

Chehalis Basin Lead Entity

Habitat Work Group Meeting

October 14, 2016

9:30 am – 12:00 pm

Chehalis Tribe Community Center – Gathering Room
461 Secena Road, Oakville, WA

In attendance:

Adam Lower, <i>Chehalis Tribe DNR</i>	Janet Strong, <i>Chehalis River Basin Land Trust</i>
Alice Rubin, <i>RCO</i>	Jessica Helsley, <i>Coast Salmon Foundation</i>
Amy Spoon, <i>WDFW</i>	Jonathan Jack Jr, <i>Chehalis Tribe DNR</i>
Ann Weckback, <i>Lewis County</i>	Kathleen Berger, <i>Thurston C. District</i>
Brandon Carman, <i>Grays Harbor Conservation District</i>	Kirsten Harma, <i>Lead Entity Coordinator</i>
Bryan Inglin, <i>Lewis Conservation District</i>	Kim Smith, <i>Grays Harbor Conservation District</i>
Brett DeMond, <i>Streamworks</i>	Lonnie Crumley, <i>CBFTF</i>
Bob Amrine, <i>Lewis Conservation District</i>	Luke Kelly, <i>Trout Unlimited</i>
Carol Cloen, <i>WDFW</i>	Maria Hunter, <i>WDFW</i>
Colleen Suter, <i>Chehalis Tribe DNR</i>	Mark Swartout, <i>Citizen</i>
Dave Caudill, <i>RCO</i>	Omroa Bhagwandin, <i>Citizen</i>
Garrett Dalan, <i>The Nature Conservancy</i>	Rich Osborne, <i>Coast Salmon Partnership</i>
Glen Connelly, <i>Chehalis Tribe DNR</i>	Steve Hallstrom, <i>Citizen</i>
Hope Rieden, <i>Chehalis Tribe Fish and Wildlife</i>	Thom Woodruff, <i>Capitol Land Trust</i>

Meeting Summary

1. Welcome and Introductions.

Chair Bob Amrine convened the meeting. Everyone provided self-introductions. Kirsten asked participants to share a success story from over the past month, either of their work or of the work of someone they know in the community.

Thurston Conservation District reported on work getting cows out of the Skookumchuk River. The Chehalis River Basin Land Trust is closing on its East Hoquiam acquisition (2015 SRFB project), which includes 56 acres and $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of riverfront. The Lewis Conservation District has finished 11 out of its 12 HRP projects (the 12th wasn't permitted by the Corps). Omroa has been talking with the farming community in the Newaukum basin about the Chehalis Basin PEIS. Capitol Land Trust finished planting 1000 1-gallon plants on a Black River property, and closed on the Ramos acquisition, which was funded 2 years ago. The Chehalis

Basin Fisheries Task Force completed 9 fish barrier corrections. Lewis County completed one fish barrier correction and two bioengineering bank stabilization projects. Grays Harbor Conservation District is making progress on its lower Satsop project, and has two grant applications in the works. Luke Kelly of Trout Unlimited, new to the organization, now has a focus on the Chehalis Basin PEIS. He will be preparing comments for the “environmental community”

Garrett reported on three items. 1) Washington Coast Works has selected winners for \$25,000 grants that will go towards 3 projects. Two winners include stream restoration aspects in their project proposals. Winners will be announced at the October 14th Greater Grays Harbor event. Garrett encourages people to apply for the next round of grants, which will be announced in February 2017. 2) The WCRI ask for \$12.5 million for 18 projects is in RCO’s budget. If funded by the legislature, program developers will consider it “well funded” and a dependable funding source. 3) A project completed on Ellsworth Creek on the Naselle River demonstrated good restoration successes. The contractor has a drone which could be made available to other projects. It takes good quality images which could be good for stories and promoting projects.

2. Review of minutes from June 2016

No one had any comments or corrections on the minutes. Janet moved to accept the minutes, Brett seconded.

3. Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB)

Jess reported on the SRFB meeting. Most conversations are focused on funding. The Salmon Recovery Network is putting in a joint budget request to the governor. The letter will support items from various agency budgets that relate to salmon recovery. Jess reported that there is still time for the Chehalis Lead Entity to submit its own letter in November. The Salmon Recovery Funding Board has a vacant seat. Regional Area meetings to discuss Projects of Concern with the SRFB technical reviewers will be held October 24th.

Alice Rubin invited the group to submit session ideas for the Salmon Recovery Conference, to be held in April 2017. There will not be a registration discount this year, but presenters with an active SRFB grant can charge that fee to their grant. Janet suggested a session with a “quick snapshot” of lots of different projects. Kirsten suggested a coast themed session. Omroa asked if the agricultural community is usually represented at these meetings. Alice replied that they are not, but a session on agriculture might be another way to get them to be part of the conversation. There will be a session on climate change.

4. Aquatic Species Restoration Plan

a) Introduction of new Restoration Manager

Maria Hunter introduced herself to the group as the new WDFW Aquatic Species Restoration Plan manager. She has a water resources policy background and brings a policy perspective to the restoration planning. She is still in training, but eventually will be available to answer questions about the ASRP.

b) 2015-2017 Habitat Restoration and Protection grant recipient project status updates

Sponsors present shared their progress on implementing the Habitat Restoration and Protection Grants proposed last year.

Bob Amrine from the Lewis Conservation District reported successful completion of the “Great 8.” They were able to spend all grant funds by the end of the “fish window.” Bob mentioned they may have returned funds, and Carol advised Bob to talk to Maria about how to manage those funds.

Omroa spoke to the Wild Fish Conservancy’s water typing project, a project to find fish-bearing streams that might not be mapped. They started the fieldwork last summer but need more landowner access to continue. He noted that County Commissioners don’t like the water typing results since they imply need for increased regulation. Getting their support is crucial to the work, as the County has to submit recommended changes to water typing to the Department of Natural Resources. The VSP (Lewis County’s Voluntary Stewardship Program) could benefit this work.

Capitol Land Trust’s Darlin Creek barrier correction and bridge installation project has been completed.

The Chehalis Basin Fisheries Enhancement Task Force has completed all of their HRP projects. For the Boyer Road project, juvenile coho were observed upstream of the project site after completion. A project highlight from the Johns River project was discovery of buried wood under the replaced culvert. The wood integrated nicely into the project design. Juvenile coho moved in there, as well, and were seen in the stream the same day the new culvert was put in. This made the contractors “believers” since they saw the projects they were doing are actually worthwhile!

(Note – these presentations were cut short due to a weather-related disruption)

c) 2016-2017 ASRP activities

Maria and Carol from WDFW reported that the next EDT model run will be completed next week. This will be accompanied by a document developed by the consultants about what they did and how the model works. The document will explain which reaches are priority reaches and why they are a priority. Next, WDFW will check and see how EDT results “nest” within those. Two other models will eventually be integrated to help inform the Aquatic Species Restoration Plan.

The process for ASRP management has changed. There will now be a “Steering Committee.” Steering Committee members will include the WDFW Restoration Division Manager, Fish Program Division Manager, 2 Quinault representatives, and 2 Chehalis tribe seats, and an Ecology seat (but this is a liaison with Office of the Chehalis, not a decision-maker). Maria Hunter will facilitate this group. Consultants work in a support role. The Steering Committee will vote on projects. Maria will solicit advice from outside the Steering Committee.

There will also be a Monitoring and Evaluation committee, which at this point is agency reps. Their task is developing a Monitoring and Adaptive Management Plan. Maria is facilitating that committee and welcomes input.

Carol mentioned that they had suggested to the Steering Committee that there be a Restoration Advisory Group. The Lead Entity should figure how what composition it would like for that group. The group would help select target reaches, do ground-truthing, and work with landowners. The Steering Committee still needs to decide if they will support formation of such a group.

Carol mentioned that the Steering Committee will be the decision-makers because of the complexity of this work. If someone’s going to be “on the line” for the outcomes, it will be the Steering Committee. The decision-making process for this group hasn’t been developed yet.

Maria hopes to set up a meeting with the consultants and Habitat Work Group members to discuss EDT results and next steps on October 28th. They hope to do ground-truthing in November.

WDFW’s budget for the 2017-2019 biennium includes \$20 million for the Aquatic Species Restoration Plan to do restoration. Carol estimates that “a couple million” will be for barriers, the remainder for restoration and some protection.

Regarding the “early action” reaches, on-the-ground construction funding will be available starting in July. The current biennium budget can likely support project design.

5. Chehalis Basin Strategy

a) Review of PEIS

Kirsten asked for individuals to provide input on a Lead Entity draft PEIS comment letter. Bob said the Conservation Districts’ letter will just comment on the aquatic species action. He recommended providing input through the upcoming public meetings. Luke mentioned that Trout Unlimited will be asking for an extension on the comment deadline. Budget deadlines drive the deadline for the Governor’s Work Group recommendation. Bob recommends that everyone put in a comment and promote the “high” restoration scenario. Carol thinks the Governor’s Work Group is likely going to make a recommendation the day after the election. Carol thinks they will recommend the “high” scenario. The ASRP is independent of whatever “Chehalis Strategy” alternative is supported. The Coast Salmon Partnership is also going to be making comments, which they can share with the group once they’ve been approved by their Board.

Kirsten provided an overview Power Point on the Lead Entity’s salmon strategy, which includes seven goals. She noted that the comment letter could speak to how the PEIS does or does not support each of those goals. Mark commented that a letter commenting on the PEIS would be an acceptable action for the group to take. Jess supported the idea of explaining how the various components do or do not align with the Lead Entity’s strategy. If all Habitat Work Group members do not support the entire letter, individual members can pick and choose points that relate to the salmon strategy to include in their own letters.

6. Other Business & Announcements Chehalis Basin Lead Entity Subcommittee Updates

a) Bylaw Update Committee

Mark Swartout provided an update on the committee. He said that the bylaws are like a foundation of the house: they need to be strong so the organization can be strong. They should be understandable by a general citizen. The bylaw committee has met by phone and exchanged e-mails. They are recommending a revision of the structure of the bylaws, which would include ideas from other Lead Entities. For this meeting, they only recommended commenting on a new mission/purpose statement.

Kirsten put up a slide with a draft mission statement. Members questioned including the word “healthy” in front of a goal for improving habitat, and ultimately determined not to include it. The finalized statement was:

“Purpose

The purpose of the Lead Entity is to improve and protect salmon habitat in the Chehalis Basin. The Lead Entity fulfills the requirements for the Salmon Recovery of Chapter 77.85 RCW by recruiting, reviewing, and prioritizing community-based salmon restoration projects for submittal to the Salmon Recovery Funding Board. The Chehalis Basin Lead Entity’s Habitat Work Group serves as the local and technical committee with an understanding of salmon habitat and community values in the Chehalis Basin. The group serves other functions outside of the RCW requirements where their expertise is needed.

Geography

The scope of the Lead Entity is Washington’s Watershed Resource Inventory Areas (WRIA) 22 and 23, which includes the Chehalis River and its tributaries, as well as the rivers that drain to Grays Harbor and includes the Grays Harbor estuary.”

Regarding membership, Mark expressed the committee’s recommendation to put names of organizations rather than individuals in bylaws. Members present supported that idea. Mark recommended nametags for voting members so that there is more clarity when it comes to voting. Mark reminded the group that we’re not a legal organization so don’t have legal authority.

There was confusion about the role of Grays Harbor County in the Lead Entity structure, and what their responsibilities are. Alice and Dave of RCO mentioned that the County’s role is to house the process and serve as the Fiscal Agent. Kirsten will look for the resolution that established Grays Harbor County’s role in salmon recovery to provide clarity. A section of the role of Grays Harbor County can then be included in the bylaws.

b) Newaukum Pilot Watershed Subcommittee

There was no time to cover this item.

c) Culvert Subcommittee

Kirsten passed around a letter from Cade Roler, WDFW, establishing the need for the culvert subcommittee. The committee will re-do the culvert prioritization. Bob recommended adding Kathleen Berger to the committee.

7. Other Business & Announcements

The meeting ran over time and we were not able to get to these agenda items.

Next HWG meeting: TBD