

**Chehalis Basin Lead Entity
Habitat Work Group Meeting
April 2, 2018
9:30 am to 11:45 pm**

Chehalis Tribe Community Center Library
Oakville, Washington

In attendance:

Alice Rubin, *Recreation & Cons. Office*
Amy Spoon, *WDFW, Region 6*
Anthony Waldrop, *Grays Harbor Cons. Dist.*
Bob Amrine, *Lewis County Cons. Dist.*
Bonnie Blissing Earle *ACT & WNPS*
Brandon Carman, *Grays Harbor Cons. Dist.*
Cade Roler, *WDFW*
Caprice Fasano, *Quinault Indian Nation*
Chris Dwight, *WDFW*
Garret Dalan, *The Nature Conservancy*
Greg Green, *Ducks Unlimited*
Janet Strong, *Chehalis River Basin Land T.*

Jason Gillie, *Chehalis Tribe DNR*
Jordan Rash, *Forterra*
Kathleen Berger, *Thurston Cons. Dist.*
Kirsten Hama, *Watershed Coordinator*
Lonnie Crumley, *Fisheries Task Force*
Mark Gray, *Chehalis River Basin Land T.*
Rich Osborne, *Coast Salmon Partnership*
Rick Rouse, *Port of Chehalis*
Sarah Burkhart, *Grays Harbor College*
Stu Trefry, *WA State Cons. Dist.*
Thom Woodruff, *Capitol Land Trust*
Tom Kollasch, *Grays Harbor Cons. Dist.*

Meeting Summary

A. Welcome, Introductions

Everyone provided self-introductions.

B. Organizational Business

1) Approval of minutes from March 2018

Everyone is in favor of the minutes, no comments.

2) Subcommittees

a) Culvert Subcommittee

Cade (and Chris) are trying to free up time and work through spending plans with the new contract. A meeting should happen in the near future.

Bob: For the fish distribution meeting with the DNR, and looking at some sites last week on the Middle and South Fork of the Newaukum, one landowner insisted there were no fish, but the culvert survey indicated there were fish. The landowner has been there 64 years and has never seen a fish, and it dries up in summer.

Cade: What distribution layer did you use? The SWIF D layer hasn't been officially updated.

Rich: Aren't only certain people authorized to update that database?

Cade: WDFW and the tribes have authorization.

Caprice stated that there will be an update to the rules, and that an electroshock (physically seeing the fish) will be necessary to update the layer. The new rules go into effect in May or possibly June.

b) Newaukum Subcommittee haven't met in a while.

c) Grays Harbor Stream Team exists and it's COOL. If you have any project that you could invite volunteers to-- plantings, trash removal, ivy removal-- get in touch with Kirsten. The biggest challenge has been that the major projects that partner organizations have identified for the Stream Team have needed substantial site preparation before bringing in volunteers to do plantings. The Rose Foundation is no longer funding the Chehalis program. The Stream Team is in need of new funding, so we're open to ideas.

3) Further Updates

Update on 2018 grant round

Kirsten: We have a capital budget so are moving forward on a normal grant round. Upcoming deadlines: today conceptual projects are due. We currently have 6 in PRISM. Draft applications are due April 18; site visits are schedule for May 17-18 (Upper Basin on the 17th, Lower Basin on the 18th). Review team this year: Ron Figlar-Barnes, Jonathan, Caprice, Mark, Amy Spoon, Hope, Garrett, Randy Ross.

C. Conceptual Project Presentations

1) Lost Creek SFRB proposal -- WDFW

Cade Roler, WDFW, presented this project, which includes two crossing sites along Lost Creek. The first is a velocity barrier on the Richard's family property. The second is a Wendling Rd. culvert owned by the county. This is in the Boistfort Management Unit, where fish passage is listed as a Tier 1 concern. Upstream habitat consists of complex pool habitat, and this project would provide access to spawning gravels not present in lower reaches. At the lower crossing, target species are winter steelhead, coho, and potentially juvenile chinook. Up from Wendling Rd., target species are juvenile coho. Downstream, there is limited spawning habitat.

This is a design-only project. There's already been quite a bit of investment in these projects. The project was funded for construction with HRP funds, but design funds were lost. The county is committing \$6,278 for the design of Wendling Rd, plus around \$35,000 from the WDFW. They applied to the USFWS National Fish Passage Program for design funds for the Richards family site and ranked third in the state for those funds, but that funding has not yet been confirmed. Geotechnical surveys, engineering surveys, and a survey of existing conditions have been done for both sites. They have started preliminary designs for both sites, and a fair amount has been done towards the design of the projects.

Q : What is the role of Trout Unlimited?

A : TU will be managing the construction grant for the privately owned culvert, and working with them on the designs.

Q : What is the timeline?

A : We will continue on the designs this summer and construct 2019.

2) Salmon Creek, Jones Rd. culvert proposal -- Bonnie Blessing

Bonnie Blessing, Amphibian Conservation Team (ACT) & WPNS, presented this idea for a project on Salmon Creek which is near Tumwater in the upper reaches of the Chehalis Basin. Bonnie has been involved in a Oregon spotted frog project that has a fish overlap. Some of the concerns in the Salmon Creek Basin in the Black River Management Unit include control of invasives, reducing livestock access, revegetating, and reducing fish barriers. Historically, fish habitat has existed in the creek up to Lambert Road, downstream of I-5. There is a culvert at Jones Road which is a velocity barrier, upstream of the wetland. The wetland provides habitat for spotted frog, coho, and Olympic mudminnow—all of which have been undocumented in the past. Littlerock Road is a complete barrier. Upstream and downstream is a contained ditch.

Bonnie would like see the ditch converted into a sinuous channel to slow the water down in that area and provide more habitat for salmon. Bonnie states that creating better habitat for the spotted frog in the wetland and discouraging bullfrogs will also benefit salmon.

Comment: The main focus should be on the velocity barrier and salmon recovery if you decide to apply for SRFB funds.

Q: Would you expect to remove the culvert, or replace with a passable structure?

A: It would definitely need a passable structure.

Q: What state agency owns the land?

A: DNR/Webster Farms owns it.

3) Newskah Rd. barrier correction proposal -- CBFTF

Lonnie Crumley, CBFTF, presented this project.

They are proposing a fish barrier correction on a tributary to the Newskah Creek. This project is on a small tributary about 1.5 miles long, about 300 feet up from where the tributary drains into the mainstem Newskah. The project would open up about 1.5 miles of habitat. There is a population of resident cutthroat currently in the stream, but the culvert is a 100% barrier, so no coho were seen. The gravel increases in quality as you move up the basin.

The culvert is a 4-foot diameter culvert, 50' long, upstream and has a beaver working on it, plugging it up. The downstream end has an outflow drop of 10". The upstream end has an inlet drop of about 10". The culvert is going to be replaced with 18' pipe, with a 9' rise, 60' long, bottomless arch.

Q: Did you see any coho activity in that lower stretch?

A: Yes. It actually has pretty good gravel, and good potential for chum spawning in that lower section once it's opened up.

4) Wishkah barrier removal proposal -- GH Conservation District

Brandon Carmen, GHCD, presented.

This project is for the design of a channel reconnection, barrier removal, and in-stream restoration on the unnamed tributary of the Wishkah. The site is along the E. Wishkah Rd., 3-4 miles from Aberdeen. There is about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of fish habitat above the crossing, about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile is used by the anadromous species. The current culvert goes under the E. Wishkah road, under a private driveway. The outlet is completely submerged in sediment. The sponsors are unsure how it reconnects with the Wishkah. Their opinion is that it dissipates into a wetland.

Problems include the 0% passable barrier, the fact that the stream is ditched, and the fact that the stream is choked with reed canary grass. The project will primarily address improving rearing habitat for coho, steelhead, and chinook. This is design-only proposal to obtain 30% designs.

5) Chat with Jordan Rash re: ideas for invasive species control along Wishkah

Jordan Rash of Forterra presented.

Two years ago Forterra and the Chehalis River Basin Land Trust acquired a 140-acre parcel on the East Fork Hoquiam. However, due to knotweed infestation, the project did not compete well for SRFB funding, and the TAC identified a need for a basin-wide invasive species removal effort to adequately control knotweed and other invasives. They heard from the SRFB and the local lead entity that a larger invasive species control effort is needed in the Hoquiam River. With CRBLT and WFC, Forterra is working on a couple concepts trying to put together an invasive species control plan for the Hoquiam River basin, and potentially the Wishkah River basin as well. They are intending to search for sources of funding, ideally leveraging outside funding sources to bring into the watershed (e.g., WCRR).

D. Further thoughts— guidelines and roles for project review

Kirsten reminded the group of an earlier request to develop guidelines for SRFB project review teams to follow when going out to private property. Nothing formal has been written up, but project reviewers will be reminded to remember courtesy and respect and asked to not report violations to agencies after being invited on to private property. They will be asked to let the project sponsor know of any perceived violations. If you see something on site visits in Lewis County that should be a resource concern, bring it to Bob Amrine's attention.

E. Aquatic Species Restoration Plan (ASRP) and Chehalis Strategy

1) ASRP Updates and Chehalis Strategy

a) Staffing

The ASRP Steering Committee has not approved minutes for three months, as project administration has been delayed since Maria left. There is a new hire lined up to fill Maria's position who will start mid-June. Tim Kramer has been filling in, but is leaving soon on parental leave. Minutes will be approved at the next meeting, Wednesday, April 4.

The Steering Committee wrote an extensive response to the comments that came in on the draft of ASRP but this has not been sent out to those who commented yet.

Q: Why isn't the estuary being looked at for Reach Scale restoration?

A: It wasn't included in the Phase 1 report since it's not in EDT. The Steering Committee is aware of this gap and will be looking to other sources of information to write strategies for the Grays Harbor Estuary to be included in Phase 2. There won't be any early action reaches in Grays Harbor, but actions may be proposed there in the long term. The current priority is floodplain restoration where there can be early success.

b) Barrier projects

Completion of the ASRP grant round for barrier projects is one great success of the last month. The Steering Committee was able to dedicate some of the funds allocated by the legislature to fund barrier corrections in the current biennium. They approved funding for \$4.12 million worth of projects (including grant management costs). That's a large bucket compared to SRFB, so contributed greatly to benefit the basin. Kirsten did a presentation in front of the Chehalis Basin Board (CBB) that was well-received. Her presentation included details on the barrier projects that have been funded, as well as an explanation of the evaluation and selection process. The CBB would like to see some outreach showcasing these barrier corrections to the broader community.

c) Reach-Scale River Restoration Projects

Restoration design firms have been hired to start the reach-scale restoration designs. Two were chosen out of the four finalists. The top two are Inter-Fluve and the NSD-Anchor conglomerate, which includes about 12 different firms. NSD-Anchor will work on the, Wynoochee, Satsop, and Skookumchuck. Inter-Fluve will get the Lower Basin: South Fork Chehalis and Newaukum. There will be five teams of people on "design teams," including the design firms, WDFW staff, and conservation districts. Kirsten and Jess will participate on the teams to provide a link with the Lead Entity work. The current vision is that the final designs will be completed next summer.

The ASRP Steering Committee recognizes that landowner involvement and interest is the only way to implement large scale restoration. Jim Kramer initiated several meetings with the Conservation Districts to brainstorm how to approach landowners to assess what kinds of restoration treatments are feasible in the Chehalis. The result of those discussions is that the Conservation Districts will be hosting several meetings with small groups of landowners in the coming months. *Bob:* When Inter-Fluve comes on, we're going to look at the top ranking reaches, eventually choosing one, and then approaching landowners to gauge interest. The first community meeting

will be a combination of all three districts. We'll see the community's reaction, and then there will be more meetings in different areas. *Tom*: The meetings will be small, 8-12 key landowners, to have a conversation about issues and views about the river and potential restoration actions.

Q: What happened to the Newaukum RFP outreach?

A: They're assessing the feasibility of the restorative flood protection alternative. Since NSD is leading the Newaukum RFP outreach, the NSD-Anchor team is being positioned in the lower watershed as opposed to the Newaukum for the reach-scale restoration work to avoid confusion of the ASRP with the RFP.

A: *Bob*: Landowners are getting frustrated and concerned, thinking that this (RFP) is what is proposed, but really this is an alternative.

2) Other Chehalis Strategy Updates

a) Chehalis Basin Board

A director will be hired soon. The two or three finalists will be presented at the April board meeting, and then the board will go into executive session to select the top candidate.

b) Communication/Outreach

Communication and outreach is happening at the Chehalis Strategy level. There is a group that has met twice to discuss outreach strategies but hasn't convened in the past few months. Ken will be contacting folks to set up the next meeting time.

Habitat Work Group members expressed concern that landowners are confusing the alternatives that are being explored with restoration projects. They are exploring ways to assess interest, to communicate with landowners effectively, and to keep them apprised of issues regarding the river and restoration.

c) Newaukum landowner interviews

Cynthia from NSD has been conducting interviews with riverside landowners as part of scoping for the Restorative Flood Protection Alternative.

F. Other Business

1) Washington Coast Restoration and Resiliency Initiative (WCRRI) update

Garrett: There will be a focus on resiliency in the 2019 round of projects proposed for WCRRI funds. We hope to have the RFP out by April 12th. That would give project sponsors just short of two months to complete their proposals and submit them. We are looking to have 10-12 million dollars of high-ranking projects. We will probably add a project cap of about \$2 million. A manual is being prepared so that there will be better guidelines for project sponsors. Also, projects that were awarded WCRRI funds in the 2015-2017 biennium but which are not complete will probably be getting contract extensions in the upcoming months. By the end of this biennium, all of the projects need to be completed as they don't want projects to take more than 4 years.

2) Brian Abbott Fish Barrier Removal Board (FBRB)

Cade: The request for applications for the Coordinated Pathway ended last week. 49 project proposals were received and are being reviewed. The Board has a scoring criteria for the draft applications, and will present those projects to the next board meeting. WDFW staff and a technical review team will be ranking projects. Some applicants will be invited to submit full applications.

WDFW staff is also working with the priority watershed groups (Lead Entities) to make sure the watershed priority pathways are the same as submitted for the last round of the FBRB.

3) Other

Kirsten will be on vacation the first week of May, and there will be no meeting in May.

G. Meeting adjourned