



SNOHOMISH BASIN SALMON RECOVERY FORUM

The Honorable Jay Inslee
Office of the Governor
PO Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

November 1, 2018

RE: Snohomish Basin Salmon Recovery Forum Governor's Budget Priorities

Dear Governor Inslee:

On behalf of the Snohomish Basin Salmon Recovery Forum, we are writing to share our support for salmon recovery funding programs being considered for the upcoming 2019-2021 state fiscal biennium. Your leadership is critical to ensuring that we can continue our efforts—and Washington State's commitment—to protect and restore habitat for salmon listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. Additionally restoring salmon habitat is critical to ensure the long term availability of Chinook as the primary prey resource for our Southern Resident killer whales.

The state's investment in salmon recovery and Puget Sound ecosystem restoration is enabling watersheds and the region to make significant progress on our highest priorities. With funding provided by programs including the **Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration grant program, Salmon Recovery Funding Board,** and the **Estuary Salmon and Restoration Program,** Snohomish Basin partners have collectively restored over 1,000 acres in the Snohomish estuary. Your continued support for these programs is critical in ensuring that our work continues.

Your support for the **Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration, Salmon Recovery Funding Board, the Estuary Salmon and Restoration Program, and the Brian Abbot Fish Barrier Removal Board** helps watersheds enhance our science-based salmon recovery efforts and implement priority habitat restoration and protection projects. Support of the **Floodplains by Design** program advances the implementation of multiple benefit floodplain management projects that restore critical salmon habitat, reduce flood hazards, and improve water quality. Funding for the **Washington State Conservation Commission** supports non-regulatory efforts to work with private landowners to implement projects that address resource concerns that provide public benefits and support orca and salmon recovery.

While we are making progress, salmon continue to be in trouble. For the 2019-2021 biennium, we encourage you to accelerate the progress and momentum for salmon recovery and watershed health in Puget Sound and statewide. Specifically, we ask that you support the following agency budget requests:

- \$79.6 million for the **Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration** program in the Recreation and Conservation Office budget, which will fund a prioritized list of major salmon recovery projects around the Puget Sound region and provides funding to each Puget Sound watershed to run a competitive grant process for implementing additional critically important habitat projects. Moreover, for every \$1 million dollars invested in PSAR creates 17 jobs and generates \$3 million in economic activity. This is not the time to reduce this allocation.

- \$88.9 million in general obligation bonds for the **Salmon Recovery Funding Board** in the Recreation and Conservation Office budget, which funds habitat protection and restoration projects statewide.
- \$50 million for the **Fish Barrier Removal Board** grant program, in the Recreation and Conservation Office budget, which provides funding to remove barriers that prevent salmon from reaching hundreds of miles of streams and thousands of acres of pristine and restored habitat.
- \$20 million for the **Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program** in the in the Recreation and Conservation Office budget, which provides funding and technical assistance for nearshore restoration and protection efforts in Puget Sound.
- \$70 million for the **Floodplains by Design** capital budget request through the Department of Ecology, which will support a prioritized list of multi-benefit floodplain management projects around the state that protect public health and safety while also enhancing salmon habitat.
- \$8 million for the **Washington State Conservation Commission's** Natural Resource Investments which supports local, incentive-based programs that empower landowners to voluntarily install best management practices to advance progress toward improved water quality and habitat; and \$6,608,000 for the Puget Sound Regional Conservation Partnership Program to support voluntary, incentive-based conservation projects on private lands that improve water quality and habitat for salmon.

Thank you again for your work to continue Washington State's commitment to salmon recovery, tribal treaty rights, and to restoring the health of Puget Sound in addition to creating jobs and stimulating our local economy.

If you have any questions about projects funded in WRIA 7 or how these priorities advance our salmon recovery objectives, please feel free to contact Gretchen Glaub, Snohomish Basin Lead Entity Coordinator at 425-388-6403 or gretchen.glaub@snoco.org.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Terry Williams
Chair, Snohomish Basin Salmon
Recovery Forum

Jim Miller
Vice-Chair, Snohomish Basin Salmon
Recovery Forum

cc: Snohomish Basin Salmon Recovery Forum Members
Gretchen Glaub, Lead Entity Coordinator, Snohomish Basin