

**Chehalis Basin Lead Entity -- Habitat Work Group  
November 1, 2021 -- Minutes**

Zoom Meeting

~ 9:00 am – 12:00 pm ~

Ann Weckback, <i>Lewis County Public Works</i> Alex Gustafson, <i>Trout Unlimited</i> Alexa Brown, <i>CBFTF/GH Stream Team</i> Andrew Deffobis, <i>Thurston County</i> Ben Amidon, <i>Chehalis Tribe DNR</i> Bob Amrine, <i>Lewis Cons. Dist.</i> Bob Russell, <i>Lewis County Citizen</i> Brandon Carman, <i>RCO</i> Brian Stewart, <i>Conservation Northwest</i> Darric Lowery, <i>WDFW Wildlife</i> Emelie McKain, <i>ASRP/ WDFW</i> Garrett Dalan, <i>Nature Conservancy</i> Greg Green, <i>Ducks Unlimited</i> Hannah Coe, <i>Ecology Non-Point</i>	Hope Rieden, <i>Chehalis Tribe DNR</i> Jennifer Holderman, <i>WDFW ASRP</i> Kathy Jacobson, <i>CBLE Outreach Coordinator</i> Kirsten Harma, <i>Lead Entity Coordinator</i> Kelly Verd, <i>Lewis Cons. Dist.</i> Key McMurray, <i>Grays Harbor Citizen</i> Lee First, <i>Twin Harbors Water Keeper</i> Mara Healy, <i>Thurston Conservation District</i> Mara Zimmerman, <i>Coast Salmon Partnership</i> Ned Pittman, <i>Coast Salmon Part/Fdn</i> Rickie Marion, <i>Chehalis Tribe</i> Sarah Watkins, <i>Grays Harbor Citizen</i> Tom Kollasch, <i>Grays Harbor Cons. Dist.</i>
---	---

1. **Welcome, Introductions**
2. **Networking Time in Breakout Rooms**
3. **Minutes Approval – September**

Sarah motioned to approve October's minutes, and Key seconded. The motion passed.

4. **Organizational Business**
  - a. **Vote on Chair and Vice Chair**

Bob Russell made a motion to close nominations for Chair and Vice Chair. Tom seconded. All in favor. Key made a motion to open nominations. Tom seconded. All in favor. Kirsten informed the group that only one nomination was made for each seat – Bob Amrine for Chair and Key McMurray for Vice Chair. Ben made a motion to elect the slate of candidates. Bob seconded. All in favor.

- b. **Outreach updates**

Kathy will be working with school children in the coming months. She will host the River Table as a learning tool, with emphasis on the role of beaver in watersheds. She asked the group for their recommendations on new teachers to invite.

Kathy mentioned that during her recent outreach she's learned that landowners want information on how project money is spent, and what project results are. She is working on a brochure about project successes. Upcoming, she will work in short videos showcasing the projects. Project sponsors can sign up to be interviewed and showcase their project, spring of 2022.

Upcoming Watershed Hero news article series will feature William Thom and Dan Penn from the Chehalis Tribe.

Bob Russell mentioned that there are new owners at the Centralia Chronical. They may be more receptive to articles about salmon education. He agrees that people want to see how money is being spent. Bob Russell, Bob Amrine, Kathy Jacobson, and Brian Stewart are interested in talking outside this meeting about how to approach the Chronicle.

Alexa will host a salmon viewing day for the public at Schafer State Park – November 13<sup>th</sup>. The Stream Team will host a planting event November 6<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>.

**c. Newaukum subcommittee** – to be held after today’s meeting.

**d. Washington Salmon Coalition** – Kirsten provided an update.

Kirsten will continue to serve on the Executive Committee as “at large” with Anna Geffre representing the Coast.

There is a new Salmon Section Manager, Marc Duboiski. He is interested in coming out on project tours. When asked, “will you facilitate culture of helping get projects done?” Marc says he wants that culture. He says he will help teach new grant managers where we can do things with the goal of making projects a success.”

Lower Columbia regional organization is working on thinking of additional landowner incentives. One idea is encouraging legislation around Tax relief program for small landowners, that would somehow still allow the tax revenues to stay in the County. A work group of Lead Entity Coordinators statewide will come together to discuss this topic further.

Salmon Recovery Portal – new feature: “umbrella project” that will allow us to group projects with different stages and funding sources into a single project. Chantelle from RCO will come demonstrate the tool to our group once it is ready.

Statewide representatives from WSC continue to discuss Permit Streamlining with the Army Corps of Engineers. The Corps is willing to carry forward 9 recommended actions, including holding trainings for project sponsors, likely in March of 2022, new guidance documents, and a list of experts to call with questions. Kirsten will learn more after a meeting December 10.

## **5. Salmon Recovery Funding Board**

### **a. Targeted Investment – Process for Coast Lead Entities.**

Mara Zimmerman provided information on this new funding source. \$3.7 million will be available statewide as part of the 2022 SRFB grant round. The target is projects that benefit NOAA identified salmon stocks that feed Orca. In the Chehalis, this is spring and fall run Chinook. Projects will need to support their spawning and rearing needs, and cost more than is available through the Lead Entity’s grant round. A more specific RFP will come out in January. The Lead Entity will need to provide endorsement of any of the locally submitted projects by May. Ned recommends referencing the IP model which shows areas with a high potential for Chinook.

Starting next month, sponsors should start putting forward project ideas, and we can match project to likely funding source after that.

**b. SRFB Draft 2022 Schedule**

Kirsten showed the group the draft 2022 schedule. She asked if they dates between April 13 and 15<sup>th</sup> would work for folks, and if they thought we should ask for 3 days for project site visits, given the number of applications we had last year. There was general agreement.

**c. Project Proposals**

Alex Gustafson shared that she is thinking about sponsoring a project on Coal Creek. It is a fish passage barrier with good habitat upstream. She showed the group where the site is, and no one was familiar with it. Bob and Kelly are willing to assist on the project concept. They noted that there used to be more Coho in that system, and there may be a blockage lower in the system, by Sunbirds where the creek is channelized.

Kirsten mentioned a potential project concept higher up in the Salzer Creek drainage, where salmon have been spawning in a county road ditch that was recently cleaned out. Bob and Kelly noted that a lot of fish get up there for how degraded it is. They saw 200 fry coho near Renkee road the next year after a fish passage project!

**6. Presentation – Landscape Conservation Overview (Brian Stewart – Conservation Northwest)**

Brian previewed a new online resource: “Coastal Northwest Landscape Conservation Mapper.” It shows funding opportunities connected to different geographies and land use types. Brian then talked about the connection between terrestrial conservation and aquatic conservation. Newaukum and Salzer basins are “middle linkages” for migrating wildlife. He recommends thinking about terrestrial wildlife connectivity when designing culverts/bridges that are intended to improve fish passage. Conservation Northwest will host a summit on this topic next year.

**7. Associated Program Updates**

**a. Fish Barrier Removal Board (WDFW staff et. al.)**

The grant round is now open. Kirsten presented a project concept in Mason County under a County road, with the potential to make a bundle of projects on this stream. David from WDFW said that the proposal looks good.

**b. Aquatic Species Restoration Plan – Implementation Plan overview and program updates**

RFQs are due November 19<sup>th</sup> There will be an Implementation Team kick-off meeting early next month. This will include early vetting of projects in a portfolio.

**c. Coast Salmon Partnership**

Mara Zimmerman provided information about the new Infrastructure Bill which contains \$400 M for a new fish barrier program. Now is the time to put time into developing barrier project proposals.

WCRRI opens in January.

Ned Pitman provided updates on the Implementation Committee's work.

**d. Chehalis Basin Partnership**

Ecology will start accepting applications for the Streamflow Restoration program starting November 2.

**Other Business**

-Kathy proposed an idea to hold a Public Wild Swim next summer. This could be a great opportunity to increase outreach and showcase water quality issues in the Chehalis, while also encouraging a sense of Joy about our waterways. The event could include information on how to enjoy our waterways safely.