

## **Cedar River Habitat Conservation Plan Abstracts for Lake Washington Workshop**

### **Introduction to the Cedar River Watershed Habitat Conservation Plan**

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The City of Seattle's implementation of the Cedar River Watershed Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) is an important component of regional efforts to recover anadromous fish. The HCP, approved in April of 2000, is a comprehensive, ecosystem based plan for the Cedar River Municipal Watershed that will help protect and restore this natural area for the next 50 years and beyond. The HCP incorporates more than 10 years of scientific research and monitoring, and commits more than \$90 million over the next 50 years to improve conditions for fish and wildlife. The plan will substantially contribute to ensuring that our region has an ample supply of high-quality drinking water well into the 21st century by meeting the requirements of the ESA with regard to 83 species of fish and wildlife addressed in the HCP. It addresses many long-standing issues between the City of Seattle and the State of Washington regarding the blockage to anadromous fish posed by the Landsburg Diversion Dam. It also represents the completion of a long-running effort with state and federal agencies to develop technically sound instream flows in the Cedar River to protect salmon.

Because the Cedar River Municipal Watershed contains the headwaters of the major river that discharges into Lake Washington, management of the watershed and the Cedar River's instream flows represent a very important regional opportunity to protect and restore salmon and other species that are dependent upon late-successional and old-growth forests. The watershed is important not only as the region's primary water supply but also as the major source of downstream river flows necessary to maintain habitat for anadromous salmonids. In addition, the municipal watershed offers one of the few significant opportunities to reestablish a block of mature, late-successional, and old-growth forest below 3,000 ft in a manner that could effectively link this forest block to existing old-growth in other areas of the Cascade Mountains.

As will be seen in the four presentations to follow, management of the upper watershed, which constitutes 2/3 of the Cedar River Basin, as an ecological reserve is one of many important elements for salmon recovery. The Cedar River HCP includes other elements that address the critical links in the chain of habitat needs for anadromous fish. Looking at this chain as stretching from the headwaters of the Cedar River, through the Puget Sound lowlands and its lake systems, through the Ballard Locks and ultimately to the ocean, it is important for regional salmon recovery efforts to address each of these links. The HCP's contribution toward these efforts include:

- ◆ No commercial logging in the municipal watershed for the 50-year term of the HCP
- ◆ Protection of all existing late-successional and old-growth forest
- ◆ Substantial aquatic and terrestrial habitat protection and rehabilitation measures in the upper watershed that will help ensure the continued delivery of high quality water to the lower Cedar River and Lake Washington
- ◆ Protection and restoration of ecological processes that shape and maintain both aquatic and terrestrial habitat throughout the basin
- ◆ Protection and restoration of all streams in the municipal watershed including 17 miles of stream in the proposed salmon and steelhead refuge between Landsburg and lower Cedar Falls

- ◆ Fish passage facilities at Landsburg Dam to restore access for coho, chinook, and steelhead to this refuge habitat
- ◆ Improved stream flows throughout the 34 miles of mainstem anadromous fish habitat downstream of Cedar Falls
- ◆ A sockeye fry production program to contribute to improved sockeye returns to the Cedar River
- ◆ Habitat protection and restoration in the lower river downstream of the City's ownership boundary
- ◆ Funding for fish passage and fresh water conservation improvements at the Ballard Locks
- ◆ A comprehensive monitoring and adaptive management program with agency and public oversight

As Seattle continues to implement the HCP, it will be important to coordinate these capital projects, operational activities, and research and monitoring efforts with those of other entities engaged in salmon recovery work to yield a more coordinated and complementary regional effort. Seattle likewise hopes that assistance from and partnerships with other entities engaged in this important and challenging work will yield more comprehensive and effective recovery strategies.

