

## **Refining the 4-year work plan Sequencing Scheme for Habitat Capital Actions**

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### **Background:**

The 4-year work plan provides a mechanism by which the basin and the region can track and record progress toward implementation of our Salmon Recovery Plan (*Plan*), identify priority projects for current and future funding, and documents changes in the chapter. As a basin we also strive to run an inclusive work planning process, utilize the 4-year work plan as a communication tool, and submit a 4-year work plan that is a stretch to complete.

As a part of refining the 4-year work plan annually, the Snohomish Basin has developed a simple categorization scheme to identify the highest priority actions needed given priorities established by the *Plan* (2005), current progress towards 10-year benchmarks, and the considering sequencing issues and sponsor capacity. The intent of this sequencing has not been to judge the technical merit of each project in the work plan but rather to provide general guidance about the types of restoration action most needed and to reflect the ability to advance these projects in light of project readiness. The categorization scheme is meant to underscore that all of the proposed actions are needed to reach salmon recovery. However, the need for some particular projects types to advance, particularly given implementation progress to date, is becoming increasingly recognized as critical.

### **Further refining the criteria can help with multiple objectives, including:**

*Refine 4-year work plan to better reflect realistic opportunities in the Basin that can be accomplished in 4 years*

- Furthers the request from the Forum to creating a “realistic” list to describe what can most likely be accomplished in the 4-year time frame
- Describe capacity constraints and advocating for continued support for Project Sponsors

*Gain greater clarity about how/which projects are priorities for advancing the metrics in the salmon recovery plan*

- Helps to address PSP questions and comments about refining our capital program to further delineate which projects are top priorities in the basin.

*Increase understanding across the basin about progress toward recovery, lagging targets (benchmarks) and how best to prioritize between actions.*

- Could be used in assessing where the basin is not seeing projects being developed and help guide sponsors to those needs.

*Further direct funding and technical assistance*

- The 4-year work plan is gaining increasing attention as a “go to” location for funders to find “real” restoration projects. Funders are looking to the 4-year work plan to clearly define basin priorities and sequence of specific projects, so having a well refined list of projects can assist the basin in directing funders toward our highest priority actions.
- There may be a benefit to differentiate projects more due to the lack of funding and basin wide capacity to move forward on all actions at once and to better direct recovery efforts.

## Changes to the Criteria

### *Creating greater delineation between project groupings*

- The current sequencing criteria directs many projects to be either “*most pressing need*” or “*pressing need*” categories, not providing a lot of separation between project groups. Under the current criteria, if a project is a tier-one priority for its Sub Basin Strategy Group, it almost automatically becomes a “*most pressing need*”
- More delineation of tiers/groups to help clearly identify what project(s) need to advance can help the basin when short turn around requests are made to the Lead Entity (e.g. WA DOT requests for mitigation project lists), or when funders look at the 4-year work plan directly for projects to fund.

### *Assessments: (this may be best addressed via the Technical Committee)*

- Evaluating assessments relative to each other is challenging given the current criteria (i.e. How should an assessment come out relative to its peers in terms of the sequence rank?).
- There is limited guidance from the basin as to what needs to be in an assessment (e.g. methods, scales, etc.) and thus all are essentially treated equally.
- Under the current criteria projects coming out of completed assessments are receiving the intended “bump” and thus bringing about more directed/planned activity. However, the issue remains about what constitutes a complete and thorough assessment. In addition, some sponsors are not always mentioning that projects are part of implementation of a larger assessment or are not utilizing assessment work in advancing their projects.

### **Options for refining the criteria and 4-year work plan process:**

1. Solicit specific types of projects for what we would advance. Be more explicit about which projects will be a priority versus projects that are just good to do, or are part of a given sponsor’s mission. This could be accomplished through a refinement of the current sequencing/ranking criteria.
2. Set forward criteria for what the basin should meet in 4 years. Highlight specific projects that meet those criteria, specifically:
  - i. Projects that implement reach-scale assessments or other feasibility work.
  - ii. Projects that significantly address a particular issue (e.g. estuary tidal marsh, etc.)
  - iii. Other ideas
3. Develop a call for projects that meet certain criteria. The 4-year work plan habitat restoration table already identifies what the 4-year outcome is needed to be on track in 4 years (see the second to last column of Table 2 in the narrative). Ask sponsors to respond to those needed outcomes with proposed projects and advance only those that meet the need. This is not as focused on refining the current criteria, but more the 4-year work plan process.
4. Add another level of “roll-up” projects that reflect project sponsors’ work in the basin, such as XX acres of riparian planting, and use the 4-year work plan to highlight all the sponsors as partners. For these we would likely need to set these “roll-up” projects as additional Level 2 projects in HWS and use our HWS management time to ensure sponsors are feeding into those objectives.

## Current 4-year work plan Sequencing Criteria

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1. **Tier assigned by the *Plan***
  - a. Tier 1: +85 points
  - b. Tier 2: +75 points
  - c. Tier 3: +65 points
  - d. Tier 4: +55 points
  
2. **Sponsor capacity**
  - a. Sponsor currently has capacity to advance project: 0 points
  - b. Sponsor currently lacks capacity to advance project : -10 points
  
3. **Habitat action addresses lagging 10-year benchmark (see table 2, p. 12, percent 10-year benchmark column)**
  - a. < 25%: +10 points
    - nearshore beach
    - mainstem primary off-channel
    - mainstem primary edge
    - mainstem secondary riparian
    - mainstem secondary off-channel
    - rural primary off-channel
    - rural secondary off-channel
    - protection evaluation
  
  - b. 26 – 50%: +5 points
    - estuary marsh
    - rural primary riparian
    - urban riparian
  
  - c. > 50%: 0 points
    - mainstem primary riparian
    - rural secondary riparian
    - urban off-channel
  
4. **Logical Sequencing Considerations**
  - a. Logical sequencing issue: -10 points  
*Examples:*
    - downstream fish blockage
    - project does not address primary limiting factor
    - implementation of project may impede more substantial restoration in the future
  
  - b. Project informed by larger scale or process assessment: +5 points

Points were summed for each project, and scores ranged from 55-100. Project scores were then binned as follows:

90 – 100pts: <i>Most pressing need</i>	70 – 89 points: <i>Pressing need</i>	< 70 points: <i>Needed</i>
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2013 work plan spanned 3 years, 2018 spans 4 years.

	2013		2018	
	# projects	Total project cost	# projects	Total project cost
Estuary Restoration	7	\$44,239,048	8	\$61,225,000
Headwaters above Natural Falls	2	\$1,485,000	3	\$1,595,000
Headwaters Primary Protection	1	\$100,000	1	\$250,000
Headwaters Secondary Restoration	4	\$13,505,000	5	\$12,444,500
Mainstem Primary Restoration	39	\$22,074,499	55	\$69,135,645
Mainstem Secondary Restoration	4	\$13,505,000	4	\$978,000
Nearshore Restoration	9	\$28,075,077	8	\$33,170,000
Rural Streams Primary Restoration	7	\$1,215,240	12	\$2,684,503
Rural Streams Secondary Restoration	5	\$3,730,620	5	\$1,630,620
Urban Streams Restoration	4	\$873,000	4	\$463,353
<i>Non-Capital Projects</i>	<i>51</i>	<i>\$8,027,564</i>	<i>112</i>	<i>\$56,424,246</i>
	<b>133</b>	<b>\$ 136,830,048</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>\$ 240,000,867</b>