

Chehalis Basin Lead Entity

Habitat Work Group Meeting

August 22, 2016

9:30 am – 12:00 pm

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

In attendance:

Alice Rubin, RCO	Kathleen Berger, <i>Thurston C. District</i>
Ben Harbaugh, <i>Center for Natural Lands Management</i>	Kirsten Harma, <i>Lead Entity Coordinator</i>
Brett DeMond, <i>Streamworks</i>	Kim Smith, <i>Grays Harbor Conservation District</i>
Frank Staller, <i>Wild Fish Conservancy</i>	Lonnie Crumley, <i>CBFTF</i>
Garrett Dalan, <i>The Nature Conservancy</i>	Patrick Skillings, <i>Skillings Connolly</i>
Jamie Glasgow, <i>Wild Fish Conservancy</i>	Rich Osborne, <i>WCSSP</i>
Jason Gillie, <i>Chehalis Tribe</i>	Steve Hallstrom, <i>Chehalis River Basin Land Trust</i>
JB McCrummen, <i>Citizen</i>	Tammy Schmidt, <i>WDFW</i>
Jeannie Abbott, <i>WDFW</i>	Thom Woodruff, <i>Capitol Land Trust</i>
Jessica Helsley, <i>WCSSP</i>	Tom Kollasch, <i>Grays Harbor CD</i>
	Trent Lougheed, <i>City of Chehalis</i>

Meeting Summary

1. Welcome and Introductions.

Everyone provided self-introductions. Kirsten asked participants to share a success story from over the past two months, either of their work or of the work of someone they know in the community.

Lonnie and Brett mentioned the culvert correction projects the RFEG has underway, including three in the John's River tributaries, Swamp, Boyer Creek, Mox Chehalis and Big Creek.

Tom Kollasch reported on three landowner meetings that Grays Harbor Conservation District held. Between those meetings, about 70 people showed up, leading to about 25 project ideas coming out of those meetings.

Ben Harbaugh from the Center for Natural Lands Management introduced himself as the new knotweed program manager for the Chehalis Basin. His crew will be doing treatment in the East Satsop, on an infestation downstream of Cook Creek. Permission has been secured.

They might evaluate Porter Creek, as well. The rest of the HWG recommended they look at the Wynoochee and Hoquiam systems and coordinate with other existing projects.

2. Review of minutes from June 2016

No one had any comments or corrections on the minutes.

3. Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB)

a) 2016 SRFB projects – Local Review Team’s recommended project list

Kirsten presented a Power Point presentation regarding the 2016 project list, including projects which will be recommended for funding, and those which will not. The recommended grant request is \$257,540 out of an allocation of \$467,602 to the Chehalis Basin Lead Entity. According to the Washington Coast region’s protocol, remaining unused funds will be distributed to highly scoring projects in the other Coast Lead Entities.

b) Approval of final list

The Chehalis Basin Lead Entity’s calendar has today’s meeting as the day to approve the project list. There were no objections to the proposed project list.

c) Next steps

Kirsten will present the proposed list to the Grays Harbor County Commissioners for approval on August 22. The Coast region will then pass on the list to the Salmon Recovery Funding Board for funding consideration.

d) August 11th SRFB meeting in Olympia

Alice reported on the August 11th SRFB special meeting on budgets. PCSRF funding for Lead Entity capacity was cut this year. The meeting explored options for filling the funding gap. Alice encouraged participants to look over the Board memos, available online:

http://www.rco.wa.gov/boards/srfb_meetings.shtml

JB asked about the coordination between SRFB and ASRP. Kirsten and Alice reported that although these are different processes, there has been coordination, to the degree possible. Kirsten suggested that we advocate coordinating the two processes even more in the future to improve efficiencies and local involvement in the ASRP process.

4. Chehalis Basin Strategy / Aquatic Species Restoration Plan

a) Update on ASRP and “Starter Reach” projects

There have been several extra meetings to get input on potential “starter reach/early action” projects for the Aquatic Species Restoration Plan hosted by WDFW and Anchor. Habitat Work Group members have been trying to keep actively involved and consulted.

Kirsten summarized the ASRP meetings held August 2 and 3rd by WDFW and the consulting firm Anchor to develop “early action” projects in reaches of 1 mile or more in length. There will be more steps to narrow that down to the scale of a project list over the next several months. A document that outlines these steps is available from Carol Cloen, WDFW.

Kim Smith summarized the landowner meetings held by Grays Harbor CD. Tom expressed that it’s good that the state has gotten the Conservation Districts involved. They will be able to help landowners understand what opportunities will be available, early and often. Kathleen reported that Thurston’s community sessions have been good at building trust. Kirsten reported that Bob reported that the Lewis Conservation District is waiting until Anchor suggests which of the reaches they would like move forward on before initiating additional outreach with landowners.

b) Discussion – additional steps, role of Lead Entity

Kirsten presented a Power Point presentation on the Chehalis Lead Entity’s conceptual project process plan. The “conceptual project” program idea, developed by a consultant for the Habitat Work Group in 2013, suggested some strategy updates, including developing subcommittees by subbasin, bringing in additional experts, and developing conceptual projects lists. Then the HWG would select projects to nurture, and find sponsors to work on those projects. That process recognized that there’s limited funding for large projects, and limited capacity to do those projects, so these would have to be done slowly over time. The work WDFW and Anchor have been doing to gather information and identify projects at a sub-basin scale and get information from local stakeholders and restoration practitioners is similar to that approach.

Kirsten summarized the priorities in the Chehalis Lead Entity’s strategy related to the reaches where the presently proposed reaches are, and noted that the likely project types will address identified limiting factors for those river systems.

Jamie noted that he and his team had identified additional project opportunities during their work in the Newaukum.

Kirsten suggested an action for this group: that any interested parties look at how the chosen “early action” projects fit with the Lead Entity salmon strategy. She also asked the group to consider how to evaluate if the potential sites resonate with community values.

Jamie suggested using the projects that do move forward as demonstration projects to communicate those benefits so that others might consider doing a project. He suggested doing a film about the kinds of projects we're doing and why we're doing them, with the goal of generating more interest from other landowners. Kathleen from the Thurston Conservation District suggested a video with testimonials from landowners. Kirsten asked everyone to nominate someone to give a testimonial in the "Watershed Hero" article series. Rich mentioned that WCSSP has a grant to make a film like that for the Washington Coast, and work on that project will start within the next year. Garrett volunteered sharing TNC's films and photos, as well. Alice mentioned that Capitol Land Trust may do a film about their Darlin Creek project.

c) Upcoming meetings / deadlines

The small groups that identified landowner willingness for some initial reaches in the upper and lower basin will meet again with WDFW and Anchor on August 23rd to discuss further details about the potential sites.

On August 24th, the representative of the "environmental community" on the Governor's Work Group will lead a tour of the potential dam site and explain the "restorative alternative."

The Programmatic EIS will come out September 29th.

5. Newaukum Subcommittee/ Pilot Watershed Update

a) Plan for September HWG meeting

Rich Osborne reminded the group of WCSSP's pilot watershed initiative among the Coast Lead Entities. In the Chehalis, the Newaukum was selected as the pilot watershed. Rich mentioned that the Aquatic Species Restoration Plan meeting to identify larger reaches for restoration, and the Fish Barrier Removal Board process of identifying priority barrier removals provided some good information, but there is still a need to fully identify all potential projects within the subwatershed. The pilot watershed approach would put all projects into Habitat Work Schedule (HWS) so that they could be tracked together, regardless of funding source or who was initiating them. Rich will be hiring a technician to put even more data into HWS.

The afternoon after the September 9th Habitat Work Group meeting was proposed as a tentative time for the Newaukum subcommittee to meet.

b) Other updates on Newaukum

Jamie summarized his summer's work on the Wild Fish Conservancy's stream typing work.

Their team walked small streams in the Newaukum and identified a few restoration projects. Notably, the team observed non-road-based fish passage problems. The data is being compiled in a GIS database and will be available online. The Wild Fish Conservancy's project on Gheer Creek is also progressing. When complete, it will open 10 miles of habitat.

6. Other Business and Announcements

Trent Lougheed from the City of Chehalis, and consultant Patrick Skillings shared information about their proposed restoration project on Chehalis's derelict wastewater treatment plant site, north of Highway 6. They plan to remove concrete and structural fill and then remove more fill from the site. After that, they will bring in clean wetland soil and begin revegetation of the site. They're expecting to get funding through the Flood Authority over the next several biennium. They may look for SRFB funding for wetland creation in future phases of the project. At this point they are looking for letters of support and making sure everyone is aware of the project.

Tammy Schmidt shared information about NRCS technical support available to landowners. They work statewide but are available to provide help in the Chehalis. They facilitate the EQIP program. They can assist with fish passage assessments and help do stream assessments for Conservation Reserve Enhancement (CREP). They can also provide support for stock water fencing, erosion control, buffers, etc. that will help a landowner enroll in EQIP. In that program, projects rank higher to receive funding when other work is going on in nearby areas (example of work in Newaukum). Their projects can count as match for SRFB projects.

Cade Roler was not present to provide an update on FBRB. Kirsten reported that she'd heard from Cade that 6 culverts in the Chehalis will be forwarded to the legislature for the Fish Barrier Removal Board.

WCRI update. Garrett mentioned that the evaluation committee will be ranking projects over the next two weeks.

Alice invited any interested party to come with her to visit completed restoration projects. She reviews projects after 5 and 10 years as part of her work.

The Chehalis Watershed Festival will take place September 17th in Montesano.

Next HWG meeting: Friday, September 9th 2016