

Chehalis Basin Lead Entity

Habitat Work Group Meeting

Monday, April 1, 2019

9:30 am – 12:30 pm

Chehalis Tribe Community Center Gathering Room
Oakville, Washington

In attendance:

Amy Spoon, <i>WDFW</i>	Kirsten Harma, <i>Lead Entity Coordinator</i>
Anthony Waldrop, <i>Grays Harbor CD</i>	Kelly Verd, <i>Lewis CD</i>
Alissa Ferrell, <i>RCO</i>	Leanne Whitesell, <i>Ecology WQSWRO</i>
Caprice Fasano, <i>Quinault Indian Nation</i>	Maggie McKeown, <i>WDFW</i>
Chris Dwight, <i>WDFW</i>	Mara Healy, <i>Thurston Conservation District</i>
Colleen Suter, <i>Chehalis Tribe</i>	Mara Zimmerman, <i>Coast Salmon Partnership</i>
Eric Erler, <i>Consultant</i>	Mark Gray, <i>CRBLT</i>
Garrett Dalan, <i>The Nature Conservancy</i>	Omroa Bhagwandin, <i>LC Citizen Rep.</i>
Jan Robinson, <i>Chehalis R. Basin Land Trust</i>	Rich Osborne, <i>Coast Salmon Part./ONRC</i>
Jason Gillie, <i>Chehalis Tribe DNR</i>	Rick Rouse, <i>Port of Chehalis</i>
Jennifer Riedmayer, <i>WA Ecology WQSWRO</i>	Ryan Williams, <i>Mason County CD</i>
Jeanne Kinney, <i>Thurston Co. Public Works</i>	Stu Trefry, <i>WA State Cons. Commission</i>
Jonathan Bradshaw, <i>HWG Note-taker</i>	Thom Woodruff, <i>Capitol Land Trust</i>
	Tom Kollasch, <i>Grays Harbor CD</i>

Meeting Summary:

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. Organizational Business

1. Review minutes from March 4, 2019

Thom Woodruff moves to approve the notes as written, which is seconded by Tom Kollasch. All in favor.

2. Culvert Subcommittee

Chris gave an update on the status of the culvert subcommittee's work. He summarized that the group is beginning to really intensify their focus on understanding precisely what needs to be done in the coming 3 months before their deadline. The heart of that work is developing the static ranked culvert list they currently have into a widely useful and interactive mobile map. Key to this development, in addition to what has become extensive technical behind-the-scenes work, is narrowing down ranking factors to the most critical 8-10 questions in order to most accurately represent relevant habitat metrics. The ultimate goal remains developing a tool to guide interested parties in determining most accurately what passages within their jurisdiction are most critical to address. The team is working to pull together those that are most invested in this

process to carry out this 3-month push. WDFW has also been benefiting from technical and conceptual assistance from the Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board. WDFW hopes to use existing funds to hire another technical consultant in addition to stream layer work being done with ICF.

Kirsten facilitated the formalization of subcommittee members. The following expressed interest in participating: Miranda Plumb; Luke Kelly/Mara Zimmerman/Rich Osborne (all representing same perspective); Anne Weckback; Bob Amrine and Kelly Verd; Brandon Carman; Cade Roler and Chris Dwight; Jeanne Kinney (tentative); Colleen Suter; Caprice Fasano.

3. Lead Entity Strategy – Foundations for a Protection Chapter and Protection Project Evaluation Criteria (Eric Eler)

Eric Eler gave a presentation providing insight on improving the SRFB ranking process, especially regarding how best to consider acquisition projects for funding. His presentation walked through a number of the 19 SRFB ranking criteria. As a whole, much of his advice involved moving to frame these criteria not as qualifications to be met, but as concise, open questions. This, he pointed out in several examples, allows for applicants to more fully flesh out the relevant elements of their project. It is in the interest of both applicants and evaluators to lean on these fuller descriptions rather than considering applications in more generalized terms of whether or not projects meet blanket qualifications.

With regard to acquisitions, Eler's advice was that they not be thought of as different from more traditional restoration projects. Most of the ranking criteria apply to acquisitions as well as they do to other types of projects: keep the focus on how projects meet the key goals of SRFB funding, rather than getting hung up on how acquisition projects may differ. Further, acquisition is often the most cost-effective means of achieving recovery: better to preserve than to restore.

For further details on Eler's presentation, it can be accessed at the Lead Entity website or by request.

4. Lead Entity Strategy – Creating a Project List (Kirsten & Discussion)

Kirsten led a discussion on the need for and process of developing a Project List as defined by RCW 77.85.050. She presented a survey of how other entities across the state have or have not developed their own Project Lists. She noted that next meeting will involve more information from Emelie McKain regarding discussions with RCO to clarify the liability clause. Key findings of the Lead Entity Survey include the fact that 80% of entities surveyed have a list beyond the list of projects submitted for SRFB funding. Further, in all cases, while these Project Lists include projects beyond those being submitted for SRFB funding, all SRFB projects considered for funding must be on that Project List. Most entities' Project Lists are open to submissions from any interested party, although all require levels of review for inclusion, which universally are based on fit to that entity's strategy.

Kirsten listed the following pros and cons of creating an expanded Project List beyond what is submitted annually to SRFB:

PROS:

- Preparation of projects and ideas in advance of each grant round.
- Keeps project development more mindful: projects added to list are considered for fit to Strategy.
- Helps link project concepts with would-be champions and sponsors.
- Helps demonstrate need throughout the watershed.
- Helps make a case for financial need—which gets money to more projects.

CONS:

- Will take more staff time and additional work group member time.
(False causes for concern: creating this list will *neither* affect the SRFB ranking process *nor* will a project’s inclusion on this list indicate technical and/or local support of that project.)

Q: What does it take to get a project on the List?

A: In our case, it would be a conceptual project proposal.

Q: How does a long-term oriented list include acquisition, which are often so time sensitive?

Acquisition is an ongoing process.

A: Rich Osbourne pointed out that when the North Coast Lead Entity comes across a time-sensitive acquisition project, they quickly add it to their list for inclusion on the nearest grant round. On the other hand, their list also provides a place to keep longer-term projects on the radar. For example, they have an enormous project that has been on the list for 10 years and it hasn’t gotten funded, but its inclusion on the list has kept it in the conversation.

Q: How do we preserve the sponsor’s right to taking on their submitted project? What if inclusion on the list opened that project to being taken over by another party?

A: Habitat Work Schedule has a space to list the project’s sponsor. Rich had a good idea, which was that to indicate when a project is open to being sponsored by any interested party, the “project sponsor” would be listed as the Chehalis Basin Lead Entity.

A show of hands expressed the full group’s support of moving forward with the creation of a formalized Project List.

3. SRFB Project Presentations

1. Kelly Verd presented two proposed projects:

The first project, the Hamilton Fish Passage, is a 33% passable barrier on Scammon Creek. In the 2007 priority index rating for the whole Chehalis Basin, this barrier ranks as #7. Its correction would open up over 4 miles of stream. The majority of the funding has been obtained; this SRFB request is for \$30K as match.

The second project, the Hogue Fish Passage, requests funding for the correction of a 67% passable but severely undersized crossing over Berwick Creek. It is the final significant private barrier on the creek, and its correction would gain over 3 miles of habitat. The project has high land-owner support and would cost \$115K.

Following her project presentations, Kelly played a video that shared about the success of a previously funded fish-screen project. The video can be found at the Conservation District's website.

2. Mainstem Riparian Planting - Chehalis Tribe

Jason Gillie of the Chehalis Tribe presented a request for funding for the planned installation of a riparian buffer along the Chehalis. The project would transition agricultural land to a 150' ft. riparian buffer for nearly a mile along the river. This project has synergy with a current, adjacent restoration project. The bank is significantly incised, and plantings would be chosen to address bank stabilization as quickly as possible. The cost is estimated to be around \$78K, and would involve a \$15K match. These cost estimations will be clearer after completion of current, similar work is completed.

Tom Kollasch suggested the Tribe also look into CREP funding. The project would be a good fit, and would include funding for maintenance as well.

3. Gronberg East Hoquiam Acquisition—Chehalis River Basin Land Trust

Mark Gray presented on an acquisition project. The acquisition would purchase 157 acres of land that currently belongs to a family trust. The land has 1 mile of fish-bearing stream, 1.3 miles of East Hoquiam shoreline, and about 70 acres of wetland. This land is synergistic with about 7.5 miles of shoreline covered by previous Land Trust acquisitions, filling a significant conservation gap in a stretch reaching from one mile north of town to the end of tidal influence. Threats: Active road-access to the river is a conservation concern, as well as its status as a developable strip of non-wetland surrounded by wetland. The total project cost would be \$250,000. With a \$37.5K Land Trust match, the grant request would total at \$212,500.

4. Middle Fork Hoquiam Tidal Restoration Implementation –Grays Harbor Conservation District

Tom Kollasch presented on an extensive restoration project on Chehalis River Basin Land Trust property that would follow up on previously-funded design and alternative analysis work. At a cost of \$2.225 million, the project already has \$2million secured from WCRRI, in which it ranked 5th. The SRFB grant request would be for the remaining \$225,000. Tom presented on the results of the previously-funded alternative analysis work, and then discussed plans moving forward. The restoration focuses on breaching spoils, reestablishing Sitka spruce swamp, restarting forest successional patterns, and reconnecting tidal influence on tributary streams and channels. Berm breaches would be selective, leaving a useful and small impounded wetland intact, while opening up a much larger impounded wetland.

Q: What kind of fine sediments would be released by construction and wetland reestablishment?

A: Construction would take measures to lessen this, and work in the more volatile, lower level stream-bed would be done very quickly, coordinating with the tide. Sedimentation concerns have

been taken into consideration in project design.

5. Forming the review team:

Formation of the SRFB project site review team was discussed. The team is mostly established, though citizen members are still desired, to which end Kirsten sent out a Press Release to solicit members. Conflict of interest concerns were briefly discussed regarding review team members' connections to currently proposed projects. This year, Hope Rieden from the Chehalis Tribe would like to be on the review team. The Chehalis Tribe has a proposed project, but that proposal is coming from another department and Hope has no financial interest in the project. It was noted that in the past, members simply bowed out of ranking projects to which they were at all connected. The group felt fine with that scenario.

Closing

*This meeting was followed by a Pre-Application Workshop.