

**Chehalis Basin Lead Entity**  
**Habitat Work Group Meeting**  
**September 10, 2018**  
**9:30 am – 12:30 pm**

Chehalis Tribe Community Center Gathering Room  
Oakville, Washington

**In attendance:**

Alissa Ferrell, RCO  
Amy Spoon, WDFW Region 6 Habitat Bio.  
Ann Weckback, Lewis County  
Anthony Waldrop, Grays Harbor Cons. Dist.  
Bob Amrine, Lewis Cons. Dist.  
Caprice Fasano, Quinault Indian Nation  
Chris Dwight, WDFW Habitat  
Cindy Wilson, Thurston County  
Colleen Suter, Chehalis Tribe DNR  
Jess Helsley, Coast Salmon Partnership  
Kirsten Harma, Watershed Coordinator  
Kim Figlar-Barnes, WDFW Fish Program

Mara Healy, Thurston Cons. Dist.  
Miranda Plumb, USFWS  
Nicholas Carr, Forterra  
Omroa Bhagwandin, Lewis Co. Citizen  
Rich Osbourne, Coast Salmon Partnership  
Rick Rouse, Port of Chehalis  
Rickie Marion, Chehalis Tribe  
Rodney Lakey, Lewis Co. Public Works  
Sarah Watkins, GH College, notetaker  
Thom Woodruff, Capitol Land Trust  
Tom Kollasch, Grays Harbor Cons. Dist.

**Meeting Summary**

**1. Welcome, Introductions.**

Everyone provided self-introductions.

**2. Organizational Business**

**a) Review of Minutes from June 2018**

A quorum was present. Bob made note of a typo on page 2. Minutes were approved without further comment.

**b) Subcommittees**

**i) Culvert:**

Chris has taken on some of Cade's role for the Culvert Subcommittee. Chris and Cade will meet and review notes from previous meetings to catch up and re-engage with the other members on the subcommittee. They will try to set up a meeting up again after construction season is over, maybe late October. They will send out an invitation to subcommittee members to find a good time to meet.

## ii) Newaukum:

Newaukum Subcommittee will meet after this meeting.

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

There is potential for a large amount of funds to get shifted around this year between the Coast Lead Entities. There are up to about \$200,000 from the Quinault Lead Entity that could move to another Coast Lead Entity that has projects that fall below their original funding line. Coast Salmon Partnership will have a final, regional vote on the matter in October.

#### a) **Funding recommendations for ranked project list/ Discussion/ vote**

Kirsten convened a discussion about the project list. In the event that there are extra funds available to projects, we need to have a list of Alternate projects ready. She asked the group which of the projects that currently below the funding line should be left on as alternates. She showed a Power Point slide with the projects and their total score and benefit score listed. The graphic shows the bottom listed projects as having low total score. She noted that the Local Review Team recommends not recommending the bottom projects as alternates. Jess added that the group shouldn't feel pressure to offer funds to projects that aren't ready. We can hold recommended projects up to a certain standard.

The sponsor of the top ranking project, the Chehalis Basin Fish Screening Project (LCD), recently informed us that their match source fell through. They have asked if they could have any additional funds from SRFB. The Review Committee recommended "topping off" their project with additional funds, up by about \$20,000. Miranda Plumb from USFWS, who had previously offered match for the project but then withdrew it, was present for this discussion. She noted that her panel wanted to see more information in the application as to how monitoring would occur. They need to see if the fish screens help reduce fish mortality. Bob said they plan to check on them occasionally to ensure that they are working, and agreed to follow up with Miranda in order to improve the project and secure USFWS funds as match.

Vote: Motion to support providing additional funds, up to \$20,000, if available, to the fish screen project. All in favor.

The next project that needed discussion was Holm Farm. It is right below the current funding line and has a large ask, so could only be partially funded with the \$200,000, if available. Thom from Capitol Land Trust was present and let the group know that they could likely complete the project with only partial funding available through SRFB. Kirsten added that even if this Lead Entity recommends that project for funding, it might get POC'd by the state Technical Panel as they will ask the sponsor to increase the buffer size. Thom replied that 80% of the property has an unlimited buffer. It is only the narrow part below a 25-acre cultivate field that has a buffer that drops down to 30 feet. He does not know if there would be an opportunity to increase the 30-ft buffer, and is ready to respond to a POC status on this project.

Vote: Motion to keep the Holm Farm Phase II project as the first Alternate for funding on the list. All in favor.

Next for discussion was the remainder of the projects on the list, which have lower total points and lower fish benefit points. The Local Review Team was not comfortable leaving the last projects on the list as alternates for funding given low benefit. Habitat Work Group members expressed the merits of a process that doesn't fund projects below certain standards. Others saw this as an opportunity for the sponsors to work further on their project concepts and applications and come back again in the next round. Others suggested it might be worthwhile to keep some lower ranking projects on the list as a second back-up (after Holm). Jess shared that the State Review Committee lauds the Chehalis Basin for running a thorough process that ensures there is quality of fish benefit from projects. Others said it makes sense to remove them, especially if Holm can take partial funding and/or any remaining funds can be used for cost overruns for higher ranking projects.

Vote: Motion to remove the bottom three projects from the Alternates list. All in favor.

**b) Review of 2018 grant round and recommendations for this coming year**

Kirsten asked if the group had any feedback on this last grant round and any recommendations for the coming grant round. Cade mentioned that he felt rushed at site visits. He would like to see a way, if possible, to allow more time on the site to have more in-depth discussions, and maybe this could happen if there was an additional day for review panel members to visit the sites. Kirsten responded that Lead Entities around the state have the same concerns, but the days the review panel members are available are restricted due to funding. The only real way we could add more time to each site visits given current conditions would be if there were fewer projects to evaluate each grant round. The state is doing a LEAN study, looking at the entire Lead Entity process to find efficiencies and see how to do things better. Recommendations will hopefully be coming out in October. One thing they are discussing is how to improve the timing and scheduling of site visits, with an option on the table to have reviewers go out to the sites once the final applications are complete, which would mean they would have spent more time with the applications and would have better questions to make more efficient use of field time.

**c) Next steps**

The SRFB meets this week. After that, the State Review Panel will meet to discuss POC projects across the state. Comment forms will be sent out at the end of September.

**d) Berwick Barrier Removal and Channel Alignment project – Scope change and cost increase request**

Ann Weckback presented a request for scope change and cost increase. Their engineers have been studying the site hydraulics and preparing conceptual alternatives. Based on Review Panel comments, the County hired a consultant to aid in optimizing the design. The

APE for the project included the full parcel, and then two additional parcels were added after it went through review. The County is requesting including those two additional parcels into the project area in order to be able to address more issues. To add the two parcels would be a cost increase of \$12,000. Lewis County has 50% match, so they're asking for an additional \$6,000 from SRFB.

Discussion:

Q) What is the purpose of the project?

A) To reroute the channel for fish passage and provide better floodplain connectivity. The scope change won't affect the objectives.

Q) Do you need to get new landowner approvals to work in those parcels?

A) All 5 parcels are owned by the same landowner.

Q) Is the purpose to make the stream longer?

A) Yes, to provide better habitat.

Q) If you open up that levee, how do you keep from flooding Jackson Highway?

A) That is part of the study.

Q) In one of the alternatives it looks like there would be no ditch, just overland flow from the hillside. Would that solve the flooding on Armstrong road?

A) The engineers think so. They'd like to do a survey so they are more comfortable with that conclusion.

Q) Rather than a straight ditch, wouldn't it be better to be a more natural channel?

A) We don't want it to be a channel. The landowner doesn't want it to be a channel because its added encumbrances onto his property.

Vote: Motion: To support providing \$6,000 in SRFB funds from RCO's cost increase pot to support Lewis County's Berwick Creek project and allow them to develop a better design across additional parcels. All in favor.

#### **4. Streamflow Restoration Act (aka "Hirst Fix")**

This Act is a statewide program to deal with the impacts of exempt wells on stream flows. We've heard that there would be a grant round to fund streamflow enhancement projects with an application window opening in September, but haven't seen the announcement yet. None the less, if people can think of anything that would enhance stream flow, keep water on the land, and augment low flows in the summer, there's going to be an opportunity to fund those types of projects soon.

#### **5. Other Updates and Discussions**

##### **a) Stearns Creek property**

Thom shared that Capitol Land Trust has been contacted by Washington Water Trust (WWT). They had someone who wanted to sell a former dairy farm on Stearns Creek. WWT is buying the water rights, but they needed someone to buy the now de-watered fee land. Capitol Land Trust's land's committee has reservations and does not recommend

proceeding with purchase. They know that the farming community down there doesn't want to see lands lose agricultural status. Thom asked the group if anyone has a compelling argument or interest in Stearns Creek. Colleen mentioned that Ecology is working with the landowners downstream. The Tribe's monitoring has found exceedingly high fecal coliform counts. The stream desperately needs restoration. There needs to be something done with the property. Thom asked if the property might be too far upstream to add benefit. He and Colleen will talk more after the meeting. Kirsten asked if the property would lose agricultural status whether purchased for conservation or not, as it will already be losing its water right. Thom said the property can be used for dry grazing. He doesn't know if the landowner is willing to see off the water right without selling the fee.

#### **b) Washington Coast Restoration and Resiliency Initiative – WCRRI**

Jess provided an update on the WCRRI project review process. Right now, there are 17 projects on the coast that are above the funding line that the Review Panel felt very confident about. We're working with RCO to get those in RCO's budget. The total funding request is just under \$12 million, which is about what the legislature is looking to fund. We will be submitting alternates that are above that figure in case they want to do extra spending.

Jess added another Coast Salmon Foundation update. She will be leaving as Executive Director of the CSF as of October 1 to take a position with the Wild Salmon Center, also working on salmon recovery on the Washington Coast. She will be helping with the transition to the new Executive Director through January. "It's been a pleasure working with all of you, and I look forward to continue to work with you in a new hat. We're looking for some good candidates, so if you know of anyone, please pass them our way."

#### **c) Brian Abbot Fish Barrier Removal Board – FBRB**

Cade Roler provided an update. The FBRB has finished putting together their legislative request for the next biennium. They are planning to increase their request statewide from \$31 million to \$50 million. For the Watershed Pathway, the FBRB is putting forward two projects in the Middle Fork Newaukum. Cade is confident that both will receive funding. The other FBRB funding stream is called the "Coordinated Pathway." Cade expects that all projects ranking well will receive funding. Looking ahead to the next biennium, Cade suggests that the Newaukum Subcommittee meet again to revisit prioritizations and decide which projects to submit.

### **6. Aquatic Species Restoration Plan (ASRP) & Chehalis Strategy**

#### **a) ASRP Updates**

Kirsten provided updates.

**b) Design Teams/ Reach Scale River Restoration Project**

There are five design teams working in 5 different subwatersheds. There has been good progress in the Skookumchuck, which has been made easier since there are only two landowners. For the South Fork and the Newaukum, we've had landowner meetings and design team meetings. In the Newaukum, we're moving forward, though we have a couple people who are "no's". Overall, we have people who are willing to move forward on conceptual designs. For the Wynoochee and the Satsop, what NSD has for conceptual designs is to look at reestablishing the river system processes: engineered logjams, timber abetments, etc. We have meetings tomorrow with landowners to talk about these ideas.

**c) Science Review Team**

Hope wasn't present to provide an update.

**d) Chehalis Science Symposium**

This symposium will take place September 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> at the Veterans Museum in Chehalis. The first day will be an overview of ASRP-related science, such as WDFW's fish research, and the second day will be about what the Science Review Team has been doing. They've been going out to the basin, looking at the watersheds and listing the restoration and protection priorities and coming up with priority actions. Kirsten encouraged everyone to attend the second day, as this will be the first chance for the restoration community to provide substantive feedback on the Science Team's assessment of restoration priorities.

**e) Protection Workshop**

Nicholas Carr, new hire at Forterra, provided an update. Forterra was contracted by the Chehalis Strategy to provide an implementation strategy to go along with that ASRP. Nicholas is planning to create a protection "toolbox" that outlines the specific options that practitioners and landowners have to meet the ASRP goals. Types of "tools" include regulations, incentives, acquisition, funding mechanisms and stewardship strategies. He is planning on holding a workshop that allows people working in the basin to provide input on the kinds of protection tools they are already using. The workshop will be in early to mid-October and Nicholas will send out a Doodle Poll to select the appropriate date.

**f) Presentation— Dam EIS Scoping - Andrea McNamara-Doyle, Director of the Office of the Chehalis Basin**

*State of Chehalis Strategy:* Andrea gave an overview of the Chehalis basin challenges, goals, and physical attributes such as forestry and fishing, recreation and development. The mission of the Chehalis Strategy includes habitat restoration, local and large-scale flood reduction, and improved water quality, all through specific large- and small-scale actions. We're making good progress in trying to bring all of these pieces

together into an overarching, long-term integrated strategy. The goal is to create consistent and measurable benefits by prioritizing and sequencing continued investment over many years.

*Dam Proposal:* The dam is being proposed by the Chehalis Basin Flood Control Zone District, a sub-zone of Lewis County, and is supervised by the Lewis County Board of Supervisors. They've proposed a proposed dam and temporary reservoir, and have included making improvements to the airport levee in that proposal. Ecology and Army Corps of Engineers will be reviewing these proposals.

*NEPA and SEPA:* These will be prepared concurrently. The scoping period will be run concurrently. Scoping is expected to be September 28 through October 29. Public meetings will take place in October. Hopefully in early 2020, the draft EIS will be available for public comment and finalized after an additional comment review period.

*Flood Control Zone District proposals:* "FRE"- "Flood Retention Expandable" option. A proposed dam and temporary reservoir. The reservoir is only supposed to be present during major flooding. The water will be released as soon as possible as soon as flood waters begin to recede, and so is considered temporary. The proposed purpose of the project is to address major flooding. The scoping notice from Ecology will include descriptions of associated proposals and information about the scale of the dam and fish passage. It will also include a proposal to raising the levee around Centralia-Chehalis airport.

Q: Will the process explain who will pay for a dam?

A: Those discussions will be outside the EIS process.

Q: Who can give the public access to this information?

A: Chehalis Basin Board is one place to talk to. Flood Control Zone District also.

Q: What about the economic analysis that goes with it, and the social justice piece?

A: The Army Corps has the economic analysis as part of its review. Some parts of the NEPA process will address that.

**a) Other**

Next HWG Meeting: October 1, 2018