



## **King County**

### **Water and Land Resources Division**

Department of Natural Resources and Parks

King Street Center

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Seattle, WA 98104-3855

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TTY Relay: 711

August 2, 2021

Puget Sound Partnership

PO Box 40900

Olympia, WA 98504

RE: Letter of support for the grant proposal “Maximizing returns on investing in barrier culvert removal in Washington state.”

Dear Puget Sound Partnership Grant Proposal Review Panel Members:

I strongly support the proposed project entitled: “*Maximizing returns on investing in barrier culvert removal in Washington state*” and look forward to serving on the Fish Passage Policy Advisory Committee (FPPAC) for the proposed project.

I currently work as a special project manager for the Water and Land Resources Division in the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks, leading King County’s efforts to accelerate the pace of fish passage restoration in King County. The goal of the program is to get the most salmon to the best habitat as quickly as possible. To do that, the county has identified all county fish passage barriers and will soon prioritize which barrier remedies will open access to the best habitat. By investing in the highest benefit barrier remedies first, preliminary analysis indicates that it may be possible to realize most of the available habitat benefits from barrier remedies within the next 20 to 30 years. This contrasts with more random approach to barrier remedies where it could take more than a century to realize equivalent habitat benefits.

Thousands of fish passage barriers, primarily outdated culverts at road crossings, limit access to hundreds of miles of riparian salmon habitat in basins draining to Puget Sound. State agencies, local governments, and private landowners have accelerated the removal of these barriers in order to encourage the recovery of declining wild salmon stocks protected by legislation and tribal treaty rights. This proposed project will provide tools to evaluate alternative barrier correction strategies that account for the diverse priorities of agencies and stakeholder groups. Such a tool will allow stakeholders and funding agencies use consistent, evidence-based tools to better communicate their priorities, allocate funding, and evaluate tradeoffs.

As a member of the FPPAC, I will provide practical expertise and knowledge of barrier correction projects and prioritization policy. I will provide advice on the analysis and models that will be developed by the research team to evaluate correction strategies and will help disseminate

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research findings from this project to facilitate uptake of the resulting decision support tool among policymakers and stakeholders. I understand that the FPPAC is expected to meet for biannual project-update meetings, provide guidance on how project results and tools can be adapted for use in practice, and promote two stakeholder outreach workshops.

King County envisions that the tools resulting from this project will be a huge help in ensuring that investments in fish passage restoration provide better habitat outcomes than would be possible without this kind of science-based support for implementation decisions.

If I can be of assistance or answer any questions, please feel free to contact me at, 206-477-9738 or by email at, [evlewis@kingcounty.gov](mailto:evlewis@kingcounty.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Evan Lewis".

Evan Lewis

Special Project Manager for Fish Passage