

## 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** – A scope of work for Phase 2 (final) design was negotiated and will be amended to the consultant contract between the City and HDR, Inc.
- **Permitting** –
  - A second regulatory site visit was conducted on April 6<sup>th</sup>, with representatives from Washington Department of Ecology and NOAA Fisheries attending.
  - A USFWS Restoration Review Team (RRT) member attended an April 19<sup>th</sup> site visit. This visit resulted in the recommendation of PROJECTS, a joint services restoration-based programmatic for Endangered Species Act (ESA) Section 7 consultation.
  - The USACE, NMFS, and WDFW concurred with utilization of an extended 4-month work window for project construction. This is significant as it would allow us to complete in-water work in one season instead of two. The USFWS has approved the work window; however, formal approval will be commensurate with the ESA Section 7 consultation.
  - A shoreline exemption application was prepared and submitted to Whatcom County on April 23<sup>rd</sup>, for geotechnical testing at the site.
  - A pre-application meeting package was prepared and submitted to Whatcom County on April 30<sup>th</sup>.
  - A SEPA Checklist was initiated.
- **Funding** –
  - The Open Rivers Fund, a program of Resources Legacy Fund supported by The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, is providing a sub-grant of \$135,000 towards the design phase of the project to support dam removal and river restoration.
  - A response to our pre-proposal to NOAA's Coastal Resiliency (CR) funding program was received on April 30<sup>th</sup>. With the passage of the 2018 Omnibus Appropriations Act, funding will not be made available to the CR program. Instead, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation will administer this funding in partnership with NOAA in a competitive process in the fall of 2018.
  - A restoration project pre-proposal and WRIA strategy alignment letter was submitted to the Puget Sound Partnership on April 30<sup>th</sup>, in compliance with the PSAR Large Cap process.

**MAY 2018**

- Comments were received on the Draft Conceptual Alternatives Analysis report in April. The report will be finalized in May and published to the project webpage.
- The preferred alternative is being advanced to the 30% design level.
- A 30% Design Review Team (DRT) meeting will be scheduled in May to take place in June.
- Additional limited geotechnical evaluation at the site will be conducted by Shannon & Wilson.
- Draft salmon recovery restoration project proposal application materials will be developed and uploaded into PRISM, in compliance with the 2018 SRFB process.
- A meeting with the USFWS, NMFS, and the USACE is scheduled for May 2<sup>nd</sup> to discuss ESA responsibilities under Section 7.
- A site visit is scheduled with the USACE and Cultural Resources departments of the Lummi Nation and Nooksack Tribe on May 16<sup>th</sup>.
- A pre-application meeting with Whatcom County is scheduled for May 31<sup>st</sup>.