



DRAFT 2019 Legislative Priorities for Watershed Health and Salmon Recovery

Snoqualmie Watershed Forum Partners

Updated: September 18, 2018

Federal Priorities

Support a Fiscal Year 2019 appropriations request of \$70 million for the Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery Fund (PCSRF) in Departments of Commerce and Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill.

These funds allow NOAA to award grants to Washington State, tribes, and local watershed partners to implement salmon recovery priorities through the annual Salmon Recovery Funding Board grant round process. Federal PCSRF funds are matched by state funds in the Recreation and Conservation Office budget.

Support the “Promoting United Government Efforts to Save Our Sound Act” (PUGET SOS Act).

This effort would establish a Puget Sound Recovery National Program Office in the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to provide for the coordination of federal Puget Sound recovery efforts with state, local and tribal recovery efforts. The bill enhances the federal government’s role and investment in Puget Sound by amending the Clean Water Act to add a new section dedicated to Puget Sound recovery, providing lasting and structural recognition of the Puget Sound as a waterbody of national.

Support National Estuary Program (NEP) funding for the Environmental Protection Agency.

NEP funding supports local entities to recover salmon, clean up polluted water, and support the other priorities of the Puget Sound Action Agenda’s three Strategic Initiatives: Habitat, Stormwater, and Shellfish. NEP projects help us implement the right salmon projects in the right places, and increase public knowledge about these efforts.

Support proposed federal legislation that seeks to increase funding and incentives for green stormwater infrastructure.

FOR INFORMATION ABOUT THESE PRIORITIES PLEASE CONTACT:

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State Priorities

Regular Session: January 14 – April 29, 2019

Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) - \$79.6 Million (Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO))

PSAR funds support implementation of the highest priority habitat protection and restoration projects throughout Puget Sound. Funds are derived from State general obligation bonds (RCW 77.85).

State Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) - \$88.904M (RCO)

SRFB funds consist of federal PCSRF dollars and state capital funds that serve as the required match to federal funds. Together, these dollars support annual grant rounds for salmon habitat protection and restoration projects in watersheds around the state. This funding is a cornerstone of WRIA 7's annual grant round, administered by the Snohomish Forum.

Floodplains by Design –\$70M requested (Washington Department of Ecology)

In the past two biennial legislative sessions, the legislature allocated funding to Ecology to support a list of multiple benefit floodplain restoration and management projects. Current Snoqualmie/WRIA 7 priorities include:

- City of North Bend applied for \$4,209,777 to fund the South Fork Snoqualmie River Levee Setback Project
- City of Snoqualmie applied for \$1,389,000 for Snoqualmie Riverfront Acquisition and Bank Stabilization
- Sustainable Lands Strategy (SLS) in the Snohomish Basin would provide \$3,391,000 to Snohomish County Department of Public Works

Fish Barrier Removal Board –\$50M (RCO)

Funding for projects to remove barriers to fish passage, opening up habitat that salmon formerly occupied.

Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program –\$20M (RCO)

The Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program provides funding to support projects in our estuaries, which are critical nurseries for juvenile salmon.

Stormwater Financial Assistance Program –\$60M (Washington Department of Ecology)

The Stormwater Financial Assistance Program provides important funding to local communities, including the cities of the Snoqualmie Valley, to prevent pollution of water bodies from stormwater and run-off from urbanized areas. These funds are distributed via various grant programs including the Capacity Grants, Grants of Regional or Statewide Significance, and capital construction grants. Stormwater funding comes from a combination of state bond and hazardous substance tax dollars.

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Washington Wildlife & Recreation Program (WWRP) –\$130M (RCO)

For nearly 30 years, the WWRP has supported habitat conservation and outdoor recreation opportunities. The program has played a significant role in our state's landscape and quality of life, investing over \$1.4 billion into state and local parks, trails, wildlife habitat, working lands, and more. It is nationally recognized for its fair, objective, and independent funding process. Funding the WWRP will help address our state's rapid population growth, the need to preserve our shrinking green spaces, and the strong demand for outdoor recreational opportunities.

Policy Legislation

➤ **Track and support legislation that seeks to improve regulatory protections for areas that are important for salmon habitat.**

As WRIA 7 partners, consider supporting proposed legislation that improves regulatory protections that seek to benefit salmon habitat, including riparian areas, streams and rivers, marine shorelines, etc.

➤ **Support legislation that seeks to limit liability for entities that implement habitat restoration projects involving the placement of large wood.**

Snoqualmie and WRIA 7 partners have a goal to increase wood in the watershed's rivers and streams as a vital component of improving habitat conditions that support salmon. Concerns about liability associated with public safety related to placing large wood as part of habitat restoration projects can delay and/or limit restoration actions. Consider supporting amending existing state law (RCW 4.24.210, which limits liability of landowners for injuries to recreational users) to clearly limit liability for entities that implement habitat restoration projects.

➤ **Track and participate in continued efforts to explore new watershed-based funding authorities to support multiple-benefit projects that address salmon habitat protection and restoration, water quality, stormwater management, and flood management.**

Since 2011, recognizing the limited funding available to implement salmon recovery, the Snoqualmie Watershed Forum supported and participated in cross-watershed discussions to identify alternative funding mechanisms to implement multiple-benefit watershed priorities, including but not limited to salmon recovery habitat restoration, stormwater management, and flood management. These efforts and discussions are on-going and may result in future legislation.

➤ **Support state agency budget requests for monitoring salmon populations, and studies that evaluate marine survival, habitat condition, and other issues that affect Snohomish basin salmon populations.**

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