

WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council Meeting Notes

Department of Ecology Northwest Regional Office

September 15, 2016 3:10-5:08 p.m.

Members/Jurisdictional Staff Alternates Present		
#	Name	Affiliation
1.	Mayor Andy Rheaume, Chair	City of Bothell
2.	Mayor John Stokes, Vice-Chair	City of Bellevue
3.	David Bain	Sno-King Watershed Council
4.	Councilmember (CM) Elaine Barber	City of Issaquah
5.	CM Diane Buckshnis	City of Edmonds
6.	CM Bruce Dodds	City of Clyde Hill
7.	Nancy Eklund	The Boeing Company
8.	CM Ted Frantz	Town of Hunts Point
9.	Noel Gilbrough	Mid-Sound Fisheries Enhancement Group
10.	Garrett Holbrook	King County
11.	Cyndy Holtz	City of Seattle
12.	CM Shelley Kloba	City of Kirkland
13.	Robert Knoll	Snohomish County
14.	CM Hank Myers	City of Redmond
15.	Joan Nolan	WA Department of Ecology
16.	CM Tom Odell	City of Sammamish
17.	Susan O'Neil	Long Live the Kings
18.	Deputy Mayor Dana Parnello	City of Maple Valley
19.	CM Mark Phillips	City of Lake Forest Park
20.	Stewart Reinbold	WA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife
21.	Deputy Mayor Carl Scandella	City of Yarrow Point
22.	Gary Smith	Water Tenders
23.	CM Jesse Solomon	City of Shoreline
24.	Richard Sowa	Friends of the Issaquah Salmon Hatchery
25.	CM Allen Van Ness	City of Kenmore
Others Present		
26.	Alison Bennett	City of Bellevue
27.	Jim Bower	King County
28.	Craig Edwards	Raging River Conservation Group
29.	Janet Farness	Friends of Lake Sammamish State Park
30.	David Kyle	Trout Unlimited
31.	Josh Lambert	Recreation and Conservation Office/SRFB
32.	Kristina Lowthian	City of Renton
33.	Janice Mathisen	Seattle Aquarium
34.	Larry Reymann	Environmental Science Center
35.	Jerallyn Roetemeyer	City of Redmond
36.	Stacey Rush	City of Kirkland
37.	David St. John	King County
38.	Suzanna Stoike	Puget Sound Partnership
39.	Linda Grob	WRIA 8 Team
40.	Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz	WRIA 8 Team
41.	Scott Stolnack	WRIA 8 Team
42.	Jason Wilkinson	WRIA 8 Team

WRIA 8 SRC Meeting Notes

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Chair Andy Rheaume opened the Salmon Recovery Council (SRC) meeting, inviting all attendees to introduce themselves.

1. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

2. Approval of Meeting Notes for July 21, 2016

The Salmon Recovery Council unanimously approved the meeting notes for the July 21, 2016 meeting.

3. Updates & Announcements

General Announcements:

Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz (Jason MK), Salmon Recovery Manager, requested that SRC members review the Updates & Announcements handout, and he highlighted the following items:

- **Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund (PCSRF) capacity funding update** –The state Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) met on August 11, and maintained the proposed \$14,342 cut to WRIA 8’s 2016–2017 \$60,000 Lead Entity (LE) grant as was discussed at the last SRC meeting. Jason MK said WRIA 8 will renegotiate our grant scope of work for this new funding amount with the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO). We have some funds in reserve, so he doesn’t think it will impact us that much. SRFB also made decisions at the meeting for the 2017-2019 budget:
 - Request up to \$56 million in the Salmon State Capital Budget request for 2017-2019 funding, allow up to 6% of capital funding to be used by LEs for capacity funding, and use \$100,000 for a LEAN study to identify inefficiencies in the LE system;
 - Maintain same State General Fund request of \$907,000 to support LE capacity; and
 - Maintain same PCSRF funding request to NOAA with same proportion in capacity as in 2015 and 2016 applications and not just emphasize capacity in funding.
- **WRIA 8 Recovery Strategies Workshop** – As part of the process to update the WRIA 8 Salmon Conservation Plan (Plan), WRIA 8 hosted a workshop on August 16 focused on updating recovery strategies to address highest pressures. Participants proposed refinements to existing strategies and new strategies that should be included in the Plan update, as well as identified strategies that should be elevated or be a key focus in the Plan update. Jason MK said we had great feedback from the workshop.
- **WRIA 8 letter to Tribes inviting their coordination/participation in WRIA 8 Plan update** – Staff sent the letters in early August to Muckleshoot Tribe, Suquamish Tribe, Tulalip Tribes, and Snoqualmie Tribe. To date, no responses have been received from the tribes.
- **WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Tour** – WRIA 8 hosts a Salmon Recovery Tour each fall for SRC members, federal and state legislators and their staff. Staff proposed, and the Management Committee supported, taking a hiatus from the tour this year, due to several issues: the staff time it takes to plan and execute the tour when staff are focused on the time-intensive Plan update; difficulty in getting participation from state legislators who will be preparing for the legislative session; and finally, that WRIA 8 is in a period where many of our projects are in the planning and design stage. Andy Rheaume reported that instead of the tour, we plan to provide a “virtual tour” at the November SRC meeting to highlight what projects are being designed and implemented, and anticipated to be ready in the near term. Jason MK added that in order to meet our objective of reaching state legislators to share WRIA 8 legislative priorities, he and Chair Rheaume discussed scheduling specific meetings with key legislators in their home districts ahead of the session, or in Olympia during the session.

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- **Salmon SEEson Program Update** – The tenth annual Salmon SEEson program is off and running, with all sites and partners back again this year. Posters and flyers are available in the back of room.
- **Fish Return Numbers** – Scott Stolnack, Technical Coordinator, reported that Chinook are 85-90% of the way through the run. We are seeing 90% of the usual numbers, which is better than last year. He said river surveys just started last week, so we are not sure yet how the Chinook will be distributed between the Cedar and Sammamish watersheds. The sockeye numbers are still very low, but better than last year. Scott said there will be a coho fishery in Lake Washington for the first time in years, and scientists aren't sure why the numbers are better. Reasons could include the "blob" in the Strait of Juan de Fuca dissipating, and/or not having a coho fishery in the Sound this year. We have a few more days of data to collect, but it looks like the coho line in the graph is flattening out.

Carl Scandella asked if Scott has tried plotting the numbers as a bar graph to see what the trends are over time. Scott explained that the purpose of the graph he is displaying today is to show where we are at this point in the run, compared to other years at this point in the run. Bar graphs are useful to compare this year to other years only after the run has ended. He said Jim Bower, King County (KC) Ecologist, will show a bar graph of annual abundance in his presentation later in this meeting.

4. 2017 WRIA Legislative Agenda

Andy Rheame reminded the SRC that we update the Legislative Agenda every year. Jason MK said we want to make sure this is an iterative document, and he went over the legislative priorities:

Federal:

- Support an \$80 million appropriation for PCSRF for FY 2017.
- Support the "Promoting United Government Efforts to Save Our Sound Act" (PUGET SOS) to establish a Puget Sound Recovery National Program Office within EPA. Representatives Heck and Kilmer introduced the bill, which would bring much more money to Puget Sound recovery efforts. Jason MK noted that the name of the bill might change.
- Support the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) Headquarters funding for the Corps' identified Locks infrastructure improvements. For FY 2017, the amount needed is \$17.3 million.

State:

- Support the Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) capital funding request of \$80 million for 2017-2019 biennium (in RCO's budget).
- Support the RCO's SRFB capital funding request of \$56 million for 2017-2019.
- Support Department of Ecology's (Ecology) Floodplains by Design capital funding request funding of \$70 million for 2017-2019.
- Support the Puget Sound Partnership's (PSP) legislative funding strategy for capital actions supporting implementation of the Action Agenda for Puget Sound.
- Support RCO's request for \$907,000 in state general funds to support LE operational capacity, the same amount requested for the 2015-2017 biennium.
- Track and participate in continued efforts to explore new watershed funding mechanisms.

Andy Rheame reported that a couple of state senators are hosting two open houses in the next few weeks to provide input on an economic analysis of a proposed state water bill. The west side meeting is on the September 29 in Lynnwood, and Jason MK will be going to it. Chair Rheame said he went to one of the previous meetings focused on stormwater.

Discussion:

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- Susan O’Neil reported that the PCSRF dollar request went down from last year, when the overall amount was better. She suggested letting NOAA know how much outreach happens in this state.
- Hank Myers asked if members are being encouraged to take this document to our cities. Jason MK said yes, that the Legislative Agenda doesn’t go anywhere unless you take it back to your jurisdictions. Power is among the electeds around the table, and he said he and Andy Rheume will go to Olympia to meet with legislators.
- Mark Phillips said there are three proposals he’s heard about that could possibly be added to the Legislative Agenda: A revenue stream for culvert replacement; establishing a tax credit for individuals who do restoration; and HR 4648, which says transportation projects need to include green infrastructure components. HR 4648 is in committee right now in the House, and was submitted last March/April. Andy Rheume reported he hadn’t heard of the house bill. CM Phillips said it may be premature, but he supports it and could do more research. Jason MK said he will look into HR 4648 with CM Phillips’ help, but he personally thinks we should think about it a bit before adding to our priorities. CM Phillips agreed.

The Salmon Recovery Council unanimously approved the 2017 WRIA 8 Legislative Agenda with the caveat it can be changed as new priorities emerge.

Andy Rheume reported that emails were sent to city mayors, electeds, and parks staff inviting them to a meeting about the KC Land Conservation Initiative. The meeting was held as part of our Implementation Committee (IC) meeting, and around 12 people attended. He suggested cities look at possible lands, trails and open space to include in the initiative list. Jason MK said right now county staff are getting feedback, have reached out to rural areas and are trying to reach out to cities, and are holding advisory committee meetings. Chair Rheume said county staff will come back to a SRC meeting, and he proposed that city representatives have lists of lands ready by then.

5. WRIA 8 Ten-Year Plan Update Status

Scott Stolnack said he is here again to update the SRC on where we are in the WRIA 8 Plan update process. Progress since July includes: Publishing the conceptual model on the web; hosting the Joint Technical Committee (TC)/IC Strategies Workshop on August 16 to talk about strategies that were in the 2005 Plan as well as new strategies for the Plan update; the TC completing the pressures assessment; the TC drafting the updated strategies list from the Joint Workshop and sending it to the IC; the TC working on formulating the habitat goals; and assembling the team of outside consultants to help us with writing the Plan update, with help from the PSP grant we received.

Scott reported that the conceptual model identified the most important life stages and key bottlenecks for Chinook in WRIA 8 as instream rearing, lake rearing/migration, and migration through the Ship Canal and Locks to Puget Sound. The most severe pressures identified by the pressure assessment, which must be addressed at specific places and times in the watershed for maximum benefit, are:

- Fish passage through the Locks, which includes high temperature and low dissolved oxygen, as well as physical passage through the Locks (big culverts entrain the fish when the large locks are filling, and barnacles in the culverts can kill or maim juvenile Chinook and other species),
- Altered freshwater flows in streams due to stormwater and climate change;
- Changes in air and water temperature;
- Conversion of land cover, due to construction too close to streams;
- Shoreline hardening on rivers and streams, with levees impacting rearing and juveniles; and
- Predation, including light.

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Scott said light needs a lot more attention than it has been getting in the past, and we are awaiting information from UW researchers. He reported that the WA Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) are conducting a two-year study to estimate the number of predators in Lake Washington.

Restoration strategies: Scott defined a strategy as a group of actions with a common focus that work together to reduce pressures or otherwise restore Chinook populations or their habitat, such as protecting/restoring floodplain connectivity. A goal is a formal statement describing specific, time-bound and measurable future status of each component needed to reach Chinook recovery. Habitat components are rivers and streams, and Lakes Washington and Sammamish. An example of a possible habitat goal: in Cedar River (the component); X% increase in functional floodplain areas by 2025, 2050 (the goal); and potential indicators are acres of connected floodplain, riparian cover, and wood volume.

Scott said the TC met yesterday to nail down the strategies, which will be forwarded to the IC. The TC will continue working on habitat goals and engaging with the IC, and work on indicators and monitoring recommendation with consultants. The team will draft the Plan update narrative for further review by the SRC and committees.

Discussion:

- Ted Frantz said he presumed the severe pressure in the Locks was for fish going out. Scott Stolnack said yes and no. A pressure for juveniles going out are the barnacles; high temperature affects fish going both in and out.
- Hank Myers inquired if we have new information for how to improve benthic numbers (B-IBI), because there has not been a lot of information out there on how to do so. Scott Stolnack replied that KC got a grant last year to study that question and they are working on it now.
- Joan Nolan reported that Ecology will be working on water quality standards related to B-IBI, and has starting some of the preliminary work.
- Nancy Eklund asked if there is citizen input to the TC. Scott Stolnack responded that the TC is made up of ecologists and biologists working in the watershed. Nancy asked when the Plan update gets to the policy part it will be online for public comment. Jason MK said yes, and that parts of it are already online.
- Mark Phillips said he remains surprised that water quality is not one of the pressures. Scott Stolnack explained that while water quality can be an issue, other things have been identified as even worse issues for Chinook. Juvenile Chinook are only in fresh water a short period of time, and in Lake Washington they probably don't spend enough time there to ingest a lot of toxins. Scott added that we aren't saying water quality is not important, but are just saying we get a bigger lift when we focus on these other things. Jason MK said water quality will also be addressed in the Plan update.
- Joan Nolan noted that temperature is another thing that can be considered water quality.
- John Stokes commented that we keep doing plans and studies, but will we still have salmon in 2050? Scott Stolnack said that we also have ten years of implementing projects. He said it's not that we aren't doing things, but a big part of his job right now is to focus on the next step of the Plan. One generation of Chinook is three or four years – we are still pretty early on in implementation.
- Tom Odell reported that the City of Sammamish is working on its surface water manual right now, and the light issue is something that never occurred to him when they went through their shoreline master plan. He encouraged those around the table to continue to keep it in mind. Jason MK said we will address ambient lighting in the Plan update.

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- Stewart Reinbold added that it's not just ambient light on the shore but light reflecting off the clouds, which is having an effect on the lower Cedar River. So it's a big issue.
- Ted Frantz said part of this is external to what we are doing here. We need to do lobbying on external factors.

6. Fish-In/Fish-Out Monitoring Update

Jim Bower, Fish Ecologist, KC Water and Land Resources Division (WLRD), said he started about a year ago in his position. Fish-In monitoring supports the VSP parameters of: abundance (spawners), productivity (spawner recruitment/juvenile migrant-to-adult survival), diversity (age class, natural vs. hatchery), and spatial distribution. Fish-Out monitoring supports: abundance (juvenile), productivity (egg-to-juvenile migrant survival), and diversity (fry vs parr). He said the focus of this presentation is on the egg-to-migrant survival rate and parr and fry migrant diversity.

Discussion:

- Hank Myers reported that Bear Creek is in his area, and he asked why it has one-third the numbers for natural spawners and productivity of the Cedar River. Jim Bower responded that the productivity number in the Cedar is very high. Scott Stolnack also addressed this question, reporting that on the Cedar there are ton of early fry migrants, skewing the survival rate. Fish produced in Bear Creek tend to migrate later as parr, which means more opportunity for predators to eat them before they migrate. The Bear Creek numbers are actually pretty good for parr migrants, and are not really something to worry about.
- Noel Gilbrough, noting the double amount of spawners in the Cedar, commented that we don't see an increase in returning fish at the Locks. Jason MK said that speaks to those external factors outside the control of watershed managers, such as conditions in the Sound and Pacific Ocean.
- Carl Scandella asked if we can use this data to understand where our biggest problems are. Jim Bower responded that we are going through the adaptive management process through our Plan update. Fish-in/fish-out monitoring is specifically giving us good information. Deputy Mayor Scandella asked what we are getting out of this information. Jim explained that at a minimum, we can show that at least at least we are holding the population steady.

7. Lake Sammamish Kokanee Recovery Update

Due to time constraints, the Kokanee Recovery Update presentation was postponed to the next SRC meeting.

8. Success Story: Beach Naturalist Program

Janice Mathisen, Seattle Aquarium, reported that the Beach Naturalist Program recruits volunteers to engage Puget Sound citizens on twelve beaches, from Richmond Beach in the north to Redondo Beach in the south. The best recruitment for volunteers is people on the beach who hear from volunteers and decide to get involved. The focus is on the nearshore, with volunteers talking about everything from moon snails to eelgrass and salmon, and armoring and the differences it creates with natural shorelines. Beach Naturalists has about 20 lead staff on our beaches, and for the 2016 season started a live feed where volunteers can post their photos, which included more octopi and healthy sea stars than in previous years. She said they started recording the number of conversations in 2000, and partial statistics for 2016 indicate they have so far counted 66,722 conversations. Janice said they train and stress salmon issues, have a program at the Locks in the summer, and talk about the human impact on salmon and how we are connected to the greater watershed. In 2015 the Beach Naturalist Program received the first Volunteer Engagement Award from the Association of Zoos & Aquariums, and she passed out pocket guides and 2015 handouts.

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Discussion:

- John Stokes commended the Seattle Aquarium for taking on the Cedar River Salmon Journey program, which has really prospered since the Aquarium started running it. Janice Mathisen said they are excited that so many Beach Naturalists signed up as volunteers for the Cedar River Salmon Journey.
- Dana Parnello asked if WRIA 8 staff could send the Beach Naturalist report electronically. Jason MK said we will do that/post a link to the report on the WRIA 8 website.

9. Next Meeting:

The next Salmon Recovery Council meeting is November 17, 2016, 3:00 – 5:15 p.m., Ecology's Northwest Regional Office in Bellevue.