

# Habitat Work Group, Chehalis Basin Lead Entity

## AGENDA

Nov 6, 2023

~ 9:00 am – 12:00 pm ~

Chehalis Tribe Community Center: Library Classroom ~ 461 Secena Road, Oakville, WA

Alex Gustafson - <i>Trout Ultd</i>	Karen Adams - <i>WDFW Habitat Biologist</i>
Ann Weckback - <i>Lewis County Public Works</i>	Kathy Jacobsen - <i>LE Outreach</i>
Anthony Waldrop - <i>Grays Harbor Conserv Dist</i>	Kelly Verd - <i>Lewis Conservation Dist.</i>
Ben Amidon - <i>Chehalis Tribe Restoration</i>	Kelsey Mach - <i>Aspect Consulting</i>
Bob Russel - <i>Lewis County Citizen</i>	Key McMurray - <i>Pacific County LE</i>
Brett DeMond - <i>CBFTF Streamworks</i>	Kim Figlar-Barnes - <i>WDFW Fish Biologist</i>
Drew Mealor - <i>ASRP Implementation Mgr</i>	Mara Healey - <i>Thurston Conservation Dist</i>
Grace Adams - <i>Coast Salmon Foundation</i>	Mara Zimmerman - <i>Coast Salmon Part/Fdn</i>
Greg Green - <i>Ducks Unlimited</i>	Martin McCallum - <i>Thurston County Citizen</i>
Jan Robinson - <i>Chehalis River Basin Land Trust</i>	Mack Hunter - <i>Grays Harbor Conserv. Dist.</i>
Jacob Murray - <i>Mason Conservation District</i>	Meghan Tuttle - <i>WDFW Habitat Biologist</i>
Jamie Glasgow - <i>Wild Fish Conservancy</i>	Ned Pittman - <i>Coast Salmon Part/Fdn</i>
Jennifer Lewis- <i>ASRP Restoration Coordinator</i>	Sarah Watkins - <i>Grays Harbor County Citizen</i>
John Stepanek - <i>Grays Harbor Conserv Dist</i>	Travis Casey - <i>Dept of Ecology</i>
	Victoria Knorr - <i>ASRP Program Manager</i>

### 1. Welcome & Introductions

### 2. Minutes Approval

Sarah Watkins moved to approve September's minutes, which Bob Russel seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

### 3. Organizational Business

#### a. Outreach Updates

Kathy Jacobson shared a presentation on the Return of the Salmon event that the Lead Entity, WDFW, Mason Conservation District, Washington State Parks, Grays Harbor Stream Team, and Chehalis Basin Fisheries Task Force put on. The event was held at both the Satsop Springs hatchery as well as Schaefer State Park. About 20 citizens participated in the event. Lauren Bauernschmidt, a WDFW biologist, presented the public with information on Salmon ecology and biology, and Kurt Holt also shared information and stories. At Schaefer State Park, conditions made it difficult to view salmon, and so the event moved to the Satsop Springs hatchery, where participants got a tour, and hands-on interaction with salmon that were being spawned out at the hatchery.

Bob Russell shared that the Lewis County Stream Team will be holding a Riparian Walk with a Washington State Forester Patrick Shultz at Mill Creek on November 18th. The event will take place at Bob's property.

Kathy also shared that the Lead Entity tabled the Onalaska Harvest Festival event last month, and was co-located with WDFW's table. She noted that this worked well, as Kathy could provide watershed-level information, and folks with specific questions could be directed to the WDFW biologists. The event was very well attended, with many new residents.

Kirsten then shared that in November, the Chehalis LE will be hosting the "Happy Fish", a large, 6-foot icon representing World Fish Migration Day. On November 12th, it will be with Grays Harbor Stream Team, after which it will be at a Climate workshop at Ocean Shores on November 14th. At the end of the month, it will be at a Lewis County Stream Team planting event, and then at the Hoquiam Dam.

Further, Kirsten shared that the OCB is coordinating with the Chronicle every other week to publish Chehalis Basin restoration stories. Reach out to Kirsten with ideas for public engagement through this avenue.

Jan Robinson shared that the Discovery Trail is hosting a student restoration event with Onalaska and Evaline students on November 14th, and that the LC Stream Team will then help finish the project on the 20th.

Bob Russell shared that he would be interested to see what kind of opportunities and funding sources there might be to publish paid articles through the Chronicle, in addition to its regular but necessarily limited coverage. He shared the example of the Economic Alliance's regular paid insert feature, and suggested local restoration and conservation entities consider funding something similar.

#### **b. Newaukum Prioritized Watershed Plan**

Alex Gustafson shared an update from the recent Newaukum workgroup meeting. In the last month, the group has started the field verification phase, visiting the SF Newaukum to verify the model on the ground. At the meeting, Ann Weckback led an exercise to prioritize the remaining high priority barriers in the Newaukum. The group is also working on funding the remainder of the work through a NOAA proposal, and are starting work on discussions for funding options to address the City of Chehalis water intake and fish passage site.

Newaukum Work Group meetings will continue to occur on an as-needed basis.

Mara Zimmerman shared a map outlining the areas of the Newaukum selected for prioritized watershed restoration planning. The map outlined areas targeted for an intensive effort to execute 12 miles of wood placement, 12 miles of riparian restoration, and three fish passage barrier corrections.

On behalf of the Coast Salmon Partnership, Mara requested a letter of support for a NOAA fish passage program grant proposal to assess all 24 miles of stream for wood placement and restoration projects, complete 2 miles of on the ground construction, and design 10 miles of work: all for a total of 2 million dollars. This funding will pass through the CSF to fund work to

be done by Trout Unlimited and the Lewis Conservation District. Mara requested the group's approval to work with Kirsten on a letter of support from the Lead Entity for this project.

*Q: Mitchell Creek is an area prone to slides and has a lot of sediment. Is this a concern regarding its ability to retain instream wood and structures?*

A: The plan is for engineered wood structures to help retain gravels and naturally recruited wood from slides; retained gravel will help wash out that sediment. The engineered wood structures are designed to withstand large flood events, and are not as subject to washing out as is naturally recruited wood.

*Q: What is the ownership in the headwaters?*

A: Primarily Weyerhaeuser. We've been working on outreach to them with Lewis Conservation District step by step. We currently hold a permit from Weyerhaeuser to do the field assessment work in the South Fork and will seek further permitting as we move forward.

Comment: The lower reaches of this area have a lot of intense development pressure, and so outreach will be an important part of this work.

**ACTION:** Megan Tuttle moved that the HWG put forward a letter of support for Coast Salmon Partnership's pilot watershed project grant request to the NOAA fish passage program, which Key McMurray seconded. The motion passed unanimously, with an abstention from Alex Gustafson, who represents Trout Unlimited, a beneficiary of the grant request.

#### c. **Cloquallum PWR**

Kirsten shared that the focus of the Lead Entity's next Prioritized Watershed Restoration plan, modeled after the Newaukum PWR plan, will be the Cloquallum watershed. John Stepanek will be working in a supportive role for this plan through the Grays Harbor Conservation District, and Kirsten led a conversation about forming a Cloquallum PWR workgroup. Kirsten shared that the work group will likely meet 6 - 7 times over the coming year, with hopes of a streamlined process given lessons learned on the Newaukum. Members who expressed interest in involvement on various levels include John Stepanek or Anthony Waldrop with the Grays Harbor Conservation District, Jacob Murray with Mason Conservation District, Kim Figlar-Barnes with WDFW, Megan Tuttle with WDFW, Brett DeMond with Chehalis Basin Fisheries Task Force, Jamie Galsgow with Wild Fish Conservancy, and Caprice Fasano with the Quinault Indian Nation.

Representatives are also sought from Dept of Natural Resources, Dept of Ecology, Port Blakely, the Chehalis Tribe, the City of McCleary, Green Diamond, other private ownership and citizens local to the watershed.

Megan Tuttle also noted that this is a main watershed she is writing emergency permits for: the river is very incised and regularly subject to road washout, and so urgent infrastructure repairs have been common here, which are often not compatible with ecologically-prudent construction.

Involved parties can watch for an invite to schedule an upcoming meeting, and core members will be discussing next steps offline.

#### d. **Humptulips**

Caprice Fasano shared an update on the Humptulips pilot work. She shared that the Quinault Indian Nation is working to get three concept designs completed by April 30th, the end of the

current funding window. The tribe has a prioritization workshop later the afternoon. Caprice also shared that Natural Systems Design (NSD) is using an analysis decision tool to prioritize and filter projects, which she noted as helpful.

e. **Washington Salmon Coalition (WSC)**

Kirsten shared that the WSC is taking on “Salmon Day on the Hill” on January 31st, an outreach project to elected officials. This is in coordination with the Council of Regions in an effort to carry to elected officials a wide, shared message about why we care about salmon and what we’re doing about it. Kirsten asked Citizen members to participate – get in touch with Kirsten for further details.

4. **Letter of Support Request - Hoquiam**

Kelsey Mach with Aspect Consulting shared an update on the City of Hoquiam’s West Fork Dam Removal and source switch project, as well as a request for a letter of support for an upcoming grant application.

Kelsey shared that the project to date has received \$1.2 million from NOAA for feasibility-level efforts toward removal of the Hoquiam dam and water source replacement, and then shared a range of updates on the progress of that work.

Kelsey then shared a request for a letter of support for a current grant proposal to carry out the removal of the dam, construction of the source alternative, and water treatment plan upgrades.

Permitting, design and construction would occur from 2024 - 2027, with dam removal starting in 2027; source alternative construction in 2025-26; and water treatment upgrades 2025-28. Currently, a request for \$500,000 through local legislators is in the works, and a \$10.7 million grant application has been submitted to NOAA’s 2023 fish passage grant program. If needed, the project also intends to apply to further grants and future NOAA fish passage program grant rounds.

*Q: Are all of the proposed source alternatives ground water?*

A: One of the alternatives is deep groundwater at a different location than previously identified, another is a shallow groundwater source alongside the river, and a third is a new diversion that would not include a dam. The deep groundwater is the highly preferred option, but the priority remains whatever is required for successful removal of the dam.

**ACTION:** Anthony Waldrop moved to put forward a letter of support for the Hoquiam dam removal and source replacement project, which Bob Russell seconded. A vote on the motion passed unanimously.

5. **Salmon Recovery Funding Board – updates**

a. **2024 – Summary for Grant Round**

Kirsten shared an update on the coming Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) grant round, noting that a significant difference going into this year is that funding is effectively doubled with the addition of riparian-dedicated funding. Traditional SRFB funding should total from \$898K to \$1 million, and up to \$886K funding will be made available for riparian-specific projects. Riparian-focused funding is uniquely flexible in that stand-alone acquisition, assessment, inventory, and maintenance are all qualifying project-types.

Previous input from statewide Lead Entities encouraging this funding to be handled directly by LEs were heard, and funding will be handled through the Lead Entities. Kirsten noted that Jeannie Abbott from GSRO noted that will also be useful this year to solicit and compile projects that may not fit these SRFB grants: both in order to have a very strong SRFB list, as well as to have projects lined up for additional funding likely in the works. The RCO is seeking additional funding from the legislature, and is looking to have robust lists to populate a significant funding request in the near future.

**SRFB Match Policy:** Kirsten noted that after a lot of LE feedback, consideration of having no match requirement for SRFB funding is under consideration by the Board as an option - a significant change from previous discussions.

At their December 13<sup>th</sup> meeting, the SRFB will discuss both the no-match option, as well as share more details on the potential funding being sought from the legislature above and beyond the SRFB. Interested parties are welcome to provide public comment in favor of no-match.

Kirsten then asked for input from the group on whether coming riparian-focused grant proposals should be handled through a single RFP, or whether it should be run as its own RFP. Group members tended to be interested in keeping both funding sources under the same RFP in brief discussion, but further discussion is needed.

*Q: What if a project is both a barrier and a riparian project?*

A: Guidance at this point is that a project cannot have ineligible elements: it must be dedicated riparian restoration work for the riparian funding.

#### **b. Project Ideas**

Group members shared potential SRFB projects they have in the pipeline for the coming grant round.

Anthony Waldrop shared that some landowners on Garrard Creek are interested in a full salmon riparian restoration project on their property, and he is interested in putting together a design grant for the project.

Brett DeMond shared that the Chehalis Basin Fisheries Task Force (CBFTF) has a project on Workman Creek, southwest of Elma, funded mostly from the CAOP grants. The county needs a \$500k match would like to apply for SRFB funding for at least a portion of that.

Kelly Verd shared that she is looking forward to getting to the district's project on Hammer and Guenther completed. She will not submit more projects until that is funded.

Ben Amidon shared that they are continuing with the Big Buffer project, managing and expanding it. Another 1000 plants are going in this winter, but they are limited by capacity. Another couple riparian projects are coming up upriver of this work as well that will qualify for this funding. Because of this capacity, any grants would necessitate including capacity funding. Anthony Waldrop and Kelly Verd both noted that their planting crews may be available to be hired out for some of this work if needed.

## 6. Climate and Salmon Workshop and Climate Resilience Index Results

Grace Adams shared an update on the Coast Salmon Partnership's upcoming climate workshop, as well as draft results on the Climate Resilience Index (CRI).

The upcoming climate workshop will take place November 14th, which requires no-cost registration. It will take place at the Ocean Shores convention center, and will focus on clarifying the importance of climate resilience, sharing an overview of the climate resilience index, and share how the index can be used going forward.

Grace then shared a summary of the work the CSP has carried out on Phase II of the climate adaptation framework, which has been in progress since April. This work is compiling information on climate resilience throughout the Coast Lead Entities, and bringing it together into a resilience index draft. This resource aims to identify opportunities to improve climate resilience and target restoration of habitats.

Grace shared a presentation on the details of how the CRI is calculated. Working at the HUC12 level, the index incorporates each HUC12 unit's

1. Exposure (to climate impacts),
2. Sensitivity (landscape characteristics that will impact the extent exposure will be felt), and
3. Social Adaptability (capacity of human systems to respond to changing conditions).

The index compiles data for each component, in a way consistently available across the watersheds. Grace noted the metrics used in this process, detailing the Index's guiding equation and describing each of the equation's components. She then shared a map of the HUC12 units throughout the Coastal LEs, shaded according to their CRI score.

More in-depth information and opportunity for discussion will take place at the upcoming climate workshop.

Q: What were your criteria for the invasive plant establishment vulnerability metric?

A: This is a somewhat coarse index, but it brought together elements including physical and geographic pathways for seed distribution, and levels of management.

Q: You're focusing on the coast. How transferable is this across non-coastal regions?

A: Some of this will be transferable, depending on availability of data sets. But yes, some of these elements are necessarily coastally-specific.

## 7. Federal Funding workshop

Kirsten shared the opportunity for a federal funding workshop that is coming together. She, Anthony Waldrop, and Cindy Malay with the Office of the Chehalis Basin (OCB) are working to nail down a date for a full-day, in-person event.

Anthony added that the goal of this workshop is to work together to understand how best to coordinate across the basin on a large, high-dollar package of projects in a way that is worth the time and effort required for the extensive process of applying for federal funding.

Q: *Are there specific sources of funding you are looking at?*

A: There are a suite of sources we'll be looking at, and that will be part of the discussion. But we're focusing on putting together a large basin-wide package, and then will be considering what kind of large-cap federal funding source would be a good fit for that package.

## **8. Associated Programs Updates**

### **a. Coast Salmon Partnership**

Ned Pittman shared that the implementation committee is meeting November 28th, developing recommendations to the Coast Salmon Partnership Board, based on a review the Hydraulic Permit Applications (HPA) and Forest Practice Rules. He noted an agenda is forthcoming. He also noted that the Washington Coast Restoration and Resiliency Initiative (WCRRRI) grant round opens in January. Sponsors with larger projects on the coast should look to apply.

### **b. Aquatic Species Restoration Plan**

Drew Meador shared that the ASRP has a lot going on right now, with several recent Regional Implementation Team (RIT) meetings, and multiple projects coming up. Some of these are large reach-scale projects, some are smaller riparian projects, and all are in the application pipeline at this point. At this point, no funding has been obligated from this biennium, but about \$10 million-worth of projects are in the pipeline, which is just under half of the funding for the biennium.

Drew noted that the next RIT meeting is November 16th, and that some site visits are upcoming, which Victoria Knorr noted would focus on Oregon Spotted Frog and beaver dam analogues, as well as on project effectiveness monitoring and prioritization of that monitoring work. Further, Drew noted that a cultural resources inadvertent discovery plan (IDP) training is coming up on November 8th.

Lastly, he noted that on December 14th, the ASRP will be having an in-person, potluck-style RIT meeting, which will also be an opportunity for engagement with the Steering Committee.

Victoria Knorr further shared that the ASRP is also starting to plan their public-facing, information-sharing symposium in 2024. It will likely take place April 17th and 18th.

## **9. Other Business**

Bob Russell finished the meeting by highlighting his gratitude for the nature of the Habitat Work Group, and specifically for the work Kirsten Harma does for the group. He noted particular work she has done above and beyond in support of individual restoration efforts in the basin.