

Chehalis Basin / Grays Harbor Lead Entity

Habitat Work Group Meeting

December 11, 2015

9:30 am – 12:00 pm

Chehalis Basin Land Trust Office
417 N Pearl St # 7
Centralia, Washington

In attendance:

Alice Rubin, RCO
Amy Spoon, WDFW
Bruce Treichler, Citizen
Bob Amrine, Lewis County Conservation
Caitlin Guthrie, Capitol Land Trust
Derek Rockett, Ecology
Dustin Bilhimer, Ecology
Jamie Glasgow, Wild Fish Conservancy
Jan Robinson, Chehalis Basin Land Trust
Jeni Maakad, Grays Harbor Conservation

Keith Douville, WDFW
Kirsten Harma, Lead Entity Coordinator
Lonnie Crumley, CBFETF
Marc Hayes, WDFW
Miles Batchelder, WCSSP
Omroa Bhagwandin, Onalaska Citizen
Penny Mabie, EnviroIssues
Rich Osborne, WCSSP
Stacy Polkowske, WDFW
Steve Hallstrom, Chehalis Land Trust

Meeting Summary

1. Welcome and Introductions.

Everyone provided self-introductions.

2. Brief overview of the different processes happening in the Chehalis

Kirsten provided a brief overview of the different processes happening in the Chehalis (PowerPoint available upon request).

3. SRFB Updates

a) Summary of December SRFB meeting

Alice Rubin provided a summary of the December 10-11th Salmon Recovery Funding Board meetings. All projects from the Coast Region were approved for funding. The Chehalis Basin Land Trust's Hoquiam Surge Plain Acquisition was identified as "Noteworthy" – this is truly a

distinction because only four out of 180 projects were identified as such by the SRFB this year.

A major topic discussed at the SRFB meeting was a proposal for a new funding stream for “Large Capital” projects. This proposal was only put forward by RCO staff to the SRFB in the last couple of weeks, so the details have not been worked out and the concept has not yet been fully vetted. SRFB Board members seemed to favor having this funding run through the SRFB program, rather than be made into a new program. Alice reported that other salmon recovery regions said that they have large “shovel ready” projects that could take advantage of a source of funding specifically for large projects. Alice’s concern is that all the other regions can think big because they have other large funding sources to work with. The Coast wasn’t represented during that discussion at the SRFB meeting so no one provided input on whether there are any of these types of projects ready on the coast or not. If the Coast doesn’t have any conceptualized but wants was to put projects forward, it might need to propose phased projects. She asked HWG members to think of any such projects they know of that might be ready for a “large capital” funding stream.

Miles mentioned that he knows of some project ideas that could be made “shovel ready” fairly quickly. Something to consider, however, is how much work sponsors should put into developing these types of project ideas when the funding program doesn’t exist yet.

Kirsten told the group that she heard that there was not yet wide-held consensus that even asking the legislature to support this funding stream is a good idea at this point. Alice said the Salmon Recovery Network, who exists to connect all salmon recovery interests in the state, will meet to discuss this further.

Bob asked if match would be required for these projects. Alice responded that if it goes through SRFB, the requirements will be the same as the regular grant round – 15% match.

Another outcome of the SRFB meeting was that the SRFB agreed to extend RMAP eligibility until 2022. This eligibility was set to expire next year otherwise.

Miles reported that “monitoring” will be eligible in 2016, but this will happen through the region. He asked HWG members to send any ideas for monitoring to Rich. Important to note is that funds for monitoring come out of the same pot of funding as for projects. Also to consider is that monitoring is only useful if it occurs for multiple years, and the current grants operate on an annual basis.

Action Item: Send any monitoring ideas you have to Rich Osborne.

Alice reported the release of a new National Weather Service Inundation Mapping tool:

<http://water.weather.gov/ahps2/inundation/index.php?gage=cenw1>

b) 2016 SRFB schedule

Kirsten presented the group with a draft 2016 grant round schedule and asked for input. Bob liked the fact that the Call for Proposals will come out just after the funding announcements for the HRP program. This will allow sponsors who weren't successful in HRP to apply through SRFB.

Miles suggested amending the schedule to allow for sponsor presentations at the January and February HWG meetings.

Kirsten suggested the addition of a tour of 2015 project sites for elected officials, in addition to the regular field tours for the review team. Miles recommended taking the elected officials to WCRI project sites, instead, since this is the more tenuous grant funding program. The tours could be done jointly among the Coast Lead Entities. Bob suggested at least doing a virtual tour with pictures for the legislators.

4. Chehalis Basin Strategy/ Aquatic Species Restoration Plan/ Habitat Restoration and Protection

a) Update on HRP Process

Alice reported that no agency has yet been designated to manage the HRP grants nor has funding been offered to do that work. Both WDFW and RCO have been suggested as possible agencies to manage these grants. HWG members expressed preference for having RCO manage these grants.

Kirsten reported that the HRP subcommittee is working on developing ranking criteria. Amy said she has been telling lots of people about the grant opportunity, but hasn't heard of any other project proposals. Lonnie said he will submit 18 projects, and Bob said Lewis County will be submitting projects as a block.

b) NOAA Work

Kirsten shared that she had learned NOAA staff are working on a watershed scale assessment of fish use and limiting factors, similar to Tim Beechie's work for the Skagit watershed completed in 1994. Jamie Thompson of NOAA reported that with their modeling work, "Different restoration activities are run through the model, resulting in correlation of land use activity to loss, and identification of "optimal" or "cost-effective" restoration actions for the watershed. The assessment can be done on different scales, from individual sub-basins to whole watersheds." They are "shooting to have some model runs ready by fall

of 2016.” Jamie Thompson reported that Tim Beechie expressed interest in presenting this work to the HWG.

c) **Culvert Inventory – Stacy Polkowske**

Stacy provided an update on the WDFW culvert inventory efforts. In addition to her work on the FBRB culvert inventory, her department has a separate contract to assisting work to inform the longer term Aquatic Species Restoration Plan.

The WDFW team’s goal for this contract is to get a full up-to-date culvert inventory for the whole Chehalis Basin. They are starting with the top 10% of culverts off the ranked culvert list produced at one point by the Habitat Work Group. They will also be looking at “unknown” road crossings to see what the culverts are like there, and at any culverts that local groups request that they look at.

Action Item: If you know of any culvert with unknown passability that you would like WDFW to assess, let Stacy know. Please also give her any feedback on the Chehalis Basin-wide inventory priorities by the next HWG meeting.

Jamie asked if the crew would be looking at tidegates, and Stacy responded that they would just be looking at freshwater crossings.

d) **Other ASRP**

Rich reported that he attended a meeting on developing the Conceptual Model for the Chehalis. He will be attending a follow-up meeting next Monday.

5. Fish Barrier Removal Board Update (Stacy Polkowske)

All regions in Washington have nominated subwatersheds for extensive review for barrier removal “packages.” The Coast’s nominations have been at a HUC10 level. Next Tuesday (following this meeting) the Board will discuss and then approve or reject the nominations. The Board will also decide on “coordinated pathways” projects. Stacy is working with WCSSP’s IP model results for coho and steelhead rearing habitat “density” in the different subwatersheds. Her initial assessment is that the Newaukum subwatershed will be the highest priority on the coast given number of culverts and IP density of fish use.

Action Item: Please provide any recommendations you have for “focus areas” for culvert removal project development in the Newaukum to Stacy ASAP.

6. Newaukum / Land Owner Engagement

a) Review of various focuses on the Newaukum Subwatershed

i. WSCCP/ Lewis Conservation Dist/ FBRB/ FWS/ Other

Kirsten reminded the group of the conversation from the November HWG meeting where different members described their organization or agency's projects proposed to occur in the Newaukum watershed. Stacy added that her crew (for both FBRB and ASRP work) is interacting with landowners as needed through the Conservation Districts.

b) Discussion regarding coordinated outreach to landowners

i. Review of Draft letter to Landowners

Bob distributed a draft 'letter to landowners' that describes the *non-regulatory* work proposed for the Newaukum. He is waiting for approval from his board to distribute this letter and hold a meeting on this topic. He doesn't know what their response will be, but expects to have an answer in time to provide an update at the January HWG meeting.

His proposal will be that the letter be distributed to all streamside landowners, followed by a presentation at the Conservation District's Coordinated Resource Management meeting on February 2nd. He will invite the other agencies/entities to participate. At that meeting, he will ask landowners how they want to proceed with projects.

Other's in this group provided additional ideas about the letter/meeting approach. Marc Hayes cautioned that most people will see the "regulatory" hat of each agency presenting, even if they clearly state that they are pursuing only non-regulatory work. Bruce suggested that the idea of having each agency do a presentation might not go over well, as people don't like long presentations, and when the time comes around to ask for people's opinions, people are already out the door. Bob followed up that since the purpose of these CRM is to "give time to the people," maybe overwhelming them with presentations isn't the best thing to do. The group concluded that bringing in other organizations or agency representatives should wait until a second, follow-up meeting.

Kirsten asked about the timing of sending out this letter (presumably after January 8th), holding the CRM meeting in February, and then presumably a follow-up meeting after that. The concern being that the different folks might need to be out doing site visits and soliciting support for projects before the community members are fully aware of what is going on. Jamie said that the Wild Fish Conservancy doesn't need to start on its water typing work until after the CRM and associated process have taken place.

Another suggestion regarding the letter was to get copies of it for all of the people (such as Stacy's field crew) who will be working on the ground.

Other points about landowner perspectives that were brought up:

- * People doing illegal activities don't want to be caught, so they don't want anyone with "regulatory" authority on their land
- * Some people think the WDFW isn't doing enough "regulatory" work
- * People like the idea of seeing wild salmon runs return to their property
- * People don't want salmon-bearing streams on their property if it means they will have to put up with more regulations.

ii. Input from Penny Mabie or Keith Douville

Keith explained his work with landowners as part of the WDFW amphibian surveys. He said he'd had success because he just asked for permission to access properties to count fish and frogs. Since then, he's been asked by others to use those contacts to access those properties for other reasons. He sees the risk of losing credibility by going back to ask for access for different purposes than originally stated. People don't like a flood of requests, but rather one full request up front. Keith sees the importance of each entity working with landowners knowing what else is going on before asking for access permission.

Another perspective he offered is that landowners are more likely to fear "what might happen" as a result of you accessing their property, rather than just what you say will happen. They also worry about the impacts of proposed work. Anyone working with landowners should understand both the expected and unexpected outcomes.

Kirsten asked Keith if he could develop a list of potential impacts to properties based on his experience. If everyone can tell the landowner various outcomes of project work on their property, it will help to build credibility.

c) Proposed work by Department of Ecology (Derek)

Derek shared his plans for focused work for addressing water quality violations, specifically from the agriculture industry, in the Newaukum over the next six months to a year. This will be another focus on the Newaukum that will need to be integrated with the other initiatives.

Derek described his approach when working with reported violations. He said he always contacts Conservation Districts before contacting the land owner. He explains the non-regulatory help that Conservation Districts can offer, with the goal of getting voluntary compliance before having to look to enforcements. In his 10 years working on these same issues he has never had to do enforcement. He stressed that communication is a big factor

necessary for success in this work.

d) Discussion of next steps

There was a collectively identified need for continued coordination around outreach to the public regarding activities in the watershed. Agency representatives present at this meeting expressed interest in continued participation in the group to help facilitate that coordination.

Next HWG meeting: January 8th 2016