

Meeting Summary
Snohomish Basin Salmon Recovery Technical Committee
Web Conference
9am – 12pm, March 2, 2021

In attendance:

1. Colin Wahl, Tulalip Tribes
2. Emily Davis, Snoqualmie Watershed Forum
3. Andrea Mojzak, King County
4. Ben Peterson, King County Noxious Weeds
5. Brett Gaddis, Snohomish County
6. Carson Moscoso, Snohomish Conservation District
7. Cory Zyla, Snoqualmie Watershed Forum
8. Denise Krownbell, Seattle City Light
9. Doug Hennick, Wild Fish Conservancy
10. Elissa Ostergaard, Snoqualmie Watershed Forum
11. Elizabeth Butler, RCO
12. Gretchen Glaub, Snohomish County
13. Heather Khan, Dept. of Ecology
14. Irene Webber, DNR
15. Joe Rocchio, DNR
16. Jim Shannon, Port of Everett/City of Everett
17. Jason Hall, Cramer Fish Sciences
18. Jessica Lange, Sound Salmon Solutions
19. Kevin Lee, WDFW
20. Lindsey Desmul, WDFW
21. Lisa Tario, Snohomish County
22. Marissa Burghdoff, Snohomish County
23. Matt Baerwalde, Snoqualmie Tribe
24. Mike Rustay, Snohomish County
25. Ryan Bartelheimer, Snohomish Conservation District
26. Ryan Lewis, Snoqualmie Tribe
27. Tynan Ramm-Granberg, DNR

Meeting Summary:

Introductions

Emily opened the meeting, reviewed the agenda, and introduced participants.

Live Poll

Tech Comm members were given time to fill out a brief survey regarding their regional science and salmon recovery participation. To leverage the group's expertise, we will send an email to these contacts before meetings to coordinate the Regional Updates section of the agenda.

Brief Updates

Gretchen provided some brief updates of interest.

SRFB 2021

The SRFB grant round is in progress. Applications were due yesterday. It looks like only 4 applications

were received, but it is a small grant round year. The basin only has around \$500,000 to allocate for 2021. Site visits will be held March 17th. You can expect to hear more about the projects at the May TC meeting.

Return Funds

The King County Lower Frew project funded in 2017 is closing as “incomplete” so there will be some money leftover that we can hopefully move over to the alternate list projects from last grant round. But the money has to be spent by June, so that might limit what we can feasibly do. However, the goal remains to get as much money to our projects as possible.

Forum

The Forum meeting this Thursday has an exciting agenda featuring DNR Commissioner Hilary Franz and staffer Stephanie Celt. Hilary will unveil the DNR Salmon Strategy. As a reminder, their intention is to use the Snohomish as a pilot watershed. There will be a presentation and then time for Q+A. Colin and Emily will also be presenting on the Water Quality white paper and the Plan Update.

Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council

There is a retreat coming up at the end of March with a discussion on the PSAR allocation process (the formula for distributing the funds among the watersheds). The agenda is still in development. Gretchen, Elissa, and Keith will be attending. We may want to coordinate beforehand with the TC for their feedback.

Plan Update

Work on the update continues, but capacity has been in flux. Gretchen attended a nearshore work group meeting to review new science and what we know now about conditions and fish use since 2005. Two more meetings are scheduled to talk about potential new targets and strategies. Will likely bring back to the TC in May for feedback.

Staffing Change

Colin announced that he will be leaving late this month to work for the Skagit River System Cooperative as a senior restoration ecologist. This will be his last TC meeting. He has enjoyed working with everyone and is sad to leave the Snohomish but is excited for this new opportunity to work on his home river system. Mike will be filling in as the TC Co-chair following Colin’s departure.

Questions

Jim Shannon asked if there are any updates on the riparian strategy. Gretchen said not much has changed since she last spoke about it. They are still working through the scope of work, but there should be a lot more to say next month.

Brazilian Elodea Infestation in WRIA 7

Ben Peterson, the aquatic noxious weed specialist with King County Noxious Weeds, gave the presentation. *Egeria densa* was found at Lake Rasmussen in November. *Egeria* is native to South America’s Amazon Basin but is invasive to Washington State. It grows in up to 20 feet of water (if clear enough) and spreads by fragmentation - one section of stem can float downstream and reestablish. This is a big problem in the Chehalis where they use manual removal methods to combat it. In King County it is a significant problem in the Sammamish River. Negative impacts include habitat loss, reduced biodiversity, raised water level, decreased dissolved oxygen levels, and algal blooms.

It’s not certain how *Egeria* got introduced into Lake Rasmussen. Control options include hand pulling, herbicide, diver dredging, bottom barriers, and grass carp. There are plans to conduct an herbicide treatment hopefully in the summer when there is no outflow coming from the lake so that it does not

travel downstream.

Matt Baerwalde commented on the need for proper signage during the herbicide treatment to ensure no downstream release occurs.

Heather Khan asked: once the plant dies off from the herbicide treatment will the plant then be removed from the lake to minimize DO loss? Ben replied that the plant breaks down really quickly from the herbicide. And there would not be a way to get a plant harvester in the lake because it's too shallow. So there is no plan for that. The mitigation plan for that is to only treat half of the lake at a time so only half experiences the die off at a time.

Cory Zyla asked: do you know how the folks in Lake Sammamish are tackling this? What is their control method as a potential source for *Eggaria*? Ben replied that Lake Sammamish does not have a widespread control strategy. It's such a big lake. Some landowners hire out for hand pulling here and there. But a lake wide approach would be a huge project.

Marissa Burghdoff asked: is there potential for eradication or will it take ongoing management to keep it at low levels? Ben replied that they are hopeful they can achieve complete eradication with the herbicide treatment approach.

DNR's Ecological Integrity Assessment Project

Tynan Ramm-Granberg, a vegetation ecologist with DNR gave the presentation. He explained that the program uses Ecological Integrity Assessments (EIA) as a methodology to measure the condition of upland and wetland ecosystems from a biodiversity/conservation lens. And they are considering piloting a project in the Snohomish or Puyallup-White based on diversity of land uses and distribution of level 1 EIA ranks. Project outputs will include maps, results, and EIA trainings.

Ecological integrity scores are used to evaluate the ecosystem and prioritize areas with the most intact function (those in the best condition requiring the least restoration) to stretch conservation funding. The EIA scoring methodology was explained. Sites that rank high enough are included in their database for conservation prioritization.

The broad goals of the program are to 1) highlight ecologically important lands in the Puget Sound, 2) outline and implement a systematic approach for identifying and prioritizing areas for restoration and protection, and 3) assist land managers in assessing current ecological conditions and monitoring restoration progress.

Tynan and his team are interested to hear from our basin if there are:

- Particular wetland or upland ecosystems of interest to the group
- Stressors of particular concern impacting ecological integrity in the watershed
- Suggestions of additional spatial data products that might improve the Level 1 model
- Research questions that their project might help answer

Colin asked: what is the project timeframe? Tynan replied that everything has to be finished by the end of the year. DNR has made good progress on the Level 1 map so far and it should be made available broadly this fall once integrated into the DNR map viewer. Field work will be conducted this summer with report wrap up this winter.

Emily asked: when do you need the answers to these questions? Tynan replied that they are choosing field sites in April. He will be presenting to the Puyallup-White watershed on March 22nd. So answers

sometime this month would be great. Feel free to call or email Tynan.

Elissa commented that we are in the process of updating our salmon recovery targets and there are some particular things being evaluated for change since 2005 e.g.) overall impervious surface, overall forest cover, overall riparian cover, etc. Tynan asked what data is being used. Elissa referred to the [C-SEACAP](#) data for riparian cover and developing a new metric for floodplain connectivity. PSP has a dataset that they have used for that. As far as landcover, there is still research to be done on the approach for that. UW has some data layers of interest. Tynan mentioned that anyone interested in the technical aspects of the data can reach out to their GIS staffer.

Colin mentioned the lifecycle model that Tim Beechie is working on to calculate salmon productivity based off of habitat variables. He will connect Tynan and Tim.

Group Discussion: Factors Limiting Salmon Recovery

Colin provided a brief presentation on the PSP Salmon Science Advisory Group white paper for background before the discussion. The paper is intended to address the reasons for slow progress in Puget Sound recovery. The 5 causes identified in the paper are 1) insufficient time elapsed 2) not enough restoration 3) projects are not addressing the key limiting factors 4) habitat degradation is offsetting benefits from restoration 5) monitoring of population response cannot separate signal from noise.

Attendees were sorted into breakout rooms to discuss. Then there was a report out of discussion highlights to the full meeting group after. Topics mentioned included the impacts of changing variables, stochastic effects, need for more strategic rather than opportunistic projects, difficulty dealing with unknowns, climate change, difficulty tying project outcomes to number of fish produced, capacity constraints for data analysis, plan B if Chinook are not recovered by the target date, need for more investment, need for messaging to decision makers, need for better habitat protection, need to be willing to reprioritize as needed, regulation has not been enough – need other landowner accountability strategies, need support for initiatives to address these obstacles head on, and more.

Roundtable Updates

Heather Khan: Pilchuck River ERTS (complaint response tracking system) came in mid-January. Will be discussing restoration ideas and thoughts with the Pilchuck Work Group. There was a garbage dump on the bank opposite the highway that is eroding away and washing trash into the river. DNR drafted a letter to the landowner. There may be \$50,000 in Terry Hussmann grants along with other funding sources to help with cleanup. Mike commented that access could be tricky. Kirk added that there are old logging roads that could potentially be used to access the site.

Kirk Lakey: a new person will be hired soon (mid-March) to help cover the basin.

Action Items:

Emily will email out Tynan's questions and contact information

Meeting adjourned at 11:00am.