

Chehalis Basin Lead Entity

Habitat Work Group Meeting

February 5, 2018

9:30 am – 12:00 pm

Chehalis Tribe Community Center Gathering Room
Oakville, Washington

In attendance:

Alice Rubin, <i>Recreation & Conservation Office</i>	Kelly Verd, <i>Lewis County Cons Dist.</i>
Ann Weckback, <i>Lewis County Public Works</i>	Kirsten Harma, <i>Watershed Coordinator</i>
Bob Amrine, <i>Lewis County Conservation Dist.</i>	Michelle Cramer, <i>WDFW, Habitat Engineer</i>
Brett Demond, <i>Citizen</i>	Mike Scharpf, <i>WDFW, Region 6</i>
Hope Rieden, <i>Chehalis Tribe F&W.</i>	Omroa Bhagwandin, <i>Citizen</i>
Jamie Glasgow, <i>Wild Fish Conservancy</i>	Rich Osborne, <i>Coast Salmon Partnership</i>
Jan Strong, <i>Chehalis River Basin Land Trust</i>	Rick Rouse, <i>Port of Chehalis</i>
Jess Helsley, <i>Coast Salmon Partnership</i>	Ron Figlar-Barnes, <i>Citizen</i>
Jonathan Bradshaw, <i>Citizen</i>	Stu Trefry, <i>Washington State Cons. Commiss.</i>
Kathleen Berger, <i>Thurston Cons Dist.</i>	Thom Woodruff, <i>Capitol Land Trust</i>
	Tom Kollasch, <i>Grays Harbor Cons. Dist.</i>

Meeting Summary

1. Welcome, Introductions and Updates.

Everyone provided self-introductions and also updates related to their work.

-The Grays Harbor Stream Team will be conducting a tree planting near the culverts recently completed by the Chehalis Basin Fisheries Task Force with “HRP” funds.

-There will be a call for proposals for the next round of Washington Coast Restoration Initiative (WCRI) in April or May. Jess Helsley is working on a guidance manual, which will be available soon. The manual will be informed by Manual 18 and ESRP. There likely won't be major changes to guidelines present during the last round. There is hope that this will be a regular line item in the state capital budget.

-Tom Kollasch mentioned that the Grays Harbor Conservation District on Chehalis River Basin Land Trust have reviewed design options for the Middle Fork Hoquiam wetland reconnection project.

-Bob Amrine mentioned that he was recently asked if all salmon projects are mitigation for the proposed dam. He encouraged the group to think of ways to counter this public perception.

-Capitol Land Trust's annual Conservation Breakfast will be held tomorrow. The Holm Farm project's appraisal is going to need to be re-done. The old one expired before funding was secured. Of note is that the Conservation Future program will not be funding fish work this year. No new grants will be awarded and existing grants were frozen. Despite these constraints, Capital Land Trust is progressing towards closing on Holm Farm.

-Rick Rouse mentioned that they've heard from a private landowner near their Port held properties about interest in doing a possible restoration project. Habitat Work Group members encouraged Rick to develop a conceptual project for the planting and then they'll be able to provide ideas about potential funding.

-Wild Fish Conservancy will be starting water typing field work in the South Fork Newaukum March 1, ending July 15. The WebGIS with the project results will be available soon. Work continues to progress on the barrier correction projects in Gheer Creek. They have found some barriers upstream that they will recommend for FFFPP funding.

-Mike Scharft has been participating in the North of Falcon process. He plans to be more involved in learning what is happening with habitat projects in the Chehalis and will attend more meetings.

-The Thurston Conservation District has received funding for CREP projects and has already started on planting projects.

-Janet reported that the Wild Fish Conservancy's assessment of the new Wishkah property acquired with 2015 SRFB funds shows it in good condition and not in need of further restoration action.

-Ron Figlar-Barnes mentioned the Skokomish River floodplain project as providing an exemplary vision of dual flood risk reduction and habitat restoration.

-The Lewis County Conservation District will be celebrating its 75th anniversary this October.

2. Organizational Business

a) Review of Minutes from January 2017

Tom moved to approve. Brett seconded. All in favour.

3. Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB)

a) **Updates**

Alice noted that all 2017 SRFB projects that were approved by the Board are now funded. She requested patience as contracts are issued.

Jess provided an update on the legislative session. She has spoken with many local legislators who are interested in salmon recovery. They like to see people put to work and projects in action. Jess will likely be arranging field tours in the spring that showcase good projects, and is willing to facilitate face-to-face conversations with legislators. Another legislative item that may be of interest is the Orca bill. The bill may support increased production of hatchery salmon. The Governor is expected to release an executive order establishing a task force around orca recovery. Jess hopes to participate on the Orca bill task force.

Jess mentioned that in the upcoming PCSRF application (federal funds), there will likely no longer be a request to use funds for assessment-only projects, and those projects will not likely be taken up by State funds, either. The SRFB will discuss this topic at their March 21st Board meeting. Anyone is welcome to attend to provide public comment.

Kirsten reminded the group that there will be a 2018 grant round. She will send out a press release announcing the grant round soon. Shortly thereafter, we will put out a call for local reviewers. Start thinking about who you would like to invite to the review team. Local reviewers need to be available for site visits (May 17 and 18). Bob Amrine asked guest Ron Figlar-Barnes if he would want to be on the review team.

b) **Conceptual Project Presentations**

Fish Screen – Lewis County Conservation District

Kelly Verd presented a conceptual project idea of installing fish screens on irrigation water intakes. The screens would reduce accidental fish kills. The screens don't slow the water flow, but actually improve water pressure. The CD will offer these as part of their Farm Plans. The proposal is for \$83,000 for 15 screens. They have applied for match through USFWS. There is a demonstration project that farmers and anyone interested can visit on Lincoln Creek. They typically cost about \$1,000, but can cost up to \$5,000.

Q) What do farmers need to do to get a fish screen?

A) They just need to say "yes." To get to a yes, they just need to be assured that the screens won't clog or reduce pump function.

Q) Are there annual charges with this?

A) Pumps are all individually owned. The farmers need to maintain them but there is no cost to them.

Q) How do the mechanics work?

A) We can send out a video of how they work.

Q) Will this project reduce consumptive water use, as well?

A) The fish screens are part of agriculture irrigation plans, which include recommendations for water saving options.

-Alice recommended that the CD articulate the water saving benefits in their application.

McDonald Creek – Ron Figlar-Barnes, for Jarred Figlar Barnes

Ron presented a conceptual project in its early stages. The project would finish off the McDonald Creek fish passage improvements and include other restoration and protection elements. The previous McDonald Creek projects have returned coho salmon to a system they hadn't been in for years. At this time the next phases of this project are not fully developed, but Jarred would like input from the group on how to proceed next.

Project vision: The McDonald Creek Upper Watershed Reconnection Project is a multi-phased project that will correct up to seven individual fish-passage barriers mostly located in the upper watershed of McDonald Creek in Elma, Washington. The project will also reconstruct approximately 1,300 ft. of ditched stream channel with a new meandering channel with LWD, pools, riparian plantings and stream bed gravels. The project will also acquire 3 parcels of land permanently conserving approximately 62 acres of vital wetland and riparian buffer zone along the stream.

Q) How will the project be phased?

A) Jarred still needs to figure that out.

Q) How will you deal with the acquisitions?

-Alice recommends that if you include those as part of a single project application, you will have to make it a restoration-acquisition project.

4. Aquatic Species Restoration Plan (ASRP) & Chehalis Strategy

Kirsten provided an update on the ASRP Steering Committee and other ASRP actions. The group didn't meet for a long period between November and January. There are still staffing issues at WDFW as Maria left her job and hasn't been rehired, and Jeannie Abbott, who was serving as support staff, has also left. There will be new roles at WDFW including someone to help with grants and administration.

a) ASRP Barrier Grant Round Update

The review team proceeded with this work in spite of lack of capital budget. The group conducted site visits and completed ranking last Friday. This has been a successful use of the Lead Entity process. The project list will be distributed to the ASRP Steering Committee

where a decision may or may not be made. The total funding available is still not known. The Chehalis Basin Board will discuss this at their March meeting. RCO is still working on an interagency agreement with Ecology so that they can administer contracts. Pre-agreement costs are an agency policy at RCO.

b) ASRP Phase I – Comments

Kirsten submitted comments from the Lead Entity perspective to the Chehalis Basin Board on 2/2/18.

c) ASRP Phase II – Discussion

Hope provided an update from the Science and Review team. They've only met once in the last 2 months. They reviewed the timeline for Phase II of the ASRP. They also saw a presentation on land use. The team is looking at monitoring and how to incorporate other aquatic species and what to do about invasive species. The timeline shows what components need to be worked on, and approximately when they'll need to occur. Actions include finalizing models, strategic planning, community involvement planning, and preparation of the document itself. The detailed scope of work is in PRISM. Bob mentioned that they've heard that Early Action reaches are likely to go forward this biennium.

d) Other Chehalis Strategy Updates

Cynthia Carlstad, consultant for the Restorative Flood Protection alternative will be starting interviews in the Newaukum next week. She is sharing interview questions and there will be a call today to ask for input. This will be a feasibility study only.

The Chehalis Basin Board will meet Thursday, February 8, at Borst Park in Centralia.

Other Business:

There will be a mandatory pre-application workshop for potential project sponsors. It will occur after the regularly Habitat Work Group, approximately from 12:30 pm - 2:30 pm. Kirsten and Alice will run the workshop.

Next HWG Meeting: March 5, 2018

****Next month's meeting will be followed by Mandatory Pre-Application Workshop****