**Chehalis Basin Lead Entity**

**Habitat Work Group Meeting Minutes**

**June 13, 2014**

The June 13, 2014 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 9:30 a.m. In attendance were:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Bob Amrine, Lewis County Conservation District  Alice Rubin, RCO  Amy Spoon, WDFW  Miles Batchelder, WCSSP  Jamie Glasgow, Wild Fish Conservancy  Dustin Bilhimer, Dept. of Ecology  Chanele Holbrook, Heernett Environmental  Lonnie Crumley, Chehalis Basin Fisheries Task Force and Streamworks | Ann Weckback, Lewis County Public Works  Jane Atha, LE Coordinator  Caitlin Guthrie, Capitol Land Trust  Miranda Plumb, USFWS  Dave Geroux, Center for Natural Lands Management  Omroa Bhagwandin, Onalaska Alliance |

**Agenda Items**

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Updates and announcements

* WCSSP Board Members
* Lead entity strategy
* Washington Coast Restoration Initiative
* Others?

1. Site visit recap
2. Proposed project questions and input

* Opportunity for feedback and to address site visit comments

1. SRFB Cycle 2014

* Upcoming important dates
* Ranking meeting in July; reminder that HWG does not meet in July

1. Agenda for next HWG meeting August 8, 2014

**Updates and Announcements**

Chanele Holbrook updated the group on Schweikert Farm and on her latest findings regarding the benefits of side channels and disconnected channels for salmon habitat. She showed the group maps of the project site with the Scatter Creek aquifer overlaid on them demonstrating the connectivity of the proposed project property with underlying groundwater.

WCSSP Board Members

Currently these board members are representing the Grays Harbor/Chehalis lead entity: Jane Atha, Terry Baltzell, Frank Gordon, Mark Swartout, and Mark White. The lead entity can have up to 6 total board members. We are intending to have Terry Baltzell removed from the board member list. The lead entity approved the decision. Additionally, the Grays Harbor/Chehalis lead entity is invited to appoint a board member to the Washington Coast Sustainable Salmon Foundation. Atha is looking for suggestions for a Foundation member. Kahle Jennings has expressed some interest in the position. The time commitment for the Foundation board member is to be available for quarterly meetings – in person or remotely – for approximately half a day. The Foundation member may be asked to serve on a committee which would require 4-6 additional hours of work per month. Atha has a WCSSP backgrounder and time requirement document for anyone they think may be interested in serving on WCSSF.

Lead entity Strategy

The lead entity has wrapped up the Humptulips sub-basin strategy. We’ve met with key players in the Humptulips, and found some particularly helpful conceptual projects at a meeting with Region 6. The Habitat Work Group expressed that it would be best if there was some strategy involved with determining the next sub-basin to focus on within the Chehalis.

Washington Coast Restoration Initiative

Eric Delvin is organizing the next year/phase of the WCRI and has created templates for conceptual projects that people would like to put forward this year. The group may recall that the sideboards of WCRI projects are restoration and jobs. This is an excellent avenue for projects that do not fit into SRFB criteria, and that have potentially large budgets. Atha would like to see a large number of projects in the Chehalis. Delvin would ideally like a list by the end of this month – June 25th. Atha realizes that this is the day before final SRFB applications are due in PRISM. If there is an issue with the deadline, please still let us know about your project. The key change in this year’s list is that acquisitions may be added. However, this is with the strong caveat that the land must be acquired in order to accomplish restoration goals. The plan is to time this with SRFB proposed projects so that we can put the proposed projects on the list and then remove them if they get funding. To ensure that the projects have been properly vetted, however, those pertaining to salmon recovery need to be approved by the lead entity before making it onto the list.

**Site Visit Recap**

The site visits were held over the rainy days of May 8th and May 9th. The group toured 11 different projects throughout the basin, with several in the upland forestry areas of the basin. The site visits were a success; however, Atha admits the complexities of staying on schedule and has learned a lot for next year. The project sponsors were all very adaptable and didn’t show any outward scorn towards Atha which was appreciated. To recap, there are two proposed acquisitions and one proposed acquisition and restoration combination (Wishkah Gardens). There is one planning project – Gheer Creek – and the remaining 7 are restoration projects. Atha is open to suggestions for next year – particularly regarding the timing of the site visits and the standard 30 min/project allotment. If there are some that the project sponsor feels would ideally take longer due to accessibility, etc., then it may be possible to provide more time. The group discussed scheduling possibilities and the need to have clear directions to each site.

**Proposed project questions and input**

Atha has provided the project sponsors as well as the local review team members the SRFB review panel comments for each proposed project. In addition, Atha provided the project sponsors comments from the debriefing conducted on the bus immediately following the site visits. This is an opportunity to address the comments from either review team and/or answer any new questions about each project based on the applications and site visits. The project sponsors answered lingering questions regarding their proposed projects and discussed the feedback they received with the Habitat Work Group.

**SRFB Cycle 2014**

The schedule this year requires that project sponsors have their grant applications finalized in PRISM no later than noon on June 26th. This is in order to give enough time for the local review team to receive the final materials in advance of the July 11 ranking meeting. There was some discussion regarding the application deadlines, and Atha told the group the final applications need to be submitted in PRISM by August 15th, but that they will be reviewed in July. In years past, the review team has received hard-copy binders containing all of the grant application materials, and ranking form in a large binder. The local review team expressed the usefulness of the binders and it was decided to continue to distribute them to the review team members for their review.

**Agenda for next HWG meeting August 8, 2014**

The August HWG meeting will be have a debriefing from the review and rank process, lessons learned, next steps, and ideas for next year.

**NEXT MEETING:** Friday, August 8, 2014 9:30 AM at the Lewis County Conservation District, in Chehalis.