

WRIA 8 Updates and Committee Reports

November 19, 2020

- **Puget Sound Regional Update** – The Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council (PS SRC) last met on September 24. The meeting focused on:
 - Framework for identifying budget and policy priorities and a strategy for advancing priorities during the upcoming legislative session;
 - Update from the PS SRC's Funding Subcommittee regarding approaches to designing a pilot for integrating salmon recovery priorities into Conservations Futures programs;
 - Presentation on the Meadowdale Beach Restoration Project with insights for successful collaboration with BNSF;
 - Review top barriers to recovery identified by watersheds in the context of selecting specific projects for the PS SRC to champion and inform its 2021 work priorities;
 - Update on the Regional Salmon Recovery Plan Chapter update and discuss how the Regional Chapter can support addressing key barriers to recovery;
 - Update on the Salish Sea Nearshore Program and related draft Biological Opinion from NOAA Fisheries;
 - Input on proposed values to select priority outcomes and strategies for the 2022-2026 Action Agenda.

The PS SRC is scheduled to meet next on November 19. Diane Buckshnis, Edmonds City Councilmember, and Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz represent WRIA 8.

The **South Central Action Area Caucus** (Local Integrating Organization (LIO)) last met on October 7. The meeting focused on an update on 2022-2026 Action Agenda updates and how the LIO can provide support; approving LIO operating principles and 2020-2022 work plan updates; and planning for a King County stormwater summit. Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz represents WRIA 8 on the LIO.

- **Status of WRIA 8 Interlocal Agreement (ILA) amendment for Snohomish County to rejoin as a cost share partner** – Since late June, WRIA 8 staff has worked with WRIA 8 ILA partners to approve and sign the amendment to the ILA enabling Snohomish County to return as an ILA cost share partner in 2020. As of early November, 26 of 28 partners have approved and signed the amendment and we expect approval and signature from the final two partners by the end of November.
- **King County Flood Control District approval of motion confirming to commitment to integrated floodplain management and multipole benefit projects** – The King County Flood Control District (District) approved a motion at its meeting on November 4, confirming its commitment to integrated floodplain management and multiple benefit projects, and redefining the District's approach to planning capital projects. This renewed commitment will help leverage additional resources and support coordinating implementation of actions that support both flood risk reduction and salmon habitat restoration, as well as other benefits. Approval of the motion further supports the District's decision to increase Cooperative Watershed Management grant funding and create three new grant programs. The WRIA 8 Management Committee approved sending a letter to the District Board of Supervisors encouraging the District to approve the motion. See the letter on **page XX** of the meeting packet.
- **WRIA 8 SRC Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Subcommittee meeting** – The new Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Subcommittee met biweekly since late September, with a tentative plan to present initial updates and recommendations to the Salmon Recovery Council in January

and/or March 2021. Topics included establishing a meeting schedule and ground rules, defining key DEI terms and meanings, outlining four DEI goals establishing a goal-strategy-outcome-assessment framework for achieving the goals, and beginning to work through some initial strategies including potential revisions to WRIA 8 supplemental funding applications and ranking criteria. Salmon Recovery Council members who are interested in participating in this work should contact Carla Nelson (carnelson@kingcounty.gov).

- **Salmon returns status** – Although Chinook counts at the Ballard Locks suggested much higher than projected returns this year, there's a mismatch with results from Chinook spawner surveys of both the Cedar and Sammamish populations. Redd counts throughout the watershed have been much lower than the Locks count would suggest. Preliminary data on the Chinook redd count from the Cedar River suggest the third lowest returns on record since 1999.
- **Implementation Progress Report** – The ten-year update to the WRIA 8 Plan called for reporting implementation progress every five years. WRIA 8 staff are working on the first progress report, to provide a baseline status on habitat goal metrics, highlight projects that are advancing priority recovery strategies, and highlight where WRIA 8's recovery work is headed. Rather than a traditional hard copy report, this progress report will be produced as an online "Story Map". WRIA 8 staff are working to produce the progress report to present at the January Salmon Recovery Council meeting.
- **Salmon SEEson program status** – The 2020 Salmon SEEson is wrapping up after a successful, although unusual viewing season. Salmon SEEson provides salmon viewing opportunities and educational resources to the public and is coordinated by WRIA 8 and partners. Most Salmon SEEson sites were self-guided for 2020, to follow public health guidelines. However, the Friends of the Issaquah Salmon Hatchery did get permission from WDFW mid-way through the season to resume in-person, outdoor tours, following public health guidelines. Many partners pivoted to virtual content, providing online curriculums and activities. The Seattle Aquarium's Cedar River Salmon Journey hosted a webinar series in October and Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz joined one of the webinars to speak about local salmon restoration efforts in WRIA 8. The [new Salmon SEEson website](#) has been well received, and the program was featured on a [KIRO 7 news clip](#) in late September. November is a great time to look for salmon at Piper's Creek in Carkeek Park in NW Seattle if you haven't already been out to see the fish!
- **2021 Salmon Recovery Council meeting schedule** – Beginning in January 2021, the Salmon Recovery Council will continue to meet on the third Thursday of every other month, from 2:00-4:15pm. Currently, all meetings are presumed to be virtual until further notice. Please see the meeting schedule on **page XX** in the meeting packet.
- **WRIA 8 E-News** – The October edition of the WRIA 8 E-news included the following topics and updates: Announcement for the 14th annual Salmon SEEson; impact of environmental education on sense of place among urban youth; history of food web found in harbor seal skulls; efforts to control seal populations; testing underwater noisemaking device to scare away seals at Ballard Locks; King County Executive Dow Constantine tour of Cedar River floodplain restoration site; restored salmon habitat in Bear Creek and Cedar Creek; Washington State Department of Transportation to clean up May Creek thanks to legislative inquiry; new guidance for cleanup of toxics in Puget Sound; FEMA policy change to preference natural wetland and riparian areas over flood walls; observing salmon in Cottage Lake Creek; opportunity to become a Salmon Watcher in North Creek; Coastal Beaches and Bluffs video; Salmon in the City conference; and the Salmon Recovery Conference scheduled as a virtual event for April 27-30, 2021. The next edition is scheduled for release on December 22nd. Please submit topics by December 11th to Carla Nelson (carnelson@kingcounty.gov).

WRIA 8 Committee Reports

WRIA 8 Technical Committee – The WRIA 8 Technical Committee (TC) met in October to determine their recommendation for revised Salmon Recovery Council guidance to direct Cooperative Watershed Management Grant Program funds. The TC also discussed WRIA 8's Viable Salmon Population goals for the watershed, whether any revisions to the goals may be warranted as part of monitoring and adaptive management, and inclusion of goal metrics in the 2020 WRIA 8 Progress Report. The November meeting fell on Veteran's Day so WRIA 8 staff is requesting written feedback from the TC on WRIA 8 habitat goals and baseline conditions for inclusion in the 2020 Progress Report.

WRIA 8 Implementation Committee – The Implementation Committee met on November 3. Meeting topics included general WRIA 8 updates, review and recommendation to the Salmon Recovery Council for Cooperative Watershed Management grant program outreach and education category funding guidance, presentation from King County Bear Creek Basin Steward and Stormwater Services on a partnership stormwater retrofit project at a NorthShore School District site in the Bear Creek basin, discussion of 2021 Committee work plan priorities and meeting schedule, and review of agenda topics for the November 19 Salmon Recovery Council meeting.