



SNOHOMISH  
BASIN  
SALMON  
RECOVERY  
FORUM

# 2019 Legislative Priorities for Watershed Health and Salmon Recovery

*Snohomish Basin Salmon Recovery Forum Partners*

Updated: February 7, 2019

## State Priorities

**Regular Session: January 14 – April 29, 2019**

**Orca Recovery** – In response to Governor Jay Inslee’s Southern Resident Killer Whale Executive Order, the Orca Recovery Task Force has completed a report with recommendations for their recovery. Lack of prey, primarily Chinook salmon, has been identified as a one of the main drivers for the decline in the SRKW population. Recovering Chinook and other salmon are vital to recovering the orcas. Recommendation 1 of the Task Force is to - **Significantly increase investment in restoration and acquisition of Chinook salmon habitat.**

The Snohomish Basin Salmon Recovery Forum urges support for the following programs that support salmon habitat restoration and protection.

### **Capital Programs**

**Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) – Support the agency request for \$79.6M (RCO)**

PSAR funds support implementation of the highest priority salmon habitat protection and restoration projects throughout Puget Sound. Example projects supported in the Snohomish Basin by PSAR funding in 2019-2021 include:

- **Removal of the Pilchuck Dam** on the Pilchuck River which will open access to 37 miles of intact salmon habitat that has been blocked for decades.
- Design for **levee setbacks and reconnection of floodplain** in a high priority reach of the **Snoqualmie River.**

**State Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) – Support the agency request for \$88.9M (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.

**Floodplains by Design – Support the agency request for \$70M (Ecology)**

Floodplains by Design supports implementation of multiple benefit projects in the floodplain that support flood risk reduction, salmon habitat restoration and agricultural viability. 2019-2021 projects supported in the Snohomish Basin by FbD funding in include:

- **Snohomish County’s** Advancing Sustainable Land Strategies in the Snohomish Basin project
- **City of North Bend’s** South Fork Snoqualmie River Levee Setback project

**Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program – Support the agency request for \$20M (RCO)**

The Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program provides funding to support projects in Puget Sound estuaries, which are critical nurseries for juvenile Chinook salmon. The 2019-2021 ESRP funding would support a WDFW project focused on multi benefit planning for salmon habitat and agricultural use in the **Snohomish Delta.**

FOR INFORMATION ABOUT THESE PRIORITIES PLEASE CONTACT:

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### **Fish Barrier Removal Board – Support the agency request for \$50M (RCO)**

The Fish Barrier Removal Board supports projects to remove barriers to fish passage, opening up access to habitat that salmon formerly occupied.

### **Stormwater Financial Assistance Program – Support the agency request for \$60M (Ecology)**

The Stormwater Financial Assistance Program provides important funding to local 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.

### **Washington Wildlife & Recreation Program (WWRP) – Support the agency request for \$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.

### **Washington State Conservation Commission - Support the agency requests for the following programs:**

- **\$17.1 million for Conservation Technical Assistance:** Builds critical capacity for conservation districts to work with private landowners to implement on-the-ground projects that support natural resource management improvements and help address salmon recovery, Puget Sound recovery, and agriculture viability.
- **\$16 million for Natural Resource Investments:** Supports specific, high priority and on-the-ground capital projects with private landowners. These projects can include actions that improve water quality, enhance endangered species habitat, and preserve viable farms.
- **\$7.5 million for the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP):** Accelerates the voluntary implementation of projects that protect and enhance critical salmon habitat. This is needed to match approximately \$30 million in federal support
- **\$11.8 million for the State match for Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP):** Provides required state match for over \$23 million in federal funding awarded to Washington State. This includes funding that will implement best management practices on private lands.

## **Policy Legislation**

- **Track and support legislation that seeks to improve regulatory protections for salmon habitat.**  
Consider supporting proposed legislation that improves regulatory protections that seek to benefit salmon habitat, including riparian areas, streams and rivers, marine shorelines, etc.
- **Track and support legislation that seeks to implement the recommendations of the Orca Recovery**  
Consider supporting proposed legislation that accelerates salmon habitat protection and restoration and the reduction of toxic contaminants in water and sediments.
- **Track and support legislation to reduce carbon emissions.**  
Consider supporting proposed legislation that promotes clean energy, reduces emissions, and prevents climate change and ocean acidification.

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# 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 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 efforts of the Congressional Puget Sound Recovery Caucus, including:**

- Establishing 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. This effort would enhance 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 federal legislation that seeks to increase funding and incentives for green stormwater infrastructure. Expand eligibility criteria in transportation grants to include green stormwater components, thereby creating incentives for states and local governments to adopt green stormwater practices. For states like Washington that already have high standards, this legislation would prioritize projects from a scoring standpoint and direct more federal funding to the state.

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