

**Chehalis Basin Lead Entity
Habitat Work Group Meeting
September 8, 2017
9:30 am – 12:30 pm**

Lewis County Conservation District
Chehalis, Washington

In attendance:

Alice Rubin, RCO
Amy Spoon, WDFW Region 6
Ann Weckback, Lewis County Public Works
Bob Amrine, Lewis County Conservation Dist.
Brett Raunig, Ecology
Dennis Haberkorn, Citizen, Onalaska
Garrett Dalan, Nature Conservancy
Greg Green, Ducks Unlimited
Hope Rieden, Chehalis Tribe Fish & Wildlife
Jamie Glasgow, Wild Fish Conservancy
Jason Gillie, Chehalis Tribe DNR

Jess Helsley, Coast Salmon Partnership
Kevin Hoffman, Onalaska High School
Kirsten Harma, Lead Entity Coordinator
Lonnie Crumley, Chehalis Basin Fisheries Task Force
Luke Kelly, Trout Unlimited
Mara Healy, Thurston Conservation Dist.
Mark Swartout, Citizen, Thurston County
Miranda Plumb, USFWS
Omroa Bhagwandin, Citizen, Lewis County
Rich Osborne, Coast Salmon Partnership

Additional guests:

Kaylyna Deck, Onalaska High School
Bryan Deck, Onalaska High School
Dhaymion Leder, Onalaska High School
Pete Murphy, Onalaska Alliance
Bill Morris, Jackson Prairie Food Bank

Jeff Davis, Onalaska School District
Dracy McCoy, Onalaska School District
Clinton Fitch, WDFW Cowlitz Trout Hatchery
Mary Glen, Onalaska School Board
Mike Luaco, WDFW Skookumchuck Hatchery

Meeting Summary

1. Welcome and Introductions.

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

2. Organizational Business

a) Review of minutes from August 2017

Mark made a motion to approve the minutes. Jamie seconded. All in favor.

b) Decision on letter to ASRP Steering Committee re: acquisition strategy

At a previous meeting, Thom had requested that the group communicate the value of acquisition to the ASRP Steering Committee. The group agreed to send a formal letter. Kirsten worked with Thom and others to draft a letter, which was sent out to the whole group for review prior to this meeting. All voting members present approved the letter.

Action: Bob Amrine will sign the letter and Kirsten will send it to the Steering Committee

c) Meeting schedule

The group discussed holding Habitat Work Group meetings on a different regular meeting date. Garrett suggested that First Monday's are generally free, since they are occasionally holidays. The group agreed that Kirsten should send out a Doodle poll to see which days might work for people – including First Mondays and another possibility.

3. Subcommittee Updates

a) Newaukum

The Natural Systems Design team working on the Restorative Flood Protection Alternative is using the Newaukum as its pilot for a feasibility study. They (via Ecology) sent a letter to 117 landowners. Cynthia of NSD is hoping for the opportunity to meet with landowners one on one. Bob Amrine noted that at the last Chehalis Basin Board meeting, board members expressed confusion about the difference between Alternative 4 and the ASRP. He surmised that landowners will be confused, as well.

b) Culvert

The culvert subcommittee has not recently met. Lonnie reported his progress on barrier corrections. They have completed six barrier corrections and have already been spotting coho and cutthroat in those streams, and found a Pacific Lamprey in one of them. Bob reported that the Bunker Creek project is finally moving ahead.

4. Salmon Recovery Funding Board

Alice provided a general SRFB update. There was an emergency SRFB meeting where the Board discussed the funding situation. They approved funding the Lead Entities and Regions through December 31. December 31 is the next Board meeting, and the Board could decide to add additional funds to contracts at that time. To save costs, the Regional Areas meetings will be shorter and only include presentations from sponsors whose projects have been POC'd. RCO's funding to support the SRFB process will run out in March or April if there is not a new capital budget.

There was a brief conversation about the recent Atlantic salmon release. Jess noted that the Coast Salmon Partnership will have a presentation about Atlantic Salmon farming in Willapa and Grays Harbor at their October Board meeting. The Wild Fish Conservancy is building a coalition to oppose net pens in the Puget Sound with a campaign called “Our Salmon Our Sound.” He has information resources which he will pass on to this group. The SRFB also opposes Atlantic salmon farming.

a) Project list submitted by Coast Salmon Partnership & allocated funding

Two other coast lead entities had more funding than they could use. There was enough funding to “top up” the partially-funded project on the Chehalis Lead Entity’s list, Holm Farm. The Coast Salmon Partnership submitted 8 projects to the state by the Coast region for funding. The funding situation is still unknown given lack of Capital Budget.

b) Conceptual projects – finding and selecting a project to mentor in 2018

Kirsten brought up a discussion topic based on an idea in the Chehalis Lead Entity strategy. The strategy chapter titled “Conceptual Projects in Habitat Work Schedule” includes a recommendation that the group start in September on a project mentoring process. The mentoring idea has the intension to develop larger projects using a team approach, and develop high priority projects ready for the SRFB grant round.

Discussion:

- Alice noted that SRFB grants can go towards funding a design of up to \$200,000 with no match requirement. Since it’s an “off-year” for WCRI, it’s a good time to put together large-scale project ideas to submit for funding consideration by that program next year. Projects could also be funded by ASRP, or in phases by SRFB.
- Brett Raunig noted that doing designs of larger projects is something they are doing in the Lower Columbia and it has worked well for them. He could provide examples as guidance.
- Amy Spoon supported mentoring projects of sponsors who take the effort to get applications together early. Ann Weckback always has project ideas ready to go early in the grant round. Since she can only do work in the County Right-of-Way, she could partner with groups to do a side-channel reconnection or similar in the same system.
- Lonnie noted that developing projects take time and money and that’s a big risk if the project isn’t funded. They’ve developed some conceptual projects in the Wynoochee for the ASRP but fears those won’t be funded. That project is an option for mentoring.
- Habitat Work Schedule is the database where all conceptual projects are currently stored. The group could look there and see if there are any good projects to develop further.
- Jess noted that this approach is already developing through the Newaukum pilot watershed approach. Mentoring a larger-scale project in the Newaukum is a next step.

- Kirsten suggested considering putting some of the SRFB allocation towards a group developed larger scale design, and then leave the rest for an open competition.
- Mark noted that this approach might help reduce the number of totally project applications, saving time for sponsors and the review committee
- The group will discuss this idea further at the October HWG meeting.

5. Onalaska Hatchery Program

This agenda item was moved earlier in the agenda given the arrival of presenters and guests.

Three Onalaska High School students gave a presentation on their school's hatchery program. The hatchery produces 35,000 steelhead, 6,000 rainbow trout, and 100,000 coho which are put into the Newaukum system via Gheer Creek. The program provides science learning opportunities for student, as well as job skills training. Another school program provides training in water quality monitoring. Students test Carlisle Lake water monthly.

Kevin Hoffman provided additional information about the benefits of the hatchery program. The hatchery positively contributes to the fishery. Caught fish are donated to the food bank. He noted that Carlyle Lake is not a good place for fish survival given low DO, high summer temperatures, and associated aquatic weeds. For this reason, he would like to see a fish-trapping facility built into the new fish-passage structure the Wild Fish Conservancy is currently designing. With a fish trap, hatchery fish could be stopped before the lake, and wild fish could allowed to pass upstream. Alice noted that RCO can't fund fish traps as part of a SRFB grant, so if the landowner wants a fish trap, they will have to fund it a different way. Onalaska Alliance wants to support the hatchery program and wild fish.

Concerns were expressed about wild salmon reintroduction into Gheer Creek: if the fishery becomes just wild, will harvest need to stop? Will sport fishing stop? If the system becomes wild, will the school hatchery program need to stop? Jamie noted that this could be an opportunity to explore H-integration. Someone asked him: "Why us? Why here? Hatchery vs. wild-fish is a statewide issue that has been going on for decades." Jamie responded that there are no endangered species in the Newaukum, so new creative management techniques can be tested. Additionally, the Newaukum has been chosen as a priority basin within the Chehalis, and there is money for habitat improvements in the Chehalis.

6. ASRP & Chehalis Strategy

a) ASRP Updates & Discussion

Kirsten provided an update on the latest ASRP Steering Committee meetings. Hope will give updates on the progress of the Science Team at future HWG meetings.

7. **Presentation**

Kirsten provided this presentation to a few remaining members after the meeting adjourned. The presentation will take place the evening of September 21, 2017.

Next HWG meeting: TBD