



WRIA 6 Salmon Recovery Technical & Citizen Committee Meeting

April 15, 2024

Member Participants: Jessica Côté, Paul Williams (SWS), Kathleen Landel), Todd Zackey (Tulalip, Co-Chair), Barbara Brock (Citizen, Co-Chair), Fred Kiga, Jeff Cordell, Paul Williams, Lee Chavez, Hannah Booth (WDFW), Renee Zavas Silva (ICCAO), James Watson (WICD), Kelly Zupich (MRC), Eric M (Skagit), James W and Christine S (Conservation Districts) **Others:** Clea Barenburg (LE Coordinator), Heidi Stewart (Tulalip), Lauren M(WCLT), Brett S (Tulalip), Haley Sherman (NWS)

Introductions & Updates

-The March meeting minutes were approved.

-April-9 LE call with review panel for conditioned project at Race Lagoon. Project sponsors confirmed review panel interest in adding a meander to the lower reach of stream to keep both culverts in the project. If a meander is not included, then only one culvert replacement would be supported by the panel. Other Conditioned and NMI project sponsors did not attend, as they did not have questions about comments.

-Whidbey Basin Coordination- There are 2 projects in the WRIA 6 geographic area on the Skagit SRFB grant review. Race Lagoon Culverts and Maylor Marsh feasibility for enhancement. Island LE will attend site visits. One project is for Maylor Marsh [24-1734](#) and the other is for Race Lagoon [24-1863](#).

-Island LE in collaboration with the Oak Harbor Marina Salmon Rearing Project, will do the first Natural Resources adult/teen outreach program at the Oak Harbor Library on May 10th.

<https://www.islandcountywa.gov/DocumentCenter/View/6809/20240510-POSTER-OAK-SalmonOrcaNoxiousWeeds-04798?bId=> <https://www.oakhboror.gov/704/Salmon-Rearing-Project>

-Recent event- LE will be at a table for Earth Day outreach at the Coupeville Farmers Market. For more information- <https://whidbeyearthday.org/kickoff-festival/>

-ESRP updates with 2 WRIA 6 projects submitted for the 2025-27 grant round. In 2022 Keystone (22-1157) approved. Maxwelton (22-1228) just missed the allocation and plans to apply again this year. Maxwelton was informed they will likely receive the 2022 request, afterall. Maxwelton group decided to ask for more than previously requested in 2022 with a new application for this year. 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> [24-1119](#) Whidbey Camano Land Trust Double Bluff from ESRP (Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program) [24-1200](#) request and Maxwelton Group ESRP request [24-1348](#)

Discussion

-Presentation on Cornet Juvenile Salmon survey from Northwest Strait by Haley Sherman- link to the full report: <https://nwstraitsfoundation.org/download/cornet-bay-final-report/> <https://nwstraitsfoundation.org/project/cornet-bay-nearshore-restoration/>

Focus of restoration program to improve shoreline habitat to support forage fish, which are an important food source for salmon and chinook in particular as food for Southern resident Orca Whales. Monitoring of this habitat in Cornet Bay looked at juvenile salmon and other fish species presence.

- SRTCC members reviewed the criteria for project scoring received handbook in previous email. Poll was sent out to make sure all committee members feel that the projects submitted meet the basic requirements and the results were majority support for all 4 projects. Poll results for comments, show support for all projects and critical comments were sent to all sponsors by the LE. Prior to ranking, SRTCC encouraged to review BICC approved Salmon Recovery Plan 2005 and the Mulit-Species Salmon Recovery Plan Update 2019 We do have the 2019 one linked on the salmon page- <https://www.islandcountywa.gov/DocumentCenter/View/3520>
<https://www.psp.wa.gov/salmon-recovery-watersheds.php#:~:text=barenburg%40islandcountywa.gov-2005%20Island%20Chapter,-2019%20Island%20Chapter>
<https://pspwa.box.com/s/e0d2wolqet6mvh1s09tieuyqz0p3kjag>
- Funding/SRFB -Reviewed the timeline of Grant Round. Updated timeline discussed with SRFB review and RCO and will be sent out to all members. This is updated on the website as well. Snapshots of projects were included in the emails sent out. Other information and resources were shared at site visits and in email helpful to understanding the type of projects we see in WRIA 6.
- Sponsors report that some of the project proposals are changing as sponsors are submitting all of the required application paperwork. A reminder that project information and cost can and will change with feedback from SRTCC and Salmon Funding Board feedback. Reminder that projects with more collaboration with multiple groups are often more successful. All SRTCC members should review updated proposals prior to ranking.
- PreScore poll was sent out with reminders before the meeting. Some results came in late or during the meeting, so LE quickly created tables and only reviewed averages of scores with group. As seen in lower table.
- 2 WRIA 6 projects are going for the Larger PSAR Large CAP funding, as WRIA 6 LE allocation is not enough to cover requests. Double Bluff and Race Lagoon Culverts are entered in the category for projects over 1 million. The PSAR Large Capital RFP contains helpful information on process, timeline and requirements. If sponsors with Riparian or PSAR Large Cap projects have not yet notified Tribes of your proposed project, as required by the Climate Commitment Act, please do so now and upload your letters to PRISM.

SRTCC 2024 projects for Salmon funding under review-

- Cultus Bay Private Fish Passage Project (Design and permitting) 280K with no match: Sponsors- Tulalip Tribes
<https://secure.rco.wa.gov/prism/search/projectsnapshot.aspx?ProjectNumber=24-1274>

Areas and Ecosystem Components: Priority Area 2 estuary with visual support of juvenile salmon using the estuary. Questions come in as to unknown final option. Conceptual design only so panel can review. Watershed Processes and Actions: The breach has shown already to be connecting habitat. What will the final project look like. They have explained to land owners what the options are that are supported by the review panel. Conceptual designs may include bridge spans.

Costs:

Climate: Any access to the home looks to be a challenge with sea level rise. Project would not be here if King tide series did not take out the tidegate.

Certainty of Success: Tulalip has been successful with projects in the past, but there is uncertainty around how this project will be implemented. There is confidence in the Tulalip to identify best options. Review panel feedback makes it more certain of success.

- Double Bluff protection (Acquisition) 2.8M with 6.3 M match: Sponsors- Whidbey Camano Land Trust- <https://secure.rco.wa.gov/prism/search/ProjectSnapshot.aspx?ProjectNumber=24-1119>

Areas and Ecosystem Components: Priority areas 2 and 3. Majority thought of it as the bluff area but others see the dominating feature uplands. Concern that we can't separate out the bluff portion from the uplands. Many people feel it is an important purchase, just not sure if salmon funding is the correct choice. Habitat preservation is a tier 1 priority. Questions on if that property can be developed as much as they think. Juvenile salmon is our priority and this is an outer beach farther away from outmigration from large rivers. There is no question that this is an iconic as well as exceptional bluff and important area with feeder bluff. Question if this is the most valuable beach for forage fish spawning. The unarmored areas are a priority for acquisition and areas in natural state, see MRC armoring report. Watershed Processes and Actions: This project is about a large acquisition, and is difficult to rank because different components of area with beach, bluff, lake, stream wetlands. Concerns that the project is mostly upland.

Costs: Based on the cost/acre of other WCLT acquisition projects, they could likely acquire 1-3 properties based on their request. It will help save money because closing faster typically saves money overall. This is a local project and the WCLT wants to get the best projects for cheapest price and maximize the value of the funding. They are looking at the highest value habitat – this funding is specifically targeting salmon habitat. All of the parcels in priority 1 areas will have salmon habitat. There are checks and balances in place for moving forward. Consider value of eelgrass, shellfish, and ghost shrimp. Value of development related invasive species.

Climate: Freshwater lake, stream to deer lagoon and stream off bluff, beach changes in future with climate. Importance of keeping areas without armor.

Certainty of Success: There is confidence in the WCLT to identify projects and have back up plans.

Example of success Keystone.

- Race Road fish passage culvert replacements (Construction) 1.9 M with 15% match: Sponsors- Island County Public Works and Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group- <https://secure.rco.wa.gov/prism/search/ProjectSnapshot.aspx?ProjectNumber=24-1117>

Areas and Ecosystem Components: Priority areas 2. Majority thought of it as the stream mouth closest to Estuary. Some thought that since culverts are not tidally influenced that it should only be in the stream category. Western culvert closest to tidal influence. If a stream meander is included closer to the estuary, then project would rank higher. There is no question that this is an important pocket estuary but there is question of access to stream depending on restoration work combined with culvert replacements and cost balance.

Watershed Processes and Actions: This project is a construction and part two. The first review in 2022 was ranked well and the two culverts were supported for design to make them fish passage culverts. The stream is flowing at important times for juvenile salmon but is ephemeral. If meander on tidal side happens then would rank higher.

Costs: Not unusual cost for this culvert work, but higher than most thought it would be. Discuss project being broken up and reason why the project had to go for Large Cap or Skagit funding.

Climate: Some would like to see more SLR predictions for that area. Culvert should be more beneficial to salmon with sea level rise.

Certainty of Success: The SFEG and Island County Public Works have good reputation, but there is uncertainty around how this project will be implemented in the end. Even if only one culvert is supported in the end this would be important habitat. This project could move forward in Skagit

grant round and to watch for changes in project with addition of lower stream meander. There is confidence in the SFEG to identify projects. Public Works only brings forward projects past SRTCC has recommended. If SRTCC does not support work on both culverts they need to say that now. Maybe the bigger stream is the easier option. Project was supported by SRTCC in 2022 with 2 culverts. SFEG brought in many partners for comment and suggestions over the last year.

- North Livingston Bay Sherman addition to previous project (Acquisition) 400K with 6K match: Sponsors Whidbey Camano Land Trust-
<https://secure.rco.wa.gov/prism/search/ProjectSnapshot.aspx?ProjectNumber=24-1118>

Areas and Ecosystem Components: The Land Trust project within priority area 1. Everyone in agreement for highest rank.

Watershed Processes and Actions: This project is about acquisition for a key middle parcel for a larger Livingston estuary recovery project. Consistent scoring.

Costs: Based on the cost/acre of other WCLT similar support. They are looking at the highest value habitat – this funding is specifically targeting salmon habitat. All of the parcels in priority 1 areas will have salmon habitat. There are checks and balances in place for moving forward.

Climate: The scores are likely reflecting that SRTCC is not judging a specific parcel, but future project. SRFB would not spend funds on farmland unless a restoration plan is attached to it.

Certainty of Success: The WCLT has good reputation with Tulalip as co-sponsors increases level of confidence. There is confidence in the WCLT to identify projects. LE asked them to look at Riparian funding to help with balance of project funding in 2024.

-See the SRTCC website for more information on the grant round-

<https://www.islandcountywa.gov/698/Salmon-Recovery-Funding-Board-SRFB-GRANT> or found on the [Salmon Recovery and Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration](#) website

-Discussion on manual and if sponsors can rank other projects just not their own. There is wording that says sponsors not at rank discussion to avoid influence. Talk about the need for having as many votes as possible to maintain majority. Discuss different funding pots and how SRFB is more chinook focused and the need for Riparian funded projects to use out full allocation.

WRIA 6 funding allocation from the State-RCO Manual 18 for Salmon Recovery Grants has information on Allocations for WRIA's- <https://rco.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/SAL-Manual18.pdf> In summary Puget Sound receives 38% of the SRFB funding and that is broken down in the WRIA's of Puget Sound with Island receiving 3% of this break down. Description of allocation-The Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council recommends, and the Puget Sound Leadership Council approves, allocation percentages that prioritize watersheds based on the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's delisting criteria in the Puget Sound Chinook Recovery Plan. Lead entities develop their proposed ranked project lists with an assumption, as a starting point, that the base amount for the regular round will be about \$30.6 million, inclusive of capital project funding and program costs. Lead entities are encouraged to add a reasonable number of alternate projects to their lists if they have additional high-priority projects in their strategies that are ready to move forward.

-Discussed the upcoming meeting on May 15th where ranking will be calculated. LE will be sent out a poll for time preference of location and reminder that sponsors do not attend part of the meeting with final ranking.

Scoring-Remember to check PRISM reports for updated information. To meet conditions, Race Lagoon culvert project and Cultus Bay project have updated their information. Race Lagoon and Double Bluff project have also received feedback from PSAR Large Cap reviewers. To meet the request for more information, Double Bluff acquisition project has updated information as well as feedback from ESRP review as well as PSAR Large Cap review team.

The review panel comment will come back soon for Race, Double Bluff and Cultus.

Please ask questions and send score adjustments to LE or add to the poll. I will send sponsors questions and try to get answers if you need them. Please get everything in by May 14.

Remember that scoring is important, but it does not absolutely dictate project ranking. We will review the scores at the May meeting and wait for all feedback from State reviewers before establishing rank and discussing funding allocations. Make numbers into percentages for final rank.

The Lead Entity needs to submit the final ranked list in August. The review panel has one more round of reviews and may come back with concerns to address.

Pre-score breakdown discussed.

Meeting ended 4:15

- April 14th Prescores due- email or Cognito end of day
- May 15th meeting SRTCC members may not score their own project or attend ranking section of the meeting
- June 26th meeting moved because of Juneteenth holiday and final application deadline.
- July 31st meeting moved to accommodate SRFB review panel comments