



WRIA 6 Salmon Recovery Technical & Citizen Committee Meeting

March 20, 2024

Member Participants: Paul Williams (SWS), Kathleen Landel(Citizen), Todd Zackey (Tulalip, Co-Chair), Barbara Brock (Citizen, Co-Chair), Fred Kiga, Jeff Cordell, Lee Chavez, Hannah Booth (WDFW), Renee Zavas Silva (ICCAO), Mathew Lander (PW), James Watson (WICD), Kelly Zupich (MRC), Kurt S (WCLT), Alison S (SFEG), Christine S. (SCD) **Others:** Clea Barenburg (LE Coordinator), Bridget K (RCO), Heidi Stewart (Tulalip), Jessica Reed (ICDNR), Yuki Rice (SFEG), Natasha C. (Tulalip), Joseph S. (Tulalip), Austin R. (Tulalip), Jay Kidder (SFEG), Brett S (Tulalip)

Introductions & Updates

- The February meeting minutes, and site visit notes were approved. Membership update with Kathleen and Jeff approved before site visits and Janet St. Clair appointed as COG at the last Council of Governments after site visits.
- Whidbey Basin Coordination- WRIA 6 first site visits in the grant round for Puget Sound. Stillaguamish (3 projects) and Snohomish no PSAR projects and Skagit later but predicts some PSAR projects and one of our projects will also apply for Skagit LE funds. No PSAR projects for the San Juans. The Puget Sound looks to have 24 PSAR projects and 6 of these can go for Target Investment funding. New requirements for many of the grants for sponsors to include Climate Commitment Act paperwork which involves letters to local tribes. There is discussion and concern for loss of Climate Commitment Act funding. Climate Commitment Act in the news as well as articles in the Seattle Times on culvert replacements and increased costs.
- WASDOT update on fish passage and presentation coming this spring. Articles have been featured in the Seattle Times on progress with fish passage replacements- <https://wsdot.wa.gov/construction-planning/protecting-environment/fish-passage>
- ESRP updates with 2 WRIA 6 projects submitted for the 2025-27 grant round and LE attended site visits. Maxwelton (22-1228) may be funded with older request but also put in for a new request (24-1348). Double Bluff project also applying for ESRP funds (24-1200) To see the 2023-25 investment list see here- <https://wdfw.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2023-11/2023-2025-esrp-investment-plan-fact-sheet.pdf>
- Shared information about outreach at a local riparian planting. Bountiful Buffers as a way to have more profitable situations for agriculture supporting riparian habitat. For more about this program see- <https://snohomishcd.org/blog/2023/12/27/bountiful-buffers-farming-highlight>
https://www.whidbeycd.org/uploads/1/1/6/8/11683986/working_buffers_final.pdf
- Outreach updates Coupeville Water Festival on May 18th and Oak Harbor Marina Salmon Rearing Project, with plans to collaborate for a Sno-isle library event on May 10th For more info- [The Salmon, the Orca and the Salish Sea](https://www.oakharbor.gov/704/Salmon-Rearing-Project) - <https://www.oakharbor.gov/704/Salmon-Rearing-Project>
- MRC update and presentation coming in April on Cornet Juvenile Salmon survey from Northwest Straits- <https://nwstraitsfoundation.org/project/cornet-bay-nearshore-restoration/>
- The Northwest Straits sponsored project at Polnell from 2020 will not be completed and they are returning funds and closing out the grant (20-1146 and 20-1559). There were complications from the Navy that were unexpected that delayed the project and caused

costs to change.

- SRTCC members reviewed the criteria for project scoring received handbook in older email and links to resources. Site visit last month with poll request for feedback. After these virtual presentations if you have not commented then we will need your critical comments and feedback as soon as possible.
- Funding/SRFB -Reviewed the timeline of Grant Round. Snapshots of projects were included in emails and watch for updates there. Feedback from SRFB reviewers should be coming on the 28th. Your critical feedback from the poll will be shared with sponsors before our next meeting.
- Full Proposal – Supplemental Materials For projects that have been invited to submit a full proposal after the pre-proposal review, completed applications include all materials required for an initial proposal as well as:
 - Supplemental materials must be submitted via PRISM by May 21 at noon.
 - PSAR Large Cap information- All pre-proposal materials must be submitted via PRISM as part of an online application or attached to the online application by April 10 at noon. A letter of support from the sponsoring Lead Entity Committee (technical, implementation, citizens, or executive body). Letters of support must verify the project sponsors' or project managers' abilities to manage a project of this scope and scale, including examples of successful project management of similar project(s), if applicable.
 - All applications submitted to WRIA 6 for 2024 will be scored, ranked, and prioritized according to our Program Guide. Funding sources will be assigned after prioritized lists are created. Assigning funding sources will require some adjustments on the part of sponsors. Projects will be scored, and moved between application types if necessary. This process is new and in flux. It is complicated by the fact that some projects (PSAR Large Cap and TI) will be reviewed and ranked by more than one entity.

SRTCC 2024 projects for Salmon funding under review with presentations in that order-

- Project 1- Cultus Bay Private Fish Passage ask 279,390- 350,000. Sponsors- Tulalip Tribes
<https://secure.rco.wa.gov/prism/search/projectsnapshot.aspx?ProjectNumber=24-1274>

The proposed project is to develop alternatives and designs to reconnect the inner estuary of Cultus Creek including tidal inundation and provide access for several ESU listed species by replacing a flap tidegate with a fish passable structure. Estuary becoming more inundated with time. Recently, 100 ft. of the dike and road where the gate was located blew out from flooding. The dike/road provides access to a private house structure, and the landowners are motivated in working with Tulalip to come up with a solution to restore landowner access, enhance fish passage, and return natural processes for the inner estuary of Cultus Creek. Project would be looking at many options for connectivity and presenting preferred alternatives. Cultus creek connection could lead to spawning habitat in the future. We will work with a coastal engineer and the landowner to develop alternatives, including alternative access routes, a muted/self-regulated tide-gate, alternative crossing structure (bridge, etc.) and/or setback berm/dike design. We will then select a preferred alternative and complete permit ready preliminary (60%) designs. Note: Timing of funding for this project is essential to keep amenability of landowners and implement the most fish friendly solution for Cultus Bay. We would like for this project to be considered for the regular SRFB round, so we can begin work this year and complete the 60% designs by end of 2025. Landowners may seek other solutions, including rebuilding the road/levee, emergency repair solutions and/or replacing it again with a flap gate as before if we are not able to work with them on the issue in the near term. Landowners have a long history with the land and the greater Seattle area community. Tier 1 Strategy in Geographic Area 2 Salmon. Questions on will owners provide a level of match and will sea level rise be included in planning?

- Project 2- Double Bluff protection (Acquisition) 2.1M with 6.3 M match: Sponsors- Whidbey Camano Land Trust-

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

Related to project- ESRP-

<https://secure.rco.wa.gov/prism/search/projectsnapshot.aspx?ProjectNumber=24-1200>

The Double Bluff acquisition project will protect 257 acres comprised of undeveloped forestland, 25 acres of vegetated bluff and buffer, the 15-acre Oliver Lake, a stream flowing from Oliver Lake to Deer Lagoon and associated riparian habitat, 3,500 feet of exceptional bluff-backed shoreline with kelp and eelgrass beds that provide migratory habitat for salmon, including threatened Hood Canal chum and chinook, coho, and pink salmon. The project addresses one of the top priorities of the WRIA 6 (Island) Multi-Species Salmon Recovery Plan - protection of natural marine shoreline and processes. The project site is located in geographic salmon priority areas 2 and 3. Tier 1 priority- protect natural marine shorelines and processes. Tier 1 priority- protect and restore functional riparian vegetation. Land Trust is certified Non-Profit, nationally accredited, Donor supported, more than 11,000 acres protected and turns 40 this year. Many people think that Double Bluff is already protected. This has been on the list of top priorities for land trust, few properties compare in scale and desire to protect nearshore processes.

Appraisal is not complete, and this is sensitive opportunity. Streams drain from lake in both directions. One direction towards protected Deer Lagoon. Land Trust will have to use loans like with Keystone and use grants for match as timeline is sensitive. How is this important for salmon. Salmon use this area for migratory path, feeder bluffs are important and rarer with PS armoring. Protecting these areas from Climate change are becoming more important.

Exceptional Feeder Bluff area with priority for protecting sediment and for forage fish. Sediment travels in both directions from the bluff. -

<https://geodataservices.wdfw.wa.gov/hp/psnerp/reports/two-page/SPU5031.pdf>

<https://geodataservices.wdfw.wa.gov/hp/psnerp/reports/two-page/SPU5032.pdf>

https://geodataservices.wdfw.wa.gov/hp/beach-strategies/20240222/DriftCellReport_ISWH031.pdf

https://geodataservices.wdfw.wa.gov/hp/beach-strategies/20240222/DriftCellReport_ISWH032.pdf

- Project 3 - Race Road fish passage culvert replacements (Construction) 1.9 M with (300,000.match): Sponsors- Island County Public Works and Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group-
<https://secure.rco.wa.gov/prism/search/ProjectSnapshot.aspx?ProjectNumber=24-1117>

Related to project- <https://secure.rco.wa.gov/PRISM/Sponsor/Project/Brief/Index/22-1089>

This project proposes to implement Phase 2 of the Race Lagoon Culvert No. 1893/1894 replacements. Depending on funding sources construction could begin in 2026 or 27. SFEG is looking at DNA of salmon to see if fish use in this area is from what specific river. Depending on funding opportunities this project could be scaled back to just permitting at the next phase. Island County Public Works has been working with the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group to replace two fish barrier culverts, culvert 1893 and 1894, under Race Road near Coupeville. Removal of these fish passage barriers will open up critical rearing habitat for juvenile salmonids including ESA-listed Threatened Chinook, pink, coho, and chum salmon. These two coastal streams drain to Race Lagoon which has been identified as important pocket estuary habitat for out-migrating salmon from the Skagit, Stillaguamish, and Snohomish Rivers. Pocket estuaries and small coastal streams such as these provide important feeding, resting, and refuge habitat as juvenile salmon transition from freshwater to saltwater habitat. These culverts were identified in the Culvert Prioritization Inventory conducted by SFEG and Island County in 2021 during which time a Chinook smolt was found in the stream above culvert #1893. In addition, SFEG has been working with local landowners who are open to additional wetland and riparian restoration upstream of these culverts. Final design and construction of two fish passable structures at culverts 1893 and 1894, as well as remove the privately owned barrier (RFEG053) immediately downstream of #1894. Fish passage barrier removal is one of the most rapid and cost-effective ways of increasing the amount of accessible habitat for salmon.

Connecting stream mouths to important pocket estuaries are a priority of WRIA 6. A total of 1.35 miles, 0.84 miles of rearing habitat will be made accessible above culvert #1893 and 0.51 miles of rearing habitat above culvert #1894. The Multispecies Salmon Recovery Plan Update

identifies Race Lagoon as important outmigration rearing habitat for juvenile salmon. Access to the coastal stream habitat at the mouth of pocket estuaries is critical for resting, feeding, and refuge for migrating salmon. Many SRTCC members were at this site in 2022 for phase 1 review. There have been many ideas for how to do more with the project and SFEGL has been careful to include many opportunities for agencies to provide input. In phase one there was a suggestion for one crossing, but that included creating more private crossings that did not seem feasible. Stream does not flow all year. During outmigration in January, we expect to see salmon use around this time. Sampling data is being collected at this time. Project is being designed for climate resiliency. In the Skagit recovery plan these pocket estuaries are also identified as tier 2 priority for Skagit Chinook recovery.

- Project 4- Livingston Bay Sherman Parcel Acquisition North Livingston Bay Sherman (Acquisition) 395,000. with 589,500. match: Sponsors Whidbey Camano Land Trust PRISM-
<https://secure.rco.wa.gov/prism/search/ProjectSnapshot.aspx?ProjectNumber=24-1118>

Connected to project -<https://secure.rco.wa.gov/PRISM/Sponsor/Project/Brief/Index/20-1461>

This project will involve the purchase of the 15.7-acre Sherman property, connecting 127 acres of adjacent land protected by the project sponsors in 2023 using funding from SRFB, ESRP, and National Coastal Wetland Conservation grant program. Acquisition of the property will move this former estuary a step closer to future restoration. This acquisition will also build off large scale protection that has been done at Livingston Bay/Port Susan Bay, including 3,218 acres of tidelands protected by the Whidbey Camano Land Trust, nearly 4,000 acres protected by The Nature Conservancy, and an additional 13,000 acres managed by WA Department of Fish and Wildlife. The tidelands at Livingston Bay are identified in the Island County Salmon Recovery Plan as a top priority for protection as they are utilized by juvenile salmon and adults during their migration to and from the Stillaguamish River. Protection of the diked farmlands and historic tidally influenced estuary will protect the potential for future process-based restoration efforts prioritized by the Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project (PSNERP). This nearshore project will provide secondary benefits to migratory birds, including large numbers of waterfowl and shorebirds that depend on coastal habitats. More than 30 species of shorebirds commonly use this area during migration or wintering. Between 65-90% of Puget Sound winter populations rely on Livingston Bay/Port Susan Bay for forage and shelter. This parcel was included in the Livingston Bay Restoration Feasibility (NTA 2018-0603) study presented in 2022 that many SRTCC members attended-

<https://soundwaterstewards.org/event/livingston-bay-restoration-feasibility-study-webinar/> This is a Tier 1 project in geographic priority area 1. In future feasibility review there is a reminder to include all streams in restoration. WCCLT interested in looking at Maritime Juniper on the property. Presentation from 20-1461 restoration planning.

<https://secure.rco.wa.gov/prism/search/ProjectSnapshotAttachmentData.aspx?id=424057&sid=33D5CE06-05AA-43F7-982E-7A41E2177E36>

Additional information on the SRFB Grant Round process can be found on the [Salmon Recovery and Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration](#) website

- Discussed the next meeting on April 17th where the Pre-scoring of projects will be shared and reviewed. LE sent out a poll for entering Pre-scores. There was a question about a parcel on Camano who's owner was looking for salmon funding, but it looks to be too late for WRIA 6 grant round but is also on the Stillaguamish and Skagit priority area restoration lists and could maybe get into the Skagit grant round.

Adjourn

Meeting ended 4:45

- April 8-9 LE call with review panel if we have sponsors that want to discuss Conditioned project or Not Enough Information project comments.
- April 15th Prescores due- email or Cognito end of day
- April 17th meeting SRTCC members who are also sponsors may participate in the pre scoring of all projects.
- May outreach- May 10th Sno-Isle and Oak Harbor Marina presentation. May 18th Penn Cove Water Festival
- May 15th, 2024 – 2:00-4:00 PM – Location TBD – Ranking meeting – No sponsors attend. Coupeville Library? Hybrid? All Zoom? Oak Harbor Whidbey Coffee?
- Final Revised applications due in PRISM on June 24th!
- June 26th, 2024 – 2:00-4:00 PM – Zoom (Moved for Juneteenth 19th)
- July 31st, 2024 - 2:00-4:00 PM – Location TBD – Moved for SRFB final decision.