

Chehalis Basin Lead Entity

Habitat Work Group Meeting

December 3, 2018

9:30 am – 12:30 pm

Chehalis Tribe Community Center Gathering Room

Oakville, Washington

In attendance:

Alissa Ferrell, RCO

Amy Spoon, WDFW Region 6

Bob Amrine, Lewis Conservation District

Brett Demond, Citizen

Carol Henry, WDFW

Chris Dwight, WDFW

Don Schuh, Weyerhaeuser

Emelie McKain, ASRP Manager, WDFW

Jason Gillie, Chehalis Tribe DNR

Jan Strong, Chehalis River Basin Land Trust

Jess Helsley, Coast Salmon Partnership

Kelly Verd, Lewis Conservation District

Kirsten Harma, Lead Entity Coordinator

Lonnie Crumley, Chehalis Basin FTF

Mara Healy, Thurston CD

Rich Osborne, Coast Salmon Partnership

Rick Rouse, Port of Chehalis

Rickie Marion, Chehalis Tribe

Sarah Watkins, Grays Harbor College

Stu Trefry, WA. Conservation Commission

Thom Woodruff, Capitol Land Trust

Tom Kollasch, Grays Harbor CD

Meeting Summary

1. Welcome, Introductions

2. Special Presentation (Stu Trefry)

Kirsten Harma, Watershed Coordinator, was named "Southwest Partner of the Year" by the Washington State Conservation Commission.

3. Organizational Business

a. Review minutes from November 2018

Minutes were approved without comment.

b. Culvert Subcommittee (Chris Dwight)

The first Culvert Subcommittee in several months was held Thursday, November 29, with a good turnout. The Subcommittee meeting included WDFW updating everyone on reprioritization of barriers in the Chehalis, and the discussion resulting in consensus for what the next steps will be. There is still a question of whether the Subcommittee should use the same prioritization equation with the new inventory. A fresh study in prioritization for the Upper Columbia Basin barriers will be looked at to possibly help update the 2009 prioritization formula. The next meeting will be January/early February 2019.

Q: Is there a difference between results using past prioritization with simpler tools and a new equation? How does a new equation change the information?

A: I don't know. What stood out from the Upper Columbia work was things didn't quite match up; if the barrier wasn't on the stream layer, it wasn't prioritized. 84% of the crossings didn't get ranked.

Comment (Rich Osbourne): GIS layers vary for each location, creating mismatch between layers. CSP wants a core prioritization for the entire coast, with specific layers placed on top.

c. Newaukum Subcommittee

Kirsten presented a Story Map (website) about the Newaukum coordination that she has been working on with RCO. This will be part of the State of the Salmon report that comes out every year to show the legislators the state's progress on salmon recovery. This is the first year the Chehalis has something featured in that report. She asked interested parties to stay after the meeting to provide more input on the draft Story Map content.

4. Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB)

a. SRFB meeting December 5-6

The Washington Salmon Coalition meeting will be held the day before on 12/4.

b. Salmon Recovery Conference 2019—April 8-9 in Tacoma

The call for more sessions is open until 12/4. They'll be getting back to people around 12/20.

c. 17-1098 Time Extension Request (Alissa)

Capitol Land Trust is requesting a time extension for doing a conservation easement on the Wilson Creek property in the Black River area. At the time the project was merged into an older for the Black River Conservation, which was to purchase fee simple the completed Ramos property. \$20,000 in old federal funds is expiring that can't be reappropriated. Those need to be removed, so the \$20,000 will be deobligated for the Ramos portion. The Wilson property was merged into it with newer federal money, and so a time extension to December 2021 has been requested for that portion— \$50,000 of that is still good. More time is needed to work with the landowner, and line out more of the agricultural potential, and work out details of the easement.

d. LEAN Recommendations for 2020 (Kirsten)

Funding was approved by the legislature in the last biennium to get RCO to go through the LEAN process to make the SRFB process less cumbersome and more efficient. They hired consultants and conducted interviews with Lead Entities across the state, RCO staff, and sponsors. Kirsten sent out a survey to members of this group and project sponsors, and that input was used in the analysis. Recommendations will be made for the entire state.

The biggest changes that could affect the 2020 grant round:

i. Faster grant round:

1. Call for projects will still begin in January, with the SRFB meeting where grants will be awarded moved earlier - to September.
2. Site visits would be earlier in the spring.

3. Project ranking will be in June.
 4. Applications will need to be completed before site visits, resulting in better feedback from reviewers
 5. Sponsors will have more time with the review panel.
 6. All comment forms will be in PRISM for ease of tracking
- ii. Request for comments:
1. The state technical review panel is removing one of the steps: there will be one review by the full technical committee instead of two reviews.
 2. A recommendation was made where some Lead Entities may opt for an every-other-year grant cycle (funding made available every year, but call for projects only made every other year).

5. Project Presentations

a. **Completed Projects: Chehalis Basin Fisheries Task Force (Lonnie Crumley)**

Lonnie gave a presentation of the work completed on Sand Creek near McCleary. Restoration of 5 crossings are finished: four concrete bridges and one bottomless arch, which opened up 8.67 miles of habitat for coho and other species. Prior to our project, every one of the crossings flooded over roads. Total project budget was \$1.5, but we are coming in under budget. All construction is done, but there is tree planting and some reports and then the project will be wrapped up. There was tremendous cooperation from landowners along the County road.

b. **Conceptual: Wildcat Road Fish Barrier Correction (Brett Demond)**

This proposed project addresses a 33% passable fish barrier where West Fork Wildcat Creek passes under Wildcat Road north of McCleary in the Cloquallum subbasin. This addresses a Tier 1 priority for fish passage in this basin. It will be the only barrier left in the subbasin after Green Diamond corrects its 8 barriers upstream. The project would open up 7.29 miles of habitat.

c. **Conceptual: Weyerhauser Oxbow Reconnection (Don Schuh)**

This project would restore 7 miles of suitable anadromous habitat on Weyerhauser tree farm land on the West Fork of the Chehalis. Forest Practices Act dictates that barriers need to be removed and access opened. Shareholders can pay for the fish barrier correction on the lower crossing because Weyerhauser is obligated by law. The constructed bypass channel was constructed before Forest Practices rules were established, so Weyerhauser is not obligated to pay for realigning the road to restore channel. Weyerhauser would be requesting grant and public matching funds, estimated at \$900,000, primarily for two bridges. Weyerhauser is willing to take 51% of that cost. The project could be completed in its entirety by summer 2020. Weyerhauser is looking for an eligible project partner to sponsor the grant and work on the project.

6. Aquatic Species Restoration Plan (ASRP)

a. **ASRP Updates**

No updates this month in order to allow time for the ASRP Implementation presentation.

b. ASRP Implementation—Plan Overview—Role for Lead Entity—Request for Feedback (Emelie)

Emelie presented a draft version of the implementation framework for the ASRP: how we're going to get those projects selected and on the ground. Part of this process is getting feedback from this group and creating the framework around what this group wants. Emelie presented a Power Point. Note: the red on the flow chart handout represents where basin entities have the opportunity to be involved.

- Basis for the elements in this draft implementation plan:
 - Ensure the goals of the ASRP and fits within the Chehalis Basin framework
 - Find roles and responsibilities so that everything we are doing is transparent
 - Easy and feasible to implement
 - Efficient use of current resources
 - Maintain support from Basin entities
- Restoration Strategy Implementation
 - Reach Scale implementation process: Early Action projects, large, complex 2-3-mile river projects with a riparian component.
 - Pre-project development
 - Similar to project-specific development: once we define a Reach Scale project based on landowner willingness, we can recommend reaches to enter the design phase.
 - Project design
 - Similar design team process that we have now with Early Action Reaches, also including the landowner liaison that was building support in that reach.
 - Iterative outreach
 - Project implementation
 - Project sponsor looks like it will be the state, mainly for liability.
 - Project sponsor will oversee all implementation, design firms, subcontractors, and permitting
 - Landowner liaison still involved
 - Monitoring before and after construction
 - Adaptive management

Questions and comments:

- The Science Review Team is putting together prioritization. How will that work with future priority project selection?
 - SRT (ASRP) will identify high priority restoration projects. Then, the landowner engagement group will go to the area to build relationships with landowners and assess willingness.
- Does that rule out projects like the Weyerhauser project to get funded through the ASRP if the geospatial units are not within Weyerhauser property?
 - That's a policy consideration for the Steering Committee, with input from the LE. That project could better fit into the project-specific process.
- The state would be the sponsor, but not the construction project manager?

- Likely not.
- Is monitoring basically project implementation monitoring?
 - This will be connected to ASRP's monitoring and adaptive management plan, the framework of which will be completed this year.
- I want to make sure there are ways we're building capacity to handle all this in the local communities, and to propose on their own ideas.

- Project-specifics implementation process: everything that doesn't qualify as a Reach Scale project
 - Pre-project development
 - Priorities of actions for restoration
 - Priorities for area of action
 - Two already created groups will use this document and tailor it each biennium on needed scientific or policy criteria:
 - Science Review Team
 - Steering Committee
 - Landowner Outreach Group: working with landowners to cultivate restoration opportunities within priority areas. Currently the role of CDs but this could expand. They will take information from the Plan and the two groups and cultivate opportunities on the ground.
 - Project design
 - Conceptual project collection, "cross-pollination" from the various groups
 - Formal request for proposals
 - Project selection: local review team, including LEs
 - Formal approval process to award funds
 - Project implementation
 - Project sponsor overseeing the logistics with project permitting and construction

Questions and comments:

- Q) Why create a new process that is ASRP-specific vs. have one process through the LE? What are the criteria that projects need to fit to go through the ASRP route vs the existing criteria of SRFB?
A) This is a draft, and we are still seeking input. In the future there are opportunities to meld these two processes.
- Q) The LE put together a review process for ASRP funds over the past two biennia. How will this new proposal differ?
A) The big difference is the recognition and approval of the Steering Committee and Science Review Team.
- Comment: SRFB is where we can get a lot of good design work done. We can have the state review panel and have more eyes on it. Make sure you have that link that takes advantage of the SRFB review process and get the bigger projects funded.

- Comment: Maybe it should be clear in the flow chart: it is the LE that is doing the collection and review of conceptual project ideas? ASRP does not want to dictate the SRFB list.
- Comment: It might take more time merging these processes than using the existing processes.
- Q) Isn't it up to the sponsor to decide which is the best funding source?
A) Hopefully having the Lead Entity group aware of all project ideas and funding sources will better help landowners and sponsors decide which funding programs is the best fit for their project.
- Comment: Doing concurrent processes might open up more coordination and efficiency. If not, we need processes to be separate.

7. **Other items:**

Tom: Related to ASRP and outreach, we're going to talk to landowner "focus group" we spoke with again in the coming spring. Tonight, I'm visiting with the Grays Harbor Guides Association, who are interested in doing volunteer projects. They have concerns of their own on particular rivers.

Tom: The recent heavy rains triggered a large avulsion on the lower Satsop, on the Willis' property. There's a scramble to figure out what if anything can be done.

8. **Closing**