



## WRIA 6 Salmon Recovery Technical & Citizen Committee Meeting

January 15, 2025

**Member Participants:** Jessica Reed (LEC), Paul Williams (SRTCC, SWS), Kathleen Landel (SRTCC), Fred Kiga (SRTCC), Hannah Booth (WDFW), Jeff Cordell (SRTCC), Alex Pinney (SSS), Christine Stephens (Snoho CD), Jessica Cote (Blue Coast Engineering), Todd Zackey (Tulalip Tribes)

**Also in Attendance:** Jen Schmitz (DNR Manager, ILIO), Tom Leshine (MCA) and Kit O’Niel (MCA), Melissa (WCLT)

### Introductions & Updates-

Pertaining to Grant Round 2025: One LOI, from WCLT for the acquisition of Beaver Marsh Habitat on Kristoferson Creek. 19 acres of mixtures of riparian and wetland, adjacent to agriculture land. Has matching funds from Navy.

Would be part of umbrella projects in the Kristoferson Creek area, many projects completed/proposed already in the area, variety of funds also. Salmon back in creek this year for first time in many years. General thoughts are that it is a viable acquisition project. One concern of note as far as potential ranking is given that it is all wetland, is it being acquired to protect it or would it already be naturally protected because it is a wetland and couldn’t be developed? Should touch on that in the proposal. Stream restoration may not be priority for Island County, but can make cases that it is a part of an entire watershed, has potential for salmon spawning and habitat. Small discussion about beaver dams as barriers, where beaver may or may not be located.

Administrative -The December meeting minutes were approved.

### Discussion

Guest Speakers Tom Leshine & Kit O’Niel from Maxwellton Creek Alliance visited to discuss ESRO feedback on Maxwellton Creek project (PRISM 24-1348). Tidegate present at mouth of Maxwellton Creek preventing salmon migration, looking at feasibility study to see what would be possible in that location to improve salmon habitat passage. Working with Jessica Cote as consultant. Trying to determine how to maintain longevity if project were to happen as Maxwellton Creek Alliance members are retiring and or moving, not able to guarantee long term maintenance of any project, hoping to gain partner organization to oversee long term details of project. Believe that as feasibility study would likely cost about \$100,000 instead of \$70,000 originally asked for in ESRP proposal. Confident that could contribute \$30,000 match, one person has pledged \$10,000 already. MCA organization has been meeting since 2019 and have worked through many differences, priorities, and social hurdles already. With guidance of Jessica Cote, considering many parameters in monitoring study such as ground water monitoring, flow monitoring, sea water intrusion, surface water salinity. Hoping study can help align solutions with priorities of SRTCC. Jessica Cote pointed out certain challenges such as confined channel, residential homes providing challenges of creating a historical open channel, but that having better understanding of what would be feasible in that location in case opportunities arise for acquisition or other projects in the future would be a benefit to the recovery of salmon. Reiterated that MCA needs a larger sponsor to help manage the project and ensure long term success of any project there. Any actual project in this location is going to be a many-phase project over many years and will require a higher level of capacity than the small group has.

Question: In terms of \$100,000 and feasibility, is it only gathering technical data or is there also a public outreach/engagement component? Answer: outreach is important in the community and would be considered.

Comment: This project is a proactive approach and is an important component of restoration, even if the end

result cannot be seen yet. Suggestion to look into tide gate update, that would allow better fish passage than current barrier, although funding for any tide gate is difficult. Being that it drains agriculture land may be helpful in potentially gaining some permits or funding for tide gate update.

## Information

### **Funding:**

- Puget Sound Partnership RFI for Salmon Science Investigations. Due March 10, 2025. Funding will be awarded to investigations that inform progress towards self-sustaining, harvestable salmon populations that uphold Tribal treaty rights and support thriving communities and ecosystems in Puget Sound. Studies should fill critical knowledge gaps to inform planning, policy, and management decisions towards this goal. The Partnership has the greatest need for studies on Endangered Species Act (ESA) listed Chinook salmon and steelhead, but studies of other salmonid species in Puget Sound are also eligible for funding. <https://pspwa.app.box.com/s/i9c1nu0wb9haqh8dvo036fx874rsocm6>
- Puget Sound Partnership RFI for collaborative ecosystem monitoring (Monitoring to Accelerate Recovery). Due March 28, 2025. All projects are expected to support the objectives of the Puget Sound Ecosystem Monitoring Program (PSEMP) Strategic Plan which aims to increase collaboration, support adaptive management of Puget Sound recovery efforts, and improve communication and access to credible information that guides recovery decisions. As an implementing agency of Washington State's Healthy Environment for All (HEAL) Act, the Partnership encourages respondents to submit proposals that create environmental benefits for overburdened and vulnerable populations, collaborate with community scientists, and provide opportunities for Tribes, vulnerable populations, and overburdened communities to participate. More information about the HEAL Act can be found in Appendix E. <https://pspwa.app.box.com/s/kym5rd06d3afjdmy6ey16hteyyq7cjoyw>

### **Puget Sound Partnership updates-**

**Purpose:** Collaborates with federal, tribal, state, and local partners to develop regional and local salmon recovery plans as part of the [Action Agenda for Puget Sound](#). Supports lead entities and project sponsors to implement restoration and acquisition projects, advance priority recovery efforts through the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council, and manage the [Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration \(PSAR\) fund](#). Tracks and reports change using the Common Indicators and [Vital Signs](#).

Shared information on recent PSP meetings with update regarding meetings Jen attends including ECB, Leadership Council, Salmon Recovery Council, which Jessica will be taking over the alternate position. Addendum to the 2007 Regional Chapter of the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Plan- <https://pssalmonhub.wa.gov/pages/salmon-addendum>

- Unpermitted shoreline armoring being discussed at meetings. Senate Bill 5014- Ecology must conduct and maintain a baseline survey of Puget Sound marine shorelines that uses

new technology to capture geo-referenced oblique aerial and 360 degree on-the-water imagery. The software used for the imagery must have the capacity for change analysis review. The initial marine oblique aerial and on-the-water imagery must be completed and publicly available by December 31, 2024. By June 30, 2025, a survey to document and map existing shoreline conditions, structures, and structure conditions must be completed. Both surveys must be updated on a regular two-year cycle. The information from the surveys must be available to the public and incorporated into state geographic information system mapping, with visual personally identifiable information removed from on-the-water imagery prior to posting. Ecology and DFW must each maintain a record of all civil or criminal investigations or enforcement actions in which Ecology or DFW, respectively, is a participant that utilize geo-referenced imagery or surveys produced pursuant to the act. Bill was introduced DECEMBER 2022! Armor Surveys-San Juans 2009-2019 and Island 2016-2023 <https://lawfilesextra.leg.wa.gov/biennium/2023-24/Htm/Bill%20Reports/Senate/5104%20SBR%20AWNP%20OC%2023.htm>

- Stillaguamish- the 2023 imagery is up and ready to pick through. If you are unfamiliar, it is like Google StreetView for the river. The images are all 360 degrees and there is WQ data associated with most photos. Please let me know if you notice anything amiss in the 2023 imagery tour (link above). I am working to get a year label up top so you can easily distinguish the 2023 tour from the 2017 tour (link below): <https://arcgis.earthviews.com/public/stillaguamish-main#1326> (2017)
- ARMORING- Unpermitted armoring in Puget Sound- <https://wa.audubon.org/news/unpermitted-shoreline-armoring-threatens-puget-sound> San Juan Armoring- <https://www.sanjuancountywa.gov/1937/LIO-SJ-Projects> Senate Bill- <https://legiscan.com/WA/supplement/SB5104/id/404103> MRC armoring survey- <https://www.islandcountymrc.org/media/oqidnhsh/071724-shoreline-armoring-survey-and-permit-analysis.pdf>
- WRIA 6 has armor removal goals in our Multi-Species Salmon Recovery Plans- [Island County Salmon Recovery Plan Update 2019](#) and [Water Resources Inventory Area 6 \(Whidbey & Camano Islands\) Multi-species Salmon Recovery Plan 2005](#) Shared some past SRTCC supported and ranked projects in the past 10 years.
- 2025 Grant round- Announcement that March 12<sup>th</sup> will be the site visit date for 2025. Reviewed timeline for grant rounds in general with final update of 2025, RFP, timeline, LOI form and handbook for sponsors. The Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) Request for proposals (RFP) for 2025 WRIA 6 grant round was advertised and available on December 13<sup>th</sup>. This is expected to be a small funding year around \$217,000 (two hundred and seventeen thousand) in SRFB allocation. Please check our website for details- <https://www.islandcountywa.gov/698/Salmon-Recovery-Funding-Board-SRFB-GRANT>

Shared information on recent meetings and reports-

- “Fish and the Farm Bill” panel, co-hosted by the Puget Sound Partnership and the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission. A recording of the discussion is now available on the TVW online archive here:

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<https://tvw.org/video/puget-sound-partnership-2024121078/>

- Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) Meeting- SRFB's meeting will be on March 11, 2025 from 9am-4:30pm [Information and registration here](#).
- Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups yearly reports- <https://regionalfisheriescoalition.org/about-us/annual-reports/>
- Visit the [Puget Sound Recovery Acceleration Funding Tool](#) (PS RAFT) for more funding information about current funding opportunities, including eligibility, deadlines, and scope.
- Review ESRP announcement of projects- Status of Double Bluff- <https://wdfw.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2024-10/esrp-2025-2027-preliminary-investment-plan.pdf>
- Restoring Pocket Estuaries Key to Puget Sound Chinook Recovery in Washington - With funding from [NOAA's Office of Habitat Conservation](#), the [Skagit River System Cooperative](#) (SRSC) and many partners are restoring the Similk pocket estuary for Skagit River Chinook. In 2023 and 2024, the Cooperative was awarded \$5.8 million through the [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act](#) for salmon habitat restoration work in Washington State. NOAA has supported restoration work on the Skagit River and other locations in Puget Sound for decades. Learn more here- [https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/feature-story/restoring-pocket-estuaries-key-puget-sound-chinook-recovery-washington?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/feature-story/restoring-pocket-estuaries-key-puget-sound-chinook-recovery-washington?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery)
- A new report by University of Washington scientist Thomas Quinn looks at the different ways that adult salmon and trout use Puget Sound's estuaries and why this matters for ecosystem recovery. The report was commissioned by the University of Washington Puget Sound Institute with funding from the Environmental Protection Agency's National Estuary Program. Download "[The role of estuaries in the ecology of adult Pacific salmon and trout](#)" on the Encyclopedia of Puget Sound.
- The Puget Sound Ecosystem Monitoring Program has released its 13th annual overview of Puget Sound's marine water conditions. [The report](#). Urban Estuary study- <https://cdnsiencepub.com/doi/full/10.1139/cjfas-2020-0247>
- Whidbey Basin update- HSIL grant awarded <https://pugetsoundestuary.wa.gov/2024/07/09/sil-2024-investment-plan/> See [Investment List](#) for details of Whidbey Basin project- Building Reliable Habitat Restoration Information in the Whidbey Basin Lead entities (LEs). Whidbey Basin LEs requested funding as a group to transform their existing database into a useful and comparable tool necessary to meet our Basin's and PSP's planning and communication goals.

Review of WRIA 6 watershed plan and projects ranked over the past 4 years-

2020/21- 20-1134 Livingston Bay ESRP -

<https://secure.rco.wa.gov/prism/search/projectsnapshot.aspx?ProjectNumber=20-1134>

2020/21- 21-1066 Hoypus Point – SRFB -

<https://secure.rco.wa.gov/prism/search/projectsnapshot.aspx?ProjectNumber=21-1066>

2022- 22-1085 Keystone- SRFB, PSAR, ESRP (cost increase WRIA 6 PSAR 2023, cost increase 2024 PSAR large and ESRP) <https://secure.rco.wa.gov/prism/search/projectsnapshot.aspx?ProjectNumber=22-1085>

2022- 22- 1089 - Race Lagoon culvert fish passage- SRFB and PSAR -  
<https://secure.rco.wa.gov/prism/search/ProjectSnapshot.aspx?ProjectNumber=22-1089>

2023- Middle Crescent Creek- SRFB  
<https://secure.rco.wa.gov/prism/search/ProjectSnapshot.aspx?ProjectNumber=23-1081>

2023- Crescent Riparian- Skagit funded  
<https://secure.rco.wa.gov/PRISM/Sponsor/Project/Brief/Index/23-1186>

2024- Livingston Bay protection- SRFB and Riparian  
<https://secure.rco.wa.gov/prism/search/ProjectSnapshot.aspx?ProjectNumber=24-1118>

2024- Cultus Bay- SRFB and PSAR  
<https://secure.rco.wa.gov/prism/search/projectsnapshot.aspx?ProjectNumber=24-1274>

2024- Race Culvert replacement- PSAR and ½ funding from Skagit  
<https://secure.rco.wa.gov/prism/search/ProjectSnapshot.aspx?ProjectNumber=24-1117>

2024- Double Bluff protection- ESRP and PSAR Large or Target Investment  
<https://secure.rco.wa.gov/prism/search/projectsnapshot.aspx?ProjectNumber=24-1200>

<https://secure.rco.wa.gov/prism/search/projectsnapshot.aspx?ProjectNumber=24-1119>

2024- Maylor Marsh Enhancement- Skagit project-  
<https://secure.rco.wa.gov/prism/search/ProjectSnapshot.aspx?ProjectNumber=24-1734>

- SOUND WATERS UNIVERSITY- <https://soundwaterstewards.org/education-center/sound-waters-university/>
- The Salmon Recovery Conference 2025 has been cancelled- <https://rco.wa.gov/salmon-recovery/salmon-recovery-conference/>

NEXT -February- review 2025 Grant round ranking criteria. Meeting adjourned 3:30pm.