

OVERVIEW

The City of Bellingham (City), in coordination with American Rivers (AR) and partners, is planning a multi-benefit project on the Middle Fork Nooksack River. The project aims to improve fish passage for three ESA-listed Puget Sound threatened anadromous fish species by removing the diversion dam while maintaining water supply diversion at the site. A significant amount of funding has been secured towards the project. For more project information, including a description of the project's Partner Advisory Committee (PAC) and Design Review Team (DRT), visit <https://www.cob.org/services/environment/restoration/middlefork/>.

THIS MONTH

- **Design** –
 - The Design Criteria Report for the project was drafted. This document builds upon the basis of design and information in the Conceptual Design Report. It will be updated as design progresses, and distributed at critical design milestones.
 - HDR provided the DRT with updated design drawings and the Draft Design Criteria Report on July 27 for the upcoming DRT meeting in August.
 - A Draft Dam Removal Technical Memo outlining historical conditions and the geomorphic-based design approach to restoring the channel for fish passage was drafted and distributed to the DRT.
- **Permitting** –
 - A SEPA Checklist package was submitted to Whatcom County Planning & Development Services on July 18.
 - A meeting was held on July 10 to discuss fish salvage protocols and gain input from DRT biologists (Ned Currence – Nooksack Tribe; Joel Ingram – WDFW) in development of a Fish Salvage Plan. Meeting notes were distributed for review and comment.
 - A Fish Salvage Plan (Plan) was drafted and sent to the core team for review on July 31. The Plan will be sent to the fishery co-manager representatives on the DRT following core team review, and then to the USFWS and NMFS as part of the PROJECTS (Joint Services ESA programmatic) consultation review. The Plan considers the PROJECTS Contractor's handbook conservation measures for salvage, along with Bull Trout-specific salvage protocols from the Restoration Programmatic for the State of Washington (USACE).
 - PROJECTS programmatic materials, including a Project Effectiveness Monitoring and Adaptive Management Plan, were drafted. These materials will be reviewed by the Joint Services' River Review Team in their pending review and approval of the project under the PROJECTS programmatic.
 - A review of the project using the River Restoration Analysis Tool (RiverRAT) was completed on July 20. River RAT is a river project development and evaluation tool. It was developed by NOAA Fisheries' Northwest Fisheries Science Center to facilitate

MF Nooksack Dam Removal Project

Update #11

July
2018

- consistent and thorough evaluation of the potential impacts of proposed projects on river habitat.
- A JARPA package was finalized on July 31 and is on-track for early submittal in August. The package includes the application, supplement providing element-specific details and likely construction methods, and an updated draft preliminary design plan set.
 - A meeting was held at the DNR Natural Resources Office on July 11 to discuss approach and needs for the DNR Forest Practices Permit. A draft of the permit application was prepared.
 - **Funding –**
 - ***The project was reviewed by 32 subject matter experts and was ranked #1 in the PSAR Large Cap program's final draft ranking released on July 24th.*** The final project ranking will be confirmed September 27. This funding will cover remaining construction costs if sufficient funding is appropriated from the WA State Capital Budget to the PSAR program in 2019.
 - The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) released an RFP to grant National Coastal Resilience Funds. This funding opportunity was originally released by the NOAA Coastal Resiliency Program in the spring, but withdrawn and re-assigned to the NFWF for grant management. The team assessed the priorities identified in this funding opportunity to identify alignment with project goals, outcomes and benefits. This analysis found the project did not qualify under NFWF's revised priorities.

AUGUST 2018

- A Design Review Team (DRT) meeting was held on August 1st in Bellingham to review and refine design plans. A description of DRT purpose and membership can be found on the project webpage. Comments are due from DRT members by Wednesday, August 8.
- Input and feedback from the DRT will be incorporated in refining design plans and associated reports. In August, project design will continue to be advanced, with the next milestone deadline occurring in October. All final design and bid document deliverables are scheduled to be completed in February 2019.
- The JARPA will be submitted in early August to the USACE, WA Dept of Ecology, and DNR's Aquatic Lands Manager for review and approval for two long-lead permits for in-water work, and the DNR aquatic land use authorization.
- The Fish Salvage Plan will be distributed for DRT biologist review in August.