

Chehalis Basin Lead Entity -- Habitat Work Group

April 6, 2020

~ 9:30 am – 11:00 pm ~

Zoom Meeting

Ann Weckback, <i>Lewis Co.</i> Anthony Waldrop, <i>GHCD</i> Bob Amrine, <i>Lewis CD</i> Brandon Carman, <i>RCO</i> Caprice Fasano, <i>QIN</i> Colleen Suter, <i>Chehalis Tribe</i> Emilie McKain, <i>WDFW</i> Garrett Dalan, <i>TNC</i> Jeannie Abbot, <i>GSRO</i> Jennifer Riedmayer, <i>Dept. of Ecology</i> Jonathan Bradshaw, <i>HWG Minutes</i>	Kathy Jacobsen, <i>LE Outreach Coordinator</i> Keith Douville, <i>WDFW</i> Kelly Verd, <i>Lewis CD</i> Key McMurry, <i>Key Environmental Solutions</i> Kiley Smith, <i>GHC Noxious Weed</i> Kirsten Harma, <i>Lead Entity Coordinator</i> Mara Zimmerman, <i>CSP/F</i> Megan Tuttle, <i>WDFW</i> Ned Pittman, <i>CSP/F</i> Shawn Ultican, <i>Dept. of Ecology</i> Thom Woodruff, <i>Capitol Land Trust</i>
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1. Welcome, Introductions, Updates

2. Review of minutes from March 2020

Tom Woodruff made a motion to approve last month's minutes without comment; Anne Weckback seconded.

3. Organizational Business

a. Culvert Subcommittee

The subcommittee will be meeting online to update their culvert priority map. The team will be looking at the website and scoring breakouts, which will be discussed as they talk through changes.

b. Newaukum Subcommittee

The meeting between the WDFW survey crew and Coast Salmon Partnership was derailed by coronavirus concerns. They are hopeful, however, that the conversation to combine WDFW fieldwork with CSP modeling efforts will take place before the May 4th subcommittee meeting. Also of note, WCCRI field trips will be virtual as well.

c. Outreach

World Migratory Fish Day has been rescheduled for Oct 24th. They plan to have a lower and upper watershed location available for presentations.

Kathy has been putting together a factsheet about lamprey. She'd love feedback about it: email her for a copy to review.

Additionally, Kathy is working on a factsheet for freshwater mussels and a map of recreation locations throughout the basin. Mara offered to support her in the involved GIS work.

4. Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB)

a. Habitat Work Schedule Review:

The HWS is now Salmon Recovery Portal (SRP), and is being updated and polished. This portal is intended to provide clear information about what projects have been completed throughout the Basin. The Coast Salmon Partnership would like to have a clear and firm sense of what has been done in the basin in order to report on progress. This doesn't just include PRISM projects; it is a comprehensive resource for tracking restoration work in the basin. Kirsten will send out a spreadsheet of current data for relevant parties to review for accuracy. For the purposes of this data, it is important to use NOAA stream-mile standards: the anadromous stream-mile either to the limit of anadromous distribution, or to the next upstream barrier. If there is a downstream barrier, the mileage is 0. This metric ensures we are accurately reporting the stream-mile access restored across all projects carried out. Mara will update stream-mile numbers, and send the data back to Kirsten for group review.

b. Virtual Site Visits:

Zoom-call site visits will be taking place on April 14th. Online presentations will be provided in lieu of on-the-ground visits.

c. RCO Updates

Projects are being sought out for the planned project list. Ideal projects have a clearly defined concept and location. In the interest of using tools and information that already exist, one set of projects that is being considered for this list is the top-ranking culverts identified by the culvert subcommittee's ranking tool. RCO hopes to be getting this planned project list to WDFW in early August. Thus, the Habitat Work Group will finalize it's recommended list at its August 3rd meeting.

This grant round has continued in spite of the coronavirus, but has had to be flexible.

5. Presentation: Coast Salmon Partnership - Implementation Projects

Mara Zimmerman provided an overview of three projects that the Coast Salmon Partnership/Foundation has chosen to put forward and fund through a private grant. Each Lead Entity is being asked for input as these go forward.

The first project seeks to develop a comprehensive map of land-use change throughout the coast region.

Secondly, the CSP/F is looking to partner with the GHCD to do monitoring of restoration

projects that are being carried out. There is exciting evidence regarding the ability of restoration projects to positively impact the hydrology of restored areas–this monitoring would seek to provide data to understand this relationship with more clarity and certainty. This would serve both salmon conservation interests as well as the recent emphasis on streamflow restoration.

The third project seeks to create a map of the coast watersheds that focuses on providing clear information on historical resource use, (e.g. splash dams) along with information about the legacies of that use. This will be provided to sponsors and contractors in order to better interpret and address historical impacts while designing restoration projects.

Mara’s presentation serves as both a briefing and a request for input/feedback and local knowledge. Participants were excited about these project concepts.

6. Aquatic Species Restoration Plan

a. Grant Round Update

The ASRP grant round has been rolling: 16 field visits were made before the work-from-home order came into effect. For the project development proposals, the sponsors called into a WebX conference, which went well.

Both lists have gone through technical review. Following that, there will be a policy-level review for alignment with the ASRP. After this, an approved project list will be sent to the Office of the Chehalis Basin, and then to the RCO. Funding decisions should be made by mid to late April.

b. Steering Committee Update

The Steering Committee is discussing the projects from the grant round. They are also providing guidance to the SRT, the Adaptive Management Committee, and the technical committees for the ASRP. The monitoring committee is emphasizing the importance of the ability to define goals and success by SMART goals.

Q: Does the Chehalis Basin Board need to provide approval to disburse funds?

A: They won’t have a say on the project list. There are different buckets for funding, and all this funding is in the project budget, which is given to the discretion of the Steering Committee.

c. Early Action Reach Update

Lewis Conservation District: They will be finalizing the design in the SF Newaukum in the next couple weeks. The Stillman Creek proposal has been put on hold because of a property/water right purchase. The next steps are in the Land Trust’s hands here. There were two acquisitions: One is a conservation easement, which only requires a baseline document. The other is a fee-simple purchase, which requires a surveyor, appraiser, etc. That process is all on hold given the health crisis. It is hopeful that this will be addressed in the next couple weeks.

7. Thoughts on EIS review, Other:

There will not be a joint letter from the HWG, but Mara will be submitting a technical review letter on behalf of the CSP.

Bob Amrine provided an update on the fry trapping being carried out by the QIN, who is partnering with WestFork Environmental. The Skookumchuck is showing very strong numbers. The SF and mainstem Chehalis and the SF and mainstem Newaukum are coming up a little later, but are starting. The team is collecting caudal fin samples to genetically test whether fry are spring run, fall run, or a mix thereof.

Meeting adjourned at 11:30