

Chehalis Basin Lead Entity

Habitat Work Group Meeting

August 11, 2017

9:30 am – 12:30 pm

Chehalis Tribe Community Center Gathering Room
Oakville, Washington

In attendance:

Ann Weckback, <i>Lewis County Public Works</i>	Kevin Hoffman, <i>Onalaska High School</i>
Bob Amrine, <i>Lewis County Conservation Dist.</i>	Kirsten Harma, <i>Lead Entity Coordinator</i>
Brett Demond, <i>Citizen, Grays Harbor Co.</i>	Mara Healy, <i>Thurston Conservation Dist.</i>
Cynthia Carlstad, <i>Consultant</i>	Mark Swartout, <i>Citizen, Thurston County</i>
Dennis Haberkorn, <i>Citizen, Onalaska</i>	Michelle Cramer, <i>WDFW Habitat Program</i>
Jamie Glasgow, <i>Wild Fish Conservancy</i>	Omroa Bhagwandin, <i>Citizen, Lewis County</i>
Jason Gillie, <i>Chehalis Tribe DNR</i>	Rich Osborne, <i>Coast Salmon Partnership</i>
Janet Strong, <i>Chehalis Land Trust</i>	Steve Hallstrom, <i>Citizen, Grays Harbor Co.</i>
Jordan Rash, <i>Forterra</i>	Thom Woodruff, <i>Capitol Land Trust</i>
Eric Johnson, <i>Thurston Conservation Dist.</i>	Tom Kollasch, <i>Grays Harbor Conservation D.</i>

Meeting Summary

1. Welcome and Introductions.

Everyone provided self-introductions. Participants announced whether or not they were voting members.

2. Review of minutes from July 2017

Thom requested that the “in attendance” section in these and future minutes include more detail such as an individual’s department as well as organization. Thom moved to approve the minutes with those amendments. Steve seconded. All in favor.

3. Lack of capital budget - ramifications

Kirsten provided an update that there is still no capital budget. SRFB will likely recommend supporting the SRFB grant round as usual through December. The SRFB will decide on what to do about Lead Entity Capacity funding at a special Board meeting on August 23rd. The Chehalis Basin Board voted that the Chehalis Strategy will provide funds to fully advance work through November. It will borrow funds from capital projects that haven’t gone to construction in order to fund that work. HWG members shared rumors about when they thought the capital budget would be passed.

Kirsten passed on an announcement from Jess Helsley inviting anyone interested to attend a meeting August 13th with Representative Derek Kilmer and recommend continuing support for the NOAA budget.

4. Subcommittee Updates

a) Bylaw Subcommittee

- i. Resolution with Grays Harbor County

The Bylaw subcommittee met before this meeting. Kirsten informed the group that the Grays Harbor County Commissioners passed the resolution establishing the Habitat Work Group as “citizen’s committee,” essentially a confirmation that the group does what it has been doing. The Bylaw committee is working on updating the bylaws. They will send around a recommended draft once written.

b) Newaukum Subcommittee – update

The Newaukum Subcommittee will be meeting after this meeting. Cynthia Carlstad from Carlstad Consulting will be present to talk about plans for field work related to the Restorative Flood Protection Alternative pilot.

5. Watershed Coordinator position and letter to Tribe

Bob reported on a letter of support he wrote regarding the Watershed Coordinator. The letter will be sent to Chair of the Chehalis Tribe to convert more of Kirsten’s time to the Lead Entity side of the job, and to provide a raise. The recommendation would be approximately 90% Lead Entity, 10% CBP. Bob sent the letter to the group for review prior to this meeting. He asked for comments, and then a motion as to whether to sign and send it or not.

Discussion. Mark agreed to the recommendation. The CBP doesn’t have any new funding, so the less money she can draw out of that pot, the longer they can function. 10% of her time towards that work is more realistic. Mark also supported getting full time funding from RCO/SRFB for the Lead Entity Coordinator position since the Chehalis is composed of 2 WRIAs. He suggested that members bring that message forward on their own.

Thom made a motion to approve the letter. Mark seconded. All in favor.

6. Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB)

a) 2017 SRFB projects – Local Review Team’s recommended project list

Kirsten presented the Review Team's scoring and ranking of the 2017 SRFB project applications in a Power Point presentation.

The group deliberated how to go about making a decision on the list. Rich mentioned that the SRFB requires recording how the group's decisions take place. The Habitat Work Group bylaws and conflict of interest statement require that project sponsors recuse themselves from voting on the list or influencing decisions. There were 6 members present who were not project sponsors and who could vote on the list.

Discussion: Does the Habitat Work Group want to have more input on the list after the combined citizen/technical review by the Local Review Team is complete? What factors might lead to moving a project up or down on a list? In the past, the HWG has agreed with the recommendations of the Local Review Team. Citizens are involved on that team and the evaluation is quite good. A challenge with the list this year is that there is an acquisition at the funding line that could receive partial funding from the Chehalis's allocation, but they might not be able to do the project with partial funding. The Coast Region might have funding to support some of the alternates on the list but the amount is unknown. The Coast needs to submit a prioritized list to the state by September 6th.

Members asked for a chance to review the list again if more funding becomes available and if so, advance another alternate project for funding. Kirsten noted that we still need to hear from the Coast region as to whether additional funds will be available and they will make their decision on August 22nd. More funding might become available if projects above the funding line get POC'd or have other issues, if more funding become available from the SRFB, or other reasons. The conclusion was that if additional funds become available from issues with projects above the funding line, the decision will come back to the group as to whether to advance more alternates for funding.

b) Approval of final list

- i. *Decision:* Whether or not to recommend the project list and alternates

The 6 people eligible to vote agreed to the motion: "approve the list as is and recommend all the projects above the funding line for funding, designate Holm Farm as the first alternate, and then designate projects below the funding line as the next alternates with the exception of the two lowest-ranked projects."

c) Scope Change Request – Forterra - Wishkah Gardens Acquisition - #15-1109

Jordan Rash provided a summary of Forterra's proposed scope change for the Wishkah Gardens project. The Habitat Work Group has already received several presentations on this proposal and has received a letter from Forterra. New information Jordan provided is that

the small stream on the property is fish-bearing and that there are several restoration opportunities that could take place after acquisition: removing ivy, knotweed, and realigning the unnamed stream on the property. The project may catalyze additional acquisitions in the immediate area. Janet mentioned that as a project partner, the Chehalis River Basin Land Trust would need an update to the Memorandum of Understanding regarding restoration and stewardship, but was confident that sufficient stewardship funds would be provided and the Land Trust is comfortable being the permanent owner.

Discussion: Several people agreed that future restoration on this site likely won't rank high enough at a basin scale to receive funding through SRFB; there's not much upstream habitat in the unnamed stream- the value to fish of this land is mostly from the floodplain habitat along 100-ft of river front; ivy isn't really a threat to fish so what's the value in acquiring the property to remove it? Knotweed is a basin-wide issue.

Decision: Whether or not to recommend the scope change

The Chair confirmed that there were 9 voting members without a conflict of interest who could vote on the project. Bob and Brett did not vote to approve the scope change. All others voted in favor of the scope change. The majority vote carried approval for the scope change request.

7. ASRP & Chehalis Strategy

Kirsten provided a brief update on the ASRP Steering Committee activity and the recent Chehalis Basin Board meeting. She noted that the Steering Committee still hasn't made a decision on what it will do about possible "near term" funding for projects in the next biennium once there is a capital budget. Kirsten suggested that the group provide recommendations on a possible grant round under both a November budget and January budget scenario. Participants noted that it's reasonable to only expect the "early action reach" projects to get through design in the coming biennium. Several sponsors noted that they have culvert projects designed and ready to go and could take advantage of a grant round that began prior to a budget in November or January. As long as funds are received in May, those projects could be constructed that summer. Additional projects could be implemented in the biennium if permitting goes well.

Action: Kirsten will recommend to the Steering Committee that it support preparing for a barrier project grant round regardless of when the budget is expected to pass. Kirsten will convey that it is reasonable for "early action reach" projects to only go through design.

Thom reminded the group that they had previously discussed sending a letter in support of acquisitions in the ASRP to the ASRP Steering Committee. Kirsten said she had been working on the letter and would send another draft out soon.

Action: Kirsten will finalize the draft letter to send to the Steering Committee.

8. Carlisle Lake Fish Passage Project – Jamie Glasgow, Wild Fish Conservancy

a) Project Update

Jamie presented a summary of the Wild Fish Conservancy fish passage projects in Gheer Creek, tributary to the South Fork Newaukum. The project works to address 4 fish passage barriers. The downstream-most barrier is the dam on Carlisle Lake. WFC considered many design alternatives and is working with the landowner and WDFW to determine the preferred alternative, which will likely be a roughened channel in the dam spillway to allow fish access to the lake throughout the year. They will work with WDFW and WA Dept. of Ecology on the design and make sure that dam safety will not be compromised. The project would restore anadromy to 10 miles of habitat. WFC hopes to work with the high school to identify curriculum about wild fish recolonization monitoring and natural watershed processes and have a long term partnership on the project.

a) Discussion on habitat and hatchery management and opportunities for H-integration

Jamie proposed that there is an opportunity for rethinking fishery / hatchery management in the Gheer Creek watershed. He provided a short presentation on “H-integration” – highlighting WDFW’s stated commitment to coordinate management of salmon Habitat, Hatcheries and Harvest. He recommended assessing them all together and making a science-based decision to maximize the investment we’re making in all of them. He recommended minimizing the impacts of hatcheries on wild fish to maximize the public’s return on habitat restoration. One impact that can be reduced is genetic impact. Because they are locally adapted to their watersheds, wild fish have a quality of genetics that make them more likely to return to spawn than hatchery fish. When hatchery fish spawn with wild fish, the resulting reproductive success is about half that of wild fish alone. There are ways to minimize genetic interactions between hatchery and wild fish. A management option can be not allowing hatchery fish to get into streams when wild fish are spawning and thereby reduce the chances of hybridizing fish genes. Other hatchery impacts on wild populations are ecological (competition for limited food or habitat), facility impacts (water quality, disease), and fishery-related impacts (bycatch of depressed wild stocks during hatchery-supported fisheries). The early results from an experiment in the Skagit River are indicating that the wild fish numbers are growing since they’ve stopped introducing hatchery fish. Jamie then discussed state policy. He suggested the state follow their H-integration policies to re-examine hatchery management in this watershed in light of restoration of wild fish access to 10 miles habitat. He would like to meet with WDFW to assess the Gheer Creek hatchery program in combination with habitat programs and see if what we’re doing makes

sense. He proposed the conversation should also take place at a future HWG meeting given the relationship between habitat, hatcheries, and harvest.

Discussion ensued.

Next steps: Group will talk at a future meeting about whether or not to ask WDFW for a presentation on H-integration and to discuss how this applies in Gheer Creek. At the next Habitat Work Group meeting, invite Kevin Hoffman to give a presentation about the Onalaska High School hatchery program.

Bob Amrine thanked the Chehalis Tribe for providing a bus and driver for the field tours of SRFB projects this year.

Next HWG meeting: September 8th 2017