



Snohomish Basin Salmon Recovery Technical Committee

September 12, 2019

Amber Moore
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Puget Sound Partnership

RE: Funding for an update to the Snohomish Chapter of the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Plan

The members of the Snohomish Basin Salmon Recovery Technical Committee are excited about this opportunity to update our chapter of the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Plan. Recent conversations with basin partners confirm there is ample support and capacity to take on this project and meet the Partnership's expectations for an update to the Snohomish River Basin Salmon Conservation Plan. The Snohomish Salmon Recovery Forum has been aware of an impending chapter update, the first step of which was completing a status and trends report. The timing of Puget Sound Partnership's (PSP) funding is ideal, and pursuing an update now will benefit from recently completed work as well as concurrent projects with compatible timelines.

Since the adoption of our chapter in 2005, we have completed a number of significant steps advancing our understanding of the watershed, informing and redirecting strategies. The following products have been reviewed and approved by the Snohomish Salmon Recovery Forum and its subcommittees and/or the Snoqualmie Watershed Forum, and could readily be adapted to a chapter update and adopted by the Forum:

- The Snohomish Basin Protection Plan: a hydrology-based strategy for prioritizing and protecting habitat.
- White paper assessing climate change impacts on salmonids.
- Updated and prioritized monitoring metrics.
- Updated 10-year habitat targets and 2025 project list for the Snoqualmie and South Fork Skykomish rivers (Snoqualmie Forum).
- 10-year Status and Trends report (in press), which reviews the progress we've made since the adoption of the chapter, compiling the information necessary to update the chapter.

There are a number of other ongoing projects, including a life cycle model developed in collaboration with Tim Beechie at NOAA, and an estuary capacity model (aligning with the life cycle model) developed through a multi-agency effort led by Josh Chamberlin at NOAA. The goal of these efforts is a large-scale watershed model to assess different recovery scenarios and prioritize strategies. Recent in-basin grant awards associated with the Salish Sea Marine Survival Project will also elucidate the relative importance of Chinook life histories (fry vs parr) and findings could help prioritize different restoration strategies addressed in an update. Additionally we have initiated work on a water quality white paper to address

gaps identified by NMFS (2006) and summarize the latest information on water temperature from King and Snohomish Counties and sources of elevated PBDEs in juvenile Chinook from WDFW and Ecology. These efforts will be an important part of a chapter update and PSP assistance would help bring them to fruition.

Our chapter was a multi-species plan at its inception, acknowledging that recovery strategies benefiting Chinook will benefit other species. With the recent development of the Puget Sound Steelhead Recovery Plan, the timing is ripe for the addition of more detail regarding steelhead recovery, including strategies and projects.

Assistance from PSP with writing/coaching as well as technical assistance will expedite the completion of ongoing projects, and ensure the goals and outcomes of these projects are aligned with and incorporated into a chapter update. Technical assistance will likely be important to complete the life cycle model in time to use it for a chapter update in June 2021. We are especially excited about the prospect of working with Susan O'Neil, who knows the Snohomish basin very well. She will be a major asset to achieve our mutual goals. Considering the large body of completed and ongoing work that could be incorporated into a Snohomish chapter update, we will need to work with PSP and the Snohomish Forum to prioritize the elements that can be accomplished within the available time frame and funding amount. If additional funding is available, a Snohomish chapter update will be more comprehensive.

High priority elements of a Snohomish chapter update include steelhead recovery actions, refining the nearshore strategy, updating targets, water quality and quantity strategies, and incorporating the protection plan and new information about climate change. The salmon recovery partners in the Snohomish Basin are committed to completing the update by June 2021 if funding is provided. The Snohomish Basin is well positioned to take on this chapter update, and ours is the only watershed being considered within the Whidbey Major Population Group. Our recovery plan is a comprehensive, multi-species plan focused on the whole watershed from the nearshore to the headwaters; we have procured new information developed since the plan was adopted and are ideally positioned for a comprehensive chapter update.

Thank you for the opportunity to convey our enthusiasm and readiness to take on this important next step in our salmon recovery effort. We look forward to hearing back from you shortly.

Sincerely,



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Tulalip Tribes

Mike Rustay
SBSRTC Co-chair
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