

**Chehalis Basin Lead Entity**  
**Habitat Work Group Meeting Minutes**  
**April 10, 2015**  
**9:30 am – 12:30 pm**

The April 10, 2015 meeting of the Chehalis Basin Lead Entity was held at the Lewis Conservation District Office, Chehalis, Washington. Chair Bob Amrine called the meeting to order at 9:40 a.m.

**In attendance:**

Alice Rubin, RCO  
Ann Weckback, Lewis County Public Works  
Amy Spoon, WDFW  
Bob Amrine, Lewis County Conservation District  
Dustin Bilhimer, WA Dept of Ecology  
Gavin Glore, Mason Conservation District

Kirsten Harma, Lead Entity Coordinator  
Lonnie Crumley, Chehalis Basin Fisheries Task Force and Streamworks  
Miles Batchelder, WCSSP  
Omroa Bhagwandin, Onalaska Alliance  
Janet Strong, Chehalis River Basin Land Trust

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

Chair Bob Amrine welcomed new Lead Entity Coordinator Kirsten Harma. The remainder of persons in attendance provided self introductions.

**2. Updates and Announcements**

Alice Rubin mentioned that the registration for the 2015 Salmon Recovery Conference is now open. The conference will be held in Vancouver, WA, from May 27-29<sup>th</sup>. She mentioned that there will be over 40 sessions and it will be a worth-while conference to attend. Miles Batchelder added that this is the best way to keep up to date with the latest on salmon recovery.

**3. Review of 2015 SRFB schedule**

The field tours will be held May 7 and 8<sup>th</sup> and the Technical Review Panel will rank the projects in July. Janet Strong mentioned that her site is only accessible by boat. The group suggested that she take pictures of the site and present her project from somewhere overlooking the project location.

#### 4. **Review Technical Review Panel Membership**

Batchelder mentioned that there is still room on the review panel. The reviewer could be someone who is already a sponsor, they would just have to remove themselves from ranking their project. Ann Weckback volunteered to be added to the panel.

#### 5. **Project Proposal Presentations:**

##### **East Hoquiam Surge Plain Acquisition. Janet Strong - Chehalis River Basin Land Trust**

###### Overview:

The Chehalis River Basin Land Trust aims to acquire fee simple title from a willing seller to 82.3 acres of riparian floodplain and uplands along the west shore of the East Hoquiam River. The overall goal is to preserve salmon habitat in river and stream, through maintaining water quality, biological diversity, and healthy riparian habitat and to increase protected lands in the Hoquiam River Surge Plain. The 60.3 acres consist of floodplain wetlands - forested, scrub-shrub, emergent and riverine; 12.5 acres is in sloped forested uplands. The priority species to be protected by this acquisition include federally endangered bull trout plus chinook, chum, coho, cutthroat and steelhead. This project is important because it will increase the permanently protected Hoquiam River Surge-Plain lands from 1,324 to 1,406 acres. It lies adjacent to an existing protected parcel.

###### Discussion:

Ms. Rubin mentioned that the RCO review panel would likely like this project since it is continuous with already protected property. She said the review panel would likely ask if there are any threats to the parcel, and if not, why it should be protected. Ms. Strong was not aware of any proposed alternative uses for the property. It is mostly wetland and is not easy to access so does not have good development potential. She does not think the owner has any other potential buyers at this point. Her justification for protecting the parcel now is that it is unknown what might happen in Grays Harbor County in the future, and the price is low for the parcel right now. Bob Amrine mentioned that the protection fits with the aim of “protect the best and restore the rest.”

##### **Rayonier Middle Fork Hoquiam Culvert Removal, Lonnie Crumley, Chehalis Basin Fisheries Task Force**

###### Overview:

The Middle Fork Hoquiam, Rayonier Road #4014 fish barrier culvert corrections are a series of barrier culverts on an old railroad grade that is currently being used as a main logging road. This road borders the Middle Fork Hoquiam River on the east side and has 10 fish barrier culvert crossings on tributaries that flow into the Middle Fork. For this proposal the Chehalis Basin Fisheries Task Force will sponsor the correction of 5 of the 10 barriers for the 2014 SRFB granting round. These corrections, each on a separate tributary, will open more than 2.65 miles of blocked stream habitat. The remaining barrier culverts will be proposed for correction during the next SRFB cycle.

###### Discussion:

Ms. Rubin mentioned that the review panel would likely question the merit of spending money on this project now when the timber company will have to take the road out anyway under RMAP legislation. Mr. Crumley replied that the company has asked for an extension to 2022. They will get

to them, but others are a priority for them to remove. Supporting their removal now will provide added years of increased fish habitat. He reminded the group that the priority for this group is to think about which projects are going to be best for the fish, regardless of ownership. Mr. Crumley added that since forestry is the land use in 80% of this watershed, projects on forest land are going to need to take place if salmon protection and restoration is going to occur.

Ms. Rubin asked how the sponsor would deal with headcuts. Mr. Crumley responded that the sponsor will account for this by adding wood and rock to slow the process down. Headcut will level itself over time.

## **Oakhurst/ McDonald Creek Barrier Removal, Lonnie Crumley, Chehalis Basin Fisheries Task Force**

### Overview:

The Oakhurst Barrier Correction Project is a two-phased project to correct 4 individual fish-passage barriers located in the middle of the McDonald Creek Watershed in Elma, Washington. This is part of a broader watershed-wide McDonald Creek restoration effort which has successfully restored natural coho salmon runs to McDonald Creek by correcting a barrier culvert south of town and one at the Summit Pacific Medical Center stream restoration site in Elma. The project's first phase project will correct a barrier culvert under Oakhurst Street in Elma as well as a separate sheet flow problem that developed at the hospital's stream restoration site.

### Discussion:

Mr. Crumley mentioned that there is a lot of public support for this project. The City and the Hospital will be partners on the project. The Task Force has met with the city, who has agreed to move the utilities. This constitutes a big match. Phase II of the project will be to correct more upstream crossings. Dustin Bilhimer asked what funding is in place for riparian restoration of the hospital land. He said that water quality funding may be available in September to help with that aspect of the project. The rest of the group expressed enthusiasm for the project, saying that it would likely lead to lots of press coverage since it is highly visible and people are happy it is going to be done.

## **Boyer Road/Unnamed Creek Culvert Repair, Lonnie Crumley, Chehalis Basin Fisheries Task Force**

### Overview:

This is a restoration project correcting a fish barrier culvert under a Grays Harbor County Road called Boyer Road, located on Porter Creek Road 1 mile east of Porter. This project will replace a 3 ft. diameter culvert, 50 ft. long, installed at a 1.34% slope. It is elevated 14 inches at the downstream end. Correcting this culvert will allow fish access to more than 2.5 miles of excellent spawning and rearing habitat for salmonids.

### Discussion:

Ms. Rubin asked why the proposal is to extend the culvert. Mr. Crumley responded that the project will make the surrounding land higher as it will add shoulders. The extension, and the higher cost, results from DOT requirements. Ms. Rubin mentioned that it is good that the County is involved, as this will help to get the project through.

## **Wildcat Creek Barrier Culvert Removal - Gavin Gore, Mason Conservation District**

### Overview:

Gavin Gore told the group that although Mason County only consists of 20% of the watershed, they have a project they'd like to get support on through the Chehalis Basin SRFB process. Since a timber company is the owner, this project has been difficult to fund. The project is a culvert abandonment on land owned by Green Diamond Resources. The culvert qualifies for "life of pipe" which means they don't have to replace it until the culvert fails. If they wait until that happens it will have negative consequences for fish habitat. Mr. Gore said the project would be expensive, at \$400,000, but the match will be good and will include timber company crews to do the excavation. He hopes to increase the number of partners contributing to this project, to about three or four partners.

### Discussion:

Ms. Rubin suggested approaching Ecology for water quality funding. Mr. Bilhimer said that funding would be available in September. Ms. Rubin said an advantage of the project is that there have been good experiences coming from working with Green Diamond.

## **6. Washington Coast Restoration Initiative Update**

Miles provided an update on the funding of this initiative. It has been included in both the house and the Senate bills, though at a drastically different cash value. His recommendation to the sponsors is to keep your projects on the list in case they don't get funding. We likely won't know the final budget until the end of June.

## **7. Scammon Creek project – Cultural Resources Study request to RCO (Bob Amrine)**

Bob Amrine brought to the group's attention that the sponsor of the Scammon Creek project is required to do a Cultural Resource Assessment. This would add \$2000 to the project cost. He asked that the Lead Entity approve the cost increase in a letter to the RCO. Mr. Amrine believed the cost increase would need to be approved at a meeting of the Grays Harbor County Commissioners. Ms. Rubin reviewed Manual 18, which says a cost adjustment has to be approved by the Lead Entity, but this means it just needs to be approved by the Lead Entity Technical and Citizens Committees. Mr. Bac... said that the Citizens and Technical Committee are now the same thing – the Habitat Work Group. All members present approved the cost increase.

Action Item: Ms. Harma will send a letter to Ms. Rubin stating that the committee approves the cost increase.

## **8. Other Business:**

Chair Amrine asked Ms. Harma to provide the group with information on her background, which she did.

Ms. Rubin reminded the group that a new Project Proposal form is required for 2015. All project sponsors will need to input their information into the new form prior to the April 16<sup>th</sup> draft application deadline for uploading materials into PRISM. The form is available on the

RCO website. She also reminded the group that the Technical Review Committee will need to be available for both the field tours and the ranking, which will take place over approximately 4 hours on July 10<sup>th</sup>.

**9. Next HWG meeting – Project Site Visits May 7 & 8, 2015**

Adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 12:00

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