

OVERVIEW

The City of Bellingham (City), 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. The project has secured significant private and public funding match, has completed design and permitting, and is currently securing final funding and initiating bid document development. For more project information, including a description of the project's Partner Advisory Committee (PAC) and Design Review Team (DRT), visit the project [webpage](#).

THIS MONTH

- **Funding** –
 - The Governor's proposed budget for the 2019-21 biennium was released in January and included \$42.5 million for the Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) program. On March 25, the House Capital Budget proposal was released and includes \$43.6 million for the PSAR program. This amount fully funds the top two projects on the PSAR Large Cap list: the MF Nooksack Project and Dungeness Floodplain Project.
- **Outreach** –
 - Several MF Nooksack Project outreach items are now available for use in promoting and advocating for the project:
 - [Op-ed](#) by 42nd District Representative Sharon Shewmake published on March 7
 - [Video](#) available for download and sharing published on March 18
 - Project [website](#) updated on March 21
 - A presentation on the project was delivered on March 14 by April McEwen (AR), Steve Day (City), and Ned Currence (Nooksack Tribe) at a Timber, Forestry, and Wildlife Breakfast meeting near Mount Vernon, Washington. The meeting was coordinated by DNR's Forest Practices Coordinator.
 - Two previous external presentations overviewing the project were delivered in January and February at a Northsound Trout Unlimited chapter meeting in Bellingham, and to students in the Fisheries and Aquaculture Sciences program at Bellingham Technical College.
- **Design** –

City and AR staff provided review of the Draft 100% design plans and specifications. A meeting with HDR was held on March to discuss input and to address plan set finalization. The final design plans incorporate design review feedback and known permitting requirements.

- **Permitting –**
 - *Permits/Authorizations obtained this month:*
 - Department of Ecology CWA 401: Issued March 6
 - Department of Ecology Coastal Zone Management (CZM) Act Consistency Determination: Issued March 7
 - *Permits/Authorizations obtained previously:*
 - SEPA: Determination of Non-Significance. Issued in September.
 - Northwest Clean Air Agency Demolition Notification: Issued in January.
 - DNR Forest Practices Permit: Issued in January.
 - WDFW Hydraulic Project Approval (HPA): Issued in January.
 - USACE National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Section 106 consultation: Completed in January.
 - WDFW Management issued a letter relative to agency approval of project as fish habitat enhancement project per RCW 90.58.147, for Whatcom County Shoreline Exemption. Completed in January.
 - Joint Services Programmatic (PROJECTS) ESA Section 7 and MSA consultation: Completed in February.
 - USACE CWA 404: Completed in February, with issuance of Nationwide Permit verification.
 - ECY NPDES Construction Stormwater General Permit: Verification of coverage issued in February.
 - Whatcom County Shoreline Exemption Permit: Issued in February.
 - *Permits/Authorizations Remaining:*
 - DNR Aquatic Lands Use Authorization: requires other in-water permits to be issued prior to authorization. All other in-water permits have been issued and were sent to DNR.
 - Building Permit packages for the project were submitted to Whatcom County on March 25.

April 2019

- The State capital budget requires legislative approval, with the regular legislative session ending on April 28th. We encourage all project partners and supporters to continue vocalizing support to the Legislature for full PSAR funding of the Large Cap project list.
- An interview with King 5 to highlight the project will be conducted on April 2.
- Pending final review of the 100% design submittal by the City and American Rivers, project bid documents will begin development.
- DNR State Lands representatives will attend a site visit on April 18.