

Chehalis Basin / Grays Harbor Lead Entity

Habitat Work Group Meeting

March 11, 2016

9:30 am – 12:00 pm

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

In attendance:

Amy Spoon, *WDFW*
Ann Weckback, *Lewis County*
Brett DeMond, *Streamworks*
Cade Roler, *WDFW*
Caitlin Guthrie, *Capitol Land Trust*
Caprise Fasano, *Quinault Indian Nation*
Dustin Bilhimer, *Ecology*
Garret Dalan, *The Nature Conservancy*
Jamie Glasgow, *Wild Fish Conservancy*
Jason Gillie, *Chehalis Tribe*
Jane Atha, *WDFW*

Janet Strong, *Chehalis River Basin Land Trust*
JB McCrummen, *Citizen*
Jessica Helsley, *WCSSP*
Kirsten Harma, *Lead Entity Coordinator*
Lonnie Crumley, *CBFETF*
Miles Batchelder, *Citizen*
Miranda Plumb, *USFWS*
Omroa Bhagwandin, *Onalaska Citizen*
Rich Osborne, *WCSSP*
Rod Lakey, *Lewis County*
Steve Hallstrom, *Chehalis River Basin Land Trust*

Meeting Summary

1. Welcome and Introductions.

Everyone provided self-introductions.

An added agenda item was a summary of the progress with the Washington Coast Restoration Initiative (WCRI), provided by Garrett Dalan. Garrett mentioned that there are WCRI calls the first Monday of every month. They are planning for the 2017 grant round. On March 21st, there will be a call with potential project sponsors. The official call for proposals will go out on April 1st. They'll be looking for projects with a job creation focus. They want projects above and beyond salmon recovery, specifically, they are looking for projects that address nearshore restoration and strong coastal erosion. They are planning on creating a panel to review and rank the projects, which should take about 10 weeks. The site visits themselves could take up to 5 days. They need people with the capacity to help out with the task, either as part of their work, or as volunteers if they're retired.

Action Item: Let Garret know if you know someone or *are* someone who would be a good fit for that panel.

Action Item: Provide Rich with comments on how the HRP project ranking process worked and could be improved. This method will be adapted for ranking WCRI projects.

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

a) Legislative Update

Kirsten mentioned the recent news about HB 2856, the creation of the Chehalis Basin flood office at the Department of Ecology. Dustin provided additional details. He said that Ecology would likely take over grant management (from RCO). He said this is a good choice because of Ecology's involvement in running other similar grant programs, and its role in the Columbia River office. WDFW will still be the lead on the ASRP development. The composition of the Board has not yet been determined. There was some question of whether or not the bill had been on the Governor's list to veto. Omroa searched the internet during the discussion and discovered that it was not vetoed.

b) HRP Process Update

The Carlyle Lake/Gheer Creek project may be able to be funded through HRP. Streamworks has been able to reduce the budget on some of their projects.

c) Sub-Basin Local Input Workshops Update

The goal of these workshops will be to get information about what's going on in the basin from people with knowledge of what's happening "on the ground" to help develop the EDT model and the ASRP. Kirsten provided an update from Carol Cloen at WDFW: "there hasn't been a lot of movement on the sub-basin workshops." She did send out a list of proposed "clusters" of sub-basins, and asked for input on who to invite to each workshop. Kirsten handed out paper copies of the list for people to fill out during the meeting, or to return to her after the meeting. Rich mentioned that there probably won't be much notice about the meetings, and that people will find out word-of-mouth.

d) Press release

Kirsten is working with the communications staff at WDFW to put together a press release about all of the projects that will be funded through the HRP.

3. Fish Barrier Removal Board/ Culvert Inventory Update

Cade Roler, new hire at WDFW, provided an update about this work. He has been working on the FBRB since it started. For the "Coordinated Pathway" aspect of the FBRB work, they are ranking and prioritizing culvert "bundles" throughout the state. Cade is currently looking

for barriers downstream of the proposed bundles of culverts. For the “Watershed Pathway,” staff are still conducting culvert inventories in the Chehalis, looking at data from Conservation Districts, and strategizing where to go next. They’re trying to update the WDFW database with information on which culverts have been corrected in recent years. Rich mentioned that the subcommittee working with Stacy to identify priority projects in the Newaukum was very productive and he would look forward to doing that same processes for the other subwatersheds.

4. SRFB

a) Update on 2016 SRFB Grant Round

The 2016 grant round is now open. Kirsten let the group know that she’d heard that only \$13 million will be available for this year’s grant round for the whole state. The materials for the March 16th SRFB meeting, to be held in Olympia, are available on the RCO website. Someone from The Nature Conservancy will provide a policy-oriented presentation about WCRI. Jess mentioned that she plans to attend the SRFB meeting.

b) Press Release

Kirsten mentioned that her press release on this subject was taken up by The Chronicle.

c) Steven’s Creek cost increase request + decision

Lonnie Crumley presented the group with his request for a cost increase on the Minkler Road/Steven’s Creek project (SRFB, 2014). Lonnie said that after the project was completed this fall, the high-flow events unearthed a large, channel-spanning log. The log created a partial barrier to fish migration, thus negating some of the benefits of the project. To correct this, Streamworks hired contractors to remove the log. They are requesting \$5,000 in project cost increases.

Miranda asked the group if anyone had any concerns with this request. In hearing none, the proposal was approved. Kirsten will inform Alice Rubin of the group’s decision.

d) Presentations

Chehalis River Basin Land Trust – Hoquiam Surge Plain culvert removal project
Presented by Steve Hallstrom

This project was proposed for funding through the Chehalis Strategy Habitat Restoration and Protection program. It was not above the funding line, but the review committee

recommended some changes to the proposal and suggested the sponsor submit it for consideration for SRFB funding. Steve said the CRBLT will submit a conceptual project application for the April 1 deadline.

Part of the Land Trust's mission is to conduct restoration on acquired lands. They don't have expertise in this area and are looking for advice from the HWG. A biologist from the FFFPP program came out to the site and recommended which culverts to remove. One of the components of the project will be engineering a channel in a large wetland. Since they don't have in-house expertise on how to do this, they will need to get resources to hire an engineer to do the design work. They might see if Grays Harbor Conservation District would be willing to implement the project work.

Steve asked the HWG for advice on next steps.

Q) Why are you proposing to do this work now?

A) The Timber company land owners will remove some of the culverts along the old railroad grade in 2017, which will prevent access to do work further down the line.

Q) Why aren't these eligible for FFFPP?

A) The project site isn't close enough to harvestable forest. DNR might have to make that call.

Q) Can FFFPP funds be used as match for SRFB funds?

A) Cade Roler replied that they cannot. The sponsor might be able to get funds through NRCS as match. Miranda mentioned that they might be able to use the USFWS funds for the Chehalis Fisheries Restoration Program as match, but the proposal would need a lot of work to determine if the project would be eligible. The sponsor would have to prove use of the project site by salmon and steelhead.

Lewis County – Van Ornum and Frase Creek Culvert Barrier Removal

Presented by Ann Weckback and Rod Lakey

The Van Ornum project was previously proposed for SRFB funding, and also was recently proposed for HRP funding. It fell below the funding line in the latter grant program. The project sponsor mentioned that since the last SRFB applications, all upstream barrier culverts have been replaced but one. The remaining upstream culvert is only a 33% barrier.

Q) Miranda asked Ann what the downstream landowner plans to do with the farm road below the county road.

A) The farm road will remain in place, but the new culvert will be long enough to go under the farm road, as well.

Q) Isn't there a potential for more sediment to get into the creek with the continued use of that farm road?

A) The sponsor will try to talk to the owner and ask him how much he uses it. He might

consider making it narrower or putting in a GSRP bridge, or include design of a sediment control structure in the project application.

The Frase Creek project was also proposed in previous SRFB grant rounds as well as through HRP. Since it was last proposed to SRFB in 2011, the nearby mill has been removed. This will provide more room to work with upstream to realign the channel and thus deal with previously identified issues with elevation and grade. Lewis County is required to replace the culvert by 2020, but the County won't work on the channel realignment unless they get SRFB money. Removal of the mill has changed the bankful width of the stream. Xxxx. The landowner is amenable to allowing the County to realign a portion of the channel through the old mill site, but doesn't like the idea of additional riparian planting. Planting will be ok if in an already disturbed area. This is a "design only" project to determine how to realign the channel.

Q) Will you come back to the SRFB in a later year to get funding for construction?

A) Probably, but only for plantings or wood. The County has to replace the culvert anyway.

5. Communications and Outreach.

Kirsten shared that she had arranged a contract with a photojournalist to do some "human interest" stories on salmon restoration projects in the basin. She said that the contract through Grays Harbor County has been signed and the photographer is ready to go. At this point, the stories will be published in the Chronicle, and also available for the Lead Entity to use on its website and to print out for community events, etc. She asked the group to recommend some stories to feature. Suggestions included:

-In general, a good story might be anywhere where the last barrier in a watershed is removed. One example is Bunker Creek.

-Delezenne would make a good story, given the involvement of the boy scouts. The site is planted and looks good.

-Satsop – the WDFW project on the mainstem Chehalis. But this is a design project and there won't be any "shovels" for a while.

-Darlin Creek project site, Capitol Land Trust. The nearby community is excited about this project. Show how this will benefit those land owners. Both WCRI and HRP funded this project.

-Discovery Trail near Centralia. This one has lots of local interest. There's always someone walking down there.

-Hoquiam project. Though this one might be a better one for the Daily World to run.

-Preacher's Slough. This was a project that SRFB really likes. Birdie Davenport was involved with this one and would be a good person to interview about it – but she is hard to reach. Brian Blake, legislator, always was involved with this.

-Porter Creek project by the Chehalis Tribe. Or the Davis Creek project.

-Highlight needs for restoration, not just completed work.

6. Rose Foundation Funding Opportunity

Kirsten mentioned that the Chehalis Basin Partnership was one of four organizations invited to submit applications for funding in the Rose Foundation's 2016 grant cycle. They are specifically looking for ways to get student interns involved in restoration projects. She distributed the call for proposals and asked if people had any ideas for restoration projects that could use an intern, or any other project ideas that might be a good fit with the call for proposals.

7. WDFW Research – Culverts, Climate Change and the Chehalis (Jane Atha)

Jane presented her research on “integrating global climate model projections into culvert design.” WDFW initiated this research because current culvert design doesn't account for climate change. The research used coupled climate and hydrologic models to determine the projected bankfull width changes due to climate change. The results showed that culverts being designed today are likely to be too narrow to accommodate the greater peak flows projected to accompany a changing climate. Dave Price at WDFW is interested in incorporating the new data into projects being designed with the Chehalis Strategy funding.

Jane's presentation is available on the Chehalis Lead Entity website.

Next HWG meeting: April 8th 2016 --