

## **Chehalis Basin Lead Entity**

### **Habitat Work Group Meeting**

**June 9, 2017**

**9:30 am – 1:00 pm**

Chehalis Tribe Community Center Gathering Room  
Oakville, Washington

#### **In attendance:**

Alice Rubin, RCO	Kirsten Harma, <i>Lead Entity Coordinator</i>
Amy Spoon, WDFW	Kim Figlar-Barnes, WDFW
Ann Weckback, <i>Lewis County</i>	Lonnie Crumley, CBFETF
Bob Amrine, <i>Lewis County Conservation</i>	Luke Kelly, <i>Trout Unlimited</i>
Brett Demond, <i>Streamworks</i>	Mara Healy, <i>Thurston CD</i>
Brandon Carman, <i>Grays Harbor CD</i>	Maria Hunter, WDFW
Cade Roler, WDFW	Mark Swartout, <i>Citizen</i>
Colleen Suter, <i>Chehalis Tribe DNR</i>	Mitch Redfern, <i>Mason County</i>
Emilie Blevins, <i>Xerces Society</i>	Omroa Bhagwandi, <i>Citizen, Lewis County</i>
Hope Rieden, <i>Chehalis Tribe</i>	Rich Osborne, <i>Coast Salmon Partnership</i>
Jamie Glasgow, <i>Wild Fish Conservancy</i>	Rick Rouse, <i>Port of Chehalis</i>
Jason Gillie, <i>Chehalis Tribe</i>	Steve Hallstrom, <i>Citizen</i>
Jess Helsley, <i>Coast Salmon Partnership</i>	Thom Woodruff, <i>Capitol Land Trust</i>
Jonathan Bradshaw, <i>Citizen</i>	Tom Kollasch, <i>Grays Harbor CD</i>
Jordan Rash, <i>Forterra</i>	

### **Meeting Summary**

#### **1. Welcome and Introductions.**

Everyone provided self-introductions.

#### **2. Review of minutes from April 2017**

Tom moved to approve the minutes, Mark seconded. All in favor.

#### **3. Subcommittee Updates**

Kirsten provided updates on topics of interest to the group, with others adding detail.

Bylaw Subcommittee: Kirsten met with the Grays Harbor County Commissioner Randy Ross and the County lawyer to discuss updates to the resolution regarding the role of the County in the Lead Entity process. The goal of the update is to bring the resolution up to date to reflect current conditions, and to establish the Habitat Work Group as “Citizens Committee” consistent with the RCW. The lawyer drafted a resolution yesterday. Kirsten will work with the Bylaw subcommittee to make edits, and then will circulate the document to the entire Habitat Work Group before the document goes on to the County Commissioners. The next step for the Bylaw subcommittee will be to guide a conversation on membership as the next “policy discussion” prior to drafting the bylaws.

Culvert Subcommittee: The next meeting will be June 29.

Newaukum Subcommittee. This committee has not met in a while and will reconvene following this meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to keep track of all of the research, monitoring and restoration work happening and planned for the Newaukum basin.

#### **4. ASRP & Chehalis Strategy**

Draft ASRP Budget and Work Plan.

Maria Hunter provided an update. The project implementation budget for 2017-2019 will not be known until the legislature comes up with a budget. The Steering Committee is developing scenarios for how funds might be allocated. Guidance will be available after July 1st.

Mark asked what the decision-making process is among the Steering Committee. Maria answered that it is the majority of the 3 voting members, but they are striving for consensus. Three voting members are WDFW, Chehalis Tribe and Quinault Indian Nation.

Other Updates. Thom expressed interest in following-up on the decision last HWG meeting to write a letter to the Steering Committee in support of the top-ranking Holm Farm project for funding the “return funds”. Since that meeting, the suggestion was made to the Steering Committee, but not accepted. Thom noted that he understands the project won’t be funded, but suggests maybe it would be good to have the request on record and let them know acquisitions are valuable tool. Maria provided an update on where the Steering Committee is at, including that they are looking for ideas on the complicated topic of prioritizing acquisitions, how to address restoration needs for non-salmonids, etc. Many HWG members expressed interest in seeing a letter sent to the Steering Committee about the value of acquisitions in general. Ideas of what to include in the letter were: Suggest the Steering Committee tap this group as a resource since it includes groups doing acquisitions and individuals with perspectives on concerns unique to the Chehalis (e.g. public access). Outline the benefits of acquisitions, noting the number of projects that have come through the Lead Entity for funding and what their benefits are. Finally, let the Steering Committee

know about GIS-prioritization tools and other tools basin groups can provide to helping develop an acquisition strategy. Action item: acquisition-oriented groups to draft a letter, Kirsten to add additional content.

#### Office of the Chehalis

Kirsten provided an update on the formation of the Chehalis Board and next steps for the Chehalis Strategy. Of particular interest to this group is the idea of hosting project tours around the timing of each future Chehalis Board meeting. Kirsten let folks know that she'd keep them apprised of any tour opportunities.

Habitat Work Group members agreed on the need to get the new Board engaged with biologists and others with knowledge about that habitat issues on the basin. A suggestion was made to bring Board members to Habitat Work Group meetings. Maria was asked who will approve habitat projects – the new Board or the ASRP Steering Committee. Maria answered that it is unknown, but it will likely be the Steering Committee. Others expressed a need to get this clarified in writing as soon as possible.

#### HRP “Return Funds” Cost Increase request

Chehalis Basin Fisheries Task Force, project sponsors, requested a cost increase on their HRP-funded Taylor Creek South Bank Road project. The Habitat Work Group was asked for a recommendation on the cost increase since a system for dealing with these types of requests is not yet set up through the ASRP Steering Committee. Rich added that these types of cost increase requests are a typical responsibility for local Lead Entity groups.

The sponsor requested an additional \$12,000 to do the project since all bids from contractors came in high. The group discussed ideas that might help further cost savings, such as leaving some of the spoils on site. All questions were answered to the satisfaction of the group and members expressed that this is a reasonable request. Tom motioned to approve the cost increase request, Mark seconded, all in favor.

### **5. Salmon Recovery Funding Board**

#### a) Proposed pre-application workshop for next grant round

Kirsten proposed giving a pre-application workshop next year for potential sponsors of salmon recovery projects in the Chehalis. There are some questions that the Lead Entity review team needs answers to that aren't making it in to project applications. A workshop would help make sure the sponsors know how to fully describe their project so that it can be accurately scored.

b) Chehalis Stock Status – Kim Figlar Barnes, WDFW

Kim Figlar-Barnes, biologist with WDFW Region 6, provided information on the status of salmon stocks in the Chehalis. Kirsten noted that this information should help answer a question in the SRFB application (“current population status (decline, stable, rising”).

Spring Chinook in the Newaukum are monitored intensively. Monitoring also takes place in the mainstem Chehalis, Skookumchuk, and Satsop. The Wynoochee is not monitored. There aren't enough data to determine population trends by river system – the numbers are aggregated throughout the basin. Anecdotal, Chinook numbers are really low in the Satsop. Throughout the basin, the trend appears to be steady or even an increase in numbers. Kim cautioned that this should be interpreted cautiously. WDFW is currently conducting research to determine if spring and fall chinook are hybridizing or behaviourally adapting to spawn closer in time.

For Chum, there is an increase in trend as an aggregate in the Chehalis. These data aren't river specific.

Kim let people know they should get ahold of Curt Holt for further information.

c) Feedback from Local Review Team on 2017 SRFB Applications

Wildcat: This project might benefit from getting a conservation easement established prior to the restoration work. Need is to improve “certainty of success” for the project. I.e, if the landowner changes – will the restoration project be maintained? Sponsor mentioned that the landowner is interested in a conservation easement but they aren't ready to do this yet. May negotiate longer term for the project agreement as an interim measure to deal with the

Black River Conservation Initiative - Wilson CE (PRISM 17-1098): No comments

Holm Farm (PRISM 17-1076): No Comments.

Lower Reach Berwick Creek Barrier Removals (PRISM 17-1149): Seen as a good project – lower in the watershed

Berwick Creek Barrier Removal and Realignment (PRISM 17-1148): No comment

Berwick Creek Barrier Removal (PRISM 17-1099): Reviewers support changing this to a design-only project

Newaukum Trio – Lewis County Conservation District (PRISM 17-1221) Ekerson site -Sponsor noted that the conditions during the field visit were different than during most times of the year. The site isn't always flooded like that and there's a defined channel. Hayes site –

reviewer noted that the sponsor should do more work assessing conditions up and down stream during design of the project. It's in a wetland/floodplain so using reference conditions in nearby streams isn't a good way to size the culvert. Reviewers suggested working with the project engineer to find a longer-term solution.

Lucas Creek – Lewis County Conservation District (PRISM 17-1126) Reviewer noted that the road at this site is sloughing and the road may erode into the creek if the project isn't properly designed. Alice noted that road construction funds are not eligible SRFB expenses.

Bush Creek 3 Fish Barrier Correction Design (PRISM #17-1184). A reviewer suggested looking at what it would take to design each of the 3 projects separately.

ESD113: Reviewers felt that the knotweed portion of the project proposal seem like a scientific experiment. Alice noted that scientific studies are not eligible through SRFB.

MF Hoquiam Phase II Barrier Removals and Road Abandonment (PRISM # 17-1219): The sponsor believes some of the recommendations from the state review panel aren't reasonable. Angle of repose is determined by RMAP. Spoils piles on existing projects like this in the area aren't eroding. If they do more plantings the elk will eat them, so they will propose willow stakes instead. Amy will work with Lonnie to justify the project as proposed to the state reviewers. Alice will serve as a link to the review panel, letting them know that the local review team thinks the project specifications are reasonable.

Landowner Willingness Assessment – Capitol Land Trust (PRISM#17-1125). Local reviewers didn't have suggestions. Kirsten suggested the sponsor work with the ASRP Steering Committee on developing the project.

Silvia Creek Tributary Fish Passage - Grays Harbor Conservation District (PRISM 17-1147) – No comments.

East Fork Hoquiam and Wynoochee Knotweed Project– Grays Harbor Conservation District (17-1212). No comments. Forterra sent in a letter in support of this project.

d) Wishkah Gardens Scope Change Request - #15-1109

Forterra requested a scope change on project 15-1109. The landowners declined the acquisition of the parcel adjacent to their house since they weren't supportive of the proposed restoration. They recently contacted Forterra about purchasing just a smaller undeveloped parcel that was part of the original project. Forterra is willing to pursue this and ownership would be transferred to the Chehalis River Basin Land Trust. The timeframe to complete the transaction is limited by the appraisal, which is valid until September 30. Habitat Work Group members expressed concern that this is a very different project than the one scored and ranked in 2015, so it's hard to make a decision about it. There was

concern that there is no threat to this parcel since it can't be developed anyway (forested wetland). Forterra noted that the threat is neglect, and once owned by the land trust, invasive species and trash removal can begin on the parcel. Forterra noted that if this parcel is purchased, it will build the trust of the landowner who may eventually support the restoration work of the original project proposal. Jess added a broader perspective – if this parcel is not purchased with SRFB funds, those funds will go back to the state and could go to a project with even less benefit to salmon.

Presentation: **BMPs for restoration in habitat where Western Ridged Mussels are present.**  
**Emilie Blevins** – Conservation Biologist, Endangered Species Program, Xerces Society

Native freshwater mussels are an important part of the Chehalis Watershed ecosystem. They clean and filter water, stabilize shorelines, and create refugia for the invertebrates that feed salmon. Western Ridged Mussel are a species in decline which are found in the Chehalis. The Xerces Society is looking to do surveys for this species in September. Do date, they have been documented in the Chehalis River Mainstem and the Skookcumchuk River. It is important to think about how instream work on restoration projects might affect mussels. The Xerces Society is developing a Best Management Practice (BMP) guideline book for how to avoid negative impacts to mussels when doing restoration work. Emilie can be contacted to get a copy of the guidelines when they are ready. She can also provide freshwater mussel siting forms. Anyone working in streams who sees mussels is encouraged to fill out a form to update the Pacific Northwest database on mussel distribution. Resources can be found: [www.xerces.org/western-freshwater-mussels](http://www.xerces.org/western-freshwater-mussels); or contact [mussels@xerces.org](mailto:mussels@xerces.org); [emilie.blevins@xerces.org](mailto:emilie.blevins@xerces.org)

**Next HWG meeting: July 14<sup>th</sup> 2017**