

Chehalis Basin Lead Entity -- Habitat Work Group

Monday, May 6, 2019

~ 9:30 am – 12:00 pm ~

In response to a last-minute tribal closure, this meeting was held at a meeting room at the Grand Mound Marriot Hotel -- 6223 197th Way SW, Rochester, WA

In attendance:

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| Ann Weckback, <i>Lewis County Public Works</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> | Mara Healy, <i>Thurston Conservation District</i> |
| Bob Amrine, <i>Lewis CD</i> | Mara Zimmerman, <i>Coast Salmon Partnership</i> |
| Caprice Fasano, <i>Quinault Indian Nation</i> | Mark Gray, <i>CRBLT</i> |
| Cade Roler, <i>WDFW</i> | Mark Swartout, <i>Thurston Co. Citizen</i> |
| Claire Williamson, <i>WDFW</i> | Mike Nordin, <i>GHCD</i> |
| Emilie McKain, <i>WDFW</i> | Miranda Plumb, <i>USFWS</i> |
| Garrett Dalan, <i>The Nature Conservancy</i> | Paula Holroyde, <i>League of Women Voters</i> |
| Greg Green, <i>Ducks Unlimited</i> | Rich Osborne, <i>Coast Salmon Part./ONRC</i> |
| Jeanne Kinney, <i>Thurston Co. Public Works</i> | Rick Rouse, <i>Port of Chehalis</i> |
| Jonathan Bradshaw, <i>HWG Note-taker</i> | Robyn Pepin, <i>Aspect Consulting</i> |

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. Organizational Business

1. Review minutes from April 1, 2019

Rick Rouse moved to approve the minutes without comment, Mark Gray seconded. All in favor.

2. Lead Entity Strategy – Chehalis Basin Salmon Habitat Restoration & Preservation Strategy presentations --- Hoquiam & Wishkah. (Anthony Waldrop)

Anthony presented a summary of the Chehalis Basin Salmon Habitat Preservation Strategy's section on the Hoquiam and Wishkah WMUs. His presentation can be accessed on the Lead Entity's site, or by contacting the Lead Entity. Points of interest include, briefly:

For the Hoquiam: water quality, fish passage and riparian conditions are Tier 1 concerns. For the Wishkah: Tier 1 concerns include sediment, riparian conditions and fish passage. Species of concern with these areas are depressed populations of Fall Chinook (Hoq.) and Coho (Wish.). Wishkah is critical habitat for Bull Trout.

Throughout this area, there is a particularly significant legacy of issues that result from wide-spread splash-dams.

3. Lead Entity Strategy – Evaluation of Acquisition Proposals: Ranking Guidelines and Considerations – Feedback requested. (Kirsten)

Kirsten passed out a document proposing adjustments to the detailed ranking criteria for SRFB projects, which was produced by Eric Erler, consultant. The document provides detail on how to evaluate acquisition projects, as well as generally inform how criteria are considered. The changes propose criteria as questions rather than statements to guide how reviewers think about the projects, and demonstrate how those questions are often the same for acquisitions as for restoration projects. Members were asked to review this proposal for next meeting.

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

Kirsten led a discussion about the process of creating a formal Lead Entity Project List. After no longer valid or already funded projects were removed after review by Alice Rubin, RCO, as well as numerous project sponsors, the conceptual project list was cleaned up to bring over 100 conceptual projects down to 45. Excluded projects were marked Dormant. Kirsten asked for volunteers to further winnow the list of Conceptual projects to see if anything can be considered a viable project to help implement the Lead Entity strategy (Round one: winnow for what is viable and permitable), with the next need being to do outreach to add more conceptual projects to the database.

Q: Will projects not included on the list be excluded from SRFB consideration?

A: No. The process of submitting the project for SRFB funding will remain the same as what it has been (submitting a conceptual project form). The group still needs to discuss how it wants to approach creating a longer project list. Since this Project List will be more comprehensive, conversations do need to be had regarding what level of scrutiny the projects being submitted receive. The level of endorsement assumed for different projects on the list will also need to be considered. We will need to “tag” projects that have simply been submitted as distinct from projects that are of particular interest, as well as mark projects so that our SRFB projects list is nested within the Project List. This is a conversation that needs to be had down the road.

Rich Osbourne commented that ONRC will be incorporating DNR, DFW, and State Park projects into the Habitat Work Schedule so that this database will be a comprehensive and useful database of work being done in the basin.

Q: How are we considering the privacy of landowners if they want their ownership data or contact info to be kept private?

A: We've considered this: individual projects can be adjusted for what information is listed in Habitat Work Schedule. Certain info can be hidden for general access. For example, location of projects, if the owner is sensitive, can be listed as the local Conservation District.

3. SRFB & Project Presentations

1. Update on SRFB process and Next Steps.

The Final draft application deadline for SRFB funding is June 22nd.

2. Project presentation: “Satsop/Wynoochee In-Stream Restoration Pilot Project” – Anthony Waldrop. Grays Harbor Conservation District

Anthony Waldrop presented on a project being submitted for SRFB funding by the GHCD. The full presentation can be found on the Lead Entity website or by request. In general, the GHCD is looking for funding to:

- a.) Develop a restoration strategy that uses instream wood structures to address the legacy impacts of splash dams that were historically installed throughout the Satsop and Wynoochee watersheds. This restoration strategy would, it is hoped, be a comprehensive tool that could then be applied universally throughout the Chehalis Basin and beyond.
- b.) Implement a pilot project for the developed restoration strategy by 2020 or 2021.

Discussion:

Suggestion: It was pointed out that this work would merge well with the Hirst fix. This could be a tool for addressing water quantity. Anthony replied that they already applied for that funding but were rejected in the first grant round.

Suggestion: Consider ways to do more community outreach around the projects. Choose pilot project sites based on where you could get public viewing and increase community support. Also put water level loggers in to demonstrate changes in water level over time.

Suggestion: There is a climate change connection here. You might be able to bring in foundation funded (Climate Solutions) to support data collection.

Q: How does this work affect downstream culverts? Completed culvert replacements were done to fit with current upstream conditions.

A: Yes, this is being considered, looked at.

4. ASRP Updates

1. Early Action Reach projects, RCO input & LE “list” (Emelie, Alissa, Kirsten)

A fact sheet, “Salmon Restoration Projects and Civil Liability for Landowners” put together by the RCO, was passed out. It is available at the RCO website. The emphasis is that with the clause, there is guarantee for protection from civil liability for landowners as long as the conditions in the RCW are met. Alissa pointed out that there is no contractual link between the Lead Entity or Habitat Work Group and the project level work. There is no reason to expect legal risk to anyone but the project sponsors or engineers associated with the project.

Discussion pointed out that this was a solution found to get landowner willingness to participate in restoration work.

Q: Who takes liability?

A: The sponsor, which is the way it has been.

Kirsten summarized that the question the HWG has been working with has been: Should we include ASRP Early Action Reach scale projects onto the Lead Entity List? This question opened up extensive discussion over the last several meetings and with RCO and with Lead Entities around the state. Through that discussion, it has become clear that this is something that is beneficial to all parties involved, and is something the HWG is comfortable with.

Q: What state agency will be considered the liable sponsor for the ASRP projects?

A: Emelie responded that this is still being discussed. We should consider the sponsor: “the State” –the particular agency will be based on who is best suited to take on this responsibility, but it looks like it will either be WDFW or the Office of the Chehalis Basin (Ecology).

Kirsten asked the group if they supported adding the ASRP projects to the Lead Entity list. There were no objections.

2. Early Action Reach Project Updates (CDs)

Mara Healy talked through the work being done in the early action reach project for the TCD on the Skookumchuck, directly below the dam. It’s moving along well. They are now working with land trusts in the area.

Q: Is that reach between the dam and Bucoda?

A: Yes—it’s about a two mile stretch between the dam and the river crossing on the way to the dam.

Anthony Waldrop discussed the GHCD’s reach scale work on the Satsop and Wynoochee. They are moving forward with their acquisition/easement assessment, which will determine how much planting can happen vs. continued use as productive land. They’re dialoguing with landowners about timeline. Last week there were permit review visits led by Natural Systems Design. Outstanding questions were clarified and accelerated construction timelines are set.

Bob Amrine updated as follows: The Thursday following this meeting, a meeting was to be held on how to do landowner agreements re: acquisition and easements. They’re dealing with 24 landowners, 12 per reach. Further, there is some CREP land involved, and the Farm Services Agency will be meeting with the County to coordinate around potentially conflicting strategies. There is concern that reach-scale work might interfere with CREP interests, but reach-scale projects do follow CRP guidelines (CREP is under this umbrella). Bob is hopeful that this issue is mostly just a matter of clearer communication. This communication will probably have to involve Inter-Fluve coming in and going through each site with the County to discuss the issue on a site-by-site basis.

3. Science Review Team updates (Hope & Colleen)

With the tribe closure, Hope and Colleen were not in attendance. Emilie McKain provided an update:

The SRT has made progress on the development of the restoration strategy of the ASRP. They currently have scenarios for 3 levels of effort in the basin, and the final tweaks on those are upcoming in the next few weeks. They're focusing on finalizing those for the next phase of document by the end of Sept. The legislature approved the full-funding Chehalis Strategy ask of \$73 million. Funding will cover full construction of all five of the reach-scale projects, as well as some amphibian work and some pilot projects/studies to finish out the plan itself. Funding will be available for other assorted small projects as well.

Q: Is there money for pre- and post-monitoring plans?

A: Yes.

Q: Is there any avian component to the ASRP?

A: That isn't precluded, but we don't currently have specific avian projects for the current biennium.

Q: Who manages this money? It seems like there is a lot of people involved, and it has been confusing for sponsors.

A: The Chehalis Strategy has two arms: Flooding and ASRP. There have been complications as all of this has evolved separately as well as in parallel as well as in different timeframes. Combining them all well into one strategy has been challenging. RCO manages grants for both the flooding and the ASRP side of the Strategy. Emilie can't speak to the flooding side of things, but the ASRP side also has a steering committee who makes funding recommendations. But in general, we're building this as we go: so confusion is acknowledged. This is not yet entirely smooth.

Emilie hopes, before the ASRP document comes out, to hold a number of outreach discussions. She encouraged participants to get in touch with her if they know of parties who would benefit from a presentation. These would serve to provide opportunities for feedback for the development of the final document. Emilie will present on this at the June HWG meeting.

5. Other Updates (11:45)

1. Streamflow Restoration Act, Chehalis Basin Partnership, and Habitat Committee (Kirsten)

CBP group now has funding for facilitation of the Streamflow Restoration Act planning. Cynthia Carlstad has been hired for this. CBP is developing a Habitat Committee. Kirsten asked the group for interested in participating in this committee and ideas for "cross-pollination." She hopes to host the CBP-related conversations after each HWG meeting, but given existing commitments, this will have to start after the August meeting.

Ecology is accepting feedback for Net Ecological Benefit (NEB) guidance and policy by June 7th.