

## **Chehalis Basin Lead Entity**

### **Habitat Work Group Meeting**

**November 14, 2016**

**9:30 am – 12:00 pm**

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

#### **In attendance:**

Alice Rubin, RCO	Kathleen Berger, <i>Thurston C. District</i>
Amy Spoon, WDFW	Kirsten Harma, <i>Lead Entity Coordinator</i>
Bennett Harbaugh, Center for Natural Lands Management	Luke Kelly, <i>Trout Unlimited</i>
Brett DeMond, <i>Streamworks</i>	Maria Hunter, WDFW
Bob Amrine, <i>Lewis Conservation District</i>	Michelle Cramer, WDFW
Garrett Dalan, <i>The Nature Conservancy</i>	Miranda Plumb, USFWS
Greg Green, <i>Ducks Unlimited</i>	Mitchell Redfern, <i>Mason Conservation District</i>
Jamie Glasgow, <i>Wild Fish Conservancy</i>	Omroa Bhagwandin, <i>Citizen, Lewis County</i>
Janet Strong, <i>Chehalis River Basin Land Trust</i>	Rich Osborne, <i>Coast Salmon Partnership</i>
Jason Gillie, <i>Chehalis Tribe</i>	Steve Hallstrom, <i>Citizen, Grays Harbor County</i>
Jessica Helsley, <i>Coast Salmon Partnership</i>	Thom Woodruff, <i>Capitol Land Trust</i>
Jonathan Jack Jr, <i>Chehalis Tribe DNR</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.

Mitch Redfern, new to this group, shared that he works on riparian restoration, instream work, and invasive species removal. Amy Spoon shared that she has been nominated to serve on the Marine Resource Committee. Streamworks is underway with design and permitting of 11 HRP projects. Miranda reported that the Fish and Wildlife Service is updating its Fisheries Restoration program, and she will be talking more about this later in the meeting. Capitol Land Trust has a new Americorps volunteer who can help out on restoration projects. The two Wildlife Refuges have a new Management Plan and are accepting public comment through November 28<sup>th</sup>. Wild Fish Conservancy just finished up a “gear reform” project on the Columbia River, that will help unnecessary kills by gill nets. The

study has applications to other areas. The Chehalis Tribe has reinstalled the screw trap at Pe Ell and will be starting a restoration project at River Mile 78.

## **2. Review of minutes from June 2016**

Thom mentioned that he had a correction to the minutes. The Ramos acquisition had not been completed, but hopefully will be soon. Thom moved to accept the minutes, Brett seconded. All in favor.

## **3. Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB)**

The Wishkah Gardens cost increase request from Forterra has been post-poned until the December HWG meeting.

Jess reported on the SRFB's Allocation Subcommittee meeting. The committee was convened in response to a reduction in funding from NOAA this fiscal year, and the agency's suggestion that Washington look at how it allocates funds geographically. On the table for possible changes are the capacity funding allocations and project funding allocations. She noted that the facilitator is only contracted for 3 meetings. What the committee comes up with in that time will only be passed on to the SRFB as a recommendation.

## **4. Chehalis Fisheries Restoration Program - Next Steps**

Miranda Plumb explained the Fish and Wildlife Service's plan for evaluating and possibly changing the Chehalis Fisheries Restoration Program.

History: Congress recommended a study in the Chehalis Basin. The Chehalis Restoration Program evolved from that. It used to have a steering committee, but then transitioned to just engaging in the Lead Entity as that group grew. The program used to focus more directly on fisheries, now it focuses on aquatic habitat. It has funded work in restoration, invasive species removal, and education.

The program is once again putting out a call for proposals. They anticipate the approximately \$130,000 will fund one or two projects.

Miranda indicated that USFWS is re-evaluating the program and it will look different in years ahead. She asked Habitat Work Group members for input: "What should the Service provide to the basin?" Her proposal is to explore funding monitoring and evaluation. The justification for that recommendation being that the amount of funding USFWS has to offer is so small, and can't be used towards any substantial restoration projects and is small compared to other currently available funding sources. The USFWS is exploring using the

program funds to potentially initiate a site-specific project evaluating restoration efforts in the Basin.

Different types of monitoring would be possible. 1) Fish population monitoring. Restoration professionals have assumed that there has been population benefits from projects. Monitoring could evaluate fish populations before and after construction to determine if the projects are providing benefits. 2) Construction assessment. How long do projects last after they are constructed? This type of funding would be particularly effective for fencing projects, which have been observed to fail after a number of years.

The group discussed the details of a fish use monitoring plan. The CRFP might be able to go towards USFWS staff setting up a study with a PIT tag array a few years pre-project, and maintain it for a few years after. The grant could include both construction funding and monitoring funding, since the USFWS grants are typically 3-5 years in duration. Several participants noted that this sounds similar to the Intensively Monitored Watersheds that are present in other lead entity areas. Rich suggested borrowing methodology from the UW's Olympic Experimental State Forests paired watersheds in the Clearwater. Maria suggested coordinating with the Aquatic Species Restoration Plan Monitoring and Evaluation team while developing this program.

Miranda asked for further help from the HWG in developing the program, which will likely still take months to do. Kirsten suggested setting up a subcommittee or keeping this as a standing item on the HWG's monthly agenda.

## **5. Aquatic Species Restoration Plan**

### **a) Update from WDFW**

Maria Hunter provided an update on the "Early Action reach" process. There are a few steps to take still, with the final reaches identified by January 2017. At this point, the priority subwatersheds to focus on in this next biennium have been identified: Newaukum, South Fork Chehalis, Skookumchuk, Satsop and Wynoochee. The next step will be for the modelers to gather more information about the "physical conditions" in those watersheds. After that, the process for selecting reaches to focus on will occur. On November 21<sup>st</sup>, there will be a meeting with Anchor to identify the "rough" areas to focus on based on the EDT model results. In December some ground truthing will begin. They want to determine: is what is impairing the habitat something that can be addressed by a reach-scale project or not? Maria is open to feedback on how to do the ground truthing. The process for identifying and developing projects has not been completed.

### **b) Habitat Work Group feedback**

- Q) Are you expecting to get projects on the ground by 2017?  
 A) Not likely. 2018 is more likely. Funding will be available July 2017.  
 Q) How do you know doing reaches is the best solution to habitat restoration?  
 A) That's a question for the EDT folks – I'll ask on Wednesday.  
 Q) How is NOAA's research going to integrate into ASRP?  
 A) It won't be ready in time for selection of the early action reaches. None the less, the researchers will give direction based on the work they've done so far.  
 Q) Are you still expecting about \$2 million for barriers in the next biennium?  
 A) At this point about \$6 million is in the proposed budget going to the governor.

Kirsten asked Maria what WDFW's response was to the letter the Habitat Work Group submitted regarding input on the Early Action reach process. Maria responded that they are still waiting for feedback from the full Steering Committee, including the Quinault Nation. She expects they will advance the recommendation to have representation on the Steering Committee. They expect the whole HWG will be invited to serve as the Restoration Advisory Committee to the ASRP. Maria also expressed agreement on acknowledging the limitations of EDT and respecting landowner willingness. Alice expressed appreciation of the invitation to the HWG to participate on the Restoration Advisory Committee. She cautioned that before asking HWG members to increase their involvement in this process, we'll need to know how much time will need to be committed and if the members have the capacity to commit that time.

## 6. Chehalis Basin Strategy

### a) Review of PEIS Comment Letter

Kirsten distributed a draft comment letter on the Chehalis Strategy's PEIS. She asked if a) anyone agreed or disagreed with submitting a letter. The answer was yes. The next question, b) being if we submit this letter, are there any changes or corrections needed? Brett had a few corrections that she will mail to Kirsten. Garrett suggested language regarding Alternative 4. Bob suggested that since the letter hasn't been approved by Grays Harbor County, it shouldn't be signed as the Lead Entity, given the grey areas in roles there. Instead, the letter should be signed by the Habitat Work Group. Kirsten should sign on behalf of the group.

Chair Amrine convened a vote: Should we submit a letter? All were in favor. Members suggested sending the letter directly to the Governor's Work Group, as well as online through Ecology's website.

**7. Presentation:** SWIFD Fish Distribution Tool – Bruce Jones, Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission

Bruce Jones presented online tools available for understanding fish distribution. The tool, called SalmonScape by WDFW, is called SWIFD by the NWIFC. It merges state and tribal datasets. Process for modifications: state and tribal biologists need to agree on the changes before they are made. WDFW and tribal biologists have access to the map, which they can change.

This tool and other resources are available online:

NWIFC website: <https://nwifc.org>

SSHIAP website: <http://nwifc.org/about-us/habitat/sshiap/>

SWIFD WebMap: <https://geo.nwifc.org/swifd/>

Bruce walked the group through the webmap.

If anyone here has updated data for the Chehalis, one of Bruce's staff is assigned to the Chehalis and they can do a mapping update. If anyone sees an error on the map, send Bruce an e-mail: [bjones@nwifc.org](mailto:bjones@nwifc.org) Also let him know if there are datasets you'd like to see added.

Q) Can you add data on other species to this?

A) The map includes data on warm water fish. We could probably add data on lamprey, as well.

Q) How often is this data updated?

A) Depends on demand. If there is a need to get new data in there, we'll put more effort into entering it. Data from tribal and WDFW biologists can be entered faster.

Worth checking out is NWIFD's 2016 State of the Watershed report.

Some tools for restoration project sponsors:

-Drawing tools, print function, fish distribution data that you can export into your own GIS.

## **8. Chehalis Basin Lead Entity Subcommittee Updates**

Kirsten reported that there are no updates since these groups haven't met since the last HWG meeting.

### **9. Other Business & Announcements**

a) Weyerhaeuser/RMAP

Miranda said she would discuss the matter with Caprise.

**Next HWG meeting: December 9**