



Chehalis Basin Collaborative
for Salmon Habitat

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Minutes

October 6, 2025

9:00 am- 12:00 pm

Zoom Only

Alex James, <i>Capitol Land Trust</i>	Kelly Verd – <i>Lewis Conservation Dist.</i>
Alex Gustafson, <i>Trout Unlimited</i>	Kendall Kohler - <i>RCO</i>
Ann Weckback – <i>Lewis County Public W.</i>	Key McMurray - <i>Grays Harbor Citizen Rep</i>
Bella Padget – <i>Ducks Unlimited</i>	Kirsten Harma - <i>LE Coordinator</i>
Bill Teitzel - <i>Port of Chehalis</i>	Kim Figlar-Barnes, <i>WDFW Region 6</i>
Bob Russell - <i>Lewis County Citizen</i>	Mack Hunter - <i>Grays Harbor Conserv. Dist.</i>
Brandon Carman – <i>WDFW Region 6</i>	Mara Healey - <i>Thurston County Conserv Dist</i>
Brett DeMond - <i>CBFTF Streamworks</i>	Molly Paige - <i>Non-Point Coordinator, Ecology</i>
Brian Combs – <i>Mason Conservation Dist.</i>	Neina Chapa, <i>American Rivers</i>
Caprice Fasano - <i>Quinault Indian Nation</i>	Sarah Longacre – <i>Ecology Non-point</i>
Chanele Holbrook- <i>Department of Ecology</i>	Sofia Sherman – <i>Chehalis Weed Coordinator</i>
Daron Williams – <i>WDFW Region 5</i>	Tina Niels, <i>Grays Harbor Citizen</i>
Jacob Murray - <i>Mason CD</i>	Vanessa LaValle – <i>Coast Salmon Partnership</i>
Jane Atha – <i>Coast Salmon Partnership</i>	Victoria Knorr - <i>WDFW</i>
John Stepanek - <i>Grays Harbor Conserv Dist</i>	

1. **Welcome, Break-Out Rooms, Introductions**
2. **Minutes – September**

Bob Russell moved to approve September’s minutes, which Sofia seconded. The motion was passed without comment.

3. Organizational Business

a. CBC-fSH Outreach – Priorities for the new contract

Kirsten shared a presentation covering and discussing the scope of CBC-fSH's outreach needs, as Kathy Jacobson is not currently under contract, and an RFP is currently active for the position. Kirsten shared that Kathy is currently the only applicant who has applied for the next biennium of the outreach contract, and it is likely that she will continue in that position.

Kirsten led a conversation about the previous scope of this contract (e.g. school outreach with the water table, tabling local events, website updates, local interest stories in the paper), and discussed specific duties the collaborative would expect from their outreach coordinator going forward.

Jacob Murray asked if there was a specific date for the Return of the Salmon event at Schaefer Park, but as Kathy is not currently coordinating this, Kirsten stated she was unsure. Tina Niels shared that this event would be taking place on October 25th from 1-3PM.

Chanelle Holbrook shared that she is working with local schools to do water quality monitoring, and suggested that Kathy might help out to expand the program's capacity.

Finally, Kirsten shared a poll with the group to help determine the collaborative's priorities for this upcoming contract. Areas of high enthusiasm include youth education, tabling events, and the river table. Areas of least enthusiasm include assistance with adding outreach and education into SRFB grants applications.

When asked about the amount of time the collaborative would like the future candidate to dedicate to rehauling CBC-fSH's website, the average response was approximately 10-15%.

Tina Niels then shared that she has seven Satsop Springs school field trips set up with the Chehalis Basin Fish Task Force, funded by the Grays Harbor Foundation. She shared that a number of Collaborative members are participating with these trips, and any other interested members are invited. These events will be taking place on Oct 17, 23, and 24, and Nov 6, 7, 13, and 14.

b. Chair and Vice Chair – Elections!

Kirsten facilitated elections for the Collaborative's chair and vice-chair, as well as a conversation about filling empty seats representing different stakeholders.

Tina Niels moved to open nominations, which Bob Russell seconded.

Key McMurray nominated Ben Amidon as chair, and Bob Russell nominated Key McMurray for vice-chair.

Bob Russell moved to close nominations, which was sustained.

Bob Russell then moved to elect Ben Amidon as chair and Key McMurray as vice-chair in 2026, which passed unanimously.

c. Washington Salmon Coalition

Kirsten shared that she would be attending the gathering of the Lead Entity coordinators, the Washington Salmon Coalition. She shared specifically that an area of focus will be on managing burnout and resilience in conservation work.

4. Fish Barrier Tool Update

Jane Atha, Coast Salmon Partnership director, shared that the Chehalis's Fish Barrier tool is a tool created by WDFW several years ago, but has not had WDFW support for maintenance. As such, the latest data sets are from 2020 and the tool badly needs updating. She then shared that she met with WDFW about concerns regarding their housing of this tool, and concerns about having it available to the public when it is out of date. After that discussion, she shared that Vanessa LaValle will be rebuilding the tool with the Fish Passage and Diversion Screening Inventory (FPDSI) and with updated scores. Jane also shared that she reached out to RCO and they may be able to provide support while updating tools around the state.

Finally, Jane asked the Collaborative whether they feel this outdated tool is still worth using as-is, or whether it should be taken offline, as WDFW is suggesting. If the group feels it is still worth hosting, CSP could house and work on updating the tool. She also asked the group for input on protocols for how the tool should be updated and maintained.

Brett DeMond shared she feels that the tool is very valuable, and would like to see it migrated to the CSP.

Julie Grobelny shared that she is in support of keeping the tool alive and accessible, and also expressed support for the CSP housing and updating the tool in the interim while RCO is working to put together a state-wide solution.

Key McMurray also emphasized the importance of keeping the tool available, but also expressed the need for protocols for regularly maintaining and updating the tool.

Jane suggested that one possible measure would be to include a disclaimer splash-page on the tool's site qualifying the out-dated nature of the tool's information.

Kirsten further suggested that any of these changes should be postponed until after the current FBRB grant round, which gives points for barriers in the top 20% of any regional/lead entity level barrier prioritization.

5. Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB)

a. PCSRF Update

Kendall Kohler of RCO introduced herself as the current SRFB grants manager for the Chehalis LE, replacing Alice Rubin. She shared that the PCSRF award request for \$22M was granted, so the SRFB grant round will be able to continue as planned. She shared that agreements for the 2025 grant round should be sent out by the end of October, and that she would be reaching out with next steps soon.

Finally, she shared that the RCO does have a new grant manager position open for anyone interested.

b. RCO Updates

Kirsten shared that a call for proposals will go out for the 2026 SRFB grant round on December 8th, 2025, with complete applications due February 24th, 2026. She also reminded the group that there is a special Riparian Funding pot this grant round, with \$356,700 in funding available. More information on the possibilities of upcoming targeted investment funding should be available next month.

c. Monitoring Grant Round Update

Jane Atha shared that neither the Grays Harbor nor the Willapa Bay monitoring projects ranked out above the funding line. She shared that the Grays Harbor project does have ASRP funding already, and is planning to move forward with that funding as well as seeking future funding opportunities.

Jane also shared that there will be another monitoring grant round in the future.

6. Upcoming Funding Opportunities

a. WCRRI

Jane Atha shared an overview of the Washington Coast Restoration and Resilience Initiative (WCRRI). She explained that the initiative is funded through the state capital budget at approximately \$8-10M, and is administered jointly by the RCO and the WCRRI Steering committee - which includes Jane with CSP, Garrett Dalan with the Nature Conservancy, and Jess Helsley with the Wild Salmon Center. She reminded the group that WCRRI aims to protect and restore ecosystems of the Washington Coast as well as promoting economic resilience throughout its coastal communities. The grant round is a two-year cycle with a maximum request of \$2M, and does not require match. The grants are scored by a technical review panel as well as by the steering community. The guiding document for these grants is Manual 24, and the coming updated version is immanent.

Jane then shared that the grant round opens earlier this year, in order to overlap less significantly with the SRFB grant round, on November 3rd. An application workshop will take place on November 13th, with initial complete applications due in PRISM on December 9th. Site visits will take place in late March, with final revised project proposals due May 14th, 2026.

Finally, Jane encouraged collaborative members to get involved by submitting grants, serving on the WCRRI technical review team, and reach out to government officials about the importance of this funding source.

Kendall Kohler noted that Ameer Bahr will be managing WCRRI grants, with assistance from Alice Rubin, as well.

b. Fish Barrier Removal Board

Kirsten shared that John Foltz is the contact for FBRB grant round that opens October 1st. Applications to PRISM are due January 26, 2026. This program has a generous match waiver program, under which many of the group projects would qualify. Programs that qualify must either be in the top 20% of the LE's list; be coordinated with another project within 4 years w/in HUC 10; and/or take place in a "disadvantaged community", which includes both Grays Harbor County and Lewis County.

Shannon Shula shared that Adam High is no longer with Thurston County, as he has moved to work for an NGO on the Olympic Peninsula. Beyond that, she has no current updates about upcoming projects, but the collaborative should get updates in the coming month.

c. Streamflow Restoration

Kirsten shared that the Department of Ecology (ECY) will be launching their grant round on January 25th, 2026. Applications are submitted online through ECY. Kirsten noted that considerations for this grant round are: the grant round funds all types of habitat restoration and protection; and that points are given for benefiting ESA fish, being a part of a Plan, and for quantitatively improving streamflow.

d. National Fish Passage Program (USFWS)

Kirsten noted that the National Fish Passage Program's grant round will begin at the end of December. Olivia Williams, currently furloughed with the federal government, will be the contact for this.

7. Salmon Recovery Portal – Review of its utility

Kirsten reminded the group of the utility of the Salmon Recovery Portal. She emphasized that it serves as a central portal for project ideas; for searching for projects by their status as part of the Streamflow Restoration Plan; finding adjacent projects to count in an FBRB match waiver; and finding information on completed projects to inform developing projects.

Jane Atha then noted that at the September SRFB meeting, the board mentioned several times the need to track projects from beginning to end, in terms of their funding, development, and completion. She pointed out at the meeting that the SRP is designed to serve all of those needs.

8. Scatter Creek @ Churchill Rd Culvert Issue – Letter to Thurston County

Kirsten shared about a culvert issue on Scatter Creek, noting that more information will be available next month, as there are currently staffing changes at Thurston County. She shared that this summer, a citizen science monitoring team noticed an emergency replacement of a failing culvert on Scatter Creek at Churchill Road, which is very undersized. Kirsten reached out to the county, who explained the emergency situation. Kirsten then described the importance of replacing this culvert to the collaborative, and asked for input on sending a letter to the county requesting they prioritize replacement of this culvert with county funding dedicated to fish passage.

Adam High, though not able to speak for Thurston County at this point, was able to provide some clarification that the emergency HPA granted for this replacement did specify that this temporary replacement be corrected within five years. He also shared that the emergency replacement was in response to a very acute structural problem, and needed to be fixed immediately.

Daron Williams shared that this isn't an uncommon situation in the event of a true structural emergency, and Anne Weckback noted that Lewis County currently has a few of these ongoing as well, and provided perspective on the logistical challenges involved with prioritizing them. Daron also shared a link

<https://wdfw.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=5236050415414351b06326e78e38e9e9> where information is available on issued HPAs.

The collaborative decided to have Kirsten reach out to the county and see where the replacement is on their priority list before submitting a letter.

Bob Russell noted it might be useful to ask the county to consider improving the process when it comes to emergency HPAs, particularly with regard to having more appropriately sized and shaped pipes on hand.

9. Associated Program Updates

a. Office of the Chehalis Basin

Victoria Knorr shared that the Office of the Chehalis Basin (OCB) will be having an open house in the evening on October 8th at the Montesano City Hall. They will also have an online open-house the following week.

b. Coast Salmon Partnership

In addition to her updates above, Jane Atha shared that she was able to participate in the Onalaska Apple Harvest Festival. She also described the upcoming Chinook Symposium at Ocean Shores in the coming week. Wednesday and Thursday, speakers will be converging to discuss Spring and Fall Chinook to think broadly to consider differences and similarities among different coastal watersheds, as well as broad conversation about Chinook life histories issues. Conversations will be had at the local scale, as well as a wide regional scale.

c. Aquatic Species Restoration Program

Victoria Knorr shared that the ASRP is going to have an in-person workshop at the Chehalis Tribal Community Center on October 16th, and provided a link to RSVP and to see the agenda.

d. Stream Teams

Breana Downs with Grays Harbor Stream Team shared that they have been closing out their Rose Foundation grant for the year in the last couple months. This involved tabling a number of Grays Harbor farmers markets, as well as a storm drain marking event. She shared that the stream team also did a few different boat-launch cleanups, including some tire removal. She also shared that the team will be starting the new fiscal year on October 16th from 1-3PM with a storm drain cleaning event along Broadway. On October 29th, they will also be hosting a Satsop project tour and landowner workshop at the Chapman Farm Satsop GHCD project. Finally, on November 22nd, the team is aiming to do a river table demonstration at a local library, likely at Elma.

Further, she noted that if folks want to be on the mailing list, they can do so on the GHCD website, or email streamteam@graysharborcd.org directly.

e. Chehalis Basin Weed Collaborative (Sofia)

Sofia Sherman shared that she would send out her regional contractor list as it stands to the group for feedback. She also shared that in the coming week she would be teaching a noxious weed event at the Tenino middle school, and would be happy to share that program with

others for use. She also shared that the Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA) fall meeting is coming up. Anyone who would like to attend is invited and can email her at ssherman@chehalistribe.org.

10. Other Business

a. DNR Timber Sale Public Comment Event

Sofia also shared that there is a DNR public meeting about 10 timber sales, several of which are legacy forests, and four of which are in the Chehalis Basin. Public comment sign-up is closed, but a public discussion will be taking place October 7th.

Donna Albert shared that the Legacy Forest Defense Coalition (LFDC) has information on these forests, and that she will be speaking at this forum as well.

b. Department of Ecology NP Stream Ruling

Bob reminded the group that on November 12th, the Department of Ecology Forest Practices Board will be making the ruling for NP Streams. He explained that this ruling is considering extending the buffer for type F streams into NP streams.

11. Closing