility leads to better habitat and water quality outcomes, other opportunities should be explored to provide additional flexibility. If the flexibility has not led to better outcomes, the County should evaluate if there are improvements to the regulatory structure (e.g. require some amount of the farm plan be implemented versus implementation being voluntary) that would improve the outcomes of the flexible approach.

Strategy: Integrate Salmon Recovery into Land Use Planning

Location: All Subwatersheds

Historical population growth and development within the watershed displaced habitat, altered natural hydrology, and polluted local waters. Local land use plans should provide a blueprint for future growth and development that is consistent with salmon recovery. Land use decisions should reinforce the importance of preservation of intact, functional habitats and provide a pathway for restoration of priority habitats. While the Salmon Habitat Plan is not a regulatory document, integration of identified recovery strategies and habitat priorities within local land use plans, policy and decision-making can accelerate implementation and ultimately dictate success of recovery efforts within the Green/Duwamish.

Programs

» **Incentivize Voluntary Restoration Practices**

Local governments and state agencies should promote landowner adoption of voluntary conservation and restoration actions through implementing associated incentive programs. Regulatory complexity, fees, access to technical assistance, and project costs have all been identified as barriers to expanding adoptions of voluntary best management practices on private property. Priority areas to address include invasive removal and native revegetation along shorelines, soft shoreline stabilization, and green stormwater infrastructure. Jurisdictions should review existing barriers and evaluate incentive opportunities, including:

- Streamlined permitting process;
- Reduced fees for restoration projects;
- Free technical assistance (e.g., engineering, planting plans, etc.);
- Cost share/financing programs; and
- Regulatory flexibility.

Voluntary adoption of best management practices by private landowners has been sporadic. Additional targeted investments are needed to expand implementation beyond early adopters. Improving coordination and consistency across regulatory jurisdictions (i.e., local, state and federal governments) is also needed to improve consistency and reliability of the permitting process and increase adoption of best management practices. A coordinated effort across the watershed to identify targeted practices and assess best practices related to available incentives could reduce costs and improve efficiency. Using the Green Shores for Homes or similar programs as an incentive-based program to increase the number of properties that voluntarily improve shoreline conditions on their property should be explored.

» **Regulatory Compliance Monitoring and Associated Enforcement**

Jurisdictions should assess regulatory compliance with shoreline master programs, critical area protections, floodplain regulations, and agricultural regulations (e.g., Livestock Management Ordinance) to assess and improve protection of salmon habitats. Regulatory compliance is fundamental to achieving no net loss of ecological function along marine and freshwater shorelines and to ensuring that ongoing impacts to salmon habitat do not undermine salmon recovery investments. Periodic compliance monitoring should be used to assess the status of jurisdictions and the status of local regulatory implementation and to inform a strategic approach to address shortcomings. If a regulatory framework is not achieving intended outcomes, local jurisdictions should assess changes to staffing levels, outreach and education, technical training for staff, interagency coordination, and enforcement to improve compliance rates.

A WRIA 9 Marine Shoreline Monitoring and Compliance Project (2018) found that only 42 percent of shoreline modifications between 2013-2018

obtained local permits. Even fewer shoreline modifications obtained a WDFW Hydraulic Project Approval. Furthermore, more new shoreline armor (mostly unpermitted) was constructed than removed through restoration projects. These results indicate that unpermitted shoreline modifications are undermining salmon recovery investments and overall efforts to achieve "no net loss of ecosystem function" as required through the Shoreline Management Act. Jurisdictions should take a programmatic approach to identify and address barriers (e.g., permit fees, regulatory uncertainty/confusion) to improve shoreline compliance rates and achieve outcomes that protect salmon habitat. Coordination and sharing of lessons learned across jurisdictions and the larger Puget Sound are recommended to improve efficiency.

Policies

» **Land Use (LU)1:** Ensure salmon recovery priorities are integrated into long-range planning efforts, including Shoreline Master Programs, Comprehensive Plans, and Open Space and Parks Plans. Planning documents should be consistent with the Salmon Habitat Plan and support implementation of habitat protection and restoration priorities. WRIA 9 should provide technical assistance to promote compatibility.

» **LU2:** Land use development, annexation, and capital improvement programs within the watershed should be consistent with the salmon recovery plan and promote progress towards achieving the necessary future conditions (and associated implementation targets) for a viable salmon population. Development proposals should be evaluated with respect to impacts on key habitat indicators and identified habitat projects for the respective subwatershed.

» **LU3:** Local governments should use comprehensive plans and associated land use policies to direct growth and development within existing Urban Growth Areas (UGAs) to protect ecologically important landscapes in rural areas. Specifically, avoid future expansions to existing UGAs that could result in additional land conversion and landscape degradation.

» **LU4**: Strictly apply and improve compliance with critical area, shoreline, vegetation conservation, floodplain, and agricultural regulations designed to protect important ecological habitats. Avoid use of variances in priority areas identified for protection and restoration in the salmon habitat plan.

» **LU5:** Local governments should support flexible development tools that encourage protection and/or restoration of ecologically important salmon habitat. Possible tools include, but are not limited to, transferable development rights, mitigation banking/reserve programs, incentive zoning, Green Shores for Homes, and Public Benefit Rating System tax programs.

» **LU6:** WRIA 9 partners should incorporate sea level rise projections into long-range planning documents, habitat project designs, and development standards to promote long-term ecosystem resiliency. Nearshore habitats adjacent to armored shorelines could be lost as water levels rise (i.e., coastal squeeze) if shorelines remain fixed. Low-lying shoreline areas should be identified to support landward migration of nearshore habitat as sea levels rise where appropriate.

» **LU7:** Encourage certified development standards (e.g., Built Green, Salmon-Safe Certification, and Green Shores for Homes) that minimize the impacts of urban development on the natural environment. Incentives could include reductions in flexible development standards, expedited permitting, and reduced or waived permit costs.

» **LU8**: Incorporate Salmon-Safe Certification standards into best management practices for park and grounds maintenance procedures. Certification is available for parks system, golf courses, and urban development. Salmon-Safe Certification is a peer-reviewed certification and accreditation program that promotes practices that protect water quality, improve watershed health and restore habitat.

» **LU9:** Local governments should evaluate shorelines and critical areas, open space (e.g., parks and golf courses), and public lands with respect to identified salmon habitat priorities and notify WRIA 9 staff prior to approving significant land use conversion, or pursuing sale/exchange of public lands.

» **LU10:** Incorporate Green Shores for Homes Certification standards into best management practices for residential shoreline development. The WRIA should support municipal efforts to establish a Green Shores for Homes certification process during permit review to help expedite permitting. Green Shores for Homes is an EPA-funded certification and accreditation program that was developed by technical Shore Friendly design of shoreline properties.

Plan Implementation and Funding

Location: All Subwatersheds

The WRIA 9 2016-2025 Interlocal Agreement provides a framework for managing and coordinating implementation of the Salmon Habitat Plan. It recognizes that salmon recovery transcends political boundaries and calls for strong collaboration between local, state, and federal partners. Success hinges on strong relationships, strategic coordination, and collective action. Working effectively across such a diverse landscape as the Green/Duwamish and Central Puget Sound requires creative partnerships with non-traditional partners. Leveraging shared resources to implement multi-benefit projects will help overcome land availability constraints and high restoration costs.

Programs

» **Basin Stewardship**

Support and expand existing basin stewardship programs across the Green/Duwamish subwatersheds. Basin stewards are instrumental to implementation of the salmon habitat plan. They advocate for salmon recovery, coordinate across diverse stakeholders, and build on-the-ground relationships that facilitate large capital restoration projects. Key tasks for basin stewardship include:

- Coordinating and implementing restoration projects;
- Coordination and collaboration across jurisdictions;
- Securing grant funding (including grant writing) for restoration and acquisition projects;
- Promoting voluntary stewardship on private property;
- Responding to citizen inquiries concerning watershed issues; and
- Expanding public education and outreach opportunities

Basin stewardship covers the Middle and Lower Green River sub-basins, Miller and Walker Creek basins, and Vashon Island. Priorities for expansion include mainland nearshore and Duwamish sub-basins.

» **Land Conservation Initiative (LCI)**

The LCI represents a coordinated effort to preserve river corridors, urban open space, trails, natural lands, farmland and forestlands. It is a regional collaboration between King County, cities, business people, farmers, environmental partners, and others to strategically preserve our last, most important places. The initiative sets forth the goal of conserving and preserving 65,000 acres of high conservation value lands throughout King County within the next 30 years. The primary funding source is the Conservation Futures Tax (CFT) fund, which is a property tax on all parcels in the county.

The LCI is an important funding source for pursuing open space acquisitions throughout the Green/Duwamish watershed. WRIA 9 partners should leverage the LCI to execute high-priority land acquisitions within the Green River Corridor to improve hydrological integrity, support salmon recovery, and expand recreational opportunity. Much of WRIA 9 is mapped as an "opportunity area" where households lack access to open space. Implementation of the LCI has the potential to align salmon recovery investments with needed investments to address equitable access to open space throughout the watershed.

» **U.S. Army Corps Green/Duwamish Ecosystem Restoration Program (ERP)**

WRIA 9 partners should continue to engage U.S. Army Corps leadership to advocate for appropriation of funding to implement ERP projects. The original collaborative effort resulted in identification of 45 projects, 29 of which were carried forward in the 2005 Salmon Habitat Plan. U.S. Congress authorized $113 million in 2000 to be cost shared between the federal (65%) and local partners (35%). Since the 2005 Plan, 13 of the original projects have

been completed, with seven completed under the ERP authorization (e.g., North Winds Weir, Codiga Farms, Riverview Side Channel) and six completed by local sponsors (e.g., Porter Levee Setback, Fenster levee Setback, and Gale Creek).

The Congressionally authorized ERP represents an important federal resource to support critically needed and underfunded salmon restoration work in the watershed. As of 2016, the ERP has only been allocated 8.25 percent of the authorized amount. A 2018 Green/Duwamish ERP Comprehensive Cost Update removed 12 projects based on the ratio of perceived habitat value to cost and the presence of hazardous materials. However, the recommended "de-scoped" plan still includes a number of high-priority projects including NE Auburn Creek and the Hamakami, Turley, and Lones levee setback projects. The cost update for the modified ERP scope is $260 million and the congressionally authorized cost adjusted for inflation is $269 million.

Policies

» **Implementation (I)1**: The WRIA 9 2016-2025 Interlocal Agreement outlines the governance, funding, and decision-making structure for coordination and implementation of the Salmon Habitat Plan.

» **I2:** Process-based habitat restoration – where feasible – is preferable to other approaches that rely on more intensive human intervention. However, the magnitude of alteration within portions of the watershed render true restoration of degraded processes infeasible in some locations. Rehabilitation and substitution projects require additional monitoring and maintenance to ensure desired functions are achieved. WRIA 9 should support periodic investments in adaptive management of completed projects to ensure maximize long-term ecological benefits.

» **I3:** Support use of mitigation funds to implement priority salmon habitat enhancement projects. Offsite mitigation programs (e.g., in-lieu fee and mitigation banking) can help improve ecological function in critical locations (e.g., Chinook Wind in the Duwamish Transition Zone) as a means of offsetting unavoidable impacts in less sensitive areas of the watershed. Development of mitigation opportunities should be coordinated with the WRIA to ensure proposals are consistent with and do not preclude identified salmon recovery priorities. The WRIA should explore the potential for innovative partnerships that could combine mitigation and restoration funding to expand the overall ecosystem benefit of habitat projects. However, habitat improvements

Figure 24.
The Riverview Park Project created approximately 800 ft of side channel to increasing juvenile Chinook rearing and refuge habitat in the Lower Green River. The project, sponsored by the City of Kent, was constructed in 2012 in partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers under the Green/Duwamish Ecosystem Restoration Project.

Photo: City of Kent.

associated with mitigation funds must be tracked as separate and discrete from those achieved with restoration-based grant funding.

» **I4:** Salmon recovery planning and habitat project development should integrate social justice and equity considerations. Public access and recreational improvements should be considered where demonstrated need exists and when compatible with salmon recovery goals. WRIA 9 should seek multiple benefit solutions that consider displacement and social justice issues.

» **I5**: Coordinate Salmon Habitat Plan implementation with other watershed-wide and regional initiatives to identify synergies, leverage available funding, avoid conflicts, and improve salmon recovery outcomes. Existing watershed-wide and regional initiatives include the King County Flood Hazard Management Plan, King County Flood Control District Lower Green River Corridor Plan, Lower Duwamish Waterway Superfund Cleanup, Puget Sound Action Agenda, Our Green Duwamish, WRIA 9 Watershed Restoration Enhancement Committee, and the Puget Sound South Central Action Area Local Integrating Organization.

» **I6:** Support examining new funding sources and financing strategies for implementing priority habitat projects and programs throughout Puget Sound. The WRIA 9 Watershed Forum will seek representation on regional committees tasked with the examination of public and private funding strategies at the local and regional level.

» **I7: Salmon recovery funding** should support adaptive management of previously constructed projects where monitoring data shows design changes are necessary to improve habitat function.