

RECAP

The City of Bellingham (COB), in coordination with American Rivers (AR) and partners, is proposing 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** – A draft conceptual design report was sent to the PAC and DRT for review on March 26th. Responses are due by April 11th.
- **Permitting** –
 - A draft cultural resources assessment report was provided to the core team for review on March 23. This report provides baseline information to support the USACE during consultation with the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.
 - The core team provided the USFWS and NMFS with information to support a presentation to the joint-Services Restoration Review Team (RRT). The RRT presentation is the initial step required to determine the potential applicability and use of a restoration-based programmatic Endangered Species Act (ESA) Section 7 consultation for the project.
 - A regulatory agency project introductory meeting was held on March 29th in Bellingham, WA and at the project site with representatives from the USACE, Whatcom County, WDFW, Ecology, DNR, USFWS, COB, AR, Nooksack Tribe Natural Resources, and HDR in attendance.
 - Preliminary discussions took place with: (1) Whatcom County to discuss potential shoreline permitting pathways; (2) WDFW, USACE, Nooksack tribal biologists, NMFS, and USFWS to determine the potential for, and biological appropriateness of an extended in-water work window. (3) the USACE related to project timeline and potential permitting pathways.
- **Funding** – The final project Near Term Action (NTA) proposal was submitted to the Puget Sound Partnership on March 30th, in compliance with the process schedule for NTA adoption consideration into the 2018-2022 Action Agenda of the Puget Sound Partnership. A Letter of Intent was submitted to the WRIA 1 Lead entity on March 28th, in compliance with the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) and regular PSAR application process.
- **Other** – Film footage at the dam was captured on March 21 – 23. This film will be completed promote the project, and explain the project's collaborative partnership, technical elements, and benefits. Additional summer footage will be captured in July, and the film will be finalized by September 2018.

APRIL 2018

- PAC and DRT feedback on the draft Conceptual Alternatives report is due to Steve Day (COB Project Engineer, smday@cob.org) by April 11th. Feedback will be incorporated, remaining issues addressed in the 30% design review meeting, and the draft report will be finalized in late April or early May.
- The preferred alternative is being refined. A 30% design review meeting will be held in late April or early May.
- The final scope and fees for final design (Phase 2) will be reviewed with HDR in April.
- A pre-proposal to the PSAR Large Cap program will be submitted for WRIA 1 review by April 5th, and a final proposal will be submitted to the Puget Sound Partnership on April 30th. Application materials will be drafted for full application submission to the NOAA CR program, regular PSAR and SRFB.
- Additional regulatory agency project review meetings and site visits are being held with representatives that couldn't attend on March 29th. These will occur on April 6th and 19th. HDR will continue discussions with regulatory permitting agencies and will schedule agency-specific meetings as needed.
- HDR will prepare and submit a pre-application packet to Whatcom County and schedule a pre-application meeting for both County land use and public works divisions. This will serve to guide requirements for County authorizations for both built and natural resource environments.