**Chehalis Basin Lead Entity**

**Habitat Work Group Meeting Minutes**

**September 12, 2014**

The September 12, 2014 meeting of the Chehalis Basin Lead Entity was held at the Lewis Conservation District Office, Chehalis, Washington. Chair Bob Amrine called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. In attendance were:

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| Bob Amrine, Lewis County Conservation District  Celest Wilder, Centralia College work-study student with Lewis County Public Works  Amy Spoon, WDFW  Eric Delvin, The Nature Conservancy  Miles Batchelder, WCSSP | Ann Weckback, Lewis County Public Works  Jane Atha, LE Coordinator  John Kliem, Creative Community Solutions  Dustin Bilhimer, Dept. of Ecology  Micah Wait, Wild Fish Conservancy  Chanele Holbrook, Creekside Conservancy  Alice Rubin, RCO |

**Agenda Items**

Welcome and Introductions

Updates and announcements

-Lead entity strategy

-Washington Coast Restoration Initiative

-Draft list of projects in WRIAs 22/23

-Others?

Chehalis water quality workshop

-Improving coordination between salmon recovery and water quality improvements

-Discuss what has worked and what has been less successful

-Funding opportunities

WCRI project presentations

-Wild Fish Conservancy

-Lewis County Public Works

-Center for Natural Lands Management (tentative)

Lead Entity Organization Update

-Regional Project Funding Update from SRFB

Agenda for next HWG meeting October 10, 2014

**WCRI project presentations**

The WCRI project presentations have been moved to the top of the agenda. The first project discussed was the Unnamed Tributary to Salzer Creek Barrier Removal. Celest Wilder gave an overview of plans to reconnect a disconnected channel to Salzer creek in order to increase conveyance, as well as open up habitat. Wilder distributed maps and preliminary design plans. Additional plans include large woody debris. Amrine expressed that this type of project would be useful in other locations along Salzer Creek and in Lewis County so if this project is successful it will be a good model for future projects of this nature. Currently the stream stops at the road crossing and floods the road. This project will reconnect the upstream tributaries. The group discussed invasive species containment and management in conjunction with other restoration activities for the project. Alice Rubin discussed options for future phasing of the project if Lewis County decides to take that approach.

Micah Wait presented on a WCRI project focusing on one site in Schafer State Park on the Satsop, owned by WDFW. There have been issues with flooding. The historic floodplain is 3-4 wider than what is allowed now; there is currently rip rap constricting lateral migration. It is important to consider the historic CCC structures at the park; however, the floodplain can be widened significantly with rip rap removal and LWD additions. The project is to develop a conceptual design for a channel with better capacity to accommodate gravel input and substrate. Miles Batchelder asked about the excessive amount of gravel in the area and if the design will account for that somehow. Wait mentioned that they originally wanted to do a sediment budget for the area, but that the SRFB technical committee directly expressed that they did not want to see that (too expensive). Alice Rubin asked if they would consider engineered log jams upstream of the state bridge. Wait said that they would not rule that out; however, they will see if the parks and public would be on board with that design element. Wait said that chinook, steelhead, and chum all spawn in this area. This would increase important spawning and rearing habitat for three salmon species.

Eric Delvin talked about the progress of the WCRI and the group discussed this project being a good location for a legislative tour since the problem is visible. Delvin then discussed the timeline of the WCRI and more generally the tough road for it in light of the McCleary decision. Delvin then told the group that he also won a grant with the USDA to have a sustainable business competition on the Washington Coast – details will follow. It will be a competition for businesses in natural resources to develop new ideas.

**Chehalis water quality workshop**

Dustin Bilhimer discussed an implementation workshop focused on meeting with all of the stakeholders to talk about the priority areas and the needs of the conservation districts in advance of the 319 funding cycle. Atha distributed a write-up of what the workshop would focus on and mentioned that it would weave into the lead entity strategy as well. Bilhimer said that there are ammonia, temperature, and BOD TMDLs in the upper basin. Amrine mentioned that having a habitat focus would work well as a phase 2 project to some of the restoration work being proposed. Bilhimer said that bank stabilization projects would be good to start with since they will also address water quality. The group discussed the upcoming grant workshops as a way to find out more about Ecology funding opportunities.

**Updates and announcements**

Lead entity Strategy

John Kliem put it out to the group to discuss where the lead entity should go next in the basin. Kliem reminded us that the reason we did the Humptulips was to take advantage of Forest Service funding. Batchelder recommends going to the areas where the species are most concerned. Summer chinook have a depressed stock so the estuary and the main-stem Chehalis are two options. The group talked about the possibility of breaking it up into the lower and upper main-stem. Atha wondered about starting on the upper main-stem to piggyback onto the Governor’s Work Group currently being done in that area. Kliem expressed that it will be a lot more complex to work on the upper main-stem. Chanele Holbrook thinks we need to focus on the upper watershed in order to have landowner participation, there are also bigger water quality issues, and past Porter it is all timber industry. The group thinks that focusing on the Newaukum may be the most logical place to go next. It is smaller than the main-stem, there is existing landowner participation, and it has water quality issues to be addressed. Kliem stressed the need to put together a consistent team. Bob Burkle, Bob Amrine, Kelly Verd, Caprice Fasano, Rod Lakey, and other WDFW names came out as possible committee members.

Creekside Conservancy Benefit

Chanele Holbrook is working with the landowner of Monarch Sculpture Park in Thurston County. Creekside Conservancy has just been awarded funds to acquire the property and now there is a benefit happening in order to obtain permits and fund capacity to manage the property. In addition to the existing sculpture garden and gallery there is upland forest habitat for over 6 miles. Silver Creek runs through the property, is spring-fed, and drains into the Deschutes. WDFW has monitored salmon there for a number of years, and it is one of the few areas of refugia in the area.

**Lead entity organization update**

Atha distributed the final funding allocations for the Coast Region.

**Agenda for next HWG meeting October 10, 2014**

The October HWG meeting will revisit the lead entity strategy, SRFB technical committee comments and meetings, finalized WCRI list, and other conceptual projects.

**NEXT MEETING:** Friday, October 10, 2014 9:30 AM at the Lewis County Conservation District, in Chehalis.