

WRIA 8 Update

Jan. 20, 2012

- **WRIA 8 Implementation Progress Report 2005-2010** – The WRIA 8 Team is pleased to announce the availability of an updated implementation progress report documenting the state of our Chinook salmon populations, watershed and our efforts to implement the WRIA 8 Chinook Conservation Plan during the first five years of implementation. Copies of the report will be distributed to WRIA 8 partners over the next few weeks. Please let us know if you would like additional copies. It is also posted on the WRIA 8 website: [Five-Year Implementation Progress Report](#).
- **Final 2011 grant round funding decisions and upcoming 2012 grant rounds** – At the July 2011 meeting, the Salmon Recovery Council approved project proposal recommendations to be submitted for the King Conservation District (KCD) and the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) / Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) grant rounds. All 12 WRIA 8 KCD project proposal recommendations were funded. Of the six WRIA 8 SRFB/PSAR project proposal recommendations, four received funding. The other two projects withdrew their applications: 1) The City of Seattle Mouth of Taylor Creek Acquisition project received both KCD and SRFB grants and only needed the KCD grant due to reduced project cost, and 2) the Beaux Arts Shoreline Restoration project received concerns from the SRFB Review Panel that the project cost was too high relative to the proposed salmon benefit, and the project sponsor decided to drop the SRFB funding and focus on KCD funding to implement phases of the project.

Project Status update: The City of Renton Airport recently returned their 2010 SRFB grant to design and build habitat islands near the mouth of the Cedar River in south Lake Washington. As the landowner of the aquatic lands on which Renton was proposing to construct the habitat islands, the Washington State Department of Natural Resources reviewed and denied Renton's aquatic lands lease application. Unfortunately, the returned SRFB funds (\$300,475) from this grant do not come back to WRIA 8 for reallocation. However, as part of the grant, Renton also received \$20,000 in PSAR funds that do come back to WRIA 8 for reallocation in the 2012 grant round.

The 2012 KCD and SRFB/PSAR grant round announcements will be distributed by the end of January. Although final funding amounts are not confirmed, we anticipate having about \$1.18 million in KCD funding and \$745,000 in combined SRFB/PSAR funding to allocate to priority recovery actions that advance implementation of the WRIA 8 Plan. Please contact Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz with any questions at 206-296-8067.

- **Williams Pipeline Update** – In response to concerns raised by King County, WRIA 8 and others about their selection of the Rainbow Bend Restoration Site as their preferred location to cross the Cedar River with a gas pipeline, Northwest Williams Pipeline has been evaluating other options and alignments for crossing the Cedar River with its South Seattle Delivery Lateral Expansion gas line. Their preferred crossing is now at its existing pipeline crossing location near Highway 169. It is a complex site for construction for many reasons, so they are retaining the Rainbow Bend site as an alternative crossing site for the pipeline. The WRIA 8 team will continue to track this issue.

- **NOAA's Feedback on Proposed Recovery Approach (PRA) Comments** – NOAA is expected to publish their responses to the more than 20 comment letters they received on the PRA in the first quarter of 2012. In December, Elizabeth Babcock, staff from NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service, answered questions from the Puget Sound Watershed Leads group regarding the PRA. Unfortunately, from her email, it appears the additional data and technical comments they received (including WRIA 8's) will not lead to “different conclusions or outcomes from [NOAA] framework analysis.” She confirms that NOAA does plan to use the PRA in NOAA's policy and decision making. She indicates that the PRA was done for NOAA's own use and they will not tell others if/how to use it, but she suggests that others might want to use it to inform their recovery decisions. The WRIA 8 Team is concerned and will continue to track this issue.
- **WRIA 8 Watershed Investment District Discussion** – On Dec. 9 the following WRIA 8 SRC members met in Kirkland to discuss the pros and cons to WRIA 8 of the draft Watershed Investment District legislation: Dr. Don Davidson (Mayor, Bellevue); Cm Larry Phillips (King County); Bill Knutsen (King Conservation District); Mayor Joan McBride (Kirkland); CM Chris Eggen (Shoreline); CM Bart Masterson (Mill Creek); Denise Di Santo (Dept. of Ecology); CM Mike O'Brien (Seattle); CM Don Fiene (Lake Forest Park); Brian Goodnight (Snohomish County alternate). Other attendees: Mayor David Baker (Kenmore); Doreen Booth (Suburban Cities Association); Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz (WRIA 8); Jean White (WRIA 8); Kathy Minsch (Seattle); Jerallyn Roetemeyer (Redmond); Stacey Rush (Kirkland); Jenny Gaus (Kirkland); Fred Stouder (Kenmore). Next steps include: continuing the conversation about what it would take to have a draft proposal that everyone can support; engaging with the South Central Puget Sound Caucus group on the watershed investment district concept; tracking the Puget Sound Ecosystem Coordination Board's Local Funding Subcommittee and requesting WRIA 8 representation on the subcommittee; and seeking feedback from state legislators on the concept.
- **Salmon SEEson** – The fifth annual Salmon SEEson campaign to promote salmon viewing opportunities throughout the watershed just ended. It received good press coverage in the Sunday, October 23 *Seattle Times* (NW Traveler section). See it at: [Homecoming Salmon Article](#).

Several of the groups reported high visitor turnouts despite the lower sockeye salmon runs last fall. The Cedar River Salmon Journey reported: “2011 was our best year ever. We had the largest number of naturalists, fall visitors, other programs provided by CRSJ naturalists and evaluations returned. There were 1,952 summer visitors at the Chittenden Locks, 5,860 visitors to the fall Cedar River program and an additional 663 visitors to other programs provided by CRSJ naturalists. Total 2011 visitors: 8,475. We had 79 CRSJ volunteers working on the river this fall, and 23 volunteers who participated in the Locks program (including some beach naturalists), for a total of 89 volunteers participating this year.”

Carkeek Park also had excellent numbers for salmon visitors this year, 200-500 visitors for each of the Salmon Steward weekends, probably more than 3,000 visitors over the season. More than 500 people came to the Salmon Celebration the day after Thanksgiving.

- **Puget Sound Regional Update** – Comments on the updating of the Puget Sound Action Agenda, the plan for recovering Puget Sound, are due on Feb. 3. The WRIA 8 Implementation Committee recommends that WRIA 8 send a short letter with more detailed comments attached. Jean White will propose a draft letter and comments for the WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council to consider over email.

The **Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council** met on Dec. 1 to continue the conversation with federal and state agency leaders about how habitat protection can be strengthened in light of NOAA's Implementation Status Report on the Puget Sound Chinook Conservation Plan which found that habitat is still declining and strong tribal concerns about this habitat decline. The federal response will be led by NOAA, EPA and USDA and will focus on: shorelines, floodplain connectivity and water quality (both stormwater and agricultural runoff issues). Tribal representatives met with the Council of Environmental Quality in Washington DC and had a government to government meeting with many state agency heads. At the state level, directors of many of the natural resource agencies met to discuss the state's response. Representatives from the federal agencies also met with state agency directors to suggest that they work together to identify solutions. Generally there was a positive response at the meeting that the decline in habitat is being taken seriously.

The **South Central Action Area Caucus Group** met on January 9 to discuss how to provide comment on the Puget Sound Partnership's draft Action Agenda. Caucus Group members agreed to share comments from their individual organizations, which will help identify common messages for a collective set of comments from the Caucus Group, including a need to focus on better demonstrating how the local priorities for Puget Sound recovery identified by the Caucus Group will be implemented.

The meeting also included discussion of the draft national pollution discharge elimination system (NPDES) stormwater permit and local governments' review of the draft permit. As one example of how a local government is addressing the stormwater permit, the City of Redmond provided a detailed presentation on their integrated watershed planning effort, which enables them to address priorities for stormwater management, salmon recovery, growth management, and water quality planning.

WRIA 8 Committee Reports

- **WRIA 8 Technical Committee** – December 7: briefing by King County on Rainbow Bend restoration project and monitoring plan; discussion with Puget Sound Partnership and Regional Implementation Technical Team (RITT) on feedback regarding WRIA 8 2011 Three Year Work Plan update. January 11: discussed 2012 WRIA 8 Technical Committee work program.
- **WRIA 8 Implementation Committee** – Met on Jan. 10. Committee discussed what to expect in 2012 (e.g. WRIA 8 interlocal agreement to be recalculated, King Conservation District Funds up for reassessment) and potential agenda topics for WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council meetings. Group felt that WRIA 8 should send a comment letter on the Puget Sound Partnership's Action Agenda update and should recommend partnering with the Friends of the Cedar River Watershed on their Watershed Report as a way to share our salmon recovery efforts with a broader audience.

- **Green Shorelines** – Met with representatives of the Washington Chapter of the American Association of Landscape Architects (WASLA) and the American Institute of Architects (AIA) to initiate outreach to landscape architecture and architecture professionals. Discussed a possible waterfront home award, and at the request of each organization, will give green shorelines presentations to their memberships. Wrote three posts to the Green shorelines blog (<http://greenshorelines.wordpress.com/>) aimed at shoreline planners and other shoreline professionals. Currently editing two green shorelines videos: one with a fisheries scientist; and one with a homeowner who did extensive shoreline planting.