

Hand out @ 9/9/08 GMAK mtg
2008-130191

WATER RESOURCE INVENTORY AREA 9 (WRIA 9) STEERING COMMITTEE

GREEN/DUWAMISH
AND



Auburn
Burien
Covington
Kent
King County
Normandy Park
Renton
SeaTac
Seattle
Tukwila

Port of Seattle

Vashon/Maury Island
Community Council

Covington Water District

King Conservation District

Tacoma Public Utilities

U.S. Army Corps
of Engineers

Washington Department
of Ecology

Washington Department
of Fish and Wildlife

Washington Department
of Natural Resources

Washington
Environmental Council

Green/Duwamish
Watershed Alliance

Trout Unlimited/
Mid-Sound Fisheries
Enhancement Group

The Boeing Company

Plum Creek
Timber Company

Master Builders
Association

South County Chambers
of Commerce Coalition

King County Agricultural
Commission

King County Livestock
Oversight Committee

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February 27, 2008

The Honorable Julia Patterson
Chair
Metropolitan King County Council
516 Third Ave., Rm. 1200
Seattle, WA 98104



RE: Proposed citizen and design review processes for placement of
wood in rivers

Dear Chair Patterson:

On behalf of the WRIA 9 Steering Committee, we are writing to confirm our strong support for adding wood to the Green River to improve habitat for salmon. We are writing in response to King County Council Motion 2007-0622, which directs the County Executive to address recreational safety issues by proposing new citizen and design review processes for the placement of wood in rivers.

In 2005, the King County Council, along with 16 other local governments, approved the WRIA 9 Salmon Habitat Plan: "Making Our Watershed Fit for a King." One of the most critically important actions to recover the Green River Chinook salmon population is to add significant amounts of wood to the river. To be clear, the dominant strategy to improve the viability of Chinook salmon in the Green River is to increase the habitats available to salmon. Rehabilitation of large woody debris is needed to increase river channel form and function. Indeed, in virtually every area of the watershed, rehabilitation of large woody debris is required to stem the on-going loss of Chinook salmon viability caused by the interruption of habitat-forming processes. In the Middle Green River alone, needed rehabilitation measures are estimated to be at least 65% of the historical habitat capacity to support a viable Green River Chinook salmon population.

To state the situation simply, wood in the river is paramount to achieving all other recovery objectives of the Salmon Habitat Plan. WRIA 9 is concerned about any additional public and design review procedures that impedes successful implementation of the Plan and "Making Our Watershed Fit for a King." Similarly, we are opposed to any wide-scale removal of existing wood in rivers, whether placed or naturally-recruited.



*Financial support provided by signers of Watershed Planning Interlocal Agreement for WRIA 9 including:
Algona, Auburn, Black Diamond, Burien, Covington, Des Moines, Enumclaw, Federal Way, Kent, King County, Maple Valley,
Normandy Park, Renton, SeaTac, Seattle, Tacoma, Tukwila*

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Safety is obviously important on our rivers. Recreation of any kind in or on rivers is dangerous, typically more so than the ocean and lakes. It is the current of rivers that makes them treacherous. Anyone entering a river is putting his or her life at risk; people die in the concrete-encased rivers of Los Angeles that are wood- and obstruction-free. We support people informing King County about hazardous conditions on rivers to improve public awareness of safety considerations and dangers. We support placement of wood in rivers in a way that reduces risk to river users while fulfilling the essential ecological functions of wood.

Please contact Doug Osterman, WRIA 9 Watershed Coordinator, at 206-296-8069 or doug.osterman@kingcounty.gov if you have any questions. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Dow Constantine
Councilmember, King County Council
Co-Chair, WRIA 9 Steering Committee

Bill Peloza
Councilmember, City of Auburn
Co-Chair, WRIA 9 Steering Committee

Cc: Members of the WRIA 9 Steering Committee and Forum of Local Governments