

## **Chehalis Basin Lead Entity**

### **Habitat Work Group Meeting**

**September 9, 2016**

**9:30 am – 12:00 pm**

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

#### **In attendance:**

Amy Spoon, WDFW  
Ann Weckback, Lewis County  
Ben Harbaugh, Center for Natural Lands Management  
Brett DeMond, Streamworks  
Brett Raunig, Ecology  
Bob Amrine, Lewis Conservation District  
Cade Roler, WDFW  
Charissa Waters, Thurston County  
Frank Staller, Wild Fish Conservancy  
Garrett Dalan, The Nature Conservancy  
Jason Gillie, Chehalis Tribe  
JB McCrummen, Citizen  
Jeannie Abbott, WDFW

Jessica Helsley, Coast Salmon Foundation (WCSSP)  
Kathleen Berger, Thurston C. District  
Kirsten Harma, Lead Entity Coordinator  
Kim Smith, Grays Harbor Conservation District  
Lonnie Crumley, CBFTF  
Luke Kelly, Trout Unlimited  
Mark Swartout, Citizen  
Patrick Skillings, Skillings Connolly  
Rich Osborne, Coast Salmon Partnership (WCSSP)  
Steve Hallstrom, Citizen  
Thom Woodruff, Capitol Land Trust  
Tom Kollasch, Grays Harbor CD

### **Meeting Summary**

#### **1. Welcome and Introductions.**

Chair Bob Amrine convened the meeting. Everyone provided self-introductions. Kirsten asked participants to share a success story from over the past month, either of their work or of the work of someone they know in the community.

Thurston Conservation District community meetings resulted in identification of restoration projects up to 1 mile in length. The Wild Fish Conservancy's Carlyle Lake project is underway in working with the WDFW and seeking permits. They are also planning on doing DNA analyses in the headwaters of the Humptulips, Satsop and Wynoochee. Capitol Land Trust is seeing progress on the Darlin Creek project. Center for Natural Lands Management staff are successfully killing of knotweed in the East Fork of the Satsop. Amy Spoon is happy to report seeing the completion of "Habitat Restoration and Protection" projects that were ranked, funded and permitted less than a year ago. The Chehalis Tribe is doing DNA work in

the Chehalis headwaters. The Chehalis River Basin Land Trust is closing its Hoquiam Surge Plain purchase. Brett DeMond reported on the Governor's Work Group tour, where she noted an information gap between that work group and the local restoration community. The Chehalis Fisheries Task Force is completing the 5<sup>th</sup> of 7 projects in Grays Harbor County. The Voluntary Stewardship Program is up and running in Thurston County again, and will soon start in Lewis and Grays Harbor County. Lewis County has started planning on 3 projects.

## **2. Review of minutes from June 2016**

No one had any comments or corrections on the minutes.

## **3. Review of Bylaws and Officers**

Kirsten noted that member and officers were updated in the bylaws this time last year, so it's time to do the update again. JB suggested that the membership list not be included in the bylaws so it doesn't need updating every year.

The group discussed possible updates to the Lead Entity's bylaws. Members suggested expanding the "purpose" section to capture the increased scope.

Action Item: Form a bylaw subcommittee to work on suggested wording and to update the member list. Volunteers included Mark Swartout, JB McCrummen and Rich Osborne.

The group discussed how to get more participation from citizens. Their input is needed in understanding the social and economic impact of projects, and to help with ranking. Tom Kollasch reported that in the Willapa the citizens' input has been very helpful. Rich reported that in the North Olympic, the citizens just rank projects. Mark Swartout reported that in the Chehalis, citizens were uncomfortable ranking projects they don't know anything about, so everyone decided to have the citizens and technical people sit on the same committee. Bob recommended letting any new citizen members know that there will be a "learning curve" when they come to meetings.

A vote for officers still needs to occur annually. The vote proceeded as follows: Bob Amrine was nominated as Chair, and Brett DeMond as Vice Chair. Mark Swartout made the motion to vote both in as a slate. Lonnie seconded the motion. All in favor.

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

Kirsten read an update on the SRFB process provided by Alice Rubin. The next SRFB review meeting will be Sept 19-20. The panel will determine if our projects are cleared.

Cade Roler provided an update on the Fish Barrier Removal Board (FBRB). Six culverts in the Chehalis were put forward to the legislature in the request for funding. 2 were County culverts and 2 private culverts in the Newaukum, and 2 on Lost Creek in the Stillman drainage. The overall request for the state-wide program is \$60 million. Cade is optimistic this package will get funded. FBRB will open up nominations again in 2017. They will do more outreach this time to get more project proposals in areas where no one applied in this last round. The FBRB will likely also ask for funding to do more culvert inventories. RCO will manage the FBRB funds and will likely manage them like SRFB grants, including using PRISM to track projects.

Brett asked about updating the Chehalis's ranked list of culverts. Cade suggested that WDFW update the ranking, as they have the money to do so. He suggested looking at the old prioritization method used by the Lead Entity and adjusting it. He suggested that the same committee of the Habitat Work Group that developed the original ranking get involved in updating the prioritization.

Action Item: Formation of a culvert prioritization update committee. Volunteers included: Ann Weckback, Brett Demond, Rich Osborne, Kim Smith and Bob Amrine.

**5. Chehalis River Watershed Assessment. A summary presentation on the NOAA Science Center's research**

Cancelled. Miranda was not present to do this presentation.

**6. Chehalis Basin Strategy / Aquatic Species Restoration Plan (ASRP)**

**a) Current Roles and participation in ASRP**

Kirsten provided a PowerPoint with a summary of the Habitat Work Group's involvement in ASRP over the past year. The work group banded together to provide input on the "Habitat Restoration and Protection" selection, and provided technical advice on ranking. Sponsors helped put \$6 million into on the ground restoration project which are now underway or complete.

Kirsten asked the group: What are your current roles in the ASRP?

- Conservation Districts: Lewis Conservation District is helping identify reaches of 1 mile or more where landowners are willing to have projects done. The people they talked to have bank erosion concerns. The CD is waiting for the Anchor consultants to tell them where the "best" reaches are for restoration, then the CD will do further work with landowners. Landowners will only allow restoration projects if their needs are

also met. The “early action” reaches, therefore, need to account for both fish benefit and landowner needs. Grays Harbor Conservation District is also doing landowner outreach. Tom reported that people respond best to them at public meetings when they say “we’re non-regulatory.” The CD staff’s strength is their ability to talk to landowners. Thurston Conservation District is also talking to landowners about project sites. The landowners they talk to are frustrated about erosion.

- Fisheries Task Force: The CBFTF is getting three projects developed as potential “early action” reaches. These include fish benefit and full landowner willingness.
- Technical experts: Amy Spoon reported that she is contributing technical support to the ASRP by reviewing project permits.
- Citizens: They’re letting the Conservation Districts and RFEG know what their needs are (e.g., bank erosion). Landowner involvement will only be successful if project development is voluntary and non-regulatory.

#### b) **Habitat Work Group – Desired Involvement**

- Being informed of when “early action” reach selection occurs.
- Making sure that “early action” reaches are those with both fish benefit *and* landowner willingness, to demonstrate early successes.
- “Early action” reaches be spread throughout the three major counties in the basin to show success to landowners who are going to look for examples in their own geographic area.
- Develop a list of engineers capable of doing large-scale restoration work in the basin.
- Notify local construction companies about potential opportunities for work
- Technical experts working in the basin need to ensure that there is a focus on habitat benefit of the selected reaches.
- The long-range strategy will need an increased involvement of local communities in the form of involving local governments in updating their land use regulations.
- Advocate accelerated permitting. If the Army Corps hired someone to help with permitting, that might speed things up and improve implementation.
- Have a liaison with the Governor’s Work Group to improve communication
- Provide presentations to the community on how rivers work

Other suggestions that came out of this conversation: The Habitat Work Group can strengthen its contributions and its role. Mark suggested that we provide information to citizens who live on the river about on how rivers work: how doing a project will affect their neighbor, for example. Kirsten mentioned that education and outreach is part of the Chehalis Basin Partnership’s desired role. Mark agreed this role should be continued and strengthened. JB offered to talk to more citizens who might be interested in participating in

the Habitat Work Group. Someone suggested advertising monthly meetings in the paper. Rich said that they'd done that in the Lead Entity he used to work for, though with response only when an issue might immediately affect them. Focused meetings with landowners in an area where an action will occur is another opportunity to engage citizens. Steve mentioned that citizens often actually do know how their local rivers work and that wisdom is worth listening to. Tom suggested that for those who work with landowners in the field, develop a common response to common questions, including "why can't we rip-rap? Why can't we dredge?" That way we'll all be able to provide a consistent message to the public about how fish-friendly projects can also address erosion issues.

Action Item: HWG members who talk to landowners should write down a list of questions they hear so we can develop non-technical answers to them.

c) **External Communication**

Suggestions for improving communication between this group and external groups: The Watershed Coordinator will send out minutes from any meeting to the Habitat Work Group mailing list. These can be short, with just a few bullet points. Having Tom Clingman sit on the Habitat Work Group should also improve communication with the Governor's Work Group. All members will work to keep on top of the various processes occurring in the basin.

7. **Other Business & Announcements**

- a) **Weyerhaeuser/RMAP** – *Miranda Plumb*
- b) **Bloom's Ditch / WSDOT culvert replacements** – *Thom Woodruff – Capitol Land Trust*

The meeting ran over time and we were not able to get to these agenda items.

**Next HWG meeting: October 14, 2016**