

Chehalis Basin Lead Entity

Habitat Work Group Meeting

August 6, 2018

9:30 am – 12:00 pm

Chehalis Tribe Community Center Gathering Room
Oakville, Washington

In attendance:

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| Alissa Ferrell, RCO | Jess Helsley, Coast Salmon Partnership |
| Amy Spoon, WDFW Region 6 Habitat Bio. | Kelly Verd, Lewis Cons. Dist. |
| Ann Weckback, Lewis County | Kirsten Harma, Watershed Coordinator |
| Anthony Waldrop, Grays Harbor Cons. Dist. | Luke Kelly, Trout Unlimited |
| Bob Amrine, Lewis Cons. Dist. | Mark Swartout, Citizen, Thurston County |
| Caprice Fasano, Quinault Indian Nation | Miranda Plumb, USFWS |
| Colleen Suter, Chehalis Tribe Natural Resources | Nicholas Carr, Forterra |
| Emelie McKain, WDFW ASRP Manager | Rich Osbourne, Coast Salmon Partnership |
| Garrett Dalan, The Nature Conservancy | Rick Rouse, Port of Chehalis |
| Hope Riedan, Chehalis Tribe Fisheries | Sarah Watkins, GH College, notetaker |
| Jason Gillie, Chehalis Tribe Natural Resources | |

Meeting Summary

1. Welcome, Introductions.

Everyone provided self-introductions. Bob provided a special introduction for Emelie McKain, who has taken Maria Hunter's old position as ASRP Project Manager.

Kirsten told the group that one of our Citizen members, Steve Hallstrom, recently passed. She highlighted his contributions to the Habitat Work Group, and mentioned that he'd told her that he'd like to have another salmon advocate take his place. She made another pitch to existing members to find and recruit citizen volunteers. We will need to update our membership list in January 2019.

2. Organizational Business

a) Review of Minutes from June 2018

A quorum was present. Motion to approve the June 4th minutes. All in favor.

b) Chehalis Lead Entity Scope of Work – 2018 - 2019

Every two years RCO puts out a request that Lead Entities provide a Scope of Work. This has been an unusual year because of lack of a capital budget, which put off the new Scope of Work. Kirsten requested that the Habitat Work Group, as our official steering body, review the Scope of Work and make sure that we are on track for what we need to do. The document was sent to the membership prior to the meeting. During the meeting she highlighted the changes from last year:

***New in Task 4: Adaptive Management and Habitat Recovery Strategy.** The state requested that Lead Entities update their strategies to address climate change. There is a new statement in the Scope saying that the Coast Salmon Partnership will help us with that task. Jess added that the Coast Salmon Partnership's support will focus on helping the Lead Entity create a pilot watershed restoration plan for the Newaukum, and when that's done, support with a detailed plan for another subwatershed.

Kirsten added that she plans to facilitate update of the Lead Entity's project review criteria this coming year. She's already been working with the Local Review Team to create more a detailed guidance document for scoring projects that can be sent to sponsors in advance of the grant round. She'll come back to the whole work group with recommended changes or additions for discussion and/or adoption. Mark mentioned that the review team thoroughly reviewed 8 SRFB projects this year, spending one hour on each, and he feels the ranking was done very well. The review team received suggestions from Eric Eler on how to assess acquisition projects and tried out some new ideas that Mark thinks worked well. Bob approved of the idea of getting improved guidance on how to evaluate acquisition projects as it is always a challenge to compare them to restoration projects.

***New in Outreach Task:** The tasks listed here area a "wish list" for all possible outreach tasks Kirsten would like to do if she had time. This year RCO needs Lead Entities to specify capital budget vs. operating budget tasks. Capital budget is for construction, anything that leads to "shovels in the dirt"; everything else has to be operating budget. RCO wants us to show what we're doing with operating budget vs. capital budget. Capital budget funds can be used for getting landowners to do projects, and operating tasks can be used for indirect work such as teaching kids about salmon and putting on watershed festivals.

c) Subcommittees

i) Culvert: Cade wasn't present to give an update on the culvert subcommittee

ii) Newaukum:

The Newaukum Subcommittee hasn't met in a while. The next Newaukum Subcommittee meeting will be September 10. Kirsten reported on an activity related to the scope of the Newaukum subcommittee. We were invited to do a storyboard for the State of Salmon

report that RCO produced very year. Kirsten has been working with an RCO contractor to develop a story about the partners in the Newaukum, the Coast Salmon Partnership's pilot watershed idea, how we share information as the Newaukum subcommittee, and an example of an on-the-ground project doing fish barrier correction. The contractor is looking for photos or landowner quotes. She asked the group if they felt comfortable showcasing the Newaukum in the State of Salmon.

Bob told the group that Lewis Conservation District is implementing fish barrier correction projects in the Newaukum. Two projects that were estimated to be in culverts are now bridges and so are close to exceeding the budget. The Conservation District is also getting ready to contract riparian exclusion fencing on a small drainage to the South Fork Newaukum.

3. **Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB)**

Alissa Ferrell is the new grant manager at RCO for the Chehalis projects. Alissa came from Ecology where she was managing non-point grants.

a) **Draft ranked list presented by Local Review Team**

This year there were eight projects. All the high-ranking projects were above 60 points. Projects still needing work fell below the 50-point level.

Top ranking projects: Fish screens, Lewis County ; Newkah fish barrier connection; Grayland assessment project; Lost Creek fish passage.

Moderate and lower ranking projects: Frase Creek, Lewis County; Holm Farm, Black River; Wishkah Gardens, Banick; East Fork Wishkah channel connection.

b) **Discussion/HWG Vote**

Bob convened a vote on the ranked list. No voting members opposed. Participants wanted to know which projects will be funded. Jess noted that the amount of funding that will be allocated to the Coast Lead Entities will be finalized on Thursday. Kirsten added that right now the allocation covers down through Frase Creek.

c) **LEAN study**

Kirsten described the LEAN study that RCO is currently conducting on the Lead Entity process. This is a comprehensive review of our Lead Entity process to see if there's anything we can do to make it more efficient. It is her understanding that the end result will be to show the legislators that we're doing the best we can with the money we get. If we can improve, let's make changes, and if we're all doing a good job, let's keep going with it.

d) Van Ornum – Ann Weckback, Lewis County

Ann presented the 60% design plans for this project and asked for input. If there are any concerns, they can address them before they come back for construction funding, and incorporate them into the 100% plan. Habitat Work Group members asked questions and provided input. Specific questions related to the potential impacts on the downstream landowner, stream grading, the transition from new gravel to streambed material, the appropriateness of the bankfull measurement, and the potential for backflow from the Chehalis. For construction funds, Lewis County may look to WCRRI or Brian Abbott FBRB Coordinated Pathway. They may look to SRFB, but since this will be an expensive project, that would only be a small chunk.

4. Streamflow Restoration Act (aka “Hirst Fix”)

Kirsten provided background on the Chehalis Basin Partnership (CBP) and its role in watershed planning. Recently the legislature adopted ESSB 6091, which is now the Streamflow Restoration Act. This requirements of the new Act are about updating local watershed plans, but they are different from the original watershed planning. Before, it was big principles everyone could agree with; now they’re asking for very specific projects. There’s more overlap in this between the HWG and salmon recovery than the original watershed planning process, but we’ve yet to see how the CBP will engage with this group in coming up with technical answers. Money was designated to Ecology to award as grants for some near-term projects that would make more water available in streams for “instream” water use or otherwise improve in stream conditions. The grant announcement will start in September, with 30 days to provide project applications. Kirsten asked the group to brainstorm project ideas. Mark told the group that a key issue that came out of watershed planning was the lack of information about how wells are connected physically to surface water, and a recommendation was to figuring out pumping schedules that would limit draw-downs of streams. A groundwater model for the whole basin based on the work USGS is doing would be a good project to develop to take advantage of these funds. That would be a public domain model which no consultant owns, and would make applying for water rights less expensive for farmers, and also help Ecology to decide whether water rights should be issued or not. Mark would like to see this money go towards developing this model. It would benefit everybody.

5. Aquatic Species Restoration Plan (ASRP) & Chehalis Strategy

a) ASRP Update

Kirsten reminded the group that she is this group’s representative on the ASRP Steering Committee and to let her know your thoughts on all things ASRP.

b) Design Teams/ Reach Scale River Restoration Project

There are five different subbasins with a reach scale design team which consists mostly of an engineering firm, a representative from WDFW, representatives from the conservation district, and either Kirsten or Jess, as a conduit of information. Kirsten is working in the Newaukum, South Fork, and Skookumchuck. Jess will be the liaison for the Satsop and Wynoochee. Each design team is at a different point in the process, either narrowing down to which reach to work in, or beginning to talk directly with landowners about possible design concepts. For the next step, the design teams will come up with more of the technical engineering approaches. The intent of the Chehalis Strategy is that it will we'll ask for funding from the legislature in the next biennium to construct these. The consultant put together a summary and it was around \$20,000,000 to do all five.

Maggie at WDFW is the ASRP Implementation Manager. They have been charged with figuring out liability and who is going to sponsor construction of the projects. RCO has a new policy regarding liability whereby landowners aren't liable for damages that may result from projects on Lead Entity project lists. Maggie would like to know if this group would support making these ASRP projects part of the SRFB list, or HWG list, to get them covered under this clause. Jess suggested that WDFW adopt its own policy to cover these projects. She doesn't think RCO's legal team would approve of using this waiver for these purposes. Emelie stated that WDFW is trying to figure out how to cover the Early Action Reaches now, that's why this creative approach is being considered. Updating WDFW policy will take more time than we have before we need to construct the reach-scale projects.

c) Science Review Team Field Tours

Hope provided an update: We finished the last of four field trips. One of the big takeaways for me was how little awareness the Science Review Team had of ongoing projects. They need to be out in the field, away from their models, and compromise a little more. I hope they start realizing how community support is paramount. Emelie added that it was a great reality check for a lot of these scientists, who primarily have been looking at the models, then getting out in the field, seeing what's going on, and getting Curt Holt's perspective. The third day of each set of field visits we met in a meeting room, and made sure there was a lot of dialogue and sharing of ideas. The next Science Review Team meetings, we'll be focusing on prioritizing basin-wide actions as well as strategically prioritizing within each ecological diversity unit.

d) Chehalis Science Symposium

Emelie informed the group that there will be a Chehalis Science Symposium from September 19-20. The location is TBD, but it will be around Olympia. The first day will be focused on the research that has been going on throughout the basin to inform the ASRP. The second day will be more focused on the strategies that have been developed so far. The second day will

be more interactive. We'll try to flesh out those ideas, communicate them and get your thoughts as well.

Bob: Are the general public invited?

Emilie: It's focused on those involved in Chehalis basin habitat project implementation. Not directly to landowners, but more towards practitioners, but I won't say "no" if someone asks to come.

e) Chehalis Basin Board

Kirsten hasn't been going to the last few Chehalis Basin Board meetings. Their next meeting is September 6.

Luke provided an update on the EIS. The Scoping for the project-level EIS (dam options) will start scoping comments in September. There will be a 30-day comment period. Luke will be coordinating a weekly or bi-weekly call for any groups in the "environmental community" that wants to be part of drafting comments.

Other Business:

a) **Stearns Creek Property.** Thom Woodruff was not present to give an update

b) **Washington Coast Restoration and Resiliency Initiative (WCRRI) Update**

Jess reported that they are currently in project review phase. Garrett added that there are 26 projects requesting somewhere between \$18 and \$19 million. We will have a list by September.

c) **Brian Abbott Fish Barrier Removal Board (FBRB) Update**

Cade Roler, WDFW, was not available to provide and update. Ann reported that Lewis County projects in the Newaukum are on the state's Watershed Pathway list and they have some on the Coordinated Pathway list, though those might be just below the funding line. She'd hear that the FBRB is going to combine the Coordinated Pathway with the Watershed Pathways before they send them to the legislature and rerank everything.

d) **Other**

Rich provided an Orca Task Force (OTF) update. The OTF will have a report ready in November. They are working on multiple fronts to help the orcas, everything from putting out extra hatchery chinook to adding money to any chinook restoration that is under consideration, boats and toxic chemicals, and underwater noise. Rich's opinion is that it's the lack of food that is really what's getting them. They can eat anything, but they've been eating the chinook salmon for thousands of years, so it's not easy for them to give up. Jess added that the Regional Organizations have been asked to compile a list of priorities for each region that would benefit chinook. They're going back through and looking at WCRRI projects that are recommended for funding this year as well as Salmon Recovery Funding Board projects recommended for funding, so projects that just got ranked or are in the approval process right now are actually going to the governor as a list of those projects that

have direct benefit to the orca because of the benefit to chinook. If the project sponsor put that chinook was a benefit species to that project when they entered their PRISM information, that is getting the project added to the list.

Sealion bill: The sea lion bill is progressing through Congress. That will be the Columbia basin system, and the hope is that can move up throughout the rest of the coast if they have success.

Miranda asked: Will they kill sea lions, or not?

Jess: They're going permit, specifically tribes, to allow increased harvest.

Next HWG Meeting: Sept 10, 2018