

2017 WRIA 14 Citizen Advisory Committee

Process Guide

WRIA 14 KENNEDY-GOLDSBOROUGH LEAD ENTITY

April 21, 2017

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2017 WRIA 14 Citizen Advisory Committee Salmon Habitat Recovery Process Guide

Intent

This guide establishes the WRIA¹ 14 Kennedy-Goldsborough Lead Entity (LE) process for the annual Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB)² and biennial Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) grant cycles.^{3,4} Prospective project sponsors (PS) are encouraged to use this guide when developing a project proposal. Additionally, LE Citizen Advisory Committee (LE Committee) members and the public may use this as a reference guide for the funding cycle.

Aside from establishing administrative procedures for grant funding, this guide also incorporates strategic considerations from *The Salmon Habitat Protection and Restoration Plan for Water Resource Inventory Area 14 – Kennedy / Goldsborough* (the *Freshwater Strategy*), identifies guiding documents used in ranking and rating projects and establishes operating procedures for the LE Committee and Technical Advisory Group (TAG).

Background

In the late 1990s, several salmon species were listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. In response, the Washington Legislature founded the SRFB and the LE process to ensure local expertise and interests help guide decisions to protect and restore salmon habitat. HB 2496⁵ enacted in 1998, recognizes that salmon recovery does not come from state scientist or politicians, but rather the local community and local experts working together to understand the needs of the fish. It also recognizes that local perspective coupled with a review at the state level ensures a coordinated approach that promotes the best projects, from scientific, technical and community perspectives.

¹ Major watersheds in the state delineated by the Washington State Department of Ecology and other state natural resources agencies; Washington consists of 62 WRIAs

² Funding comes the sale of state general obligation bonds and the Federal Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund, established by Congress in 2000 to reverse decline of pacific salmon and steelhead and support conservation efforts in CA, OR, WA, ID and AK.

³ Pursuant to Chapter 77.85 RCW and SRFB policies, all projects seeking funds administered by the SRFB must be reviewed and prioritized by a lead entity group.

⁴ PSAR funds are available for salmon habitat protection and restoration priorities in Puget Sound. These grants are available biennially and are awarded by the SRFB.

⁵ House Bill 2496 was backed by diverse interests including Tribal, environmental, and commercial/industrial as well as bipartisan support. The bill passed both chambers of the legislature unanimously.

Guiding Documents used for Project Ranking and Rating

The WRIA 14 TAG references strategic planning tools when rating and ranking projects. Summaries of several documents are included along with details on how these works support local, regional, state and federal efforts to recover salmon species. This list is not all-inclusive and will evolve over time.

The Freshwater Strategy

By 2004, the LE published their approach to promote the use of best available science, strategic project development, and community support for implementing HB 2496. The *Freshwater Strategy* focuses on efforts to restore Coho salmon and preserve habitats for Coho and chum salmon in freshwater environments. Coho are on a downward trend while chum runs in the South Puget Sound are healthy and it is the intent of the LE Committee to sustain these healthy populations. As outlined in The *Freshwater Strategy*, projects or programs that consider all salmonid stocks and life stages are a priority for restoration, acquisition and planning projects in WRIA 14. Tribal partners in the basin, the Squaxin Island Tribe, support the multispecies approach in the *Freshwater Strategy*, and recognize it as an important step that will lead to true recovery plans for the WRIA ecosystem.

Projects must also simultaneously address community issues and concerns in an effective and appropriate manner. The *Freshwater Strategy* lists these issues and concerns in priority order and identifies actions to address each one. Providing effective education, especially to riparian property owners, enhances commitment to habitat protection and recovery efforts. Educational efforts alongside volunteer opportunities and developing corporate and private partnerships are a few ways to promote stewardship. These partnerships help illustrate the multiple benefits of salmon habitat projects. Salmon projects utilize public funds. Providing explanation on cost benefit instills greater trust from the public. Lastly, areas in WRIA 14 that are pivotal for recovery but present outreach challenges will be pursued.

The Puget Sound Chinook Recovery Plan

LE Committee members also contributed to the development of the South Sound Regional Recovery Chapter for Puget Sound Chinook, a component of the Puget Sound Chinook Recovery Plan (the *Recovery Plan*⁶) adopted in 2007. Chinook take refuge and forage in the inlets throughout South Puget Sound. The South Puget Sound chapter of the *Recovery plan* identifies the high-priority areas for Chinook within the nearshore environment of WRIA 14, leaving freshwater habitat recovery to the LE. The *Freshwater Strategy* adopts this priority. To continue refining high-priority areas for juveniles and other salmonid species in the nearshore, the TAG utilizes the Juvenile Salmonid Nearshore Project Selection Tool (NPST⁷), developed in 2009 as a spatial update to the *Recovery Plan*. The TAG also utilizes the Coastal Catchment Nearshore Assessment (Catchment Assessment⁷) for South Puget Sound, adopted in 2016. This tool provides a strategic restoration and conservation framework for the

⁶ The Endangered Species Act requires development of Recovery Plans for listed species. Plans must incorporate:

1. A description of site-specific management actions necessary to achieve recovery,
2. Objective, measurable criteria which, when met, would result in a determination that the species be removed from the list; and
3. Cost and time estimates for achieving plan goals

⁷ For more information, see

<http://maps.squaxin.us/arcgis/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=8e51caf8172941c5a130cacf1a38f2f9>

nearshore by assessing shoreline and neighboring upland catchments for key ecological functions and habitats.

Nearshore Prioritization Tools

The Catchment Assessment utilizes data from a number of sources to provide a strategic restoration and conservation framework for the nearshore. Using the shoreline and upland catchment evaluation, the tool identified geographic priorities for protection, conservation, restoration and enhancement actions. These areas constitute approximately 37% of the South Sound shoreline and represent the greatest likelihood for successful implementation over time.

The NPST identifies priority salmon habitats⁸, evaluates the presence of attributes that would improve the quality of the habitat⁹, and produces a spatial representation of areas of the South Sound nearshore where protection and restoration projects would most benefit juvenile salmon. The Catchment Assessment and NPST models work in tandem to identify priorities areas for restoration.^{10,11}

The South Sound Strategy

The Alliance for a Healthy South Sound, made up of tribal and county elected officials, serves as the lead initiating organization for implementation of the Puget Sound Partnership's Action Agenda¹². In support of this effort, the South Sound Strategy (SSS) was developed. The SSS is a science-based resource that identifies key regions in South Puget Sound, the ecological function of these areas, development pressures affecting these functions and strategies for protecting and improving species and habitat. The Strategy sets out numeric targets for protection and improvement and juxtaposes them with recommendations generated from the NPST and the Catchment Assessment.

The *Freshwater Strategy*, the *Recovery Plan*, the Catchment Analysis/NPST and the SSS establish the lens that project sponsors use to identify priority projects and the TAG uses when rating and ranking project proposals. This review ensures projects proposed for funding by the LE to the SRFB are scientifically and technically sound while addressing community issues and concerns in an effective manner.

Vision, Mission, Strategic Goals and Outcomes

The *Freshwater Strategy* identifies a vision, mission, strategic goals and desired outcomes to achieve healthy populations of Coho, Chinook and steelhead, sustain and enhance chum populations as well as protect and enhance habitat conditions for other aquatic and terrestrial species.

⁸ In the South Sound, this includes pocket estuaries, salmonid bearing freshwater tributaries, eelgrass beds, and emergent marsh.

⁹ Attributes may include saltmarsh and proximity to fresh water inputs.

¹⁰ Like the Catchment Assessment, use of the NPST results in both a numeric value for targets and a set of geographies where work will be most fruitful. Where NPST habitats and Catchment Assessment priorities do not intersect, larger or more clustered projects are recommended. Used together with the Catchment Assessment, the two models identify 15 percent, or 62.7 miles, as a priority.

¹¹ Alliance for a Healthy South Sound, *South Sound Strategy* (Fall 2016), last downloaded from <http://www.healthysouthsound.org/south-sound-strategy/> on February 28, 2017

¹² The Action Agenda outlines regional strategies and specific actions needed to protect and restore the Puget Sound.

Vision and Mission

We envision natural watershed processes in the freshwater and marine environments of WRIA 14 that preserve or enhance biologically diverse runs of salmon capable of self-sustaining natural reproduction. We will achieve this by implementing strategic actions to maximize the productive capacity of the habitat.

We also envision a community that supports these efforts through land-use and development choices that emphasize naturally functioning aquatic systems. We will do this by working with local partners to provide outreach and education information to the public in many different forms to reach and involve the broadest possible segments of the population.

Strategic goals

The LE identified five strategies to support the maximization of productive habitat capacity in WRIA 14:

- Protect habitat through conservation easements and acquisition where the habitat is intact
- Restore functions in areas where natural processes can be recovered, not just symptoms treated
- Address gaps in our knowledge of fish populations, fish use, and condition of natural processes
- Give priority to projects that directly benefit high priority salmonid stocks
- Give priority to intact watersheds

These goals align with objectives identified in the [Guiding Documents](#) listed above.

Desired Outcomes

In fulfilling these strategic goals, the LE Committee will promote results that support salmon habitat restoration and preservation. The LE Committee will also provide project recommendations that demonstrate fiscal soundness and community support. Other deliverables include transparent and efficient processes that enhance community support and awareness for these projects. Specific outcomes include:

- A process to rank and coordinate projects for SRFB and PSAR funding,
- Integration of the *Freshwater Strategy* into the larger South Puget Sound Salmon Recovery
- Increased public awareness of salmon habitat needs
- Increased predictability of success when applying for project funding
- Renewed funding
- Building a positive reputation and strong relationships between the community, government organizations and co-managers
- Participation of citizens in restoring and protecting salmon habitat
- Maintenance and strengthening momentum for salmon recovery
- Habitat conditions that support historical salmonid distributions

Project Priorities and Geographic Regions in the Fresh Water

As a general approach, lowland freshwater habitat suitable for chum spawning is a priority for protection and restoration. Chum runs remain healthy and maintaining that health is a priority. Coho are a priority stock for both protection and restoration as populations in the Puget Sound are in decline. This headwater species is dependent upon the freshwater for major portions of its life stages, as they spend up to two years in the streams before out-migrating to the marine waters.

The Co-managers (Squaxin Island Tribe, WDFW) have developed a stream ranking model for the South Sound (2005), based on basin size, intactness, and species use, among other parameters (Table 1). The TAG uses this chart as a prioritization tool in project rating and ranking. While this ranking identifies the largest healthiest streams capable of producing the most fish, using the ranking in the strategy is not as simple as limiting projects to these “key streams”. Projects that reside outside these basins may achieve priorities as specified in the guiding documents.

Table 1. Stream ranking using the Co-manager’s model, as adopted by the LE.

Tier		
A	B	C
Cranberry	Campbell	Pickering Passage Tribs
Deer	County Line	Shelton
Goldsborough	Hiawata	Uncle Johns
Gosnell / Mill	Lynch	
Johns	Malaney	
Kennedy	Schneider	
Schumocher / Sherwood	Snodgrass	
Skookum		

Annual Grant Round

The TAG and the LE Committee rate and rank the proposed SRFB and PSAR projects for each grant round. The TAG discusses elements of the project that relate to benefits to salmon and certainty of success while the LE Committee discusses elements of the project that relate to community concerns. For more details on LE Committee and TAG roles and responsibilities, refer to [Group and LE Committee Roles](#) section that follows. This discussion begins each year in March when project sponsors submit their Letter of Intent (LOI) for proposed projects and continues until November when the LE submits the final prioritized project list to the SRFB. The grant round concludes each December when the SRFB awards grant funding.

This annual grant round meets the requirements of state statute creating the SRFB and the LE program and is designed to ensure that proposed projects are scientifically and technically sound, address priority issues, align with the LE’s strategies, and are broadly supported by diverse community interests.

Annual WRIA 14 Grant Process Timeline 2017¹³

March 10	DUE DATE: Project Sponsor (PS) submits Letter of Intent (LOI) / 4-Year Work Plan (4YWP) forms to the Lead Entity Coordinator (LEC).
March 13	LEC distributes LOI/4YWP forms to the LE Committee in preparation for 3/16 mtg.
March 16	LE COMMITTEE MEETING: Sponsors provide brief description of their LOI. LE Committee provides feedback. LE Committee reviews, discusses and adopts additions to the 4YWP.
April 11	DUE DATE: Project sponsor completes draft application in PRISM, inclusive of all attachments. Do not press 'submit.'
April 20	LE COMMITTEE MEETING: Process guide revision approval and get to know other committee members.
May 9	SITE VISITS: Project sponsors provide project overview to the LE Committee, RCO staff and Review Panel (RP) members on site.
June 1	SRFB Review Panel provides comments to Project Sponsor.
June 15	DUE DATE: Project sponsor completes final application in PRISM, but DO NOT click 'submit'. Final application is submit in August.
June 16	Technical Advisory Group (TAG) and LE Committee receive final application materials.
June 22	LE COMMITTEE Meeting: PS delivers Project Presentations
July 6	DUE DATE: TAG submits ranking sheets to LEC.
July 13	TAG RANKING MEETING
July 20	LE COMMITTEE RANKING MEETING
August 10	DUE DATE: PS clicks 'submits' in PRISM sending the application to RCO.
Sept 29	RP provides comments and project status: A status will be identified for all projects as either 'Clear', 'Conditioned', 'Need More Information (NMI)', or 'Project of Concern (POC)'.
Oct 12	DUE DATE: PS response to RP comments for conditioned, NMI, and POC projects.
Oct 23-25	Regional area project meeting: Flagged, projects of concern and conditional projects will have an opportunity to discuss issues directly with the RP during a presentation.
Nov 1	RP finalizes project comments based on application, site visits, PS responses to comments, and presentations during the regional area meeting and submits to SRFB.
Nov 7	DUE DATE: LE submits final signed copy of ranked list to SRFB. No changes after this date.
Dec 6-7	SRFB funding meeting: SRFB awards grants during December meeting in Olympia. Public comment period available.

¹³ The lead entity reserves time on a monthly basis (third Thursday of each month) to convene the LE Committee as necessary. If a meeting is required, agenda and supplemental material will be made available one week in advance.

Grant Process Timeline To-Dos and Deliverables

1. **Submitting a Letter of Intent (LOI)** (due March 10, 2017): The LOI serves two functions. It notifies the LE of the PS intent to apply for funding during the current grant round. It also initiates dialogue between the PS and the LE Committee to ensure projects are ready to proceed. It does not obligate the PS to submit a full proposal. To be considered for funding, all projects must submit a LOI and be listed on the current 4-Year Work Plan (4YWP). LOI are disclosed to the public via the Mason Conservation District website. Once the LOI is submitted, LEC provides PS with a PRISM number. With the PRISM number, the PS may begin their project application and their project becomes accessible to the public via the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) PRISM database.
2. **Updating the 4YWP:** (due March 10, 2017): The plan is updated annually and functions as a capital improvement plan to facilitate the multiple layers of SRFB review. It also focuses on the most strategically important projects for salmon, identifies the status of recovery actions and proposes future actions to implement the *Recovery Plan*. All projects proposed for SRFB and PSAR funding must be listed on the plan. Exceptions may exist, but these must be approved by the Committee and justified within the meeting summary. All projects listed on the plan, as well as all funded projects and those identified within local studies are listed on the Habitat Work Schedule <http://hws.ekosystem.us/>. The schedule includes project summaries, details on implementation, project progress and relevant background reports. In 2017, only new projects will be added to the 4YWP in March. A more thorough update will occur in fall 2017.
3. **Submitting the Draft Application** (due April 11, 2017): Complete draft application and attachments must be entered into PRISM at this time. See [RCO draft application checklist](#) for more details. The more thorough the project is at this stage, the more meaningful the feedback from the LE Committee, RCO and the Review Panel (RP). Do not hit “submit” in PRISM; final submission happens Aug. 10, 2017.
4. **Conducting Site visits and Project Presentations** (scheduled for May 9, 2017): PS lead site visits for the benefit of the LE Committee and the SRFB RP.
5. **Review Panel Comments:** (available around June 1, 2017) The RP attends the site visit and provides written comments and feedback on how PS can improve their projects. The Puget Sound Partnership review panel also provides comments accessing how projects address goals and priorities outlined in the *Recovery Plan* and the 4YWP.
6. **Project sponsor revises application** (due June 15, 2017): Once RP comments are received, PS updates their application (using track changes) to address these comments. Additionally applications can be revised for any changes that have occurred during the interim. See [RCO Final Application Checklist](#) for more details.
7. **Conducting Project Presentations** (scheduled for June 22, 2017): PS deliver presentations to the LE Committee and the TAG before ranking and rating. PS will prepare a 20-minute PowerPoint presentation with 10-minutes for questions. This is the opportunity for the PS to present

updates since site visits and address ranking criteria not clearly outlined in the proposal.

8. **TAG submits ranking sheets to LEC:** (due July 6, 2017) LEC compiles results, calculates z-scores and distributes for use at July 13, 2017 **TAG Ranking meeting**.
9. **TAG Ranking meeting:** (scheduled for July 13, 2017) See [Project Ranking Process](#) section for more details.
10. **LE Committee Ranking meeting:** (scheduled for July 20, 2017) See [Project Ranking Process](#) section for details on this process. Also around this time, the Puget Sound Partnership review panel provides comments assessing how projects address goals and priorities outlined in the *Recovery Plan* and the 4YWP.
11. **PS responds to RP comments:** (due October 12, 2017) The RP provides a second round of comments for projects identified as conditioned, need more information (NMI) or project of concern (POC). The PS responses directly on their applications in PRISM using track changes. **If no responses to comments are received from the sponsor by this date, RCO staff will assume the project has been withdrawn from funding consideration.**
12. **SRFB review and final funding decision** (scheduled for Dec 6-7): SRFB announces funding decisions at a public meeting in December. The public and PS may provide comments during an open comment period at this meeting. Prior to the final funding decision, the RP calls a meeting with PS of POC projects. A PS with a POC project who wishes to continue pursuing funding must seek approval from the LE Committee to present at this meeting. Please see RCO website for more information on comment submittal. During this meeting, the SRFB will review the project list, LE strategy summaries, regional input, the RP report, staff and public comments.

Group and LE Committee Roles

The fundamental role of the LE Committee is to review, score and rank all projects submitted to the LE and the SRFB for funding, in accordance with RCW 77.85. The LE Committee members represent the counties, Tribes, environmental community, citizens, landowners, state and federal agencies, agriculture, and other interested entities in the WRIA. Individuals from the LE Committee with sufficient technical expertise may also participate in TAG. Please see [Operating Procedures](#) for details on LE Committee and TAG participation requirements.

Technical Advisory Group

The TAG is often the most knowledgeable about local habitat processes, biology, watersheds and their habitat conditions as well as the status of salmon populations in the WRIA. Their expertise is invaluable to ensure priorities and projects encompass ecological conditions and processes. They are also the best judges of the technical merits and the certainty of a project's technical success. This group also assists

the PS to improve the technical aspects of proposed projects and ensure alignment with the Guiding Documents.

The TAG will evaluate projects to assess their degree of integration with other projects in the same watershed, consistency with the Guiding Documents, benefit to salmonids, number of species affected, how limiting factors are addressed, and budget, timing and permit requirements. When reviewing an assessment project, the TAG considers fit to the Guiding Documents, acknowledgement of data gaps, or eventual development of priority on the ground projects.

The TAG shall be composed of representatives from federal, state and local government, Tribes and individuals that possess the appropriate expertise and training to provide technical advice on habitat preservation and restoration issues. Fields of expertise represented on this group have included habitat and fisheries biologist, restoration ecologist, hydrologist, fluvial geomorphologists, and engineers. TAG membership may include representatives from the Squaxin Island Tribe, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group, Wild Fish Conservancy, Mason County, Mason Conservation District, the Capitol Land Trust, and US Fish and Wildlife Service. For additional details on membership qualifications, please see [Operating Procedures](#).

The TAG shall also be a standing technical advisory body for the LE Committee. It shall meet as needed to provide guidance for the LEC and the LE Committee.

Citizen's Advisory Committee

The LE Committee members are critical to ensure that projects have the necessary community support for success. They also determine the final ranked project list for submission to the SRFB, using the technically ranked list as well as the CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE PRIORITIZATION GUIDANCE.

The LE Committee is recognized in statute (RCW 77.85.050) and shall be comprised of representatives from counties, cities, conservation districts, Tribes, environmental groups, business interests, landowners, citizens, volunteer groups, and other habitat Interests. LE Committee membership may include representatives from Mason County, Thurston County, City of Shelton, Capitol Land Trust, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Watershed Council Members, Allyn Salmon Enhancement Group, Washington Association of Realtors, Interested Citizens, Landowners, and the Mason Conservation District. TAG members may qualify to participate in the LE Committee. For additional details on membership qualifications, please see [Operating Procedures](#).

Project Ranking Process

The LE Committee must rate and rank every project application submitted to ensure consistency with the *Freshwater Strategy* and other Guiding Documents. The TAG considers benefits to salmon, certainty of success, consistency with strategies and cost/benefit. Their recommendation is shared with the LE Committee, who also considers cultural and social benefits, economic considerations, project context/organization and partnerships/community support. This coordinated structure ensures that projects recommended for funding to the SRFB are scientifically and technically sound as well as

acknowledging community values. The ultimate goal of the LE Committee is to develop a list of ranked salmon habitat projects in WRIA 14 for submission to the SRFB.

Opportunities to learn, critique and deliberate on Project Applications

During site visits, TAG Project Reviewer Scoresheets and the Citizen Advisory Committee Prioritization Guidance will be distributed. Site visits are an important opportunity for the TAG and LE Committee members to see the site and formulate questions, comments, concerns and suggestions to help inform final project development. Two additional opportunities to learn about the projects are available following the site visit, open to both TAG and LE Committee members. Project presentations given approximately 3 weeks prior to the TAG and 4 weeks prior to LE Committee ranking meetings, provide an opportunity to ask questions and learn about the projects in a face-to-face setting. The presentations offer an important opportunity to review how the PS has responded to comments from the RP and the TAG/LE Committee during site visits. The presentations will be the first opportunity to hear about the project in its final form. Project applications will also be distributed to TAG and LE Committee members for review on their own, approximately one month prior to the final ranking meetings.

After TAG members receive the ranking sheets, they will submit their individual recommendations to the LEC one week prior to the TAG RANKING MEETING. While the WRIA 14 Kennedy-Goldsborough LE continuously seeks opportunities to increase participation in the TAG in order to achieve a 100% neutral group, PS currently serve on the TAG. They do not submit ranking sheets on behalf of their own projects. During the week prior to the ranking meeting, the LEC will calculate z-scores and compile scoresheets for distribution to the entire TAG. The z-score is used to compare individual scores within the normal distribution and are used during the final TAG deliberation.

In addition to a ranked list based on z-scores, TAG members also receive raw scores and ranking sheets for use during the TAG RANKING MEETING. With these documents in hand, members will consider factors that are challenging to quantify but nonetheless may affect project feasibility¹⁴. Any changes to the ranked project list require a 2/3 majority of the quorum and a written justification documented in the meeting notes. PS may not participate in this discussion and vote. They will be admitted to the room, but asked to remain quiet during discussions save for questions asked directly of them by a TAG member. PS may not advocate for their proposals or discuss other proposals during the ranking meeting. A PS who fails to follow this ground rule receives a verbal warning. If the conduct continues, they are asked to leave. On an annual basis, TAG members reviews potential or perceived conflicts of interest brought forth and develop a course of action. Members, in addition to the Project Sponsors, with a conflict of interest will be asked to recuse themselves from the TAG RANKING MEETING. Please see [Operating Procedures](#) for additional information on the conflict of interest policy.

The final TAG ranked list, individual scoresheets and any written justifications for ranking changes are shared with the LE Committee. TAG members who aren't PS or without a conflict of interest are encouraged to participate in the LE Committee. These TAG members will provide an important

¹⁴ Factors include timing (is it critical that this project be funding during this grant cycle?), permitting (will necessary permits be in place before construction begins?) and funding (does this project have secured match; can this project be funded by other revenue sources?).

perspective during the COMMITTEE RANKING MEETING. They are available to share details on the TAG deliberation and explain the TAG cost benefit analysis.

At the LE COMMITTEE RANKING MEETING, members use the TAG ranked list and supporting documents as a starting point for further discussion. The LE Committee also considers the CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE PRIORITIZATION GUIDANCE to develop the final ranked list for submission to the SRFB. This guidance lays out qualitative factors representing community values. Any changes to the ranked project list require a 2/3 majority of the quorum with a written justification captured in the meeting notes. On an annual basis, the LE Committee reviews potential or perceived conflicts of interest brought forth and develops a course of action. Members with a conflict of interest or PS are recused from the LE COMMITTEE RANKING MEETING. A PS may attend the meeting to answer questions asked of them but may not participate in the discussion or vote. Ground rules established above for TAG RANKING MEETING participation also apply here. Please see [Operating Procedures](#) for additional information on the conflict of interest policy.

The LE strives to reach consensus on ranking between all members. If a consensus isn't possible, a vote will be taken in accordance with the [Operating Procedures](#). The LEC will document descending votes and include them with the final ranking to the SRFB. PS not present during the LE COMMITTEE RANKING MEETING will receive notice of the decision within one business day. Finally, the LEC compiles the ranked list of proposals and submits them as one package to the SRFB for funding consideration.

The public is welcome to attend this meeting as well as other LE Committee meetings during the year and provide comments at specified times. To participate in a vote, members of the public must be recognized LE Committee members and fulfill participation requirements. See [Operating Procedures](#) for additional information. Meeting agendas will be available on the Mason Conservation District For more information contact:

WRIA 14 Lead Entity Coordinator
Jennifer Holderman
jholderman@masoncd.org
360.427.9436 ext. 101.

Operating Procedures

1.0 Purpose and Authority

1.1 Name

The name of this Lead Entity (LE) is WRIA 14 Kennedy-Goldsborough Lead Entity.

1.2 Purpose

The LE shall function as a non-governmental extension of the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB), independent of local, state, tribal, or federal government except as mandated by RCW 77.85.

The primary purpose of the LE is to develop habitat recovery project lists for the Salmon Recovery Funding Board. To aid in the development of each project list, the LE will also develop a strategy document to guide the selection and ranking of projects. Project lists shall be prioritized in a way that preserves or restores habitat capable of sustaining salmon populations, as outlined in the strategy. Prioritized lists of habitat projects shall be presented to the SRFB for consideration.

The LE shall also identify potential federal, state, local and private funding sources to implement habitat recovery projects in WRIA 14. The LE will attempt to match funding sources to appropriate projects in an effort to maximize the benefit to salmon and the community.

1.3 Geographic Boundaries

The boundaries of WRIA 14 include the shoreline of Hammersley, Skookum, Eld, Totten and Case Inlets, Pickering, Squaxin and Peale Passages, Oakland Bay, and the freshwater streams that drain into them.

2.0 Organization

2.1 Lead Entity

The governing organizations (Mason County, Thurston County, the City of Shelton and the Squaxin Island Tribe) designated the Lead Entity who in turn established the Citizens Advisory Committee (LE Committee) and Technical Advisory Group (TAG). It also includes the Coordinator and the Grant Administrator, as staff support to the LE Committee and TAG and fulfilling grant reporting requirements to RCO.

The LE develops strategies for habitat restoration and protection and supports projects that carry these strategies forward. Through the annual grant round and the rating and ranking of projects, the LE recommends the sequence for getting these projects on the ground. The TAG reviews the scientific validity and the technical feasibility of proposed projects. The LE Committee considers social, economic and cultural values associated with proposed projects. These perspectives inform the LE Committee as they adopt the final ranked list of projects and submit it to the SRFB.

2.2 Lead Entity Coordinator

The Lead Entity Coordinator (LEC) is an employee of the Mason Conservation District, facilitates LE Committee meetings and the LE process. The LEC will be responsible for the orderly conduct of meetings, pursuit of the lead entity's mission and other administrative duties as required. The

coordinator is authorized to represent the lead entity in public meetings but cannot commit the LE Committee to any action without expressed permission. Issues pursuant to the organization of the lead entity shall be vetted to the LE Committee. Additionally the LEC facilitates the SRFB process, represents and serves all project sponsors and LE Committee members equally. They also advocate for the LE and its projects in all local, regional and statewide meetings. The LEC will not present projects for review to the LE Committee.

2.3 Grant Administrator

The governing organizations (Mason County, Thurston County, City of Shelton and the Squaxin Tribe) appointed the Mason Conservation District to conduct administrative duties of the LE.

2.4 Citizens Advisory Committee

The Citizens Advisory Committee (LE Committee) shall be comprised of representative interests from counties, cities, conservation districts, tribes, environmental groups, business interests, landowners, citizens, volunteer groups, regional fish enhancement groups and other habitat interests. The representatives will provide a citizen-based evaluation of the projects proposed for salmon habitat restoration and conservation. This LE Committee approves the final project list to be submitted to the SRFB for review and funding. The LE Committee has the authority to re-rank the proposed project list from the TAG based on community criteria established within the Citizen Advisory Committee Prioritization Guidance.

2.5 Technical Advisory Group

The TAG serves in an advisory role to the LE Committee and provides a ranked list of proposed projects based on technical and scientific merits to determine readiness to proceed and fulfillment of strategy and regional plan priorities.

The TAG shall be composed of representatives from federal, state and local government, Tribes and individuals that possess the appropriate expertise and training to provide technical advice on habitat preservation and restoration issues. The TAG shall be a standing technical advisory body for the LE Committee. It shall meet as needed to review projects and perform tasks as necessary with the guidance of the coordinator and the LE Committee. The TAG shall work with project sponsors to refine projects and ensure they reflect the intent of the guiding documents.

2.6 Sub-committees

The LE Committee may appoint or request a special sub-committee from the Committee membership as needed, to accomplish the mission of the lead entity.

2.7 Membership and Attendance

Membership is voluntary. Active participation is however encouraged.

2.8 Meetings

Meetings shall be open to the public and advertised to the extent possible. Meeting frequency, time and location shall be at the discretion of the LE Committee.

2.9 Potential Conflict of Interest

A potential conflict of interest may constitute a direct or indirect financial benefit for a LE Committee member resulting from project implementation. Other than direct or indirect financial benefits, it is also important to manage for the appearance of a conflict of interest or a perceived conflict of interest. A perceived conflict of interest may result in injuring the credibility of the LE Committee and the process of allocating public funds. If a member may benefit financially, sits on the project sponsor organization Board of Directors, is an employee of the applicant's organization, has a family relation and/or has other ties to a project, two approaches may be taken to address this concern.

One option for addressing potential or perceived conflicts of interest involves self-identification and recusal, where the member notifies the LEC of the conflict and recommends recusal. In the alternative, if an opportunity for self-identification is overlooked, other members may bring this concern to the LEC, who will then bring it to the larger group. A member that brings forth their concern to the LEC may opt to have their name redacted for the purpose of the LE Committee discussion. The LEC will then collate potential conflicts of interest and share them with the LE Committee on an annual basis. The LE Committee discusses the concerns and either affirms the recommendation or suggests another approach to address the concern. If a member is unclear whether their relationship with an applicant or proposal constitutes a potential or perceived conflict of interest, members are encouraged to highlight their situation to the LE Committee. The group will then jointly decide whether it constitutes an actual conflict of interest and decide on an approach to address the concern. The LE Committee ultimately decides if a potential or perceived conflict of interest rises to the level of intervention and/or recusal. When a conflict of interest arises outside the annual declaration process, members are encouraged to bring forth these concerns to be addressed immediately.

This policy applies to all LE Committee and TAG members and support staff, including project sponsors who serve on the TAG. The WRIA 14 Kennedy-Goldsborough LE continuously seeks opportunities to increase participation in the TAG in order to achieve a 100% neutral group. If the LEC is subject to this policy, a member selected by the workgroup may serve the role as facilitator during the conversation. LE Committee members will review and certify this policy on an annual basis. Prior knowledge of the proposal or prior contact with the applicant alone does not constitute a conflict of interest.

3.0 Guiding Documents

3.1 4 Year Workplan

The plan is updated annually and functions as a capital improvement plan to facilitate the multiple layers of SRFB review while focusing on the most strategically important projects for salmon. It also identifies the status of recovery actions and proposes future actions in the next four years necessary to implement the *Recovery Plan*. All projects proposed for SRFB and PSAR funding must be listed on the plan. Exceptions may exist, but these must be approved by the LE Committee and justified within the meeting summary.

3.2 The Freshwater Strategy

Each LE develops a recovery strategy to guide its selection and ranking of projects. The strategy prioritizes geographic areas and types of restoration and protection activities, identifies salmon species

needs, and identifies local socio-economic and cultural factors as they relate to salmon recovery. These stakeholder-supported strategies increase effective decision-making by Lead Entities and define and clarify roles between Lead Entities and the broader salmon recovery planning environment. *The Salmon Habitat Protection and Restoration Plan for Water Resource Inventory Area 14 – Kennedy / Goldsborough (The Freshwater Strategy)* is the Salmon Habitat Recovery Strategy for WRIA 14 LE.

3.3 Chinook Recovery Plan

The Puget Sound Chinook Recovery Plan (the *Recovery Plan*) adopted in 2007 describes objectives, measurable criteria and management actions necessary to achieve recovery. The South Sound chapter identifies the high-priority areas within the nearshore environment of WRIA 14. Please see [Recovery Plan: South Sound Chapter](#) for more information.

3.4 South Sound Strategy

The Alliance for a Healthy South Sound developed the South Sound Strategy (SSS) to support implementation of the Puget Sound Partnership’s Action Agenda. The SSS is a science-based resource that identifies key regions in South Puget Sound, their ecological functions, development pressures affecting these functions and strategies for protecting and improving species and habitat. The Strategy sets out numeric targets for protection and improvement and juxtaposes them with recommendations generated from the NPST and the Catchment Assessment. Please see [SSS](#) for more information

3.5 Project Selection Tools

The Juvenile Salmonid Nearshore Project Selection Tool (NPST) was developed in 2009 as a spatial update to the *Recovery Plan*. The TAG also utilizes the Coastal Catchment Nearshore Assessment (Catchment Assessment) for South Puget Sound, adopted in 2016. This tool provides a strategic restoration and conservation framework for the nearshore by assessing shoreline and neighboring upland catchments for key ecological functions and habitats. These models work in tandem to identify priorities areas for restoration. Please see [Project Selection Tools](#) for more information.

4.0 Process and Administration

4.1 Representative Organization

As outlined with RCW 77.85.050, membership on each LE Committee should represent the local community and include counties, cities, conservation districts, tribes, environmental groups, business interests, landowners, citizens, volunteer groups, regional fish enhancement groups and other habitat interests. Organizations are eligible to have one representative on the LE Committee and one on the TAG, as each LE Committee is responsible for ranking proposals on different and specific criteria.

4.2 Voting Members

When a vote is called for, each representative organization shall appoint one person to participate. Voters shall be informed participants, actively involved in the business of the LE Committee.

To qualify as a voting member aside from the RANKING MEETING, individuals must attend two meetings prior to the vote and have reviewed the current year’s 4YWP and the Guiding Documents. To qualify as a voting member for purposes of the RANKING MEETINGS, TAG and LE Committee members must

attend either site visits or project presentations, review applications on their own and be familiar from with the 4YWP and the Guiding Documents. Members who are also current project sponsors or who have an identified conflict of interest are excluded from participate in the RANKING MEETING aside from answering questions directed to them. Please see Operating Procedure for Potential Conflict of Interest for more details. Members of the public are welcome to give comments and ask questions during the annual ranking meeting but may not vote unless they fulfill these requirements.

4.3 Decision making

Prior to a decision, the LE Committee shall engage in a full and open discussion of the alternatives and opinions. The preference for decision-making is unanimous agreement, which may require tabling a motion for further discussion. In certain cases, tabling an issue may not be practical due to time or administrative requirements. Then, it shall be the responsibility of the LEC to refer the matter to the LE Committee for a vote. The LE Committee shall first vote to determine the matter is of such consequence and urgency that a vote is required. The outcome of all voted decisions shall be recorded in the minutes. Dissenting individuals may submit written opinions for inclusion in the minutes.

For changes to the project ranking, voting decisions pass with a two-thirds majority of a quorum. All other decisions require a simple majority of a quorum. If a vote fails, discussion continues until it can be satisfied. The LEC will strive to ensure that all members may express their thoughts and will provide additional information as available and necessary to resolve an impasse.

A quorum of voting membership must be present to conduct a vote. A quorum of members will be one-third of the current voting member roster or five (whichever is greater) without a conflict of interest. These rules do not restrict the number of people who may participate in meetings, merely those who may participate in voting decisions.

The decisions of the LE Committee are final.

4.3 Changes to Operating Procedures

The LE Committee shall operate under these procedures. A simple majority of the voting members may alter them. A quorum of the voting membership must be present to conduct a vote.

4.4 Meeting Summary

Meeting summaries are prepared for each meeting, posted to the Mason County District website and kept on file.

5.0 Project Evaluations

5.1 Project Lists

Evaluation of salmon habitat preservation and restoration project list is the primary mission of the LE Committee. The evaluation of the projects is based on *Manual 18 Appendix L Guide for Lead Entity Project Evaluation (2017)*. Projects, which do not meet these criteria, shall be eliminated from further consideration.

5.2 Project Priorities

Projects shall be evaluated in a systematic way. The TAG is responsible for developing systematic and objective criteria for evaluating and ranking project lists. The LE Committee is responsible for considering community issues and concerns. Project priorities will be based on the Guiding Documents.

5.3 Public Outreach

Public outreach should strive to promote public support for salmon habitat restoration. Guidance for public outreach component is provided in the strategic plan and will be addressed in the development of the annual plan of work for the LE Committee. Outreach possibilities include articles in local newspapers, participation in county festivals and fairs, publications educating the public, sponsoring signage at local streams, participation in other county and city environmental efforts.

APPENDIX A CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE PRIORITIZATION GUIDANCE

WRIA 14 LEAD ENTITY

The Citizens Advisory Committee (LE Committee) will utilize the Technical Advisory Group's (TAG) review process and their ranked project list as the basis for prioritization. The LE Committee will rely on a qualitative process, using the considerations listed below for discussion, to arrive at the final list for submittal to the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB). Any changes to the TAG ranked project list require a 2/3 majority and written justification by the LE Committee based on these considerations. The LE Committee recommends that project sponsors consider these qualitative factors when developing a project application and presentation.

The SRFB provides funding for elements necessary to achieve overall salmon recovery, including habitat projects and other activities that result in sustainable and measurable benefits for salmon and other fish species. The LE Committee will keep this mission in mind as a primary factor while reviewing projects.

PROGRESS TOWARDS SALMON HABITAT RECOVERY

- Is the cumulative effect of the list of projects moving us closer to salmon recovery?
- Does this project address an imminent threat to habitat? Does it represent the next step in a larger habitat strategy? Does it fill a priority data gap identified by the freshwater strategy or other south sound work?

This document functions as guidance and not strict criteria. These elements are intended to provide examples; projects aren't required to fulfill all elements. Other elements for the committee to consider include:

COMMUNITY IMPACT & EDUCATION ISSUES

- Does the surrounding community support this project? Who is that community and how can you substantiate that support?
- Is there any community opposition to this project and how has that opposition been addressed?
- Will this project educate the public and raise their awareness about salmon and habitat protection/restoration issues? If so, how and whom?
- Will this project receive any publicity/visibility? How and whose attention will it gain? Will this publicity be helpful to salmon recovery efforts?
- Does this project have the capacity to generate more community support, additional investments and new project opportunities in the future? From whom and how?

PROJECT COST ISSUES

- Is the project cost justified? Are the cost estimates reasonable?
- What opportunities have been gained or lost if this project is funded over others?
- Is this project appropriate for SRFB or PSP Salmon Funds?

OTHER ISSUES

- Are there projects that give you pause? Could this project compromise the credibility of SRFB investments? Why?

APPENDIX B TAG RANKING CRITERIA

A note from Scott Steltzner on Squaxin Island Fisheries priorities:

The Squaxin Island Tribe Natural Resources Department supports the salmon habitat protection and restoration strategy adopted by WRIA 14. The Tribe views this document as an important step that will lead to true recovery plans for the WRIA's ecosystem.

The Squaxin Island Tribal Council has mandated that all species and their habitat be recovered to sustainable and harvestable levels. However, the Council recognizes that faced with limited resources prioritization must occur at the species, geographic or project level. Tribal priority species for salmonids which are mirrored in the strategy include chum, coho, cutthroat and steelhead for freshwater systems and chum, coho, cutthroat, steelhead and Chinook for marine waters.

The Tribe looks forward to working with our partners at the State and local level in taking the next step of using the information contained in the strategy to devise true ecosystem recovery plans.

Category	Project Type	Criteria	Total Possible Points	% of Total Score	Evaluator's Score
<u>ACTION AND AREAS</u>					
	All	Is the project occurring in and aligned with priorities for salmon recovery according to the General Stream Priority matrix (see above), the Nearshore Project Selection Tool and/or Coastal Catchment Analysis (https://maps.squaxin.us/flex/hotss/), or the South Sound Strategy (http://www.healthysouthsound.org/south-sound-strategy/).	5	8%	
<u>BENEFIT TO SALMON</u>					
	Planning	Is the project filling a data gap and/or developing designs that will lead to high priority process based restoration and/or conservation actions, OR is the project filling an important data gap that will improve scientifically justified priority setting for future grant rounds?	10	15%	
	Acquisition	Is the project protecting land that contains more than 60% intact habitat (not degraded) and is important to support critical ecosystem functions? If less than 60% then does the project include restoration? NOTE: if acquisition is to support restoration evaluators are encouraged to consider restoration criteria below.			
	Restoration	Is the project addressing high priority habitat features and/or watershed processes that significantly improve salmonid abundance, productivity, spatial structure, and/or diversity?			
<u>FEASIBILITY</u>					
	All	Can the project as it is proposed accomplish the identified goals and objectives? Is the scope appropriate for meeting the goals and objectives? Does the sponsor have the necessary expertise and/or experience to accomplish the goals and objectives?	3	5%	
<u>SPECIES</u>					
	All	Is there documented fish habitat in the project area? Does the project support multiple salmonid species? (Chum, Coho, Chinook, Steelhead/Rainbow Trout, Pink, Sockeye, and/or Cutthroat). Does the project support Squaxin Island Tribal fish priorities (see statement above)?	10	15%	
<u>LIFE HISTORY</u>					
	All	Does the project address an important life history stage that limits the salmonid species abundance and/or productivity or does the Project address multiple life history stages and requirements?	6	9%	
<u>COST</u>					
	All	Does the project represent a sound investment of public funds? Is the project cost reasonable relative to the predicted benefits? Is the cost reasonable when compared to other similar projects? If not, has appropriate justification been given to explain those cost differences?	7	11%	
<u>APPROACH</u>					
	All	Does the proposed project implement common practices and/or scientific methods that are backed by science and proven outcomes? If not, is the project implementing a new innovative approach that expands opportunities and/or creates efficiencies for future projects? If a new approach, does the proposed project include an adaptive management plan? Will the project serve as an effective demonstration project?	4	6%	
<u>SEQUENCE</u>					
	All	Is the project in the correct sequence? Is this the most logical next step in the context of watershed and species restoration and conservation? Is this project independent of other actions being taken first?	5	8%	
<u>THREAT</u>					
	All	Is habitat threatened and/or will an opportunity be lost if this project is not funded this year?	5	8%	
<u>STEWARDSHIP</u>					
	Planning	Does the sponsor have a plan for long term data stewardship and/or record keeping? Is there funding included in the project budget for stewardship? Does the sponsor have a plan to facilitate public access to data?	5	8%	
	Acquisition	Does the proposal clearly describe a plan for perpetual stewardship of the acquired land and/or easement? Are stewardship funds secured or included in the proposed project budget?			
	Restoration	Does the proposal clearly describe a plan for stewardship and/or adaptive management for at least 10 years? Are stewardship funds secured or included in the proposed project budget?			
<u>IMPLEMENTATION</u>					
	All	Have the actions needed to implement the project been scheduled, funded (if applicable), and/or ready to take place? Is the project free from potential or known constraints and/or uncertainties that could hinder the success of the project?	5	8%	
TOTAL			65	1	0

Table 4. Stream ranking using the Co-manager's model, as adopted by the LE.

GENERAL STREAM PRIORITY	Tier		
	A	B	C
	Cranberry	Campbell	Pickering Passage Tribs
	Deer	County Line	Shelton
	Goldsborough	Hiawata	Uncle Johns
	Gosnell / Mill	Lynch	
	Johns	Malaney	
	Kennedy	Schneider	
	Schumocher / Sherwood	Snodgrass	
	Skookum		

APPENDIX C GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

Abbreviations and Definitions

Citizen Advisory Committee (LE Committee) approves final project list for consideration by the Salmon Recovery Funding Board; provides a citizen-based evaluation of projects proposed for salmon habitat restoration

4 Year Workplan (4YWP) list of projects updated annually to function as capital improvement plan in the WRIA; requirement for a LE located in the Puget Sound

Lead Entity (LE) designated by Mason County, Thurston County, the Squaxin Island Tribe and the City of Shelton as the responsible party for administering funds and submitting the habitat project list

Lead Entity Coordinator (LEC) Staff support for the lead entity; employee of Mason Conservation District

Letter of Intent (LOI) first step of annual SRFB/PSAR grant rounds; provides initial opportunity for Project Sponsor to introduce their project proposal to LE Committee and receive feedback

Project Information System (PRISM) Online computer system open to the public to apply for grants, review and manage information on funded grants and produce reports about projects

Project Sponsors (PS) county, city, special district, tribal government, a nonprofit organization, a regional fisheries enhancement group or private citizen(s) submitting salmon habitat restoration, acquisition, or planning projects for funding consideration

Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) program funds appropriated by the state legislature and administered through the Salmon Recovery Funding Board on a biennial basis for habitat protection and restoration priorities in Puget Sound

Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) state agency that manages grant programs for salmon recovery; provides administrative support for the Salmon Recovery Funding Board

Review Panel (RP) independent group of technical experts that review proposed projects based on actual benefit to salmon, cost benefit and likelihood of success; on behalf of the Salmon Recovery Funding Board

Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) Composed of five citizens appointed by the Governor and five state agency directors, that award grants to protect and restore salmon habitat and related activities; administers PSAR in Puget Sound and other funds statewide

Technical Advisory Group (TAG) Serves in an advisory role to the Citizens Advisory Committee; provides ranked list of proposed projects based on technical and scientific merits to determine readiness to proceed and fulfillment of strategy and regional plan priorities

Water Resources Inventory Area (WRIA) Major watersheds in the state delineated by the Washington State Department of Ecology and other state natural resources agencies; Washington consists of 62 WRIsAs