

Chehalis Basin Lead Entity -- Habitat Work Group

January 10, 2022 -- Minutes

Zoom Meeting

~ 9:00 am – 12:00 pm ~

Andrew Deffobis, <i>Thurston County</i> Ann Weckback, <i>Lewis County Public Works</i> Alex Gustafson, <i>Trout Unlimited</i> Alexa Brown, <i>CBFTF/GH Stream Team</i> Ben Amidon, <i>Chehalis Tribe DNR</i> Bob Amrine, <i>Lewis Cons. Dist.</i> Brad Murphy, <i>Thurston County</i> Brandon Carman, <i>RCO</i> Brett DeMond, <i>Chehalis Basin Fisheries TF</i> Brian Stewart, <i>Conservation Northwest</i> Charley Kearns, <i>Grays Harbor Cons. Dist.</i> Colleen Purefoy, <i>Citizen</i> Elena Fernandez, <i>Thurston County, Pub W.</i> Emelie McKain, <i>ASRP/ WDFW</i> Garrett Dalan, <i>The Nature Conservancy</i> Greg Green, <i>Ducks Unlimited</i>	Hannah Coe, <i>Ecology Non-Point</i> Jamie Glasgow, <i>Wild Fish Conservancy</i> Kathy Jacobson, <i>CBLE Outreach Coordinator</i> Kirsten Harma, <i>Lead Entity Coordinator</i> Keith Underwood, <i>Mason Cons. Dist.</i> Kelly Verd, <i>Lewis Cons. Dist.</i> Key McMurry, <i>Grays Harbor Citizen</i> Mara Healy, <i>Thurston Conservation District</i> Mara Zimmerman, <i>Coast Salmon Partnership</i> Megan Tuttle, <i>WDFW Region 6</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> Trevin Taylor, <i>Thurston County Pub. Works</i>
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1. **Welcome, Introductions**
2. **Networking Time in Breakout Rooms**
3. **Minutes Approval – November**

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

4. **Organizational Business**
 - a. **Outreach Updates**

Kathy educated youth about river processes with the River Table at three schools starting in December (Toledo, Washington & Simpson). She recently presented to 5 classes at Toledo. She started with a PowerPoint overview first, since there can be limited kids around the table at any one time. The group applauded this opportunity to see how river processes work in order to fully understand them.

Kathy and Bob Russell met with the editor at the Centralia Chronicle to ask what kinds of educational articles might interest the paper. They were told that the Chronicle is most interested in receiving news releases, and then having its own staff write the story. Thus, they will less likely be receptive to receiving our "Watershed Hero" stories like the Daily World is. The next Watershed Hero story Kathy will be writing will be about Dan Penn and William Thom from the Chehalis Tribe, to be shared with the Daily World and Grays Harbor Talks.

Stream Team will host a yellow rope beach clean-up at Grayland on January 15th.

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

5. **Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB)**

a. **Establishing 2022 Local Review Team**

Kirsten listed the volunteers who have offered to serve on the review team for the 2022 SRFB grants. These are:

Citizens

Bob Russell (Lewis County, Wisner Creek)

Sarah Watkins (Grays Harbor County – Garrard & Harris Creek)

Cindy Wilson (Thurston County)

Technical

Key McMurray – fish/restoration

Caprice Fasano – fish biology

Ben Amidon – Plants

Megan Tuttle – fish biology/permitting

Ned Pitman – Fish biology/monitoring

Miranda Plumb/alternate USFWS – fish biology/other aquatic species

Tom made a motion to approve this list of candidates for the Local Review Team. Alexa seconded. All in favor.

b. **Targeted Investment RFP**

Mara provided an overview of the SRFB’s Targeted Investment funding source, and the joint Coast Salmon Partnership-Chehalis Basin Lead Entity RFP. The SRFB specifically wants to see projects that benefit Chinook as a food source for Southern Resident Killer Whale. Projects are only eligible if their cost is above the annual SRFB allocation for the Lead Entity.

Kirsten said she hasn’t heard of any project concepts in the works that would be a good fit for this grant source. Bob mentioned that as the ASRP Regional Implementation Teams begin to generate project lists some good project concepts may surface.

c. **SRFB Project Proposals/ Fish Barrier Removal Board Projects**

This year, the majority of SRFB applications are as match for the Fish Barrier Removal Board (FBRB) grant program. Project sponsors are seeking letters of support from the Lead Entity, which will provide them with extra points in the FBRB program. The grant deadline is January 13, so we are prioritizing these presentations during this meeting.

Thompson Creek at Thompson Creek Rd. Fish Passage Construction (Elena, Thurston County Public Works)

Elena presented the proposed project’s features and benefits to salmon. Thurston County chose to prioritize this passage correction because it ranked high using our Lead Entity’s new culvert prioritization tool, despite being a low maintenance concern

for the County. Brian asked if the proposed bridge would be large enough to allow other wildlife to pass underneath. Elena thinks it is, but Thurston County won't be added any fencing other than the necessary guardrail. They confirmed that the creek has year-round flow and is a good groundwater fed system.

The project will mainly be funded by Thurston County programs and the Fish Barrier Removal Board. They are asking for a SRFB grant to increase the funding partnerships. Kirsten brought up that for the Black River tributary project in the 2021 grant round, the review team found it concerning that the project didn't *need* funding from the SRFB to get through construction. She asked the group if they would consider this a count against this project in the present grant round. No concerns were brought up.

Sarah made a motion to provide Thurston County with a letter of support for their FBRB application. Key seconded. All in favor.

Coal Creek Fish Passage Restoration (Alex Gustafson, Trout Unlimited)

Alex presented Trout Unlimited's request for design and construction funding for this project. The landowner is supportive and loves seeing fish on his property. Alex asked for input on the project cost estimates. Bob noted that the Conservation District did a project upstream of this site and the landowner hasn't seen fish up there. This could be a good indication that there's still a downstream passage issue.

Megan made a motion to provide Trout Unlimited with a letter of support for their FBRB application. Ben seconded. All in favor.

Damon Creek Kirkpatrick Rd Fish Passage Construction (Alexa, Chehalis Basin Fisheries Task Force)

This large construction project would remove 12 ft of road fill and affect an evacuation route road. The benefit would be access to 5 species of salmonids to lots of forested habitat, with Damon Lake providing additional good rearing. All other barriers in this system have been removed. The barrier is in the top 1% in the basin-wide prioritization tool. There would be an additional community benefit of providing better public boat access at this site.

Garrett asked the sponsor why the project would be requesting WCRRI funding as match to the FBRB grant, and suggested that the sponsor carefully consider the review criteria for the WCRRI program. Others were concerned about the proportion of funds being asked of WCRRI (85%) compared to the FBRB ask (15%). Alexa noted the educational opportunity for working with the nearby Camp Bethyl.

Ben asked why this construction project is so costly. The answer was that there is a lot of road fill to remove, materials are expensive right now, and there are lots of pilings to drive – a particularly costly labor element.

Kirsten asked if Bull Trout had been documented in this system, since, although they are listed in our Lead Entity strategy, aren't usually found in rivers in the Chehalis.

Tom made a motion to provide the Chehalis Basin Fisheries Task Force with a letter of support for this project. Megan seconded. All in favor.

(Dry Bed Creek at) **W. Beeville Road Fish Passage Planning** (Alex Gustafson, Trout Unlimited)

This is a design-only grant. The finished correction would benefit coho, steelhead and searun cutthroat. Alex asked for advise on the costs estimates. Ann recommended increasing the cultural resources costs. Someone asked if there were any upstream barriers. Alex responded that Megan hadn't been able to get out and do a field visit yet. They will still need to verify the gain as part of the project. More important from FBRB's perspective is the presence of downstream barriers – there are no downstream barriers on this system.

(Dry Bed Creek at) **W. Beeville Loop Road Fish Passage Planning** (Alex Gustafson, Trout Unlimited)

This is a very similar design project on an adjacent tributary to Dry Bed Creek. Mason County wanted to put in for separate grants for each location.

Ben made a motion to provide Trout Unlimited with a letter of support for both project. Tom seconded. All in favor.

(Middle Fork Newaukum Trib) **Hammer and Guenther Fish Barrier Removal** ((Kelly Verd, Lewis Conservation District)

The Hammer project was presented for SRFB funding during the last grant round. This FBRB proposal adds another worksite which is a barrier upstream of this one. Completing both corrections will mean that there will only be 1 barrier left in the Middle Fork after this. The project is important in Lewis County and in the Newaukum. There is lots of rearing habitat in the headwaters, and coho were observed spawning downstream in the fall. Since they are only replacing the undersized culverts with a forest access road, the costs for this project will be low. There is no livestock access to the stream and there is good upstream habitat. The project will be requesting match from SRFB.

Tom made a motion to provide a letter of support to Lewis Conservation District for this project. Alexa seconded. All in favor.

Bob asked that since LCD is the sponsor of this project, that Key McMurry as Vice Chair sign the support letter.

6. Associated Program Updates

a. Aquatic Species Restoration Plan – Implementation Plan overview and program updates

Emelie provided ASRP updates. There will soon be 2 new forms, available on the ASRP website, that will serve as the intake form for all project concepts. These will be e-mailed to project sponsors shortly. There was a recent kick-off meeting for all ASRP project sponsors. The meeting wasn't recorded but notes will be posted soon.

Mara Healy provided an update on how the Skookumchuck project is looking after the floods. The structures are in place, but they don't know about the plantings. A crew is actively working on installing bare root plants. Generally good news!

b. Coast Salmon Partnership

WCRRI will be sending out an RFP on January 24th. Kirsten will send out a calendar hold for the WCCRI deadline so people don't forget it.

c. Chehalis Basin Partnership

Streamflow Restoration grants are due February 1.

This meeting was followed by a meeting of the Newaukum Subcommittee.