

Chehalis Basin Lead Entity

Habitat Work Group Meeting

December 9, 2016

10:30 am – 12:30 pm

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

In attendance:

Adam Lower, <i>Chehalis Tribe DNR</i>	Jesse Maschuke, <i>Lewis County</i>
Alice Rubin, <i>RCO</i>	Jonathan Jack Jr, <i>Chehalis Tribe DNR</i>
Amy Spoon, <i>WDFW</i>	Kathleen Berger, <i>Thurston C. District</i>
Ann Weckback, <i>Lewis County</i>	Keith Douville, <i>WDFW</i>
Brandon Carman, <i>Grays Harbor CD</i>	Kirsten Harma, <i>Lead Entity Coordinator</i>
Brett DeMond, <i>Streamworks</i>	Kim Smith, <i>Grays Harbor CD</i>
Bob Amrine, <i>Lewis Conservation District</i>	Lonnie Crumley, <i>Chehalis Basin Fisheries Task Force</i>
Cade Roler, <i>WDFW</i>	Luke Kelly, <i>Trout Unlimited</i>
Colleen Suter, <i>Chehalis Tribe</i>	Miranda Plumb, <i>USFWS</i>
Garrett Dalan, <i>The Nature Conservancy</i>	Mitchell Redfern, <i>Mason Conservation District</i>
Darcey Hughes, <i>Forterra</i>	Rich Osborne, <i>Coast Salmon Partnership</i>
Dave Price, <i>WDFW</i>	Steve Hallstrom, <i>Citizen, Grays Harbor County</i>
Jamie Glasgow, <i>Wild Fish Conservancy</i>	Thom Woodruff, <i>Capitol Land Trust</i>
Janet Strong, <i>Chehalis River Basin Land Trust</i>	
Jason Gillie, <i>Chehalis Tribe</i>	
Jessica Helsley, <i>Coast Salmon Partnership</i>	

Meeting Summary

1. Welcome and Introductions.

Chair Bob Amrine convened the meeting. Everyone provided self-introductions. Given the late start of the meeting, the story sharing agenda item was omitted.

2. Review of minutes from June 2016

Brett moved to accept the minutes, Thom seconded. All in favor.

3. Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB)

Darcey Hughes presented the Wishkah Gardens cost increase request from Forterra. Alice

told the group that RCO has plenty of funding in their cost increase pot to honor this request. All HWG members were in favor of the cost increase request.

Alice shared that the Salmon Recovery Funding Board approved the funding list for the Coast at their December Board meeting.

4. Chehalis Fisheries Restoration Program - Next Steps

Miranda Plumb gave a presentation on different types of monitoring, as a follow-up to last month's discussion about the Fish and Wildlife Service's plan for evaluating and possibly changing the Chehalis Fisheries Restoration Program. Monitoring is being considered as something the Service might fund.

There are three types of monitoring: Implementation, Effectiveness, and Validation.

Implementation Monitoring is what RCO grant managers do to ensure that a project was completed as planned. This type of monitoring addresses questions such as, if the project proponent said they would plant trees, did they plant them?

Effectiveness Monitoring gets more at impact: was the project successful at doing what it was designed to do? For example, if it is a fish passage project, does it pass fish? An important reason to do this type of monitoring is to inform future restoration design. Currently, effectiveness of salmon habitat restoration projects is rarely measured.

Validation Monitoring involves looking at biotic response to a restoration project. This is more challenging since it attempts to tie biotic response to an individual projects, while there are many other factors influencing fish abundance. In Washington, this type of monitoring only occurs in what are designated as Intensively Monitored Watersheds, which is long term research in a whole watershed.

Dave Price mentioned that WDFW is going to be developing a Monitoring plan over the next year as part of the ASRP. He shared his views on monitoring options.

The group discussed how the different monitoring types might work for the Chehalis Basin. Someone suggested perhaps one sub-basin with no recent restoration work could be used as a control paired with another where intensive monitoring takes place. Lonnie mentioned that since harvest is consistent, research is needed to see what effects from restoration are vs. changes from harvest.

Miranda's goal for these discussions is to determine how best to invest in the Chehalis. She has a year to develop a plan for USFWS and plans to keep this as an on-going discussion item at HWG meetings.

5. Aquatic Species Restoration Plan

a) Update on Early Action Reach selection process and next steps

Maria Hunter was unavailable so Dave Price provided the update.

Funding: Dave said that the “funding flow” for future Chehalis Strategy restoration projects is still undetermined. WDFW doesn’t want to manage the restoration grants and is planning as if RCO will do it. The Governor’s Work Group proposed budget will come out next week. WDFW has asked for \$20 million for ASRP. At this point, it looks like the Work Group’s ask for ASRP will be \$10 million. WDFW Steering Committee members recommended that at that level, \$6 million go towards fish passage and \$4 million go towards the “early action” reach scale projects. If the proposed budget is funded at a \$20 million level, they would propose about \$12 million for early action, and \$2 million for acquisition. Dave stressed that these numbers aren’t fixed and the discussion is still open.

Alice asked how acquisition can be removed if the Restorative Alternative, as outlined in the PEIS, relies on acquisition. Dave responded that that would be part of the larger strategy, which is funded separately. Anything done on this “Alternative 4” would happen later after more research. Alice suggested that an acquisition project take place as a demonstration of that approach as a viable option in a large-scale restoration strategy. Janet also expressed concern that acquisition be completely off the table at the \$10 million level, as it seems to put out a message that the Steering Committee thinks acquisition is of lesser importance.

Cade asked what types of work would be allowable in the “fish passage” bundle. He specifically wanted to know if adding wood around the corrected barriers could be incorporated, or other types of tributary enhancement. Several people asked if those projects can take place in tributaries. Dave said nothing is precluded yet. Regarding “early action” reaches, Dave said work is needed in the highest priority areas coming out of EDT plus the NOAA results which will come out in the spring. Regarding barriers, Dave mentioned that it’s possible that FFFPP won’t fund anything in the Chehalis if the Chehalis Strategy ASRP funding is going towards barrier correction.

Regarding the “fish passage” projects, Dave said that he expects the Habitat Work Group to have a role in evaluating and ranking the projects similar to its work evaluating HRP projects last year. Brett recommended that that process be scheduled so as to align with the SRFB grant round. Dave agreed that was a good idea.

Dave explained WDFW’s proposed process for managing the Early Action projects. The process was set up recognizing the complexity and newness of this process. The first phase

will be RCO sending an RFP for potential projects sponsors to submit project concepts in the five priority subwatersheds (identified by EDT). Simultaneously, RCO will send out an RFQ for engineering firms. The ASRP Steering Committee will select the project ideas to advance. A “design team” will work together with the sponsors to more thoroughly design the selected conceptual projects. The sponsor’s contract will be amended to further advance the project idea. Dave expects this process will be simplified in future biennium. The RFP will likely be sent out in January 2017.

Dave mentioned that Kirsten has been invited to serve on the ASRP Steering Committee as a non-voting member. HWG members expressed strong support of her serving in that role.

b) HRP – Discussion on remaining 2015-2017 funds

Dave shared that there will be remaining funds from the “HRP” 2015-2017 funding cycle, but those numbers aren’t available yet. Those funds might be reappropriated and advanced to the next biennium. None the less, we can still think which projects these funds should go towards before the end of June. Dave asked the HWG to suggest priorities for projects. The funds need to be obligated by June, so likely nothing could be constructed before June, but funds could go towards design. Using the funding for match would also be a possibility. Alice mentioned that the funding was approved starting in July 2015, so the funding could go towards active contracts that started back then. The HWG will need to discuss options for prioritizing. One option could be funding additional work on existing high-ranking projects. Another could be to advance design on lower ranking projects from the original list. Another could be looking at the list of FBRB proposals, which has already been ranked into Tier 1 and 2. Another could be a call for totally new project ideas. CBFTF has an idea for using their unspent funds on their 2017 SRFB project. The first priority at this point is knowing how much funding will be left. In the meantime, a process can be developed to look for possible projects and to rank them. All parties involved will advance work on this task as soon as possible.

Other Business & Announcements

This meeting was shorter than usual due to a weather-related delay, so the rest of the agenda items were not covered.

Next HWG meeting: January 13