



# Legislative Priorities for Puget Sound Watershed Health and Salmon Habitat Recovery

*Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed (WRIA 8) Partners*

Updated: January 2014

## Federal Priorities

- **Support and sustain \$65 million for NOAA's Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund** in the 2014 Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies appropriations bill. These funds allow NOAA to award grants to Washington State, Tribes and local watershed partners to implement salmon recovery priorities. These are the grant funds WRIA 8 directs through the annual Salmon Recovery Funding Board grant round process. Habitat restoration enabled by these funds is consistent with the Action Agenda for Puget Sound recovery and Tribal habitat priorities.
- **Support efforts and legislation to authorize a Puget Sound Recovery Program** that would designate Puget Sound as a formal federal priority to fast-track habitat restoration efforts and protection of water quality, according to the priorities of the Action Agenda for Puget Sound recovery.
- **Support funding for the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) to implement critical prioritized infrastructure repairs and updates to the Hiram M. Chittenden (Ballard) Locks.** These repairs and updates are immediately necessary for continued safe operation of the Locks for navigation, maintaining lake levels (needed for the SR-520 and I-90 floating bridges), and providing safe passage for ESA listed Chinook salmon.

### **Options for implementing these infrastructure improvements include:**

- Requesting the Corps to provide adequate operations and maintenance funding for identified prioritized improvements on the Corps' list of Locks infrastructure improvements. In 2012, the Corps adopted a list

FOR INFORMATION ABOUT THESE PRIORITIES PLEASE CONTACT:

Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz, Watershed Coordinator, Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed (WRIA 8)

[jason.mulvihill-kuntz@kingcounty.gov](mailto:jason.mulvihill-kuntz@kingcounty.gov) • (206) 477-4780 • <http://www.govlink.org/watersheds/8/>

of prioritized Locks infrastructure improvements. To date, Locks managers have been slowly implementing these improvements as limited funding allows. More funding is needed to make critical repairs in a timely manner.

- Requesting the Corps to authorize and initiate a major rehabilitation study of the Lake Washington Ship Canal and Locks, including an economic analysis of the needed infrastructure improvements and the potential damages associated with a facility failure.

WRIA 8 encourages the Washington state congressional delegation to share its concern about the condition of the Locks and support of these efforts to implement critical infrastructure improvements with local, regional and national Corps leadership.

WRIA 8 further requests the delegation's help to encourage and enable the Corps to make long-term improvements to the Ballard Locks.

## State Priorities

- **Thank state legislators for \$70 million for the Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration Fund**, of which WRIA 8 received \$1.4 million to award as grants to implement the highest priority salmon habitat acquisition and restoration projects in our watershed.
  - In WRIA 8, this funding will assist local partners in completing six high priority habitat acquisition and restoration projects (all projects have substantial local match):
    - Cedar River floodplain acquisition and relocation of residents out of harm's way to enable future floodplain restoration.
    - Issaquah Creek riparian and in-stream habitat restoration.
    - Nearshore creek daylighting and salt marsh restoration in Edmonds.
    - Little Bear Creek fish passage barrier removal in Woodinville.
    - Sammamish River side channel restoration design in Bothell.
  - A portion of this funding also supports local watershed capacity for project development and implementation.
- **Thank state legislators for continued funding for salmon recovery Lead Entities, and request the 50% reduction in State funding for Lead Entities be restored as match for federal funding.** State funding is provided in the Recreation and Conservation Offices operating budget

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to match federal Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund (PCSRF) funding from NOAA in the 2013-2015 biennium. Over the past few years, the 50% reduction in State funding has been backfilled through PCSRF funds; however, reinstating the State dollars would make Washington State more competitive with NOAA to receive a greater share of PCSRF funding. For the past 12 years, WRIA 8 has received a \$60,000 Lead Entity grant to support project development, grant coordination, and tracking implementation.

- **Support continued efforts to explore new watershed-based funding authorities to support multiple-benefit projects that address salmon habitat protection and restoration, water quality, stormwater management, and flood management.** Since 2011, recognizing the limited funding available to implement salmon recovery, WRIA 8 supported and participated in cross-watershed discussions to identify alternative funding mechanisms to implement multiple-benefit watershed priorities, including but not limited to salmon recovery habitat restoration, stormwater management, and flood management. These efforts and discussions are on-going and may result in future legislation.

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