

Chehalis Basin Lead Entity -- Habitat Work Group

Monday, June 3, 2019
~ 9:30 am – 12:00 pm ~

Chehalis Tribe Community Center – Gathering Room
461 Secena Road, Oakville, WA

Anthony Waldrop, <i>Grays Harbor CD</i> Alissa Ferrell, <i>RCO</i> Caprice Fasano, <i>Quinault Indian Nation</i> Chris Dwight, <i>WDFW</i> Claire Williamson, <i>WDFW</i> Garrett Dalan, <i>The Nature Conservancy</i> Jeanne Kinney, <i>Thurston Co. Public Works</i> Jonathan Bradshaw, <i>HWG Note-taker</i> Kirsten Harma, <i>Lead Entity Coordinator</i> Kelly Verd, <i>Lewis CD</i>	Mara Zimmerman, <i>Coast Salmon Partnership</i> Mark Gray, <i>CRBLT</i> Mark Swartout, <i>Thurston Co. Citizen</i> Miranda Plumb, <i>USFWS</i> Ned Pittman, <i>Coast Salmon Partnership</i> Omrao Bhagwandin, <i>Lewis County Citizen</i> Rick Rouse, <i>Port of Chehalis</i> Ryan Williams, <i>Mason CD</i> Thom Woodruff, <i>Capitol Land Trust</i> Tom Kollasch, <i>Grays Harbor CD</i>
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1. Welcome, Introductions, Updates

2. Organizational Business

1. Review minutes from May, 2019

Rick Rouse moved to approve the minutes without comment, and Tom Kollasch seconded.

2. Coast Salmon Foundation – Vote on Bylaws Update

Mara Zimmerman asked for the Chehalis Lead Entity’s approval for changes to Coast Salmon Foundation bylaws. To explain this request, she gave an overview on the organizational structure of the Coast Salmon Partnership. In brief: the Coast Salmon Foundation is the 501(c)(3) non-profit that helps bring in funding for the work of the Coast Salmon Partnership. Both Mara and Ned Pittman, who is the CSP’s new Program Director, are hired by the CSF to serve on the CSP. Because of the importance of maintaining a close working relationship between the CSF and the CSP, the bylaws of the CSF require updates and changes to their bylaws to be approved by the members of the CSP Board.

Following discussion of the proposed changes to the CSF bylaws, the HWG was asked to give Kirsten the go-ahead to approve the reviewed changes in her capacity on the CSP board.

Mark Swartout motioned to take a vote which Tom Kollasch seconded. The vote for Kirsten to move forward and approve of the bylaws’ updates was unanimous.

3. Coast Salmon Foundation – Introducing Ned

Ned Pittman has been newly hired by the CSF. He will serve as the technical support for the Lead Entities of the CSP as the CSP program manager. His role will involve participating in the ongoing discussions regarding the developing project list, and as he has a lot of habitat restoration background,

will likely be helpful with the project ranking. He'll also be overseeing the restarting of the Coast Salmon Partnership Plan Implementation Committee, as well as take part in WCCRI manual updates.

4. Habitat Work Schedule – Overview of Updates to Conceptual Projects

Kirsten provided an update on the process of cleaning up of the Conceptual Project list, and gave a quick tutorial on accessing the list as it currently stands online. The list has been pruned down to roughly 45 projects.

Q: If a sponsor wants to bring up a project, does it have to be on this list?

A: Yes, but the act of submitting a project for consideration puts the project onto this list. So this isn't meant to be a restriction--the project is added to the list as a matter of course in its submission.

5. Ranking Criteria and Considerations – Input

Kirsten asked for input on the adjustment of the criteria wording for the SRFB ranking process. The suggestion is to reword statements as questions to help reviewers better evaluate the project. As a reminder, this wording was suggested by Eric Erler, consultant, as a byproduct of his work providing guidance on how to evaluate protection projects. Kirsten pointed out that the adjustment is not the kind of overhaul that will change the substance of the criteria (e.g. numbers and points won't change). Further, while this conversation was initiated by the need to more fairly rank acquisition projects alongside other types of projects, it has opened up to become a more general conversation about the wording of our ranking criteria. The adjusted wording would go out to project sponsors during next year's grant round, but will be used internally for the present grant round. The ranking team will provide more detailed input via a conference call this Friday June 7th.

6. Culvert Subcommittee Update

June 30th is the ASRP-prescribed deadline to have a GIS map and excel spreadsheet to show culvert ranking and prioritization. The subcommittee has been meeting with a contracted GIS specialist. This process is working with 12 metrics (these include barrier passability, miles of habitat gain, habitat quality, documentation of species present, road density, water quality, stream temperature, barriers up- and down-stream, the potential effects of climate change, canopy cover) The subcommittee is meeting today. While it's a bit of a race to get a deliverable product by the 30th, WDFW will have funding to continue this work next biennium. As such, this is essentially just the first go at this project--there will be the chance to rework the product in the coming biennium.

7. Newaukum Subcommittee Update

There are no updates from the Newaukum Subcommittee--it hasn't met recently, but hopes to do so in the near future.

3. SRFB & Project Presentations (10:30)

1. Summary Comments on Site Visits

The site review team gave a few thoughts on this year's site visits. Caprice Fasano provided some follow-up information on one of the proposed projects--she found the permit applications for a couple barriers upstream of the Newkah Barrier correction. This suggests a timeline of 1-4 years for those projects. Mark Swartout commented generally that is solid grant round, and commented that this year has a very impressive match total, which is encouraging. It's exciting to see SRFB funds being used to leverage existing money. He also was thankful for the provision of the bus by the Chehalis Tribe, and for sandwiches.

2. Update on SRFB process and next steps.

Alissa Ferrell gave an update on what's next with this round of SRFB funding: Final applications are due June 22nd, reviewer comments will go out to sponsors in the next couple days. Ranking will be taking place July 18th.

Kirsten gave an overview of the LEAN-adjusted 2020 grant round: The call for applications will take place this fall, and site visits will take place around February. There will be an opportunity for site visit feedback until POCs are provided in April. Final applications will be due in June, and projects will receive notice of funding by Sept 2020--in contrast to December in 2019.

4. ASRP Updates (11:00)

1. ASRP Update

In Emilie's absence, Claire Williamson, WDFW's new ASRP-focused habitat biologist, gave an update.

Landowner negotiations are moving forward. Conservation Districts and consultants did ground truthing visits, which have gone encouragingly well so far. They'll be moving into the preliminary design phase in the next 2 months. They're looking to begin construction (mostly plantings that is mostly out-of-channel to start) in June 2020. In-channel work will most likely begin in 2021.

Q: There are projects that would like to start doing some in-channel work in 2020. Why is in-channel work being pushed back to 2021?

A: We're bookended by permitting: We want full permits by the time we go to bid for construction. It's just a really tight window.

Q: Can we push to make that window? We don't want ready-to-go projects getting held back unnecessarily.

A: Sure: we're not closing doors as much as we're making sure we have a plan B. We're building contingency plans for projects that do have to go into 2021.

2. Early Action Reach Project Updates

Skookumchuck: We've lost Trans-Alta as willing a landowner on the Skookumchuck. The property isn't out of the picture forever, but it's off the table for now. The project is still solid, though: it's a mile and a half reach. And while it's unfortunate, dropping some of the complications involved with that property will increase the likelihood of going into construction.

Wynoochee: We had a walk and talk with landowners for easements. Talked through planting polygons on the ground vs. on maps. What does this actually look like? Firming up of lines, some back-and-forth based on tradeoffs. Our focus is on making sure to maintain long-term relationships. Overall, we've got really good relationships with landowners, and a much clearer vision of what they are dealing with on the ground.

Lewis CD: Bob Amrine was not available to provide an update.

3. Science Review Team updates

Neither Hope nor Colleen were present. Kirsten is hopeful that the publication of the ASRP this summer will result in some clarity. It does sound like there will be a window for the steering committee to review and comment on the detailed scientific information before the initial draft publication takes place.

Q: Science Review Team work had been informed by the EDT model, with the intention of bringing in additional input from the lifecycle model being developed at NOAA. Is this input taking place?

A: It sounds like there is a dedicated team looking at how to integrate the NOAA model and the EDT. Also of note, Tom Beechie has been invited to present on this NOAA-developed model at the HWG meeting this September.

Q: It looks like the SRT has discussed integrating across habitat and hatchery concerns. Has this begun within the SRT?

A: The SRT has discussed this, but it sounds like other parties feel this is the territory of policy-makers. It is noted that technical input from the SRT would be helpful and is likely underway.

4. Other ASRP updates & discussion

The Chehalis Basin Board meeting is this Thursday in Aberdeen at the Log Pavillion. There will be lots of ASRP discussion. The CBB was interested in doing a field trip to see the Wynoochee Early Action Reach, but their schedule didn't permit it: this will hopefully happen September.

5. Other (11:45)

1.

There was an impromptu discussion regarding the issues around the Governor's veto of the gravel section of the orca bill. A lot of what is behind this veto comes largely from the mischaracterization of a nuanced situation as a "dredging" issue. The amendment was proposing very highly regulated, high-oversight pilot projects, and the intention was to allow the possibility of gravel-work to be on the table for those projects, if appropriate. Unfortunately, this got characterized as a bid to return to opening up dredging as a regular option for river management, which is not accurate. We need to be able to do work to understand what avenues are viable for landowners who have gravel bars sending water over their pastures.

2. Coho Pre-Spawn Mortality

Kirsten discussed some research done by the Center for Urban Waters of Tacoma about Coho and urban runoff's contribution to pre-spawn mortality. She encouraged locals to keep an eye out for Coho die-off in our own urban areas as well. Are there relevant stormwater pollution reduction projects that could be done in our region? Mara Zimmerman commented that citizen science could be a critical part of this: prespawn mortality due to urban runoff is a situation in which citizens, as eyes on the river, are really helpful.

3. Streamflow Restoration Act, Chehalis Basin Partnership, and Habitat Committee

The Streamflow Restoration Act is active. The Chehalis Basin Partnership has taken the lead on this for the Chehalis Basin, and has a number of subcommittees looking at this work, one of which is the Habitat Committee. There's opportunity to participate. Starting in August, there will also be a CBP project committee that meets after the HWG meeting to discuss Streamflow Restoration Act project implementation. Ask Kirsten if you want more information on any of this. Also, though it is a water quantity-focused issue, there is a lot of opportunity for common interest with fish-focused projects. This is an example of the utility of developing generalized lists of both projects and funding, so that this kind of cross-over in otherwise separate funding and projects could be readily seen. Anyone with interest in learning more should contact Kirsten.