

**WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council Guidelines for
Commenting on Issues and/or Endorsing Projects and Programs**
Updated January 2018

Background: The WRIA 8 team and the WRIA 8 Technical Committee are periodically asked to endorse proposals for grant requests, comment on development proposals with potential to impact salmon habitat or become aware of issues/proposals which are important to salmon recovery in WRIA 8. These guidelines are intended to provide clarity for Council members, staff, and partner organizations about the conditions under which the Council and/or staff may provide comment or a letter of support.

For Non-Controversial Issues that Are High Priority for WRIA 8:

An example would be a request for a letter of support for a grant proposal for a habitat project ~~in the watershed~~ on the WRIA 8 Chinook Salmon Conservation Plan (2017 update) project list or consistent with WRIA 8 recovery strategies and habitat goals. Requests for projects or programs in Tier 1 areas (Cedar River mainstem, Bear Creek, Issaquah Creek, Lakes Washington and Sammamish, Sammamish River, Ship Canal/Locks, Nearshore) should receive Ppriority for WRIA 8 staff time is for supporting Start List actions in projects and programs in Tier 1 areas ~~(lower Cedar River mainstem, Bear Creek, Issaquah Creek, Lakes Washington and Sammamish, Sammamish River, Ship Canal/Locks, Nearshore).~~ If workload allows, the team can also support actions on the Comprehensive List or consistent with goals, objectives or actions in the WRIA 8 Plan.

Process: WRIA 8 staff drafts comments or letter of support, Salmon Recovery Manager Coordinator reviews and approves draft comments or letters they sign. - The Council Chair reviews and approves draft comments or letter if they will be signing. - The letter will usually be written by a member of the WRIA 8 team and signed by the WRIA 8 Coordinator.

For Potentially Controversial Issues that are ~~not~~ NOT a High Priority for WRIA 8:

WRIA 8 staff will politely decline to comment. An example would be ~~citizen-a~~ requests for WRIA 8 to comment on a development with potential impacts on a ~~Tier 2 (Upper Cedar, Cedar tributaries, Little Bear, North and Kelsey Creeks) or~~ Tier 3 area (rest portion of watershed not designated as Tier 1 or 2) area or a request for support for a project with no direct linkage to Chinook salmon habitat in WRIA 8.

For High Profile/Potentially Controversial Issues that are High Priority to WRIA 8:

When time allows: Ideally when ~~such~~ requests/issues arise that are potentially controversial and a high priority there is sufficient time for the WRIA 8 team to discuss the topic with the appropriate committees (Technical and/or Implementation Committee) and take a recommendation to the WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council for action.

Example: A good example of this in 2008 was the SR520 widening project adjacent to lower Bear Creek. This project had the potential to negatively affect one of the highest priority habitat projects in a Tier 1 area for WRIA 8 and the City of Redmond wanted WRIA 8 support on the issue. We were able to discuss it at both the WRIA 8 Technical Committee and Implementation Committee meetings and put it on the agenda for the WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council. The Council requested that WRIA 8 staff write a letter about the issue to the Governor on their behalf for the Chair and Vice Chair to sign. WRIA 8 staff worked with Redmond staff to draft a letter which did help influence the state to find a creative solution to help Redmond fund the restoration of lower Bear Creek.

When time is not adequate: When there is not enough time to fully vet an issue with WRIA 8 ~~c~~Committees and/or the WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council at regular meetings, WRIA 8 staff will contact the appropriate committee via email and seek consensus (via email or phone) on a response from members who are most actively participating (those that attend more than ½ the meetings over a 12-month period). For policy issues, this would be the WRIA 8 Implementation Committee and for technical issues it would be the WRIA 8 Technical Committee.

On technical issues, the WRIA 8 Technical Committee will restrict its comments to technical issues and follow the Chinook conservation strategy outlined in the WRIA 8 Chinook Salmon Conservation Plan.

If WRIA 8 jurisdictions and other partners are involved in the issue (e.g. it relates to a habitat project or activity in their jurisdiction), WRIA 8 staff will attempt to contact the WRIA 8 lead staff at that jurisdiction about the issue. WRIA 8 staff will also make an effort to reach WRIA 8 committee members who are most knowledgeable about the issue being discussed.

The WRIA 8 ~~Coordinator~~ Salmon Recovery Manager will review and approve comments, and get approval from the Management Committee and the WRIA 8 Chair and/or Vice Chair. ~~Comment letters related to technical issues will generally be signed by the WRIA 8 Technical Coordinator.~~ Comment letters on potentially controversial and/or high priority related to policy issues will generally be signed by the WRIA 8 Chair and/or Vice Chair. WRIA 8 staff will report on the issue and the comments provided at the next scheduled WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council meeting.

This guidance is to be reviewed in six months regularly by the WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council.