

GREEN/DUWAMISH AND CENTRAL PUGET SOUND (WRIA 9) IMPLEMENTATION TECHNICAL COMMITTEE



WRIA 9 Implementation Technical Committee Meeting August 16, 2023 | 9:30 am – 11:30 am

[Click here to join the meeting](#) or call in (Teams audio only) [+1 425-653-6586](tel:+14256536586), [911155469#](tel:+14256539111)

Meeting ID: 291 061 535 541

Passcode: uafR9e

9:30 **Welcome & Introductions**

9:40 **Hall Property Acquisition on Miller Creek – updates to scope**
Brief update followed by group discussion

The [Hall Property Acquisition on Miller Creek proposal](#) was approved by the WRIA 9 ITC and Watershed Ecosystem Forum as part of the 2023 WRIA 9 Funding Package. This project seeks to acquire a 0.76 acre parcel on Miller Creek, demolish existing structures on the property, restore riparian buffer, and create a public access pocket park. Due to changes in project cost and funding, the project sponsor proposes expanding proposal scope to support demolition costs in addition to acquisition costs.

Decision point: does the ITC support moving forward with updated scope?

Jessie Medrow,
City of
Normandy Park

9:55 **Status & Trends: Salmon Population Status**
Presentation followed by Q&A and group discussion

Green River Chinook salmon population status is measured with four parameters (viable salmonid population parameters, or VSPs): productivity, abundance, diversity, and spatial structure. Chris will review indicators tracked for each of these parameters, present available data and observed trends for each indicator, and propose improvements to selected metrics/analyses for continued tracking. This analysis was undertaken in support of the WRIA 9 2023 Status & Trends report.

- **Pre-meeting prep** – Review the Salmon Population Status section of the [WRIA 9 2012 Status & Trends report, pages 20-25](#).

Chris Gregersen,
King County
WLRD

11:15 **Round Robin Updates – Virtual**
Slide deck activity

- **Pre-meeting prep (5 minutes)** – Please find instructions on slide 1 at this link: https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/10JAMFXoYqURcc34OKGMsm0HgFgeXrh3FPGT-QjfZqTA/edit?usp=drive_link. Use your slide to include relevant updates from your jurisdiction, project, or team. Slides are pre-filled with names for convenience; please feel free to combine slides. You can also email updates directly to Iris (ikemp@kingcounty.gov) for inclusion in the slide deck.

All

11:30 **Adjourn**

WRIA 9 ITC web page: <http://www.govlink.org/watersheds/9/committees/ImpleTechCmte.aspx>

Participant list:

Alicia Kellogg, Anna Sievers, Chapin Pier, Chris Gregersen, Iris Kemp, Jenn Stebbings, Jessie Medrow, Kelley Govan, Kerry Bauman, Kollin Higgins, Marc Marcantonio, Matt Goehring, Matt Knox, Monica Walker, Patty Robinson, Rowena Valencia-Gica

Round-table Updates and Reminders

Read through our **WRIA 9 ITC August round robin** slides at this link:

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/10JAMFXoYqURcc34OKGMsm0HqFgeXrh3FPGT-QifZqTA/edit?usp=sharing>. Includes updates from WRIA 9 Team, City of Kent, Covington Water District, City of Seattle, King County Science Section, and King County Rivers and Floodplain Management Section.

Hall Property Acquisition on Miller Creek – updates to scope

Jessie gave a brief project overview. The goal of the full project is to connect the Hall property on Miller Creek and recently acquired Strayer property on Sequoia Creek via an interpretive trail to form the first publicly accessible salmon viewing area in Normandy Park. The Hall Property Acquisition was approved by the WRIA 9 ITC and Forum as part of the 2023 funding package. The project also received CFT funding – originally at \$400,000, the new CFT match requirement reduction increased funding award to \$600,000. Additionally, the first appraisal was done at the peak of the market. Another appraisal is planned pending King County Council approval of the funding and is expected to be lower. The landowner is fully supportive of the project and the reappraisal. The project sponsor (City of Normandy Park) is requesting that CWM funding be made eligible for demolition costs as well as acquisition costs.

Decision point: ITC members in attendance supported the existing CWM funding level in the WRIA 9 2023 funding package be eligible to use for both acquisition and demolition costs. No objections recorded.

Further questions? Contact Jessie Medrow at jmedrow@normandyparkwa.gov.

Status & Trends: Salmon Population Status ([click link to view slides](#))

Chris presented an overview of Salmon Population Status monitoring for the 2023 WRIA 9 Status & Trends report. ITC members weighed in on several recommendations outlined in the linked slide deck and noted below.

WRIA 9 salmon population status monitoring is based on NOAA's viable salmonid population (VSP) parameters. These parameters – productivity, abundance, spatial structure, and diversity – are assessed at a population level. VSP parameters reflect a population's risk or lack thereof of extirpation. We would expect to see positive change in metrics associated with these parameters with successful habitat restoration.

Overall data changes since the 2012 status & trends report: co-managers changed the methodology for calculating adult escapement, transitioning to a census-based method. Adult

return numbers have been recalculated using the new methodology. Incorporating the updated adult return numbers affects the calculations of some status and trends metrics.

WRIA 9 reported on 9 indicators in the 2012 status and trends report and is now updating and recommending improvements to indicators for the 2023 status and trends report. Each indicator is explained in the [linked slide deck](#) and listed below with associated ITC discussion.

Egg to migrant survival (productivity) – recommend continued reporting with no changes to metric or methodology

Recruits per spawner (productivity) – recommend continued reporting with no changes to metric or methodology

- Kerry – is it worth doing interim calculations for 3-4 year old spawners prior to full population return?
- Chris – we can look at that. The natural origin component was fairly high 2017-2022.

Natural origin spawners (abundance) – recommend continued reporting with no changes to metric or methodology

- Kollin – suggest adding markers on the timeline to give context for known changes in hatchery practices. The change showing on this plot around 2015 probably represents the change in 2012 outmigrant releases.
 - Chris – will follow up with WDFW. It's tough to find that kind of information. Fish releases from Palmer have changed over time, as have total number of hatchery fish released. Plus there are releases at different locations and spawning at different locations.
- Matt G – theoretically all hatchery fish are clipped now, right? There was a period where Palmer fish weren't marked.
 - Kollin – yes, but marking/clipping rates are at best 95%.
 - Chris – prior to clipping, they were all supposed to be otolith marked. Will follow up with WDFW to verify that otoliths were examined for those years.

Hatchery origin recruits spawning in river (diversity) – recommend continued reporting with no changes to metric or methodology

- Matt G – the target set for this indicator was the NOAA goal. Given that the Green is managed as a mixed stock, is there any active strategy to reduce this number?
 - Kollin, Chris – not that we're aware of. Generally the extent of the effort for highly integrated fish is using natural spawners to produce hatchery fish. During the HGMP process, NOAA indicated the more urbanized watersheds would be held to a lower standard when it comes to genetic diversity. This indicator was de-prioritized in HGMP review.

- Kerry – improving hatchery practices was a major topic of conversation when Chinook were listed. Have improvements happened? Would WRIA consider trying to move the needle on that conversation?
 - Matt G – the WRIA hired Gino Lucchetti as a consultant on the topic but faced major pushback. Not all WRIA partners were prepared to weigh in at the time. There have not been further efforts since.
 - Kollin – several attempts at H-integration went down in flames due to challenges with focus on/conversation around abundance and production. WRIA 7's recent attempt produced similar results.
- Chris – opportunity with future passage at HHD for a natural origin gene bank in Upper Green.
- Kollin – suggest noting on graphic when density dependence is accounted for to justify dropping escapement. Might affect the population size on spawning grounds.

Proportion 5- and 6- year-old spawners (diversity) – recommend continued reporting with no changes to metric or methodology

- Kollin – this has changed dramatically from the data we got 4 years ago.
 - Chris – discussed at length with Nathanael (WDFW). NOAA data suggested 50% 5-year-old spawners which is questionable. The data presented today are what Nathanael recommended.
- Kerry – any data on jacks? Is there a shift towards adults returning younger? Any connection with available rearing habitat?
 - Chris – we don't have jack data. The reporting includes adults 3+ only.
 - Kollin – the most recent HGMP says not to exclude jacks. They may be counting jacks at the hatchery.

Short-term median growth rate/lambda (productivity) – recommend removing this indicator

- This data was originally obtained from NOAA population status updates. These updates are not produced regularly, and the lambda statistic is not regularly reported or updated. There is variability in how the statistic is calculated which makes it difficult to reproduce.
- ITC approved recommendation.

Relative abundance of parr (diversity) – recommend replacing this indicator with number of parr produced, setting a target of 10-year increasing trend, and supporting periodic (every 5 years) otolith analyses to measure fry contribution to adult returns

- Number of parr produced is more reflective of rearing habitat and less influenced by proportion of fry migrants, therefore a more direct link to restoration efforts. Incorporating otolith analyses would track fry survival and help assess impacts of restoration in the Duwamish River and estuary.
 - Jenn – are otolith data already collected? Where would the funding come from?
 - Kollin – if we choose to do this, we would essentially be committing some portion of WRIA 9's Monitoring and Research funding. WDFW may

be collecting and archiving otoliths but not analyzing – regardless, otolith collection is not a huge lift for the existing and ongoing carcass surveys. Would estimate \$150k every 5 years.

- Jenn – should we do a bigger push for otolith analyses in the shorter term aligned with the Duwamish clean-up? Question flagged for later discussion.
- Kerry – recommend a goal number associated with the 10-year increasing trend target.
 - Chris – tough to set a goal number...we need to put thought into what makes sense.
 - Matt G – could use other systems for reference?
 - **Flag:** Small group will discuss and come back with recommendation. Please contact Iris if you want to be involved in discussion.
- ITC approved recommendation.

Timing of peak outmigration for fry and parr (diversity) – recommend tracking this indicator over a longer timescale

- Data are produced through WDFW trap reports but not reported consistently. Additionally, this metric may be less useful for tracking results of habitat restoration and more informative within the context of long-term environmental factors.
 - Matt K – concerned that if this metric is not tracked in Status & Trends reports that it will not be tracked.
 - Kollin – WDFW tracks via their annual report
 - Chris – but it isn't tracked consistently in their reports. Would require additional work with WDFW to standardize the reported metrics across time. This metric reflects passage at the smolt trap in the Middle Green – we call it “outmigration” but just because they pass the trap doesn't mean they're outmigrating at that time.
 - Jenn – worth looking at a qualitative scale? Maybe every 10 years, i.e., every other status & trends report?
- ITC recommended tracking outmigration timing at a qualitative level every other S&T report.

Number of occupied spawning patches – recommend maintaining this indicator but referencing other ongoing work rather than duplicating effort

- ITC approved recommendation.

The 2012 report rolled up indicator time series into a visual representation of the detailed trend for each indicator. For the 2023 report, we recommend simplifying this representation to an overall direction of change and including more detailed information on the strength and magnitude of trends within the report text.

- ITC approved recommendation.

Further questions? Contact Chris Gregersen at chris.gregersen@kingcounty.gov.