

WRIA 8 Update and Committee Reports

November 21, 2013

- **Puget Sound Regional Update** – The **Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council (PS SRC)** last met on September 25. Agenda topics included updates on work to identify and prioritize salmon recovery best management practices and align them with stormwater best management practices, status of the regional monitoring and adaptive management project, steelhead recovery planning options and related marine survival study, scope and eligible activities for Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration capital project implementation and development funding, and 2014 PS SRC leadership nominations. The PS SRC meets next on December 6.

The **South Central Action Area Caucus** meets next on November 18. The meeting agenda includes 2014 legislative development update, update on the Green River System Wide Improvement Framework, and Caucus Group near-term action development. The Caucus Group continues to work to identify specific near-term actions based on the highest priority local actions to recover Puget Sound, which will be communicated to the Puget Sound Partnership as part of the 2014 Action Agenda update. WRIA 8 staff participate on a Caucus Group work group to more clearly communicate the most important local salmon recovery actions and projects into this process and to inform EPA and the state agency Lead Organizations managing funding for Puget Sound recovery as they identify the priorities for the six-year Puget Sound recovery strategy.

- **WRIA 8 Actions and Funding Coordinator position hired** – Jason Wilkinson has been serving in this position on a temporary basis, and has been hired to permanently fill the position. The hiring panel included Don Fiene, City of Lake Forest Park Councilmember and SRC member, Stacey Rush, City of Kirkland staff, Michael Murphy, King County Land Conservation staff, Scott Stolnack, WRIA 8 Technical Coordinator, and Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz, WRIA 8 Watershed Coordinator. The panel was clear in their ranking Jason as the top candidate based on his proven track record in the position over the past eight months, excellent working relationships with WRIA 8 and regional partners, understanding of WRIA 8 challenges and priorities, command of the nuances inherent in the position, and his strong desire to contribute to the WRIA 8 salmon recovery effort.
- **King County Flood Control District 2014 rate increase and funding for WRIA salmon recovery** – As part of its 2014 budget and work plan, the King County Flood Control District Board of Supervisors will be considering a Flood District proposal to increase the levy rate of \$0.03 (\$9,866,830 in 2014, \$65.75 million over 6 years). NOTE: After the Implementation Committee meeting, we learned that the Flood District Board of Supervisors had passed the proposed rate increase unanimously. The following are the intended funding elements of this rate increase:
 - 50% of the new revenue (\$4.9M per year, \$32.87 million over 6 years) is allocated to three grant programs:

1. Increase of \$1.39 million per year for the existing Subregional Opportunity Fund allocated to local governments with a \$10,000 funding floor. When combined with the existing 2014 Opportunity Fund allocation of \$3.857 million to jurisdictions, the new total 2014 Opportunity Fund is \$5,250,476.
 2. \$2.66 million per year for a new grant program for emerging flood risk reduction needs.
 3. Increase of \$873,674 in 2014 WRIA funding, making total WRIA funding go from \$3.15M to \$4.02M. For WRIA 8, this means our annual grant funding allocation increases from \$1.2M to \$1.5M in 2014. This increase includes adjusting for inflation from the base year of 2006, and adjusting for inflation in subsequent years. Previous WRIA funding allocations had never risen with inflation.
 - 50% of the new revenue (\$4.9M per year, \$32.87 million over 6 years) is allocated to river corridor plan implementation in 5 river corridors in King County, and to support implementation of 5 priority projects, including \$1.94 million to fully fund resident relocation associated with the Riverbend Mobile Home Park Relocation.
- **King County Flood Control District Cedar River Corridor Study** – The King County Flood Control District is moving forward on basin-scale planning efforts within five river basins in King County. The purpose of this planning effort is to identify integrated, multi-objective goals at the basin scale and a comprehensive set of actions to achieve those goals. The Cedar River basin will be one of the focal areas for this corridor planning effort, and King County River and Floodplain Management staff is in the early stages of scoping this effort. WRIA 8 staff will be active participants in this process to ensure habitat objectives are appropriately integrated into the study and the resulting actions.
 - **Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration Project Implementation and Development Awards funding proposal** – With Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration funded at \$70 million in the state’s 2013 – 2015 capital budget, the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council approved a Puget Sound Partnership proposal for setting aside some of these dollars for project development work. The Project Implementation and Development Awards will be allocated through a regionally-competitive process, and the intent is to direct funds where needed to advance ongoing projects or develop new projects for future funding requests. The WRIA 8 Project Subcommittee met on October 17 and recommended working with the City of Renton to submit an application for developing restoration concepts on the lower Cedar River within the City’s jurisdiction. The *WRIA 8 Chinook Salmon Conservation Plan* provides little detail on specific project actions in this area, and the proposal submitted on November 15 requests \$200,000 to conduct a detailed analysis of restoration opportunities on the lower Cedar and develop conceptual designs for feasible projects with high salmon benefit.
 - **Another successful Salmon SEEson** – This year’s Salmon SEEson was quite successful, with some innovations and expansions of the program. Salmon SEEson 2013 partners included: Hiram M. Chittenden Locks, Friends of Issaquah Salmon Hatchery, Friends of the

Cedar River, City of Redmond, City of Bellevue, City of Seattle (Carkeek Park), King County (Ebright and Lewis Creeks), Saving Water Partnership, Water Tenders. A few highlights from 2013 include:

- Salmon SEESon joined forces with the Saving Water Partnership, since saving water and saving salmon go hand in hand. We included the SWP logo and messages on the Salmon SEESon flyer, poster and website. Saving Water Partnership staff shared our materials and messages with their partners: Northshore Utility District, Shoreline Water District, Woodinville Water District, Olympic View Water & Sewer District, Water District 20, City of Bothell and City of Renton.
 - New this year, staff coordinated with partners to add video of several sites to the Salmon SEESon website. Visitors could click on video of sites at Carkeek Park, Cedar River, Hiram M. Chittenden Locks, and Issaquah Salmon Hatchery to learn more and see what the sites look like.
 - King County staff featured the Salmon SEESon website on the new King County environmental web portal.
 - *Seattle's Child* highlighted Salmon SEESon events on their home page for September.
- **WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Tour recap** – The 2013 WRIA 8 Salmon Tour on October 11 was a great success! Participants included WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Councilmembers, Congressional staff, state legislative staff, Salmon Recovery Funding Board member and former state Senator Phil Rockefeller, and state agency staff. This year's tour took us to three high priority, large-scale restoration projects in our watershed: 1) Rainbow Bend Levee Removal and Floodplain Restoration project on the Cedar River, 2) Issaquah Hatchery Dam removal on Issaquah Creek, and 3) Lower Bear Creek Restoration project in the City of Redmond. At the Rainbow Bend site we organized a media event, which featured comments from King County Councilmember and WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Councilmember Larry Phillips, Mark Isaacson, Director of King County Water and Land Resources, and Marc Daily, Interim Director of the Puget Sound Partnership. State Senator Bob Hasegawa and Representative Chad Magendanz attended the media event. The media event and project information was picked up by several local newspapers and was filmed and aired on KCTV.

In addition to visiting these important projects, we also heard from the City of Issaquah about a large-scale stream channel and riparian area restoration project that will break ground next summer at Confluence Parks in the heart of Issaquah where East Fork Issaquah Creek and Issaquah Creek come together. We also continued the discussion about the critical infrastructure improvement needs at the Hiram M. Chittenden Locks, including the fish passage facilities.

- **Returning Chinook and sockeye salmon numbers** – Chinook salmon spawner surveys are wrapping up for 2013. Preliminary data indicate that while 2013 was below average for numbers of adult Chinook salmon passing through the Ballard Locks (and reaching the Issaquah hatchery), the number of Chinook redds located in the Cedar River is actually relatively strong – twice the 14-year average and second only to the record year of 2007. *The number of returning adult Chinook salmon on the Cedar will likely surpass our minimum abundance goals (1200 adults) for only the fourth time since 1980.* (We came close in

2012, with 1175.) Adult passage over the Landsburg Dam is also very strong in 2013, with a much larger than normal number and proportion of natural-origin females. Data have not yet been reported for the Sammamish population, but judging by the hatchery report, it's likely the numbers of Chinook in Bear Creek and other North Lake Washington streams will be lower than normal (far below abundance targets).

WRIA 8 Committee Reports

- **WRIA 8 Technical Committee** –Met October 2 and November 6. Meetings were focused on developing the WRIA 8 adaptive management framework using Puget Sound Partnership guidance. Worked on key ecological attributes (KEAs) and viability goals. **H-Integration:** The WRIA 8 Technical Committee discussed and recommended that the Chinook salmon viability goals identified during the H-Integration process should be brought before the SRC to be adopted for recovery planning. Scott will present these goals to the SRC at the November meeting.
- **WRIA 8 Implementation Committee** – Met on November 12. Agenda topics included updates on the King County Flood Control District proposed rate increase, 2013 State of the Sound Report, EPA National Estuary Watershed Protection and Restoration Grant RFP, completion of the second phase of the Beaux Arts Shoreline Restoration project on Lake Washington, and WRIA 8 staffing update. The Committee also recapped the WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Tour, discussed the WRIA 8 proposal for PSAR project implementation and development award funds, and reviewed the agenda for the November 21 SRC meeting. The Committee meets again on January 7.
- **Green Shoreline Steering Committee Meeting** – The Steering Committee met on September 30, following the first Salish Sea Shoreline Forum. The Steering Committee discussed the status and relative success of various incentive-based approaches to shoreline restoration, continuing needs to advance incentive approaches, an update on the Green Shores for Homes grant that San Juan County and the City of Seattle are implementing, and an upcoming green shorelines themed workshop for realtors hosted by WSU Extension and Department of Ecology. The Steering Committee will continue to meet in conjunction with the Salish Sea Shoreline Forum events.