

Obstacles to Implementing Important Capital Projects for Salmon Recovery

Report to the Puget Sound Partnership

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Executive Summary

Introduction and Methods

In every watershed around Puget Sound, stakeholders are working together to recover salmon. However, despite the tremendous effort and dedication of these individuals, every year capital projects that are important for salmon recovery are left undone, or are not proceeding on a pace to achieve the watershed's ten-year goals. The Puget Sound Partnership wishes to understand the obstacles to implementing these projects, and how the Partnership may be able to help watershed groups overcome them.

The Puget Sound Partnership commissioned this study to address these questions. This project had two goals:

1. To identify and understand the obstacles to implementing the most important capital projects for salmon recovery in each watershed of Puget Sound; and
2. To begin to identify solutions to these obstacles, particularly the first steps and resources needed to begin ameliorating obstacles.

To achieve these goals, Blackmore Consulting, LLC interviewed 56 people in March and April 2009, including at least three people from each watershed Lead Entity in Puget Sound. Each Lead Entity Coordinator suggested interviewees for their watershed. The list of interviewees and the survey instrument used for this project are in Appendix A.

Once the interviews were complete, Blackmore Consulting analyzed and categorized the results, which are presented below. It is important to note the following limitations of this study:

- The answers to open-ended interview questions are subject to interpretation. While every attempt has been made to analyze the results as objectively as possible, it is possible that other reviewers might disagree with the interpretation of the interviews presented here.
- This study focused on capital projects only, defined as acquisition and restoration projects primarily designed to protect or restore salmon habitat. It did not address other aspects of salmon recovery, such as harvest, hatcheries, hydropower, or regulatory or programmatic approaches to habitat restoration and protection.

Results

This section presents the results of these interviews. Readers should keep in mind one important caution: the "number of respondents" figures should not be taken as absolute. The numbers should be understood as an indication of the relative importance of each topic, rather than as hard and fast results. Also, in many cases the same respondent offered multiple ideas related to the same obstacle or solution. These ideas were counted as separate responses.

This report presents results on a Sound-wide basis. Results by watershed are provided in Appendix B.

Are Important Projects on Track?

When asked to name the most important capital projects in their watersheds, respondents most frequently mentioned nearshore/estuarine and floodplain restoration projects. When asked if these projects were on track, 15 respondents said yes, 15 respondents said no, and 15 respondents said that some projects were and some weren't, or that their projects were proceeding but very slowly.

Success Factors

In response to a question about what had helped them be successful at implementing important projects, respondents most frequently mentioned partnerships, adequate funding, the dedication of local project sponsors, and the high quality of their plans and assessments.

Obstacles

Interviewees identified a wide range of obstacles to implementing the most important capital projects for recovery. These obstacles can be sorted into four major categories, as shown in Table 3.

Table ES-1: Categories of Obstacles

Category	Number of Responses
Obstacles to an Authorizing Environment	68
Project Development Obstacles	90
Implementation Obstacles	94
Process and Coordination Obstacles	22

Most interviewees identified more than one obstacle, often several in one category. As the table shows, respondents focused on obstacles related to the lack of an authorizing environment, project development, and project implementation.

Lack of an Authorizing Environment

Sixty-six interviewees described obstacles related to what one respondent calls the lack of an “authorizing environment,” or the political will and community support necessary to construct capital projects on a pace to achieve watersheds’ ten-year goals. These respondents described four major obstacles related to the lack of an authorizing environment, as shown in Table ES-2. Each of these obstacles is described in the full report.

Table ES-2: Obstacles to an Authorizing Environment

Obstacle	Number of Respondents
Lack of Political Will	27
Balancing Salmon with Other Social Priorities	20
Lack of Public Understanding	11
Lack of Regional Vision	10
Total	68

Project Development Obstacles

The term “project development” means different things to different people. For the purposes of this analysis, project development begins once a project concept has been identified – usually, but not always, in a recovery plan or three-year work plan – and ends with final design. It does not include permitting.

As described in more detail in the full report, project development requires many steps and a variety of skill sets. For effective and efficient project development, each project needs a dedicated project manager, plus an interdisciplinary design team and people talented at public outreach. This phase is crucial: without it, there are very few projects to implement.

Respondents identified four major obstacles related to the project development phase, as shown in Table 5. Each of these obstacles is described in the full report.

Table ES-3: Project Development Obstacles

Obstacle	Number of Respondents
Lack of Sustainable, Reliable Funding	59
Private Landowner Willingness	19
Project Complexity	12
Total	90

Implementation Obstacles

Like project development, the implementation phase of a project can be defined in different ways. For the purposes of this analysis, the implementation phase includes permitting, grant management, construction, and monitoring.

Respondents identified six types of obstacles associated with the implementation phase of capital projects, as Table ES-4 shows. Each of these obstacles is described in the full report.

Table ES-4: Implementation Obstacles

Obstacle	Number of Respondents
Lack of Implementation Funding	30
Permitting	15
Grant Funding and Management	14
Salmon Recovery Funding Board Issues	14
Lack of Monitoring & Adaptive Management	12
Lack of Ecosystem Focus	5
Other Implementation Issues	4
Total	94

Process and Coordination Obstacles

Salmon recovery, for better or for worse, requires a fair amount of process and coordination. Keeping partners on board, identifying and prioritizing projects, and making regional funding decisions all require meetings and coordination. Twenty-three respondents reported obstacles related to local and regional processes and smooth partnerships with other stakeholders, sorted into the categories below and described in the full report.

Table ES-5: Process and Coordination Obstacles

Process Obstacle	Number of Respondents
Local Process	9
Complex Regional Process	7
US Army Corps of Engineers	4
Other Coordination Issues	2
Total	22

Solutions

Respondents provided a wide variety of thoughtful and creative suggestions for how to address these obstacles. These solutions are described in the main body of the report, organized by obstacle.

Recommendations for Action

All of the obstacles identified in this study are barriers to implementation of capital projects that are important for salmon recovery. However, the Puget Sound Partnership cannot address all of them at once; therefore, this section identifies two categories of obstacles recommended for action: obstacles that are the most important ones to address, no matter how long it takes, and those that are ripe for immediate action. These recommendations are the author's opinion, based on professional experience and the strength of the 56 interviews conducted for this study, and are described in more detail in the Conclusions and Recommendations section of the full report.

Key Obstacles to Address

Two obstacles stand out as being both widespread and fundamental to future success:

1. The lack of an authorizing environment, and
2. The lack of dedicated, sustainable, reliable funding for project development and implementation.

Timely Obstacles to Address

In the author's opinion, several obstacles seem timely to address, meaning that progress could be made in resolving these obstacles in the next six months to a year. These obstacles include the following:

1. Permitting;
2. Developing tools and protocols for project development; and
3. Beginning work with the US Army Corps of Engineers and the railroads.

Introduction

Community groups in the Puget Sound region have been working together to implement projects to recover salmon populations for many years. Each watershed in the basin produced a plan to recover salmon in their watershed for inclusion in the landmark Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Plan in 2005. Every year watershed groups, primarily led by the Lead Entities, update their three-year work plans to document the projects and programs needed to implement the recovery plan. However, despite the tremendous dedication of the volunteers and professionals who are working to recover salmon, in many watersheds projects identified as important for recovery are left undone, or are not proceeding at the pace required to meet the watershed's ten-year goals. The Puget Sound Partnership wishes to understand the obstacles to implementing these projects, and how the Partnership may be able to help watershed groups overcome them.

The Puget Sound Partnership commissioned this study to analyze the obstacles to implementing the most important capital projects for salmon recovery in each watershed in Puget Sound. This project had two goals:

1. To identify and understand the obstacles to implementing the most important capital projects for salmon recovery in each watershed of Puget Sound; and
2. To begin to identify solutions to these obstacles, particularly the first steps and resources needed to begin ameliorating obstacles.

Methods

To achieve these goals, Blackmore Consulting, LLC interviewed 56 people in March and April 2009, including at least three people from each watershed Lead Entity in Puget Sound. Each Lead Entity Coordinator suggested interviewees for their watershed. The list of interviewees and the survey instrument used for this project are in Appendix A.

Once the interviews were complete, Blackmore Consulting analyzed and categorized the results, which are presented below. It is important to note the following limitations of this study:

- The answers to open-ended interview questions are subject to interpretation. While every attempt has been made to analyze the results as objectively as possible, it is possible that other reviewers might disagree with the interpretation of the interviews presented here.
- This study focused on capital projects only, defined as acquisition and restoration projects primarily designed to protect or restore salmon habitat. It did not address other aspects of salmon recovery, such as harvest, hatcheries,¹ hydropower, or regulatory or programmatic approaches to habitat restoration and protection.²

¹ Please see the following report for a review of hatchery issues and recommendations for addressing them: Hatchery Scientific Review Group (HSRG) – Lars Moberg (chair), John Barr, Lee Blankenship, Don Campton, Trevor Evelyn, Tom Flagg, Conrad Mahnken, Robert Piper, Paul Siedel, Lisa Seeb and Bill Smoker. April 2004. *Hatchery Reform: Principles and Recommendations of the HSRG*. Long Live the Kings, 1305 Fourth Avenue, Suite 810, Seattle, WA 98101 (available from www.hatcheryreform.org/)

² The San Juan Initiative analyzed habitat protection issues. Please see their final report, entitled *Protecting Our Place for Nature and People*, published in December 2008, at www.sanjuaninitiative.org/.

Results

This section presents the results of these interviews. Readers should keep in mind one important caution: the “number of respondents” figures should not be taken as absolute. While every effort was made to categorize and report respondents’ statements accurately, as noted above, these open-ended statements are subject to interpretation and the bias of the analyst. The numbers should be understood as an indication of the relative importance of each topic, rather than as hard and fast results.

Also, in many cases the same respondent offered multiple ideas related to the same obstacle or solution. These ideas were counted as separate responses.

This report presents results on a Sound-wide basis. Results by watershed are provided in Appendix B.

Most Important Projects

The first question asked the interviewee to name the most important capital projects for salmon recovery in their watershed. Interestingly, many interviewees responded by listing project types or categories, such as restoring the floodplain, rather than specific capital projects. Table 1, below, lists the project types reported.

Table 1: Most Important Project Types

Project Type	Number of Responses	Project Type	Number of Responses
Nearshore or estuarine restoration	17	Restore Transition Zone	3
Floodplain restoration	15	Restore Tributaries	3
Fish Passage	7	Restore Freshwater Productivity	2
Rearing Habitat	6	Protect Spawning Habitat	1
Protect Mainstem Habitat	5		

Some of the project types, such as restoring the transition zone, are specific to individual watersheds. However, it is interesting to note that restoring nearshore/estuarine habitats and floodplains are clearly the two most frequently mentioned important project types across Puget Sound.

Thirteen interviewees listed specific capital projects in response to this question. Many remarked that they were drawing the list from the three-year work plan or their Recovery Plan chapter. However, many interviewees found this question to be the most difficult one to answer.

Are the Projects On Track?

When asked whether their watershed’s projects were on track, most respondents (24) said yes. However, of these, nine qualified their responses, saying that while the projects were moving forward, they were doing so very slowly, with limited resources, or only after overcoming serious obstacles.

In addition, 15 respondents said no, and six respondents said that some were on track but others weren’t. Three respondents didn’t know.³

³ Not all interviewees answered this question.

Success Factors

If an interviewee stated that at least some of their projects were on track, the interviewer asked what factors had helped those projects move forward successfully. Table 2 presents the answers to this question. Many respondents listed more than one success factor.

Table 2: Success Factors

Success Factor	Number of Responses	Success Factor	Number of Responses
Partnerships	16	Good Project Design	4
Funding/SRFB	10	Phasing	3
Dedicated Project Sponsors	9	Community Support	3
Quality of Plans	9	Regional Support	2
Elected Official Support	6	Limit 8 & New Army Corps of Engineers Programmatic	2
Willing Landowner	5	Combining Salmon & Flood Issues	1
Technical Merit of Project	4		

The answers to this question highlight the cooperative nature of capital project implementation. Many respondents stated that their projects could not have happened without partnerships with a wide variety of stakeholders, and emphasized the importance of having experienced, dedicated project sponsors and the support of local elected officials. Respondents also stressed the importance of scientifically based, prioritized plans that identified their projects as high priorities because of their benefits to salmon, and good project design.

Obstacles

Interviewees identified a wide range of obstacles to implementing the most important capital projects for recovery. These obstacles can be sorted into four major categories, as shown in Table 3:

Table 3: Categories of Obstacles

Category	Number of Responses
Obstacles to an Authorizing Environment	68
Project Development Obstacles	90
Implementation Obstacles	94
Process and Coordination Obstacles	23

Most interviewees identified more than one obstacle, often several in one category. This section describes each category of obstacle.

Lack of an Authorizing Environment

Sixty-seven interviewees described obstacles related to what one respondent calls the lack of an “authorizing environment,” or the political will and community support necessary to construct capital projects on a pace to achieve watersheds’ ten-year goals. These respondents described four major obstacles

related to the lack of an authorizing environment, as shown in Table 4. These obstacles are described below.

Table 4: Obstacles to an Authorizing Environment

Obstacle	Number of Respondents
Lack of Political Will	27
Balancing Salmon with Other Social Priorities	20
Lack of Public Understanding	11
Lack of Regional Vision	10
Total	68

Lack of Political Will

Respondents described several ways in which a lack of political will at the local level to implement salmon recovery projects hampers their activities.

- Four interviewees noted a lack of political will to implement projects that may have some community opposition. This issue is related to the need to balance other social priorities such as local agriculture or flood reduction with habitat restoration and protection, as described in more detail below.
- Two participants stated that local government agencies with other mandates, such as roads departments, don't have salmon habitat as a priority to include in their work programs.
- Three respondents stated that agencies responsible for public property, such as parks, are not doing as much as they should to allow salmon habitat restoration on those lands.

The lack of political will is not confined to the local level, and it sometimes translates into unwillingness among other entities to consider the needs of salmon in their activities.

- Five respondents expressed frustration with the US Army Corps of Engineers, which oversees flood management infrastructure such as dikes and levees. Participants noted that the Corps does not consider fish habitat when conducting emergency repairs to flood control facilities, and that the agency is reluctant to allow riparian plantings on dikes and levees. The Corps also keeps waterways safe for navigation, which sometimes includes dredging. Participants were concerned that this mandate might make the Corps less enthusiastic about estuarine restoration projects.
- Railroads run along the eastern shore of Puget Sound and along the banks of some rivers. In the nearshore, the tracks prevent natural free movement of sediment, and culverts block fish passage to streams. Five respondents expressed frustration with the railroad companies' unresponsiveness to their requests to work together on habitat restoration projects that might affect the tracks. Because of nineteenth century legislation that led to the opening of the west, the railroad companies have strong and unusual property rights. They are not subject to state permits, and as one respondent noted, they "dredge wherever and whenever they want." Respondents stated that it was very unclear to them what benefits or avoided penalties might entice the railroads to participate in recovery efforts.
- Two respondents in the Puyallup-White Watershed were frustrated with Puget Sound Energy, which is unwilling to work with them to screen its diversion at the Electron Dam on the Puyallup River. The dam predates FERC licensing, which means that the local watersheds has fewer opportunities to press its case.
- In the Stillaguamish, both the Lead Entity and the US Forest Service acknowledged that their priorities don't always match, and that the mismatch can lead to difficulties at times.
- In the Hood Canal watershed, the Lead Entity has identified removing the Duckabush Causeway as a high priority project. Although the causeway has exceeded its design life, the Washington

State Department of Transportation is unwilling to put the project on its planning horizon for replacement.

- One respondent asked that the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) actively engage with salmon recovery groups on habitat protection and restoration efforts in every watershed, and manage their lands in the best way possible to achieve salmon recovery. She noted that the watersheds with dedicated WDFW staff benefit greatly from this engagement, particularly in watersheds where WDFW harvest and hatchery managers also participate. However, the department does not have the funding necessary to do this work.
- Lastly, one respondent noted that the Washington State Patrol sometimes pulls over truckers who are hauling logs for logjams or large woody debris emplacements because the State Patrol is concerned about the weight of the logs or the diameter of the root wad. Although it is the trucker's responsibility to ensure that the load is safe, some truckers believe they are pulled over more frequently than they should be because the State Patrol is nervous about these very large logs being hauled on the state highways.

Balancing Other Social Priorities with Salmon Recovery

Now that most watersheds are attempting to design large, complex projects such as floodplain or estuary restoration, many practitioners are finding that their project designs create real or perceived conflict with other social priorities, such as agricultural preservation, flood control, bird watching, hunting, recreation, and residential, commercial, or industrial land uses. These conflicts arise because the lands that are needed for salmon habitat restoration in the floodplain or estuary tend to be those that are also most productive for agriculture, or are near population centers protected by dikes and levees. Those dikes and levees often have trails along them that are popular with bird watchers, hunters, joggers, and others. Also, in some cases dikes have created freshwater wetlands that have habitat values for other species, particularly birds. Adjacent homeowners may believe that estuarine dikes prevent seawater intrusion into their wells or that shoreline armoring protects their properties from erosion. Landowners and recreational boaters are concerned about damages to property or public safety arising from logjam projects. As a result, farmers or agricultural boards, floodplain and nearshore landowners, and other user groups such as those focused on birds, hunting, or boating often are opposed to restoration projects.

Twenty respondents noted other social priorities as an existing or emerging obstacle to their efforts. Conflicts with agricultural priorities were most frequently mentioned (7 times), followed by conflicts with recreational users such as birders or hunters (3 times). Respondents noted that they must resolve these conflicts before their projects can move forward, but they often lack the tools they need to do so. These tools include staff time and resources to work productively with other user groups, an agreed-upon vision for what land uses the floodplain or estuarine area should support, and the political will to act upon this vision or establish salmon habitat restoration as a high priority.

While this problem is probably present in all watersheds with complex projects, it is interesting to note that it was mentioned most strongly in the Whidbey Basin watersheds. All respondents from the Skagit and Stillaguamish watersheds noted this issue, as did three out of five respondents from the Island watershed and one in Snohomish.

Lack of Public Understanding

Public support for salmon recovery is a critical component of an authorizing environment. However, 11 respondents reported that the public doesn't understand or isn't aware of many facets of salmon habitat and recovery. For example, interviewees mentioned that the public doesn't understand that the nearshore is important for salmon, that forage fish habitat is linked to salmon, or that their actions have an effect on Puget Sound. Interviewees implied that greater understanding of these linkages would increase community support for habitat projects.

Lack of Regional Vision

Ten respondents commented on the lack of Puget Sound-wide vision for habitat restoration that sets regional priorities for capital projects, integrates capital projects with the other “H’s” (habitat protection, hydropower, hatchery, and harvest), and identifies funding sources for them. As one respondent noted, making decisions about where we will and will not allow salmon habitat restoration projects on a case-by-case basis is inefficient. One was concerned that nobody has the full authority and responsibility for implementing the Recovery Plan in its entirety. Two participants also expressed frustration that the “region” – be it the Puget Sound Partnership, the Salmon Recovery Council, the Leadership Council, or other group – has not set its priorities and provided political cover to local elected officials and watershed groups to achieve what is necessary to recover salmon.

Project Development Obstacles

The term “project development” means different things to different people. For the purposes of this analysis, project development begins once a project concept has been identified – usually, but not always, in a recovery plan or three-year work plan – and ends with final design. It does not include permitting.

Project development is a crucial, complicated, lengthy, and expensive phase, which typically includes at least the following steps:

- *Increasing the specificity of the project.* Often, watershed plans identify projects at a conceptual level or a reach level, rather than identifying specific sites or parcels. Practitioners must take steps to narrow the focus of the project, which may include additional field work or other assessment work.
- *Working with landowners.* Sometimes project sites are in public ownership, but often they are not. Even if they are in public ownership they are not necessarily immediately available for salmon restoration purposes, and adjacent lands are often in private hands. Outreach to landowners is crucial to project success. Practitioners must work with public and private landowners to secure project sites in fee simple or in easement, and later with adjacent landowners to assure them that the project will not adversely affect their properties.
- *Design and feasibility.* Once a project site has been identified, the project must be designed and its feasibility evaluated. This aspect of project development has become increasingly important and expensive as projects have shifted from the low-hanging fruit – such as culvert replacements or riparian plantings – to larger, more complex projects such as removing or setting back levees or restoring tidal flow to estuaries. Practitioners must be able to predict how the river or estuary will respond to the proposed action to convince government agencies, adjacent and downstream landowners, and other stakeholders that the project will not jeopardize property or public safety. Therefore, this phase usually requires an interdisciplinary design team composed of an engineer, ecologist, and geomorphologist who can conduct the studies necessary to create a reasonable design.
- *Public outreach.* Most capital projects affect other stakeholders besides landowners. For example, engineered logjams may change recreational use of a river, and dike removal may alter or eliminate trails popular with birders, hunters, hikers, or other user groups. Practitioners must conduct outreach to these groups and often solicit their input on the project design.
- *Project management and coordination.* All of these activities require management, coordination, and partnerships. For example, since very few project sponsors can afford to have interdisciplinary design teams in-house, many projects draw upon expertise from several different agencies or consulting firms for design and feasibility work. Since watershed groups must have projects both technically and politically reviewed and approved to successfully obtain funding, project sponsors must coordinate with the local watershed group. As a result, each project needs a dedicated

project manager to coordinate with the local watershed group, the design team, and landowners, as well as manage public outreach, feasibility studies, and other efforts.

In summary, project development requires many steps and a variety of skill sets. Each project needs a dedicated project manager, plus an interdisciplinary design team and people talented at public outreach. This phase is crucial: without it, there are very few projects to implement.

Respondents identified four major obstacles related to the project development phase, as shown in Table 5. These obstacles are described below.

Table 5: Project Development Obstacles

Obstacle	Number of Respondents
Lack of Sustainable, Reliable Funding	59
Private Landowner Willingness	19
Project Complexity	12
Total	90

Lack of Sustainable, Reliable Funding

The many aspects of project development require staff to handle them, but there is very little funding available to support those staff. Most project sponsors work for local governments, conservation districts, or non-profit organizations. Local government budgets are shrinking, and many non-profits are supported largely by grants. Most grantors prefer to fund project implementation rather than project development work, even though project development is a necessary precursor to project implementation. The Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) allocates a certain percentage (25%) to project management and coordination, but respondents assert that percentage is not large enough.

The unreliable nature of project development funding increases the inefficiency of this phase. Project sponsors must raise funds for project development, either through grants, government budgeting processes, or fund-raising campaigns. When funds are available, project sponsors can hire staff to assist them, but often lose them again when the funding runs out. This cycle means that project sponsors spend a great deal of time hiring and training staff, only to lose them and have to do it again the next time funds arrive. Because the funds aren't large, project sponsors often can't afford to hire experienced project managers, ecologists, engineers, public outreach specialists, or other staff. As a result, training and mentoring costs are higher, and staff often leave if they can find a job that pays more elsewhere.

Many Lead Entity respondents indicated that the Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) capacity funds were very helpful for keeping their programs running and helping project sponsors develop projects. However, because this funding is negotiated biennially, it is not reliable enough for many Lead Entities to use it to hire additional staff long-term to assist with project development. In some watersheds, the only funding keeping the Lead Entity program alive is the Lead Entity grant from the Recreation and Conservation Office and the PSAR capacity funds.

Twenty-six respondents mentioned lack of funding for project development as a critical obstacle, while another 24 mentioned the lack of staff or capacity. Nine stated that a stable funding source is needed to support existing staff or hire additional staff to assist with project development. Many respondents cited this lack of capacity to develop projects as the primary reason why their capital projects are not being implemented on a pace to achieve their ten-year goals.

In addition, some project sponsors use consultants to perform modeling, conduct studies, or create designs needed to develop projects. Others need to perform assessments to fill data gaps or identify promising sites for projects. According to respondents, there is very little funding for this work either.

Private Landowner Willingness

Nineteen practitioners cited a lack of private landowner willingness as a major obstacle to project development. Private landowners may not be willing to sell their properties or grant easements for habitat restoration. As one respondent put it, landowners often do not see why they should give up their land and lifestyles for a fish that people are still allowed to catch and eat.

Similarly, adjacent property owners' concerns about the effects of a project on their property can prevent projects from moving forward, particularly levee removals or nearshore or estuarine restoration projects. As one respondent noted, nearshore property is extremely expensive and often represents the culmination of a person's lifetime of effort. Landowners who have invested so much in their properties are unenthusiastic about projects that they believe may threaten that investment.

Project Complexity

Twelve respondents stated that the sheer complexity of capital projects is an obstacle. They noted that these complex projects require lots of partnerships, agreements from a variety of stakeholders and landowners, funding campaigns for implementation, and the political will to implement them. As a result, respondents stated that they need dedicated project managers to coordinate all the moving parts of these projects.

Two interviewees explained that many practitioners, particularly in smaller jurisdictions or entities, do not know what steps are needed to take these complex projects from the concept described in the Recovery Plan chapter to full design. Standard protocols do not exist. In addition, some of the tools necessary to complete this work, such as models for how reaches will respond to levee removals or how sediment transport may change, are rudimentary at best. Therefore, practitioners lack the tools, and in some cases the knowledge or experience, they need to develop a project efficiently.

Sometimes a project's complexity can lead to stakeholder opposition based on a lack of understanding. For example, the Snohomish watershed has begun to design restoration projects that rely on changing boundary conditions of river systems using simple, less invasive "roughening features". These roughening features allow channel hydraulics and sediment transport and deposition to create habitat; in these projects, work crews do not build specific habitat elements. This type of complex project is difficult to explain to other watershed partners, permitting agencies, and the public. These projects also create capacity issues because they are new and a limited number of people have the expertise to design and apply them.

In addition, respondents said that many decision-makers are unfamiliar with the scoping and design phase of a project, and often are surprised by how expensive and time-consuming this step is. These decision-makers include elected officials, managers of public agencies, granting agencies, and even local watershed groups who evaluate projects for funding.

Implementation Obstacles

Like project development, the implementation phase of a project can be defined in different ways. For the purposes of this analysis, the implementation phase includes permitting, grant management, construction, and monitoring. These aspects of implementation can be described as follows:

- *Permitting.* Habitat restoration projects usually require the same permits as any development project. Project sponsors must obtain state and local permits, and sometimes federal permits, depending on the project.
- *Grant management.* Most habitat projects are grant-funded, often by multiple grants. This step includes the time necessary to apply for grants, as well as to manage the accounting and reporting associated with each grant.
- *Construction.* This step includes the time necessary to obtain bids for a project, execute a contract, and move the dirt.
- *Monitoring.* This step includes designing a monitoring plan for the project, executing it, and analyzing and reporting the data.

Respondents identified six types of obstacles associated with the implementation phase of capital projects, as Table 6 shows. These obstacles are described below.

Table 6: Implementation Obstacles

Obstacle	Number of Respondents
Lack of Implementation Funding	30
Permitting	15
Grant Funding and Management	14
SRFB Issues	14
Lack of Monitoring & Adaptive Management	12
Lack of Ecosystem Focus	5
Other Implementation Issues	4
Total	94

Lack of Implementation Funding

Thirty interviewees cited the lack of funding for implementation as a major obstacle to getting the most important capital projects done. As one respondent put it, the available funding is “inconsequential in light of the problem.” One respondent noted that to reach its ten-year goals, his watershed needs \$4.5M in implementation funding annually, but receives between \$400K and \$500K annually, putting them at about 10 percent of the funding level required.

Participants noted several facets of this problem, including the following:

- Nearshore and urban parcels are prohibitively expensive.
- The bigger, more complex projects that are high priorities in many watersheds require more funding to complete. Several respondents stated that these projects require “large chunks” of funding – in the multi-millions of dollars – which is typically more than is available. For example, the Hood Canal Coordinating Council needs \$20M to remove the Duckabush River causeway. The Nisqually Watershed obtained with difficulty \$2M for the first phase of its Ohop Creek restoration project, but will need \$2M for the following phase and about \$4M for the last phase. The Skagit Watershed needs \$5.9M for its Fisher Slough project. These large amounts of money are very difficult to obtain.
- Conversely, others noted that it is difficult to obtain funding for the very small projects, such as riparian plantings or fencing, that are required in large numbers in many watersheds. According to respondents, grantors prefer to fund larger projects.
- Lastly, interviewees noted that since funding is limited, competition for that funding can be intense and detrimental to partnerships.

Permitting

Fifteen respondents cited the time and cost associated with getting permits for habitat restoration projects as a major barrier. Restoration projects require the same permits as development projects, and go through the same levels of review. Many of these respondents were frustrated that this level of review is required even when representatives of permitting agencies participate in project design work, and the projects have gone through the fairly rigorous Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) review process and the technical review processes in place in most watersheds. One respondent said that inexperienced project sponsors, particularly those working for smaller jurisdictions or non-profits, do not know what permits they need, how to get them, or where to turn for assistance with them.

One recent improvement in permitting is known as the streamlined JARPA (Joint Aquatic Permit Application). JARPA was designed to allow project sponsors to use one application form to apply for multiple permits at once, including the US Army Corps of Engineers' Section 10 and 404 permits, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's (WDFW) Hydraulic Project Approval (HPA), and local shoreline conditional use permits, among others. The streamlined JARPA allows habitat projects to qualify, with no fees, for a streamlined HPA, exemption from the State Environmental Policy Act, and exemption from all local government permits and fees.⁴ The streamlined JARPA represents a significant time and cost savings for projects that qualify.

However, several respondents noted problems with streamlined JARPA. Only three types of projects qualify: those that remove fish passage barriers, restore stream banks using bioengineering techniques, or install large wood or other in-stream structures that benefit fish.⁵ Four respondents stated that these project types are too narrow, and don't apply to projects that do more than these things or that occur outside of freshwater environments. Others said that the guidelines for streamlined JARPA are applied inconsistently across WDFW offices.

Another barrier cited five times is the need for archaeological, cultural, or historical resources permits. Respondents noted that it can take up to two years to obtain archaeological permits from the US Army Corps of Engineers, which leaves only one construction season in a typical SRFB grant. While respondents agree with the need to preserve and protect cultural resources, such as prehistoric shellfish middens, they pointed out that the desire to preserve all of them *in situ* leaves very little land available for habitat restoration in some areas.

Grant Funding and Management

Fourteen respondents voiced frustration with the necessity of relying on grants to implement their projects. As one interviewee put it, practitioners are getting "ground down" in grant administration. Grants require staff time to complete applications, give presentations to watershed groups and/or funding entities, and maintain positive relationships with funders. Once the grant is in hand, practitioners must be sure their accounting practices comply with the funder's requirements, and that they prepare and submit progress and final reports in accordance with the funder's schedule.

The foregoing may not be much for any one grant, but in many cases several grants are needed to fund one large project. Many of these grants require matching funds, which practitioners often obtain through other grants. As a result, project managers must devote much of their time to grant management rather than project development, project management, public outreach, or other tasks. For example, the Tulalip Tribe's

⁴ Washington State Governor's Office of Regulatory Assistance, 2009. Application for Streamlined Process for Fish Habitat Enhancement Projects.

http://www.epermitting.wa.gov/Portals/_JarpaResourceCenter/images/default/fishenhancement.doc. Accessed April 23, 2009

⁵ Ibid.

Owuloolt Estuary Restoration Project has 12 grants and eight sources of match, for a total of 20 funding sources to manage.

Other grant-related obstacles noted were that some grantors provide funds only to local governments and not to conservation districts or fishery enhancement groups. This restriction is inefficient because local governments often contract with such groups to perform the work, and absorb some of the funding to cover their administrative costs. Others noted that it would be more efficient to have funding available year-round, rather than having to wait for funding cycles. Also, as noted above, complex projects such as the reach-scale projects in the Snohomish can be difficult to explain to funding agencies, especially since the purpose of those projects is to let the river create its own habitat. Many funders request metrics, such as the number of logjams to be installed, or feet of side channel to be created, as part of their funding criteria. It is very difficult to provide those metrics when it is not known in advance exactly how the river will create habitat.

Salmon Recovery Funding Board Issues

It is important to state here that practitioners are very grateful for funding from the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB). The SRFB has provided substantial funding for hundreds of projects around Puget Sound over the past 10 years, and without that funding far fewer projects would be complete now.

However, fourteen respondents cited concerns with the SRFB as obstacles to implementing the most important salmon recovery capital projects. These interviewees said that the SRFB process is inefficient in the following ways:

- The process necessary to obtain a grant is too cumbersome in terms of the effort and staff time required.
- The SRFB lacks a mechanism to fund projects that span Lead Entity boundaries.
- The SRFB requires assessment projects to be tied clearly to specific project development.
- The SRFB charter does not require it to fund what's most important in each watershed's Recovery Plan chapter.
- The SRFB Review Panel, in some cases, does not possess the scientific expertise to appropriately understand and review the watershed's projects and asks the watershed group to spend time responding to questions that are perceived as spurious. This problem is particularly acute in watersheds that sponsor nearshore projects.

Lack of Monitoring and Adaptive Management

Twelve interviewees cited the lack of monitoring and adaptive management as a barrier to selecting and implementing the most important capital projects. Most noted that while the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) expects that watersheds will be monitoring and adaptively managing their efforts, there is little to no funding available for it at this time. Respondents said that not only is there no funding to collect the data, there is no funding for project sponsors to analyze it and report it either. This gap means that it is impossible for project sponsors to demonstrate how production increases may or may not be related to their projects.

Two of these respondents also worried about the lack of funding for monitoring sites where invasive weeds such as *Spartina* have been removed, and keeping those sites clear of new infestations or illegal activities.

Lack of Ecosystem Focus

Five interviewees pointed out that the available funding sources tend to be focused on protecting and restoring Chinook habitat, rather than protecting and restoring the ecosystem. This obstacle is particularly acute in systems without natal Chinook populations but with spawning populations of steelhead, chum, coho, or other salmon species. It also makes it difficult for project sponsors to find funding for projects to restore water quality or habitat on tributaries that don't directly support Chinook, even if they are tributaries

to rivers with Chinook populations. The projects simply don't rank highly enough in most watersheds' prioritization processes, which are geared toward obtaining funding.

One respondent noted that the WRIA structure breaks down in the nearshore environment, which crosses watersheds. While single watersheds can and do implement nearshore projects that are located entirely within their borders, larger-scale nearshore projects that cross borders require coordinating multiple WRIA strategies, working with multiple WRIA groups, finding project sponsors (and sponsoring WRIA), and fitting them into prioritization processes that don't handle cross-WRIA projects easily.

Other Implementation Issues

Lastly, four respondents identified barriers that do not fit neatly into the categories above. Two participants reported that contaminated soils in the Duwamish make restoration work there expensive. One noted that there is a shortage of large wood for logjams and large wood projects.

One respondent cited a legal barrier to implementing important capital projects for salmon recovery: competitive bid laws prevent local governments from contracting with a single service provider for design-build projects. This system is inefficient in terms of contract management, and also prevents local governments from contracting with local non-profits to assist with plantings and other projects.

Process and Coordination Obstacles

Salmon recovery, for better or for worse, requires a fair amount of process. Keeping partners on board, identifying and prioritizing projects, and making regional funding decisions all require meetings. Twenty-three respondents reported obstacles related to local and regional processes and coordination, sorted into the categories below.

Table 7: Process and Coordination Obstacles

Obstacle	Number of Respondents
Local Process	9
Complex Regional Process	7
US Army Corps of Engineers	4
Other Coordination Issues	2
Total	22

These obstacles are described in more detail below.

Local Process Issues

Nine interviewees expressed some frustration with their local watershed processes. Two respondents noted that their watersheds lacked well-defined priorities or conservation strategies. Two thought there were too many local meetings. And in the Skagit, three respondents cited a lack of trust among local stakeholders as a major obstacle to creating and implementing projects. The North Olympic Lead Entity noted that it is transitioning from simply running the SRFB process towards driving priorities and offering assistance to local sponsors, which is causing some anxiety locally. Another respondent felt that his watershed is focused too narrowly on restoration, and is not ensuring that other aspects of the plan are implemented expeditiously.

Regional Process Issues

Similarly, seven interviewees expressed some frustration with the regional process. One interviewee asked for one place to report information to the state, and for state agencies such as the Puget Sound Partnership to give project sponsors more recognition for their efforts. Two interviewees felt that the directives coming

from the region to the local watersheds were confusing. Another was concerned that with funding dropping, the cooperative effort might degenerate into a “turf war.” Lastly, one interviewee believes that while the three-year work plans serve a very useful function, they may make it more difficult for watersheds to implement opportunistic projects.

US Army Corps of Engineers

Interviewees generally were grateful that the US Congress has made assessment and restoration funds available through the US Army Corps of Engineers, in the form of General Investigation Studies and other programs. However, project sponsors who have participated in these programs identified the following obstacles to implementation associated with those programs:

- Perhaps because it is an arm of the military, the Corps does not delegate decision-making authority to its District or Regional offices. All decisions must have approval from Headquarters in Washington, D.C. Therefore, working with the Corps can be very inefficient because project sponsors must obtain approval from three levels of the Corps.
- The Corps retains final authority on project design and construction, even though the local project sponsor will be responsible for the completed project's maintenance and ownership. This situation is awkward at best, and leaves local project sponsors liable for the Corps' decisions.
- Funding nationwide for General Investigation Studies is not as large as some local sponsors believed at first, and requires an annual appropriation. Local sponsors have had to call upon Washington's congressional delegation each year to be sure funds are appropriated for their projects.
- The Corps is perceived as inflexible and yet somewhat unpredictable. In the case of one project in the Green-Duwamish, the watershed spent three years working with two different colonels, the Assistant Secretary of the Army, two US Congressmen and a Senator, two lobbying firms, and the Corps to address a real estate technicality. The Corps also was reluctant to accept pre-agreement in-kind labor as credit toward the project's cost-share. Lastly, after working on the project for five years the Corps added new conditions to the project which required the local sponsors to take additional steps.
- The Corps also is perceived as indifferent to local priorities. Two respondents stated that a project in the West Sound watersheds is likely to lose its implementation funding because the Corps has not assigned a person to write the agreement to accept SRFB funding as the local match. Similarly, a respondent reported that a project in the Nooksack is languishing because the Corps has not allocated time to its engineer to create a design.

Other Coordination Issues

Lastly, two interviewees expressed a desire for better coordination more generally. One respondent wished for better coordination among the federal agencies, and the second expressed concern that the co-managers were unwilling to share fish count data with local non-profit groups, resulting in the equivalent of a Freedom of Information Act request in one watershed.

Solutions

After respondents identified the obstacles to implementing important capital projects, the interviewer asked them for their ideas about how to address these obstacles. This section summarizes the results.

Authorizing Environment Solutions

Many respondents suggested ways to create an authorizing environment for salmon recovery. These ideas are described below.

Lack of Political Will

Respondents provided ideas for generating the political will to conduct salmon recovery projects at all levels of government.

At the federal level, respondents asked that the Puget Sound Partnership continue working with the Corps to find a way to merge the Corps' responsibility for flood control facilities (dikes and levees) with the salmon recovery community's desire to plant trees on them. This coordination effort should include discussions about how the Corps conducts emergency repairs to dikes. One respondent suggested that all 15 Lead Entities should petition NOAA to do this work.

Respondents in the Puyallup-White watershed asked for the federal government, specifically NOAA Fisheries or the US Fish and Wildlife Service, to assist them with encouraging Puget Sound Energy to screen their diversion at Electron Dam. In addition, the Services could work with PSE to help it prioritize its efforts regionally to take steps to minimize the effects of its activities on salmon and other species.

Similarly, respondents who identified the railroads as an obstacle recommended that the Partnership begin a dialogue with the railroads to find a way forward. Interviewees recommended that the Partnership do some research to find out what laws and regulations apply to the railroads, and what the railroads may consider an incentive to participate in recovery efforts. Respondents noted that these discussions, like the ones with the Corps, may require the involvement of NOAA Fisheries, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, or the Congressional delegation. However, the Partnership could act as a facilitator or convener on behalf of the restoration community.

At the state level, some respondents believe that the Governor should ensure that all state agencies adopt salmon recovery as a priority in their work programs. One respondent asked that WDFW actively participate in watershed groups dedicated to habitat restoration, assist with integrating habitat projects with harvest and hatchery actions, and manage its lands to maximize their value for salmon.

Respondents from the Hood Canal Coordinating Council asked for the Partnership's help with convincing the Washington State Department of Transportation to put the Duckabush Causeway project on its planning horizon for replacement. One respondent asked for regional help working with the State Patrol to ensure they don't pull over truckers who are hauling wood for logjams and large wood emplacements.

At the local level, respondents generally agreed that local elected officials need support from state and/or federal officials to implement recovery projects, especially those that encounter some community opposition. This support is necessary to make salmon a priority in local decision-making.

Lastly, one interviewee stated that the salmon community should be working with government agencies at all levels to encourage or require them to make public lands available for restoration.

Balancing Salmon with Other Social Issues

Thirteen interviewees provided suggestions for ways to balance salmon restoration with other social issues, as follows:

- Three respondents believed that better communication and outreach would help communities understand the need for habitat projects. One noted that better information about projects and their benefits, such as feasibility studies or other data, would help in these efforts. For example, studies showing that habitat projects ameliorate flooding might help balance these two issues.
- Three respondents suggested looking for projects that restore salmon habitat while also addressing other community values, such as agriculture or flood control. Two recommended

demonstration projects such as the one The Nature Conservancy is building in the Skagit that combines salmon habitat and farming. One suggested that the SRFB work with the Office of Farm Preservation to create a grant opportunity that addresses both salmon and farming.

- One respondent noted that to more effectively balance salmon with other priorities, decision-makers need to identify the highest and best uses of public lands. Another stated the need for each community to build a common vision of its watershed.
- One respondent asked for support from the Puget Sound Partnership for a local process to work with local industry groups to find ways to build projects on the Puyallup River.
- Another respondent asked for support from the Puget Sound Partnership to mediate solutions to conflicts between conservation groups, such as the salmon community and the birding or hunting communities.

Lack of Public Understanding

Twelve respondents recommended increasing or improving public education and outreach. Eight of these urged that more effort be spent on educating the public about salmon recovery and the links between salmon and other issues. Two respondents asked that the Puget Sound Partnership conduct this outreach, which would remove one burden from project sponsors. One requested up-to-date information about public attitudes toward funding and implementing salmon recovery efforts, which could help show public support. One interviewee recommended that governments stop bailing out landowners who build in the floodplain.

Lack of a Regional Vision

Eight interviewees suggested some form of a regional, prioritized and integrated vision for implementing salmon recovery projects. They called for a regional vision that identifies and provides funding for the most important capital projects, and identifies areas where new development will not be allowed. This vision should be integrated with the other aspects of salmon recovery – habitat protection, hatchery, hydropower, and harvest – and guide salmon recovery investments. These respondents called for the region to communicate this vision in a manner that creates political will at all levels of government for taking the actions necessary to achieve recovery.

One interviewee recommended that the Partnership define ESA and recovery goals much more clearly and pick watersheds to recover as a whole.

Project Development Solutions

Many interviewees provided suggestions for ameliorating project development obstacles, particularly the lack of dedicated funding for the project design phase. Their ideas are described below.

Lack of Dedicated Funding for Project Development

Of the 44 people who provided suggestions for how to improve project development funding, 28 stated that a dedicated, stable, reliable funding stream for project development is critical to success. This funding stream should not be tied to a particular project, but should allow project sponsors the flexibility to use it as strategically as possible. Project sponsors should be able to use the funding for the staff which are necessary to work with landowners, conduct public outreach, design projects, conduct field work, assess project feasibility, fill data gaps, and participate in local and regional planning processes. Sponsors also should be able to use the funding to hire consultants where necessary, or to purchase public outreach or other materials.

Such a dedicated funding stream would allow project sponsors to build and retain the core staff necessary to strategically and systematically move projects from concept through feasibility, design, permitting, construction, and monitoring. If the funding stream were large enough to fund several staff per watershed, it is likely that it would increase the speed with which projects are designed and therefore implemented. This funding also likely would increase efficiency, since it would reduce staff turn-over and the time existing staff spends chasing and managing grants and other funding to support project development work.

Several respondents had specific ideas of how to find this funding. These ideas included the following:

- Create a funding district similar to a flood control district or raise taxes to fund ecosystem restoration work.
- Change the SRFB from an implementation funding agency to a project development funding agency, because this is funding that the state controls and it is easier to get federal and other funds for implementation. Use SRFB funding to develop the projects, and then seek other types of grants for the implementation phase. Or have the SRFB fund a project all the way from concept to monitoring, but decrease the percentage it funds (of the total project cost) in the implementation phase.
- Partner with leaders working on other issues such as transportation to create the sense that we're all working together to build healthy communities.
- Create user fees on items like pesticides.

Other respondents addressed important prerequisites for creating this funding source, emphasizing the need for decision-makers such as funding agencies and the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council to understand the gap between what is needed and what is available for project development, and to increase their comfort with funding staff. Others asked for the region to develop a funding plan that would provide a reliable level of funding for 10-15 years. Interviewees identified the Puget Sound Partnership as the logical agency to develop an outreach campaign to implement this funding plan.

Other Project Development Assistance

Other respondents suggested creative ways of making project development resources available to project sponsors:

- Fund experts who can work at the local level to assist project sponsors with developing projects. For example, the state could provide area engineers in a manner similar to WDFW habitat biologists.
- Local governments could cost-share staff.

Other respondents asked for the Puget Sound Partnership to continue supporting their efforts to fill data gaps and conduct the assessment work necessary to identify and develop projects. Respondents in the San Juan Watershed asked for nearshore experts who could help them prioritize projects and make necessary but difficult decisions about where to focus their efforts.

Landowner Willingness

Eight respondents suggested ways to improve landowner willingness, particularly private landowner willingness. These ideas included the following:

- Five respondents stated that the solution to this obstacle is outreach and education. Two respondents emphasized the need to involve landowners early in the project development phase, to listen closely to their concerns, and to meet their needs as much as possible.
- Three respondents noted the need for a strategic outreach plan. One asked for state support in collecting lessons learned from successful outreach programs, particularly about developing messages and how to deliver them to landowners. Another stressed the need for developing a

message compelling enough to convince farmers to sell their land at fair market value for restoration, but warned that there may not be one.

- One respondent noted that demonstration projects on public lands would help show private landowners that habitat restoration projects are not detrimental to property and public safety. Another noted that good project design and feasibility work is central to reassuring landowners that new projects will not adversely affect property and public safety.
- One interviewee took the long view, stating that often it's simply a matter of time until a landowner is ready to sell. However, he also emphasized that watershed groups need to be prepared to snap up lands when that time does come.

Complexity of Projects

Four respondents suggested ways to make projects easier to design, including the following:

- Fund the development of the tools necessary to conduct due diligence on complex projects. These tools include standard protocols for feasibility and design work, methods for sediment transport analysis, and models of how rivers will respond to levee setback projects, among others. The region should fund these and make them available, with training, to local sponsors.
- In addition, the region should fund the development of legal documentation, policies or procedures that help define project sponsors' liability resulting from logjam or other types of projects.
- Create a plan to implement each chapter of the Recovery Plan which addresses all the steps necessary to develop, construct, and monitor projects. Such a plan would highlight areas where watershed-wide decisions need to be made, such as where to allow salmon habitat restoration projects. Having such a plan would decrease the need for project-by-project decision-making, and increase efficiency. It would also identify the capacity needs for project design and implementation.
- Provide training to smaller jurisdictions so that they know how to create project designs and conduct feasibility work.
- Be willing to accept smaller or partial projects.

Implementation Issues

Respondents also freely offered ideas about how to address obstacles related to implementation. This section summarizes those responses.

Lack of Implementation Funding

Very few respondents had suggestions for ways to find more money for implementation. However, one noted the need to keep public awareness up and recommended getting the business and development communities involved in funding. Two others urged the state and federal governments and others to keep looking for creative ways to fund projects.

Others had ideas about how to improve the way existing implementation funds are allocated and used:

- Six respondents urged the region to identify and fund the highest priority projects at the Puget Sound scale. As one respondent stated, doing so will require significant staff work in each watershed to present information about how projects in their watershed can make a difference, and then staff work at the regional level to organize a process to prioritize these projects. She further noted that this process should include deciding whether to alter the existing funding allocation formula to focus on key projects. This process also would need support from the Recovery Council and/or the Leadership Council. These six respondents believed that such a process would help fund the large, complex projects that are regionally significant and that will require "large chunks" of funding. (It would also help develop a regional vision for restoration, as described above.)

- Other ideas for improving funding included creating a revolving fund for acquisitions that would allow watersheds to take action quickly when lands become available and repay the loans over time, and giving watersheds block grants that they can use to fund small projects, like riparian plantings or fencing, that can't compete for SRFB grants. One person noted the need to be more efficient with the funding that is available, and recommended reducing the time spent on process at both the local and regional scales.

Permitting

Many respondents with ideas about ways to lessen permitting burdens focused on the streamlined JARPA. Seven interviewees recommended expanding the scope of projects that can qualify for streamlined JARPA, and one recommended clarifying the guidelines for it to make them more objective. One interviewee even recommended making any project recommended in a watershed's Recovery Plan or three-year work plan eligible for streamlined JARPA, since those projects often have undergone rigorous review processes.

Other ideas for improving permitting included the following:

- The Snohomish Watershed is working to develop a process for habitat restoration permitting that would establish boundary conditions on permitting. This process would set a six-month timeframe for the permitting agencies to award all permits required for a habitat project, and involve getting all of the permitting agencies together at once to work on the project's permits. Such a process would increase efficiency and certainty, and help speed up a project's progress toward implementation. The Snohomish Watershed asked for the Puget Sound Partnership's continued support of this idea.
- One respondent suggested developing best management practices (BMPs) for different types of projects, so that project sponsors who use the BMPs can apply for streamlined permits. Similarly, another respondent recommended creating more programmatic approvals and exempting projects that have been approved through watershed planning processes from local permits.
- Another interviewee urged permitting agencies to hire staff to serve as permitting liaisons who can provide technical assistance to project sponsors. Similarly, one respondent recommended educating local project sponsors so that they know which permits they need, where to get them, and how to get technical assistance.
- Two respondents urged the US Army Corps of Engineers to hire more archaeologists to reduce the time necessary to obtain archaeological permits. Others asked for the state to engage in a process to set guidelines for when cultural resources, such as middens, should be preserved in situ, and when they could be responsibly excavated to make room for habitat restoration projects.

Grants

Nine interviewees commented that a stable, dedicated funding source as described above would reduce their reliance on grants. This solution also would increase project sponsors' efficiency, since they would not have to spend time applying for and managing grants and matching funds.

Alternatively, four respondents recommended combining funds into block grants for each watershed, and letting the local watershed group or other group determine how to spend them. This solution would reduce the time that project sponsors spend on applying for and managing multiple grants.

Two respondents urged grantors to cease requiring match documentation. One suggested that instead of requiring matching funds, grantors fund a certain percentage of each project and leave it up to the grantee to get the rest of the funding wherever they can. The grantee could report all funds used in the final report.

Lastly, one interviewee recommended that grantors not restrict eligibility of funds for acquisition work to local governments only. Instead, grantors should allow land trusts, conservation districts, and other groups to

acquire property and negotiate easements, especially since local governments often contract with these groups to do the work. The existing system is inefficient.

SRFB Issues

Three respondents focused on improving the SRFB Technical Panel's understanding of each watershed. One recommended stationing a SRFB person in each watershed. Two recommended helping the Technical Panel understand and fund the highest priorities in each watershed. Since these priorities may be assessments rather than restoration projects, this change would also require a change in the SRFB charter at the state level. The San Juan watershed asked for the Partnership's continued support to make this change.

Two respondents commented on the Technical Panel's perceived lack of knowledge of the nearshore, and recommended that the SRFB contract with reviewers who have nearshore expertise.

One respondent recommended turning SRFB grants into a block grant for each watershed and allowing watersheds more flexibility in shifting funds from one project to another. This flexibility would allow watersheds to move funds from projects that unexpectedly cost less to projects that unexpectedly cost more, thereby fully funding projects with high benefits rather than letting them "drag on for years."

Lack of Monitoring and Adaptive Management

Five interviewees addressed ways to increase monitoring and adaptive management. Four provided funding suggestions: one recommended a property tax or fee to support monitoring and other aspects of recovery and two recommended setting aside some portion of every grant to fund monitoring. The fourth recommended creating an endowment funded by a fraction of the money from each grant. This endowment could pay for monitoring as well as site maintenance.

One respondent asked for a set of monitoring guidelines with protocols.

Lack of Ecosystem Approach

Four participants suggested ways to move toward an ecosystem approach to recovery. Two recommended redoing each watershed's strategy to include steelhead and other species, and at the same time creating a process for ranking and funding projects that restore ecosystems rather than habitat for only listed species. One recommended bringing lead entities together to create a recovery strategy for the nearshore environment.

Other Implementation Issues

One respondent supported the pilot project underway to conduct a timber sale just to create logs for restoration work. Another requested changing state law to allow local governments more flexibility in contracting for restoration projects, perhaps under a certain dollar amount.

Process and Coordination Issues

Interviewees also contributed their ideas for how to improve the processes that lead to project development and implementation. These ideas are described below.

Local Process Issues

In general, interviewees who discussed local process issues believed they should be solved locally. The North Olympic Lead Entity asked for assistance from the Puget Sound Partnership with its ongoing transition to a role in which the Lead Entity takes responsibility for setting recovery priorities in the watershed and providing assistance to local sponsors to meet those priorities. Another respondent, noting

that watershed groups could benefit from spending more time with their local elected officials, suggested that the Partnership could set up events to encourage these interactions.

Regional Process Issues

Two respondents called for the Puget Sound Partnership to be more directive and systematic. One interviewee asked the Partnership to tell local sponsors what it wants and to recognize them for their efforts. The second recommended that the Partnership coordinate grant and other processes. One additional interviewee asked the state to solidify its efforts into one place or process.

US Army Corps of Engineers

Because the Corps is a key partner in many projects around the Sound, including several General Investigation Studies, respondents recommended that the Puget Sound Partnership begin a dialogue with the Corps to determine how to make these projects work more smoothly and how to delegate Corps decision-making authority to the District office. The Partnership would need to involve the Congressional delegation, because some of the changes may require altered or new legislation. In the meantime, one respondent recommended that local sponsors insist that the Corps sign an agreement allowing non-federal engineers the opportunity to review bid packages and designs, to minimize the risk of a local sponsor being liable for a project design approved only by the Corps.

Conclusion and Recommendations

According to the 56 people interviewed for this study, the most frequently mentioned important capital projects for salmon are large-scale, complex nearshore, estuarine, and floodplain restoration projects. Because these projects are complex, they require careful development and design, work with many partners and stakeholders, significant funding, and often many years of dedicated and meticulous work. Fifteen respondents felt their projects are on track, fifteen said they aren't, and fifteen said that some are and some aren't or their projects are moving more slowly than they'd like.⁶

While respondents identified a number of factors that lead to success, such as partnerships, obtaining funding, experienced project sponsors, and solid watershed plans, they also identified many obstacles to success. These obstacles range from coordination issues with specific agencies to the time and cost associated with permitting. Interviewees provided thoughtful suggestions for how to address many of these obstacles, primarily at the regional level.

Recommendations for Action

All of the obstacles identified in this study are barriers to implementation of capital projects that are important for salmon recovery. However, the Puget Sound Partnership cannot address all of them at once; therefore, this section identifies two categories of obstacles recommended for action: obstacles that are the most important ones to address, no matter how long it takes, and those that are ripe for immediate action. These recommendations are the author's opinion, based on professional experience and the strength of the 56 interviews conducted for this study.

Key Obstacles to Address

Two obstacles stand out as being both widespread and fundamental to future success: the lack of an authorizing environment for salmon recovery, and the lack of dedicated, sustainable, reliable funding for project development and implementation.

Lack of an Authorizing Environment

⁶ Not all respondents answered this question.

An authorizing environment for salmon recovery is a prerequisite for completing the acquisition and restoration projects necessary to restore salmon runs. Without it, important projects stall when they encounter opposition, or never get started. Creating an authorizing environment involves at least the following steps:

- *Strengthening political will at the local, state, and federal levels.* Many respondents noted that local elected officials need support from state and federal officials to make salmon a priority in their communities. State agency staff looks to the Governor for support, and in turn the State of Washington looks to the federal government – particularly NOAA and the US Fish and Wildlife Service – to establish firmly that salmon recovery is not voluntary, but is in fact required under federal law. Demonstrating this firmness at the federal and state levels would provide the support necessary to local elected officials to ensure that important capital projects in their watersheds get done.
- *Setting regional priorities for salmon recovery in Puget Sound.* Regional leaders can help set regional priorities, establish how each watershed might fit into those regional priorities, provide political support for the leaders of local processes, and hold locals and each other accountable for achieving that vision.
- *Balancing salmon recovery with other social priorities,* such as flood management or preserving family farms. Respondents noted that this is an emerging issue that confronts them, particularly as they focus on restoring lands in the floodplain and estuary, where farms and population centers tend to be located. Regional leaders could help convene and facilitate processes in each watershed to develop a vision that incorporates and balances these priorities. Establishing regional priorities for salmon recovery, as described above, is a crucial prerequisite for this step.

Creating an authorizing environment will take time and effort. However, it is critical to making progress on the large-scale, complex projects necessary for recovering salmon in many watersheds.

Lack of Dedicated, Sustainable, Reliable Funding

According to many respondents, inadequate funding is the primary obstacle for implementing important capital projects on a pace to achieve watersheds' ten-year goals. In some watersheds it is acutely inadequate, leading to the loss of staff and threatening to close some Lead Entity programs altogether. In many others, it is chronically inadequate, dramatically slowing the pace at which projects can be designed and implemented. Providing a reliable, sustainable, dedicated funding source for project development and implementation would help speed the pace of recovery in the following ways:

- It would allow project sponsors to work with landowners, fill data gaps, conduct studies to find out how projects will affect property and public safety, obtain engineering designs, and coordinate with project partners. As a result, more projects would be designed more quickly and with more community support.
- It would reduce or eliminate the need to seek funding constantly and to manage grants and matching funds. If the funding were flexible, it would allow project sponsors to be more nimble, fully fund projects and acquire properties when they become available. It would reduce staff turnover and training time, and allow project sponsors to hire and retain more experienced personnel. In short, it would increase efficiency.
- If the funding also covered monitoring and reporting, it would allow watershed groups to learn from their projects and become more strategic.

Respondents suggested creating an ecosystem recovery utility, similar to a flood control district, to provide this funding. One respondent even suggested altering SRFB funding so that it funded project development rather than implementation, since most funding sources focus on implementation.

Six respondents spoke to the need to identify the highest priority projects in Puget Sound. Once these priorities are identified, the region should find ways to fund them.

Dramatic changes in how projects are funded will take time and effort to accomplish. However, according to the respondents to this survey, doing so is critical to implementing the most important capital projects for salmon on a pace to achieve the region's ten-year goals for recovery.

Timely Obstacles to Address

In the author's opinion, several obstacles seem timely to address, meaning that progress could be made in resolving these obstacles in the next six months to a year. These obstacles include permitting, developing tools and protocols for project development, and beginning work with the US Army Corps of Engineers and the railroads.

Permitting

Fifteen respondents noted that permitting adds significant time and cost to restoration projects, and were frustrated that restoration projects undergo the same level of review as development projects. The Partnership could pursue one or several of interviewees' suggestions for improving permitting, such as working to expand and improve the streamlined JARPA permit and continuing to support the Snohomish Watershed's efforts to establish a six-month process for all permits related to habitat restoration projects.

Develop Tools and Protocols for Project Development

Respondents noted that many project sponsors are unsure how to take a project from the conceptual description identified in a watershed plan through design and feasibility. Standard protocols or guidelines would help alleviate this situation. In addition, doing due diligence on complicated projects such as levee setbacks requires modeling to predict how the river (or estuary) may respond. These models are rudimentary, and it would be very expensive for a single watershed to fund development of more sophisticated models. Instead, it may be worthwhile for the Partnership to fund their development for use across watersheds in Puget Sound, and to provide training to local sponsors to use them appropriately.

Begin Work with the US Army Corps of Engineers and the Railroads

As described in the main body of this report, the US Army Corps of Engineers is a key partner in salmon recovery efforts around the Sound, and also has responsibility for flood facilities. However, local sponsors report that relationships with the Corps are not always smooth, and that assistance from the Partnership with addressing the nexus between salmon recovery and flood prevention would be useful. While it is unlikely that this problem could be completely solved within a year, the Partnership could begin working with the Corps to frame the issues and identify possible solutions within that timeframe.

The Burlington Northern Santa Fe and Union Pacific Railroads own significant portions of the shoreline and have strong and unusual property rights as a result of the railroads' unique place in American history. Watershed groups have not been successful in attracting the railroads' interest in salmon recovery efforts, but the Partnership might be. The Partnership could research the railroads' property rights, perhaps identify benefits that might accrue to the railroads for participating in salmon recovery efforts, and convene a dialogue with the railroads to begin finding ways to restore habitat while keeping the trains running.

Appendix A

List of Interviewees

Watershed	Affiliation
Hood Canal Coordinating Council Richard Brocksmith Alex Gouley Al Latham	Hood Canal Coordinating Council Skokomish Tribe Habitat Manager Jefferson County Conservation District Director
Island Watershed Chris Luerkens Matt Kukuk Barbara Brock Jason Griffith	Lead Entity Coordinator, WRIA 6 Island County Planning & Community Development WRAC and WRIA 6 TAG Stillaguamish Tribe
Nisqually Watershed Jeanette Dorner Joe Kane Chris Ellings Lance Winecka	Watershed Coordinator Nisqually Land Trust Nisqually Tribe South Sound Salmon Enhancement Group
Nooksack Watershed John Thompson Ned Currence and Treva Coe Alan Chapman	Whatcom County Nooksack Tribe Lummi Nation
North Olympic Lead Entity Cheryl Baumann Randy Johnson Rebecca Benjamin Mike McHenry	North Olympic Lead Entity Coordinator Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe North Olympic Salmon Coalition Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe
Puyallup-White Lorin Reinelt Hans Berge Dave Seabrook Tom Nelson	Watershed and Lead Entity Coordinator King County Pierce County Conservation District Pierce County SWM
San Juan Watershed Barbara Rosenkotter Kit Rawson Tina Whitman Kim Sundberg	San Juan Watershed Coordinator Tulalip Tribes Friends of the San Juans TAG lead
Skagit Watershed Council Shirley Solomon Bob Carey	Skagit Watershed Council The Nature Conservancy

Watershed

Steve Hinton
Carolyn Kelly

Affiliation

Skagit River System Cooperative
Skagit Conservation District

Snohomish Watershed

Tim Walls
Paul DeVries
Maria Calvi

Snohomish County Salmon Program Lead
R2 Resource Consultants
Tulalip Tribes

WRIA 13

Amy Hatch-Winecka
Lance Winecka
Jamie Glasgow

WRIA 13 & 14 Lead Entity Coordinator
South Puget Sound SEG
Wild Fish Conservancy

WRIA 14

Amy Hatch-Winecka
Rick Hirschberg
Bill Worth
Lance Winecka
Jamie Glasgow

WRIA 13 & 14 Lead Entity Coordinator
Mason County
Citizen
South Puget Sound SEG
Wild Fish Conservancy

Stillaguamish Watershed

Sean Edwards
Pat Stevenson
Bill Blake
Kat Morgan
Peter Forbes

Co-Lead Entity Coordinator
Co-Lead Entity Coordinator
Chair of Citizen Committee
The Nature Conservancy
United States Forest Service

West Sound/East Kitsap

Kathy Peters

Patty Charnas
Troy Fields

West Sound Watersheds Salmon Recovery
Coordinator
Kitsap County Environmental Program
Mid-Sound Fisheries Enhancement Group

Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed

Mary Jorgensen
Roger Dane
Kerry Ritland
Heather McCartney
Diane Concannon
Tor Bell

WRIA 8 Actions and Funding Coordinator
City of Redmond
City of Issaquah
City of Mukilteo
King County
Mountains to Sound Greenway

Green/Duwamish Watershed

Dennis Clark
Karen Bergeron
Joanna Richey
Diane Concannon

WRIA 9 Public Outreach/Stewardship Coordinator
WRIA 9 Grant Coordinator
King County Water & Land Resources Division
King County Water & Land Resources Division

Survey Instrument

Interviewee Name:

Date:

Hi, this is Laura Blackmore. As you may know, the Puget Sound Partnership has hired me to investigate the obstacles to completing the most important salmon recovery projects in each watershed, and ways to overcome those obstacles. Your Watershed Coordinator recommended that I interview you to obtain your perspective on these questions.

1. What capital projects would make the most difference for salmon in your watershed? (A list of projects specific to each watershed was provided if respondents found this question difficult to answer.)
2. Are they on track? (Either the projects themselves or the prerequisites for accomplishing those projects)
3. If yes, what were the success factors?
4. If no, why not?
5. What needs to happen to address each of these obstacles?
6. What is the first logical step in that progression?
7. What support do you need to overcome this obstacle?
8. Is there anything else you would like to add about obstacles or ways to overcome them?

Thank you for your time!

Appendix B: Obstacles by Watershed

At their June 2009 meeting, the Watershed Leads asked that this report also present the most important obstacles in each watershed. Because we interviewed only three to six people per watershed, we were concerned that the results by watershed might be biased or incomplete. Blackmore Consulting sent the list of obstacles reported by each watershed's interviewees to the appropriate watershed coordinator, who decided how review of the list should occur to ensure no bias. This appendix presents the results by watershed.

Green/Duwamish and Central Puget Sound Watershed

The four interviewees in the Green/Duwamish and Central Puget Sound Watershed reported the following obstacles to implementing important capital projects for salmon recovery in their watershed. The Watershed Coordinator did not review this list, nor was it reviewed by the full multi-stakeholder group.

Table 8: Obstacles to Capital Projects in the Green/Duwamish and Central Puget Sound Watershed

Obstacle	Responses
USACOE	5
No Staff	3
Grant Funding	2
Implementation Funding	2
Project Complexity	2
Other Legal	2
Contamination	2
Project Development Funding	1
Permitting	1
Conceptual Nature of Projects	1
Public Safety	1
Decisions Made on a Project-By-Project Basis	1
Lack of Political Will	1
Lack of Monitoring & Adaptive Management	1

Hood Canal

The three interviewees in the Hood Canal Watershed reported the following obstacles to implementing important capital projects for salmon recovery in their watershed. The Watershed Coordinator reviewed this list but it was not reviewed by the full multi-stakeholder group.

Table 9: Obstacles to Capital Projects in Hood Canal

Obstacle	Responses
Grant Funding	3
Project Development Funding	2
No Staff	2
MAMA	2
Permitting	1
Implementation Funding	1
Project Complexity	1
Landowner Willingness	1
Other Legal Issues	1
Lack of Political Will	1
Balancing Social Issues	1
Ecosystem Focus	1
Public Education	1
SRFB Cumbersome	1

Island Watershed

The four interviewees in the Island Watershed reported the following obstacles to implementing important capital projects for salmon recovery in their watershed. The Watershed Coordinator reviewed this list but it was not reviewed by the watershed advisory groups.

Table 10: Obstacles to Capital Projects in Island Watershed

Obstacle	Responses
Landowner Willingness	5
Balancing Social Issues	3
Implementation Funding	2
No Staff	2
Public Education	2
Project Complexity	1
Lack of Political Will	1

Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed

The six interviewees in the Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed reported the following obstacles to implementing important capital projects for salmon recovery in their watershed. The Watershed Coordinator reviewed this list but it was not reviewed by the watershed's multi-stakeholder groups.

Table 11: Obstacles to Capital Projects in the Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed

Obstacle	Responses
Permitting	5
Project Development Funding	4
Grant Funding	4
No Staff	4
Project Complexity	3
Implementation Funding	2
Conceptual Projects	1
Public Safety	1
Decisions Made on a Project-By-Project Basis	1
USACOE	1
Landowner Willingness	1
Recognition	1
SRFB Lack of Nearshore Expertise	1
Process Complex	1
Other Legal Issues	1

Nisqually Watershed

The four interviewees in the Nisqually Watershed reported the following obstacles to implementing important capital projects for salmon recovery in their watershed. The Watershed Coordinator did not review this list, nor was it reviewed by the full multi-stakeholder group.

Table 12: Obstacles to Capital Projects in the Nisqually Watershed

Obstacle	Responses
Implementation Funding	3
Project Development Funding	2
Project Complexity	2
No Staff	2
Railroads	2
Grant Funding	1
Landowner Willingness	1
Lack of Monitoring & Adaptive Management	1
Lack of Ecosystem Focus	1

Nooksack Watershed

The four interviewees in the Nooksack Watershed reported the following obstacles to implementing important capital projects for salmon recovery in their watershed. The Salmon Staff Team reviewed this list, but it does not represent a policy position.

Obstacle	Responses
Grant Funding	3
USACOE	3
Landowner Willingness	3
No Staff	2
Local Process	2
SRFB Cumbersome	2
Project Development Funding	1
Implementation Funding	1
Other Legal Issues	1
Lack of Monitoring & Adaptive Management	1
Railroads	1
Lack of Political Will	1

North Olympic Lead Entity

The four interviewees in the North Olympic Lead Entity reported the following obstacles to implementing important capital projects for salmon recovery in their watershed. The Watershed Coordinator did not review this list, nor was it reviewed by the full multi-stakeholder group.

Table 13: Obstacles to Capital Projects in the North Olympic Lead Entity

Obstacle	Responses
Project Development Funding	4
Local Process	3
Implementation Funding	2
No Staff	2
Lack of Monitoring & Adaptive Management	2
SRFB Cumbersome	2
Grant Funding	1
Permitting	1
Landowner Willingness	1
Regional Process Complex	1

Obstacle	Responses
Other Coordination Issues	1
Lack of Ecosystem Focus	1
Other Implementation Issues	1

Puyallup-White Watershed

The four interviewees in the Puyallup-White Watershed reported the following obstacles to implementing important capital projects for salmon recovery in their watershed. The Watershed Coordinator reviewed this list, but it was not reviewed by the full multi-stakeholder group.

Table 14: Obstacles to Capital Projects in the Puyallup-White Watershed

Obstacle	Responses
Implementation Funding	3
Landowner Willingness	3
Lack of Political Will	3
Balancing Social Issues	2
Public Education	2
Railroads	2
Lack of Monitoring & Adaptive Management	1
Local Process	1

San Juan Watershed

The four interviewees in the San Juan Watershed reported the following obstacles to implementing important capital projects for salmon recovery in their watershed. The Watershed Coordinator reviewed this list, but it was not reviewed by the full multi-stakeholder group.

Table 15: Obstacles to Capital Projects in the San Juan Watershed

Obstacle	Responses
Project Development Funding	5
SRFB Cumbersome	4
Grant Funding	2
Implementation Funding	2
Lack of Political Will	2
Balancing Social Issues	2
No Staff	2
SRFB Lack of Nearshore Expertise	1

Obstacle	Responses
Regional Process Complex	1
Public Education	1

Skagit Watershed

The four interviewees in the Skagit Watershed reported the following obstacles to implementing important capital projects for salmon recovery in their watershed. The Watershed Coordinator reviewed this list, but it was not reviewed by the full multi-stakeholder group.

Table 16: Obstacles to Capital Projects in the Skagit Watershed

Obstacle	Responses
Project Development Funding	4
Balancing Social Issues	4
Local Process	3
Landowner Willingness	2
Implementation Funding	2
USACOE	1
Regional Process Complex	1
Public Education	1
Lack of Political Will	1

Stillaguamish Watershed

The five interviewees in the Stillaguamish Watershed reported the following obstacles to implementing important capital projects for salmon recovery in their watershed. The Stillaguamish Implementation Review Committee reviewed this list but provided no comments.

Table 17: Obstacles to Capital Projects in the Stillaguamish Watershed

Obstacle	Responses
Balancing Social Issues	5
Implementation Funding	4
No Staff	3
Lack of Political Will	3
Grant Funding	2
Permitting	2
Project Complexity	2
Lack of Monitoring & Adaptive Management	2

Obstacle	Responses
Project Development Funding	1
USACOE	1
Landowner Willingness	1
Public Education	1
SRFB Cumbersome	1
Lack of Large Wood	1

West Sound Watersheds

The three interviewees in the West Sound Watersheds reported the following obstacles to implementing important capital projects for salmon recovery in their watershed. The Watershed Coordinator reviewed this list, but it was not reviewed by the full multi-stakeholder group.

Table 18: Obstacles to Capital Projects in the West Sound Watersheds

Obstacle	Responses
Implementation Funding	2
No Staff	2
USACOE	2
Grant Funding	1
SRFB Lack of Nearshore Expertise	1
Regional Process Complex	1
Lack of Ecosystem Focus	1
Public Education	1
SRFB Cumbersome	1
Lack of Political Will	1

WRIA 13

The three interviewees in WRIA 13 reported the following obstacles to implementing important capital projects for salmon recovery in their watershed. The Watershed Coordinator reviewed this list, but it was not reviewed by the full multi-stakeholder group.

Table 19: Obstacles to Capital Projects in WRIA 13

Obstacle	Responses
Landowner Willingness	2
Project Development Funding	2
Permitting	2

Obstacle	Responses
Implementation Funding	1
Regional Process Complex	1
Lack of Political Will	1
Other Coordination Issues	1
Grant Funding	1
Decisions Made on a Project-By-Project Basis	1
Lack of Monitoring & Adaptive Management	1
Lack of an Ecosystem Focus	1
Public Education	1

WRIA 14

The five interviewees in WRIA 14 reported the following obstacles to implementing important capital projects for salmon recovery in their watershed. The Watershed Coordinator reviewed this list, but it was not reviewed by the full multi-stakeholder group.

Table 20: Obstacles to Capital Projects in WRIA 14

Obstacle	Responses
Landowner Willingness	3
Project Development Funding	2
Permitting	2
Implementation Funding	2
Regional Process Complex	2
Other Coordination Issues	2
Lack of Political Will	1
Grant Funding	1
Decisions Made on a Project-By-Project Basis	1
Lack of Monitoring & Adaptive Management	1
Lack of Ecosystem Focus	1
Public Education	1

Snohomish Watershed

The WRIA 7 Project Working Group asked project sponsors to complete an online survey about project implementation barriers. WRIA 7 asked that rather than using the results from the three interviews for this study, that we include the results of the 21 completed surveys here. Therefore, the summary of the online survey project is provided on the next page.

Participant Demographics

21 survey respondents

- 52% from large (>100 people) organizations
- 19% from medium (10-100 people) organizations
- 29% from small (<10 people) organizations

More than half the respondents worked for governmental agencies (62%) and/or worked primarily outside the Snohomish Basin (58%)

Feedback of Project Implementation Difficulty

Lack of clear cut results reflected a diversity in experience among project sponsors in project implementation. Non-the-less, patterns in responses emerged:

- Nearly half of all respondents (47%) felt that project maintenance was hard (rated 1 or 2 on a scale of 5) to implement. More than half (63%) of the respondents felt that monitoring was hard to implement. Write in responses indicated that difficulty in securing **funding** made these project phases hard to implement.
- Many project sponsors also indicated that assessment / feasibility and design phases are difficult to implement. Write-in responses indicated that both difficulties with **funding and technical expertise** made these phases more difficult to implement.
- Write-in responses indicated that **project permitting** also posed challenges.

What Would You Like the Project Working Group to Do?

Top Responses (very helpful + helpful):

- Help fund projects not competitive for SRFB/PSAR funds by researching additional grants, improving relationships with funding agencies, and improving guidance about suitability of projects for funding sources.
- Increase access to expertise available within the basin by discussing what project-related strengths and needs our organizations have, and then facilitate partnerships to link these resources and needs.
- Build a case that local permitting process is too burdensome, then identify possible improvements and determine who to engage cause change.

Mixed Responses (received high votes for helpful and for not a good use of time):

- Identify important restoration projects that have stalled and assign suitable project sponsors, roles in project implementation, and potential sources of money.
- Help project sponsors improve outreach by creating a "lessons learned" document focused on outreach issues that commonly stall projects.

Which project elements might make the most sense to try and coordinate on a basin scale?

Activities tended to rate higher than materials:

- Permitting Assistance – 63%
- Monitoring Needs – 44%
- Design Experience – 31%
- Assessment Experience – 25%
- Plant Materials – 13%
- LWD – 6%
- Maintenance Needs – 6%
- None – 6%

