

## Chehalis Basin Lead Entity -- Habitat Work Group

November 2, 2020 – MINUTES

~ 9:30 am – 12:20 pm ~

Alexa Brown, <i>Chehalis Basin Fisheries Task F.</i> Anthony Waldrop, <i>Grays Harbor Conserv. Dist.</i> Ann Weckback, <i>Lewis Co Public Works</i> Bob Amrine, <i>Lewis Conserv. Dist</i> Brandon Carman, <i>Recreation &amp; Cons. Office</i> Cade Roler, <i>WDFW</i> Caprice Fasano, <i>Quinault Indian Nation</i> Charissa Waters, <i>Thurston County</i> Chanelle Holbrook, <i>Citizen</i> Emilie Blevins, <i>Xerces Society</i> Emilie McKain, <i>Aquatic Species Rest./WDFW</i> Greg Green, <i>Ducks Unlimited</i> Jamie Glasgow, <i>Wild Fish Conservancy</i> Jennifer Reidmeyer, <i>Ecology</i>	Jonathan Bradshaw, <i>LC Citizen Rep/Minutes</i> Kathy Jacobson, <i>LE Outreach Coordinator</i> Key McMurry, <i>GHC Citizen</i> Kirsten Harma, <i>LE Coordinator</i> Mara Zimmerman, <i>Coast Salmon Partnerhsip</i> Miranda Plumb, <i>Fish &amp; Wildlife Service</i> Megan Tuttle, <i>WDFW</i> Ned Pittman, <i>Coast Salmon Partnership</i> Paula Holroyde, <i>Thurston Co LWV</i> Ryan Walker, <i>Forterra</i> Sarah Moorehead, <i>Thurston Cons. Dist.</i> Steve Hagerty, <i>Mason Cons. Dist.</i> Thom Woodruff, <i>Capitol Land Trust</i> Tom Kollasch, <i>Grays Harbor Cons. Dist.</i>
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1. **Welcome, Introductions**
2. **Networking Time in Breakout Rooms**
3. **October Minutes Approval**

Key McMurry moved to approve October's minutes without comment; Tom Kollasch seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

#### 4. **Organizational Business**

##### 1. **Salmon Recovery Conference**

The Salmon Recovery Conference will take place this coming April, from the 27th to the 30th. It will be a virtual conference, and as such will only cost around \$20 - \$30. The conference is currently accepting abstracts.

##### 2. **Community Outreach**

The World Fish Migration Day event at the Chehalis Discovery trail was good; attendance was small, but it was a good event. Alexa will be leading an event to find spawning salmon on the Middle Fork of the Satsop - the event will take place on the early action reach.

The Grays Harbor Stream Team is partnering with Mt. Olympus Brewing in Aberdeen, 3-Magnets in Olympia, and Mainstem Malt in Walla Walla to produce a salmon-safe certified beer

to benefit the stream team. Kathy will be putting together an outreach info sheet on Salmon Safe certification, as well.

Kathy continues to do watershed hero recognition, and will be highlighting an Aberdeen couple and their work above Wilson Creek in Aberdeen.

### **3. Lead Entity Strategy – 10 year update steps**

Kirsten shared the possibilities she suggests for the LE in updating the Strategy document. The LE is responsible for implementation of the Strategy. The Strategy document must be updated to be useful - and in order to remain updated, the document needs to be quickly adaptable.

Kirsten presented three sets of possibilities for rehauling the document: quick, medium effort, and great effort/longer-term. In brief: a quick update would involve referencing the new barrier prioritization tool, updating project-ranking criteria, adding the new acquisition chapter, adding Ned Pittman's pilot watershed white paper, and updating the grant process chapter. A medium effort update would involve updating species data, integrating new fish research, changing information on priority stocks, and update recommended actions by Management Unit; a deeper update would look at reassessing the scale at which limiting factors are assigned, a review of tiered concerns, and policy changes - ultimately, carrying out a full re-write of the strategy document.

#### **DISCUSSION:**

There is agreement that this is needed: there is a lot of relevant information newly available when compared with a decade ago. There was discussion about the possibility of carrying out the update by way of developing a website tool in addition to a document. What might it look like to develop a GIS map that serves many of the goals of the document?

The group also expressed interest in looking into the possibility of seeking grant funding for the project. Anyone with interest in assisting with this work should reach out to Kirsten.

### **4. Washington Salmon Coalition**

Kirsten provided a run-down on relevant information from the most recent WSC meeting. A brief summary follows:

- State budget forecasts include fewer cuts than expected, though there will not likely be new spending. It's also noteworthy that the legislature will likely favor capital spending.

- The SRFB is requesting \$80 million in funding (for a ~\$46 million grant round), though funding will likely be close to what was disbursed in the past.

- Conversations on legislative outreach encouraged coordination among the Salmon Recovery Network: there are 15 different salmon-recovery programs requesting funding across the state.

- The group also shared recommendations on engaging individual legislators. These included not assuming legislators are familiar with salmon concerns; meeting with legislators multiple times; emphasizing the importance of salmon conservation alongside people-oriented legislative work; working with local tribes in your advocacy.

- In the upcoming SRFB round, \$350,000 of statewide funding will be allocated specifically for

monitoring projects. Monitoring projects can be based on either before/after monitoring of upcoming projects, or on the analysis of current data. As these projects can't access state funding, they must use federal funding. If you have any local monitoring project ideas, reach out to Mara Zimmerman.

-The WSC is also working to streamline permitting concerns, and is looking to work with LEs in understanding the best way to do so. They're also considering offering LE-level permit-application training.

-Manual 18 will be out in late November or early December, with PRISM numbers available in late November.

## **5. Aquatic Species Restoration Plan**

### **1. ASRP Implementation Team - Request for Input**

Emilie McKain gave a brief PowerPoint on the development of the implementation of the ASRP, and sought input from the group on how the structure is developing.

The suggested structure she presented follows:

The basin would be divided into three regions, each of which would have a dedicated Implementation Team (IT). These regions would likely be divided by ecoregions, though jurisdictions such as county lines could be a part of considerations, as well. Each IT would serve to balance the ASRP's directive to prioritize scientifically prudent actions and areas with local interest and landowner opportunities. These groups would be open, and consist largely of sponsors and land owners. Each IT would have a team lead, who would have dedicated capacity to coordinate team meetings and landowner workshops, and aid communication within each region as well as among the three regions. These leads would also communicate with ASRP management.

These ASRP ITs are not meant to replace current restoration groups and structures such as the HWG. The focus of these ITs would be to develop, coordinate and collaborate on restoration projects locally and inclusively. Notably, the nature of these teams would also provide opportunities for new sponsors to develop and grow as they partner with and work alongside established sponsors.

Suggested project development would be sequenced as follows:

Landowner conservation workshops are held; attending sponsors partner with opportunities that come to the fore; resulting pre-designs are developed; technical review takes place; design funding is awarded.

Following her presentation, Emilie sought feedback from the group. A full-group discussion took place, which was then followed by break-out sessions with four to five folks each. Discussion summaries follow:

**GROUP DISCUSSION:**

**Q:** How will the ASRP steering committee determine how to distribute funding?

A: We're moving away from a competitive model, and toward a "project-facilitation" model. We will have a large amount of funding, and the focus will be to develop the projects to put that funding to use. Within that, however, there is prioritization that will happen at the steering committee level in that certain priority areas (GSUs) will be identified and funding available to projects in those areas.

Comment: This structure will help with community buy-in, but it will take a lot of work to get landowners to show up. Don't overlook this detail - it is an important and potentially challenging element of this process.

#### BREAKOUT DISCUSSION POINTS:

-It is good to start this process with direct community engagement: they know what they want for their land and future.

-There is concern, however, that such a community-based, bottom-up approach may lead to patchy restoration that is not led by science-based priorities. It was noted, however, that ASRP management oversight would serve to help guide this process to focus landowner collaboration within targeted, scientifically-informed locations.

-Despite the facilitative nature of the funding distribution, a competitive element in the process will remain: we should just be clear about that.

-Sponsor experience has taught that it is one thing to get a LO excited and onboard; it is another for that LO to stay committed and dedicated to the work throughout the process and all the negotiations that follow. It would be helpful to have a list of LOs who are dedicated to the conservation work who can be trusted to *stay* on board.

-It would be helpful for LOs to have access to a map that delineates priority areas. This would give them context for where their land fits into the larger restoration picture. Such an understanding would help high-priority LOs to recognize themselves as such, as well as provide rationale to LOs in lower-priority areas who may be discouraged to be passed over. We want to avoid the damage of building unrealistic expectations among LOs who are farther down the line in terms of restoration prioritization.

-IT groups should consider mechanisms to facilitate small, simple projects, in addition to more significant restoration work. If we can help folks plant some trees in their riparian zone, let's be available to facilitate that.

-Let's still keep the Lead Entity as a key group: it's important to keep these efforts local and not have this be a state-run process.

-Plans for coordination among the different ITs is noted and appreciated.

-It was noted that balance among ITs will be important: all three regions want equal chances to participate and implement projects.

-Quarterly meetings would be doable; monthly meetings might be more challenging to fit in folks' calendars.

-Be cognizant of how the geographic delineations that determine IT regions split up watersheds. These regions should make sense to LOs, and be practical. (e.g.: LOs often have property on either side of river.)

## **6. Salmon Recovery Funding Board**

### **1. Project cost increase request**

Ann Weckback shared a cost-increase request to the group on behalf of Lewis County. Upon submission of their upcoming Berwick Creek Barrier Removal and Realignment project to the local tribes for cultural resources methodology review, the QIN requested that test pits be both doubled and deepened - this change raises the project cost by \$18,340.07. The County is requesting an additional \$9,170.35 from SRFB, with the County matching the remaining 50%. This cost increase wouldn't be coming out of the Chehalis LE return funds, but out of the SRFB-wide cost-increase pot.

Tom Kollasch moved to approve the request, which Thom Woodruff seconded; the group unanimously approved the motion. Kirsten will prepare a memo to submit to RCO through Brandon.

### **2. 2021 Grant Round Schedule**

Kirsten shared the 2021 SRFB schedule: the only recent change is the site visit date. Chehalis LE visits should take place either April 13th and 14th or the 14th and 15th.

## **7. Coast Salmon Partnership**

### **1. Letter on Chehalis Dam NEPA EIS**

Mara Zimmerman is drafting a response on behalf of the Coast region regarding the Chehalis dam NEPA EIS. With a quickly approaching deadline, Mara is working on an accelerated timeline and sought feedback and collaboration from the group. The group made plans for a follow-up meeting with the Chehalis LE representatives to the CSP to discuss the letter. Any HWG members were encouraged to participate, as well.

It is noted that Thom Kollasch has been asked to take on the role of CSP chairman. His new position also gives him a seat on the Coast Salmon Foundation board.

## **8. Western Ridged Mussel proposed listing - Implications for the Chehalis Basin**

Emilie Blevins, senior conservation biologist for the Xerces Society, presented a proposed petition for the listing of Western Ridged Mussels in the Chehalis River.

The Western Ridge Mussel is one of 6 freshwater mussel species in the West, and the Chehalis River harbors a genetically distinct group of these mussels with a unique genetic structure. This population is also the only Western Washington population apart from those in the Columbia River. Since 2015, the river has seen freshwater mussel die-off, likely due to increased water temperatures. In August of this year, the society submitted a petition to list the species. For further information, her presentation is available upon request.

## **9. Closing**