

WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council

Meeting Notes

Bellevue City Hall
September 19, 2013
3:10 – 5:15 p.m.

Members Present

#	Name	Affiliation
1.	Councilmember Dr. Don Davidson, Chair	City of Bellevue
2.	Mayor Joan McBride, Vice-Chair	City of Kirkland
3.	Councilmember Layne Barnes	City of Maple Valley
4.	Councilmember Diane Buckshnis	City of Edmonds
5.	Councilmember Bruce Dodds	City of Clyde Hill
6.	Nancy Eklund	The Boeing Company
7.	Councilmember Ted Frantz	City of Hunts Point
8.	Brian Goodnight	Snohomish County
9.	Kathy Minsch	City of Seattle
10.	Councilmember Hank Myers	City of Redmond
11.	Joan Nolan	WA Department of Ecology (Ecology)
12.	Councilmember Larry Phillips	King County
13.	Keri Pravits	Friends of the Cedar River Watershed
14.	Stewart Reinbold	WA Department of Fish & Wildlife
15.	Councilmember Andy Rheaume	City of Bothell
16.	Councilmember Carl Scandella	City of Yarrow Point
17.	Gary Smith	Water Tenders/Trout Unlimited
18.	Councilmember Jesse Salomon	City of Shoreline
19.	Richard Sowa	Friends of the Issaquah Salmon Hatchery
20.	Cleve Steward	Sustainable Fisheries Foundation

Alternates Present

21.	Dave Garland	Ecology
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Others Present

22.	Jon Hansen	King County
23.	Jim Holliday	Sno-King Watershed Council
24.	Jeralyn Roetemeyer	City of Redmond
25.	Ron Straka	City of Renton
26.	Jean White	King County
27.	Bruce Wulkan	Puget Sound Partnership
28.	Linda Grob	WRIA 8 Team
29.	Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz	WRIA 8 Team
30.	Scott Stolnack	WRIA 8 Team
31.	Jason Wilkinson	WRIA 8 Team

Chair Dr. Don Davidson opened the meeting, asking attendees to introduce themselves. Dr. Davidson welcomed new member Richard Sowa, Friends of the Issaquah Salmon Hatchery.

Jean White, King County, announced that Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz has been permanently hired as the WRIA 8 Watershed Coordinator.

1. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

2. Approval of Meeting Notes for July 18, 2013

The Salmon Recovery Council unanimously approved the meeting notes for the July 18, 2013 meeting.

3. Updates & Announcements

General Announcements:

[Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz](#) (Jason MK) elaborated on several items from the WRIA 8 Update handout:

- **Puget Sound Regional Update:**
 - **Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council (PSSRC):** The PSSRC last met on July 25. Agenda topics included steelhead recovery planning, scope and eligible activities for Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) “capacity” funding, regional policy questions on the Monitoring and Adaptive Management (M&AM) project, and nomination and election of PSSRC leadership. The next meeting is September 26.
 - **South Central Action Area Caucus (Caucus Group):** The Caucus Group has not met since June 17. The next meeting is September 16. The Caucus Group continues to work on refining the list of priority local near-term actions for recovering Puget Sound.
- **WRIA 8 Cooperative Watershed Management (CWM) Grant Awards:** The King County Flood Control District (FCD) approved the CWM grant proposals on September 9. WRIA 8 will receive \$1.2 million for the projects and programs recommended by the Salmon Recovery Council (SRC) on July 18.
- **PSAR “Capacity” Funding:** In previous allocations PSAR capacity funds were more flexible and allowed us to fund programmatic activities such as Green Shorelines. This biennium the funds are restricted to being used to support capital project development and implementation. WRIA 8 will apply the funds to support much of the Actions and Funding Coordinator’s project development and implementation work program, freeing up interlocal agreement funds to support priority programmatic work identified in the 2014 WRIA 8 work plan.
- **Floodplains by Design:** The Nature Conservancy, Puget Sound Partnership (PSP) and U.S. Geological Service are partnering on the Floodplains by Design project to improve Puget Sound floodplains for protection of the human community and health of the ecosystem. The Coordinated Floodplains request to the legislature at the last session resulted in funding for nine projects, including the Lower Cedar River Integrated Floodplain Management Project that will help fund the Rainbow Bend and Riverbend projects. A “Floodplains by Design” workshop will be October 2, at the Edmonds Conference Center. Anyone interested is invited to attend.
- **Salmon SEEson:** The annual Salmon SEEson event is going on now. This year the website features links to video of some of the viewing sites, and the Saving Water Partnership of local water utilities has signed on as a Salmon SEEson sponsor. Please take posters and flyers, and contact [Linda Grob](#), Administrative Coordinator, if you would like more.
- **WRIA 8 Salmon Tour:** The annual WRIA 8 Salmon Tour is scheduled for Friday, October 11. Our priority is to get SRC members, Congressional staff, and state legislators to attend. Please contact Linda Grob to RSVP.
- **Fish Return Numbers:** [Scott Stolnack](#), Technical Coordinator, reported that Chinook salmon estimates through the locks are below the 15-year average, and below last year’s numbers. Sockeye are also lower than the 15-year average and last year. The marine survival study of the early life history will be important to help us figure out where the critical life history stage is, because more juveniles are going out but more aren’t necessarily coming back.

- Ted Frantz suggested that big flood years could be asterisked on the fish number graphs. Scott explained that floods are not a real clear indicator because some fish come back in four years, some in three years, some in two years.
- Carl Scandella said reports are coming out about ocean acidification, and he wondered if that affects salmon. Scott replied that he doesn't think it affects salmon directly, but will affect them indirectly through effects on their prey.
- Richard Sowa inquired if there is a website where someone can look at these numbers. Scott responded that the WA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) has the website, which our WRIA 8 website links to.
- Hank Myers noted that the Chinook numbers are flattening out, but not for the sockeye. Scott explained that sockeye are about 99% through the Ballard Locks.
- Larry Phillips asked if we have information on returns for the whole ESU as well as watershed-wide. Scott replied that NOAA undertakes ESU returns every five years. Councilmember Phillips said he was shocked by that. Cleve Steward agreed that ESU information should come up and be available more frequently. Integration analysis is done every five years, and NOAA collects the data.

Other Announcements:

- Don Davidson said he attended the media event celebrating the Seahurst Park shoreline restoration project in Burien, attending the PSSRC, and now the SRC. He reported that the WRIA 8 Management Committee is meeting to look at the future WRIA 8 leadership, because he and a few other SRC members will no longer be elected officials in 2014.
- Jason MK said we are looking at hiring for the WRIA 8 Actions and Funding Coordinator, which Jason Wilkinson (Jason W) has been serving in temporarily. The job announcement will be out within a week.

4. Confirm 2014 Legislative Agenda

Jason MK reported that this is the starting point for figuring out the Legislative Agenda for 2014. The Legislative Agenda is not a static list, and he requested that SRC members let him know if there is anything they would like to add.

WRIA 8's Federal priorities include:

- Support and sustain \$65 million for NOAA's Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund;
- Support passage of the Puget Sound Recovery A to designate Puget Sound as a "Great Water Body"; and
- Encourage the congressional delegation to communicate with local, regional and national leadership at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in support of funding the Corps' prioritized list of critical infrastructure repairs and updates to the Hiram A. Chittenden (Ballard) Locks.

State priorities are:

- Thank state legislators for \$70 million for the PSAR fund; and
- Thank state legislators for continued funding for salmon recovery Lead Entities.

Jason MK mentioned that WRIA 8 thank you letters have already been sent out to select legislators.

Discussion:

- Dianne Buckshnis asked who we should contact about the federal agenda. Jason MK said Senators Murray and Cantwell should be contacted for bullets one and three.
- Carl Scandella questioned why WRIA 8 receives so little of the \$70 million PSAR funding. Jason MK explained that the funding is shared by all 14 Puget Sound watersheds.
- Jean White remarked that we also might want to thank legislators for the Floodplains by Design funding.

- Jess Salomon said he was curious about who we sent thank you letters to. Jason MK said he would let him know.
- Dr. Davidson called it amazing that we received anything from the state with what is going on down in Olympia. We asked for \$80 million and received \$70 million. He noted that regional Puget Sound organizations have their own legislative agendas.

The Salmon Recovery Council unanimously confirmed the 2014 Legislative Agenda.

5. WRIA 8 Monitoring and Adaptive Management Project Status

Scott Stolnack announced that the SRC will be seeing a lot of him over the next nine months as he provides regular updates on the M&AM project. For today's update he is reviewing the first M&AM products, and reintroducing the H-Integration Subcommittee recommendations from 2009. He reported that PSP's purpose for the M&AM Common Framework is to take all the habitat plans at the watershed scale and roll them up into common Puget Sound components and indicators for adaptive management.

Scott went over the M&AM project timeline, including steps already completed or in the process of being completed: identify relevant ecosystem components (July); draft and review initial summary reports (August); and draft the list of KEAs and provide an update and initial products to the SRC (September). Next steps are: draft pressure categories and pressure-component linkages, and participate in a PSP workshop (October); and draft the indicators (November). Future steps include developing goals, viability assessments, and recovery strategies. He explained that PSP wants to be sure all the watersheds are on board as we do this work, and for that reason he will be providing M&AM updates at every SRC meeting for the next six or eight months. By June 2014 we will have all the bones that we need (the framework) for our own WRIA 8 M&AM Plan.

Scott noted that WRIA 8 has freshwater [uplands, streams/river channels, floodplain water bodies, other water bodies (lakes)] and marine [Salmon Bay (estuary), nearshore marine (beaches and pocket estuaries)] habitat components. Freshwater is where the focus really needs to be in WRIA 8; at the moment, we are not able to do much with the nearshore because of Burlington Northern (BNSF), but we can and do influence the freshwater component. Species and food webs components are more research then applied at this point, and this process won't be able to afford spending much time on them yet.

Scott introduced the Technical Committee's two-page summary report, synthesized from the WRIA 8 Plan and the Miradi planning worksheet. The summary describes WRIA 8's functional scope as two Chinook populations, and three habitat tiers, and it includes the vision statement from the WRIA 8 Plan. The summary also includes an H-Integration context. He said the Technical Committee, WDFW hatchery managers, and the Muckleshoot Tribe went through the H-Integration process in 2006-2009, trying to clarify parts of the Plan around Chinook goals. Resulting recommendations were never formally vetted or approved by the SRC, and the Technical Committee would like to use those recommendations as the state salmon recovery goals for the M&AM project. These recommendations will be brought before the SRC in a more complete form in November.

Jason MK explained we are looking for two things from the SRC today: general buyoff on the summary report and profile of the watershed, and a decision on the H-integration question.

Discussion:

- Hank Myers asked for a definition of "rearing stage". Scott Stolnack explained that after salmon hatch, some go straight out to sea, some stay several months in the river, while the majority stay only a month or less. One hypothesis is, the better the condition, the longer they stay in the river, and the bigger they are when they leave.
- Kathy Minsch asked about the H-Integration recommendations. Scott Stolnack explained that they are elements of Viable Salmonid Population (VSP) goals. Kathy asked for examples of H-Integration

recommendations that would be added to the WRIA 8 M&AM Plan. Scott said there is a long table of the recommendations that was too big for the meeting packet, but gave some examples. He said he will bring a more complete list before the council in November.

- Dr. Davidson reported that in addition to his other committees, he sits on PSP's M&AM Committee, where the policy has been if it works, keep it, if it doesn't, change it.
- Carl Scandella said it is hard to give guidance on the question, "How much data should we show to the SRC", because we are only going to see a bit of that due to time constraints. He proposed continuing the same way, with WRIA 8 staff picking out the data you think is interesting, and the SRC telling you if we want more.
- Ted Frantz questioned the size of the system being looking at: just WRIA 8 or conditions in the ocean. Scott explained we are working only on the watershed level, because that's the area the watershed jurisdictions have control over. PSP and others are becoming aware that a big component of problem may be out in the ocean. We will roll up some of the indicators. He said each watershed is unique in certain ways: WRIA 8 is the most populated watershed, and we have two large lakes. Dr. Davidson added that PSP has data collection across Puget Sound.
- Cleve Steward proposed staff present us as much data to the SRC as you think we can swallow, in addition to letting us know the gaps. He called the two-page summary just a rehash. We're responsible for habitat, but haven't influenced harvest and hatchery. He said his plea is we try and interact with those processes a little bit, because they all affect us. Cleve said he would also like to see more tribal input in WRIA 8, but he isn't clear how recently we've approached them. He noted that staff have also ruled out BNSF and the nearshore, and he asked if we've contacted them recently. He didn't think we should take them out.
- Scott Stolnack explained that the format of the summary comes from the Miradi software. Because we have a lake, it acts like an estuary, so our fish are bigger, and don't spend much time on the shore.
- Jason MK reported that generally we have reached out to the tribe, value their input, and do check-ins with them on a staff-to-staff level. The Muckleshoots support H-Integration, and we will continue to invite them to this table.
- Dr. Davidson remarked that we miss hearing the Muckleshoot perspective, and they miss hearing ours. As per BNSF, the SRC has said we should engage with them, but it is challenging. We do have a beach nourishment demonstration project going on in the nearshore.
- Diane Buckshnis reported that Edmonds has worked with BNSF on daylighting Willow Creek, and now has the culverts installed. She said it was a fascinating environmental versus development process. We are continuing to work with them, and just need another \$9 million to complete the process.
- Jim Holliday, Sno-King Watershed Council, mentioned that one of his sons is a tribal liaison with the Muckleshoots.

The Salmon Recovery Council supported the staff and the Technical Committee's determination on the level of Monitoring & Adaptive Management project detail to present at meetings.

6. WRIA 8 Project Implementation Progress

[Jason Wilkinson](#) announced that pre-WRIA 8 Plan implementation nearly 500 acres of primarily forested headwater habitat were purchased. Since the Plan was approved in 2005 the annual funding goal of \$8.5 million has not been reached until this year, when thanks to a one-time legislative appropriation our total is \$9 million. Of the 202 projects on the Ten-Year Start List in the Plan, 37 are completed (20%), 76 are active (40%), 25 are conceptual (13%), 51 are proposed (27%), and 13 will not be implemented. Over 1,300 acres of habitat have been acquired, including 240 acres of floodplain, and over 11 miles of stream bank protected. Restoration highlights include 2,850 linear feet of levee removed or set back leading to 73.5 acres of reconnected floodplain, 7,780 linear feet of lakeshore restored, and hundreds of floodplain and riparian acres planted.

Jason highlighted several large WRIA 8 projects:

- Rainbow Bend Floodplain Restoration: Twenty years from concept to completion, \$12.2 million total cost from multiple funding sources and WRIA 8 grant funds.
- Lower Bear Creek Restoration: Rehabilitation of 3,500 linear feet of Bear Creek, offering off-channel habitat and ~14 acres of restored riparian buffer when completed, \$11.5 million from multiple funders.
- Issaquah Creek Integrated Fish Passage: Replaces diversion dam with series of boulder weirs, opening over 11 miles of spawning and rearing habitat, \$4.8 million from multiple funders.
- Issaquah Creek – Confluence Parks Restoration: 2014 construction to restore 1,400+ linear feet of stream and remove 12,500 of riprap, re-vegetate 2.3 riparian acres with over 5,800 trees and shrubs planted, placing 35 wood structures (150) logs, \$1.75 million in WRIA 8 grant funds.
- Riverbend Acquisition and Restoration: Acquisition complete (\$6.875 million), relocation underway (\$5 million of \$7.765 million secured), multiple funders plus \$1.8 million in WRIA 8 grant funds. Next steps are restoration planning, levee removal/setback, and floodplain restoration.

Jason explained that we've had a lot of successes, but much work remains. We are starting to make inroads on large-scale projects, and the ten-year WRIA 8 Plan update provides an opportunity to apply what we've learned and refine our strategy.

Discussion:

- Larry Phillips remarked that the Cedar River Council has been around for twenty years now, but it has no regulatory control. One of their goals is the Cedar River Legacy Program. Restoring the watershed is a long slow process. A great example of the benefit of staying with these programs is the \$9 million received this year.
- Jean White said she also wanted to acknowledge the extent of acquisitions conducted by the City of Renton.
- Dr. Davidson said this watershed is looking very favorably, but other watersheds are not in the same situation.

7. Success Story: Rainbow Bend Floodplain Restoration

Jason MK introduced the Rainbow Bend Floodplain Restoration project. Jason said we are very excited about this project, which will restore 40 acres of floodplain habitat, and has taken about 20 years to come to fruition. One notable feature is that it is not an over-engineered project, but will remove the levee and let the river do the restoration work.

Jon Hansen provided project specific details. He explained that Rainbow Bend is at the intersection of SR 169 and Cedar Grove Road. By 2011 the county had removed most of the homes, but the ones remaining were still being flooded. He showed a slide of the flooding during 2009 storm, which flooded the mobile home park and single family residences, and caused a septic system in the floodplain to fail. King County helped the homeowners relocate to a better place, and removed the levee.

Jon reported that for now we have not touched other levees in this reach. When we took out the levee, we created pilot channels into the floodplain, and placed some wood in the floodplain. He showed a series of time-lapsed photos of the construction that were taken every two minutes during construction. Construction involved putting in a boom, and layering it with bags. The river was closed during construction, and the end result is a widened main channel, pilot side channels, and unconsolidated floodplain gravel. King County expects the project site to change shift over time.

Jon described the project goals:

1. Reduce flood risks to people and infrastructure;
2. Reduce the need for future facility maintenance and emergency response;
3. Restore floodplain functions and processes that provide for natural development of riverine habitat and aid salmon recovery; and

4. Address impacts of the project on recreational safety.

Discussion:

- Larry Phillips commented that this project involved major public infrastructure, including moving the mobile home which cost approximately \$12.2 million. Jon Hansen said this project was designed to take the energy away from the road and highway, which is important. King County spends a lot of money repairing levees, and downstream from Rainbow Bend is the Belmondo Reach, where the Cedar River is moving towards the trail.
- Ted Frantz asked if Rainbow Bend restoration creates more habitat for spawning salmon and protecting redds. Jon replied that removing the levee and widening the channel creates all sorts of gravel bars, which salmon need for spawning. The new channel is connected ten months of the year to the groundwater. The main channel of the Cedar has a lot of spawning area, but once the fish came out of the gravel there was nowhere to go when there was rock on the edges.
- Jesse Salomon asked how many juveniles we hope to get in the restored area. Jon responded that we look at the river as a system, and for lots of other projects like this, it's more about establishing the habitat conditions that fish need to survive. Scott Stolnack explained that fish are drawn to low-velocity, shallower areas, which this project provides. Jason MK remarked that King County is planning to do some project effectiveness at the site, comparing it to another 'control' site in the Cedar River. Scott mentioned that the times when fish will most use the site are when it is most dangerous for snorkeling, making quantification of fish use extremely difficult. Jon noted that this kind of habitat is so limited, so just the fact we have added to it will make a big difference.
- Stewart Reinbold said when floods come down the river salmon are getting washed out. This low-velocity area will mean a lot, and we are also going to see some new wildlife at the site.

8. Next Meeting

The next meeting is November 21, 2013, 3:00 to 5:15 p.m., Bellevue City Hall.