

Habitat Work Group, Chehalis Basin Lead Entity

MINUTES

January 8, 2023

~ 9:00 am – 12:00 pm ~

Zoom Only

<p>Adam Flemming – <i>WDFW Fish Passage</i> Alex Bradberry - <i>CSP Outreach</i> Alex Gustafson – <i>Trout Unlimited</i> Aimee Richardson - <i>Citizen</i> Ann Weckback - <i>Lewis County Public Works</i> Anthony Waldrop - <i>Grays Harbor Cons. Dist</i> Ben Amidon – <i>Chehalis Tribe</i> Bob Russell - <i>Lewis County Citizen</i> Brett DeMond - <i>CBFTF Streamworks</i> Caprice Fasano - <i>Quinault Indian Nation</i> Chanelle Holbrook – <i>Ecology, Water Qual</i> Chris Clemons – <i>WDFW, NRCS</i> Devin DeBono - <i>Lewis County Public Works</i> Drew Mealor - <i>ASRP Implementation Mgr</i> Farley Youckton - <i>Chehalis Tribe Water Qual</i> Grace Adams – <i>CSP Climate Planner</i> Jennifer Lewis – <i>Office of Chehalis Basin</i></p>	<p>John Stepanek - <i>Grays Harbor Conserv Dist</i> Kathy Jacobson - <i>LE Outreach</i> Kelly Verd - <i>Lewis Conservation District</i> Key McMurray - <i>Pacific County LE</i> Kiley Smith – <i>Grays Harbor Noxious Weeds</i> Kim Figlar-Barnes - <i>WDFW Fish Biologist</i> Kirsten Harma - <i>LE Coordinator</i> Lacey Wright – <i>Grays Harbor Wildlife Refuge</i> Luc Lamarche - <i>Beaver Craftworks</i> Mack Hunter – <i>Grays Harbor Cons Dist.</i> Mara Healy - <i>Thurston Conservation District</i> Martin McClallum– <i>Thurston County Citizen</i> Melissa Erkel - <i>WDFW Fisheries Biologist</i> Megan Tuttle - <i>WDFW Habitat Biologist</i> Ned Pittman - <i>Coast Salmon Part/Fdn</i> Sarah Watkins - <i>Grays Harbor County Citizen</i></p>
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1. **Welcome & Introductions**
2. **Minutes**

Minutes for December were approved without comment.

3. **Organizational Business**

- a. **Outreach Updates**

Kathy Jacobson shared that in December, Liz Banze with Resource Media hosted a workshop on having conversations across ideological divides. Kathy shared some insight from the workshop, and has resources to share from the workshop for anyone who is interested.

Kathy shared that the 2024 First Hike event took place on January 1st, and shared photos from the event. Lake Sylvia State Park, along with the Friends of Sylvia State Park, hosted four different hikes. Roughly 60 people were in attendance, and Kathy and Megan Tuttle hosted a “Forest Biodiversity, Streams, and Salmon” educational hike.

Further, Kathy shared that she, Friends of Schafer and Lake Sylvia State Parks (FOSLS), representatives from WDFW, and Mason CD will be meeting together on January 18th to discuss a calendar of similar events for 2024.

Kathy continues to update the Lead Entity website, and develop salmon-focused handouts for the public and local schools. She also invited participation at any of her upcoming river table presentations at

Onalaska schools on January 23rd, 24th and 25th at Onalaska. Conversation is in development with Chehalis schools to do the same in the future.

Finally, Kathy shared that Karen Adams will be the next “Meet Your Local Salmon Biologist” series.

Anthony Waldrop then shared that Megan Tuttle worked with Onalaska High School to host a restoration a field trip on Friday February 2nd. The students will bring donated Christmas trees to the district’s Schaefer Creek staging site, and then tour a finished site to see what will be done with those trees.

Lacey shared that the Grays Harbor Shorebird Nature Festival is taking place from May 3rd - 5th. Rebecca Heisman, author of Flight Path, will be a keynote speaker for the event.

Bob Russell shared that a “Coal Creek Action Committee” meeting will be taking place on January 29th at the Twin Cities Senior Center at 5PM, to understand and build community interest in the developing Coal Creek project.

b. Cloquallum PWR

John Stepanek shared an update on the Cloquallum Pilot Watershed Reach work. He shared that last week, the Core Team met for the first time, setting up the agenda and process for the rest of the year. Nine monthly meetings will take place in 2024, likely starting February 2nd.

c. Humptulips PWR

Caprice Fasano shared that the tribe has been in the field, reviewing potential restoration sites for the Humptulips pilot watershed. Upcoming restoration work includes a 30% design on Rayonier land, a 10% concept design on USFS lands, and one 10% design within the ASRP Middle Humptulips HMU.

4. Federal Funding Workshop

Kirsten Harma shared that on January 30th, Cindy Malay, OCB Project Manager, will be coordinating the upcoming CSB Federal Funding workshop, which will provide an opportunity for groups across the basin to coordinate and bundle restoration projects of all sizes, in order to ease the process of applying for large federal funding grants. She then fielded questions about the event, and shared a form through which groups are encouraged to submit projects for this discussion.

5. Associated Programs Updates – (9:50)

a. NRCS (Natural Resource Conservation Service) (Melissa Erkel)

Melissa Erkel, a biologist with WDFW, shared information with the group about a partnership WDFW has with the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). This partnership, over the past 10 years, has provided technical assistance to NRCS when assessing sites. NRCS has been working with farmers and ranchers for the past 75 years, in a manner that prioritizes both agriculture and conservation interests. The service carries out fish barrier removal, in-channel stream construction and alignment, irrigation updates, forest management practices, road erosion control, riparian buffers, wildlife habitat planting, fencing, and livestock water upgrades. WDFW provides technical assistance to the private landowners working with NRCS. In order to qualify for NRCS funding, the landowner must be a producer, and the land itself must be agricultural land. The land must also be owned by a private individual, a land trust, or a tribe. NRCS typically will pay for about 75% of the project.

If any sponsors have questions or a project that would be a good fit, they should reach out to Melissa.

Additionally, Adam Flemming of WDFW shared that he and Chris Clemons will be working with NRCS to help get projects funded across the state. Adam will be focusing on SW Washington state. He noted that NRCS has a lot of funding, though a lot of it is dedicated to riparian restoration work. Adam also stressed

that anyone with questions on this funding or anything related is encouraged to reach out to either him or Chris Clemons.

b. **Fish Barrier Removal Board (10:15)**

i. **Program Update**

Adam Flemming shared an update on the Brian Abbott Fish Barrier Removal Board (FBRB) grant round. He stated that initial preliminary applications are due January 18th, with final applications due by May 2nd. In the following two months after final applications, scoring and ranking of projects will take place. The final ranked list will be out approximately August 2024, after which the list will be submitted to the legislature for their consideration.

Adam also noted that the “Protect” funding was helpful the past grant round, and will continue going forward. Eligible sponsors (cities, counties, states) are advised to apply to this. It is a lengthier, federal funded project but DOT will work with WDFW and sponsors in this process. He also noted that while there is technically a 20% match required, the DOT indicated that this will likely be covered by toll funding. The RFP for this funding will be put out soon.

ii. **Project presentation and request for letter of support**

Camp Creek at Monte Elma Road (Chehalis Basin Fisheries Task Force)

Brett DeMond, on behalf of the Chehalis Basin Fisheries Task Force, presented a fish passage construction project seeking funding from the FBRB, and sought a letter of support from the Lead Entity. The project, in Grays Harbor County, is located on Camp Creek, which flows into Metcalf Slough. The project would replace a 33% passable, 4' x 3' x 45' culvert barrier on mainstem Camp Creek to open 4.92 miles of upstream habitat, benefiting coho, chum, steelhead, and cutthroat trout. The culvert replacement would be a 20.5' x 9' x 56' Super-Cor culvert, for a total project cost of \$704,452. The county will be covering \$140,890, bringing the FBRB ask to \$563,562.

Action: Bob Russell moved that the Lead Entity provide a letter of support for the project, which Anthony Waldrop seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

c. **Coast Salmon Partnership (Mara/Ned/Alex B.)**

Ned Pittman reminded the group that WCRRI's grant round opens January 22nd. The same day, Ned will send out RFQs for the technical review panel. He also encouraged groups and individuals to advocate to the legislature for the importance of WCRRI for the coastal region.

January 23rd will be the CSP's first implementation meeting of the year. The partnership has been developing recommendations to the board regarding regulations. Looking ahead, the implementation team will next look at growth management and shoreline management plan critical areas.

d. **Aquatic Species Restoration Plan**

Drew Mealor reminded the group that the ASRP Symposium is coming up in April. An agenda for the meeting will be coming out soon.

He also shared that the ASRP funding round is still open, with about \$20 million still yet to be obligated for this biennium.

January 11th, he reminded the group that the Office of the Chehalis Basin is meeting, which will be online for the public. The ASRP Regional Implementation Team meeting is coming up on January 18th, also online.

6. **Salmon Recovery Funding Board (11:15)**

a. **2024 –Grant Round Updates**

i. **Final Grant Round Schedule for Chehalis Basin Lead Entity**

Kirsten shared a final draft of the 2024 grant round schedule, and noted that she sent out a press release announcing the opening grant round through the Daily World. In the upcoming months, sponsors will present projects at HWG meetings, and February 5th, Kirsten will host a project sponsor workshop along with Kendall Barrameda of RCO. Applications will be due in PRISM March 22nd, and project site visits will take place April 9th - 11th.

ii. **Call for Local Review Team**

Kirsten led a conversation to develop the team for SRFB site review visits. Potential participants discussed include former participants, including Ben Amidon, Caprice Fasano, Cindy Wilson, Key McMurray, Bob Russell, Ned Pittman, Sarah Watkins, and Megan Tuttle. Participation in these visits is still open, and will be decided at the next HWG meeting.

Kirsten also shared that Patrick of Grays Harbor College is interested in bringing his students along for site visits again this year, and HWG members expressed interest in having them join again.

iii. **SRFB Funding Updates**

Kirsten shared details on funding for SRFB this year, reminding the group that this year's funds include traditional SRFB funding as well as approximately equivalent funding dedicated for riparian projects.

She also walked through a chart comparing and contrasting SRFB riparian funding with the WSCC riparian grant program, and made the chart available to the group.

Finally, Kirsten shared that the Board has decided that starting in 2025, match will no longer be required for SRFB grants, with only a couple case-specific exceptions.

b. **SRFB Conceptual Project Presentations**

i. **Grays Harbor Conservation District SRFB Projects 2024**

Anthony Waldrop shared a presentation outlining three projects that the CD is considering for the 2024 grant round, briefly outlined as follows:

1. *Garrard Creek RM 4.4 - 5.0 Restoration Design and Analysis*: two separate property owners are interested in a wide variety of restoration strategies in this stream section, including floodplain restoration, LWD installation, invasive species removal.
Comment: There is a lot of exceptional juvenile fish use here, and very good, active beaver dam habitat here. This would be an exceptional project in a great location.
2. *Wynoochee River Planting at RM 3.5*: 60 acres of restoration including conifer underplanting, wetland restoration, and invasive plant treatment.
3. *Mox Chehalis RM 4.8 - 5.6 Riparian Restoration*: John Stepanek shared a potential project to work with a landowner who has previously participated in CREP, who would like to plant approximately 14.6 acres of a riparian zone along Mox Chehalis creek. Project cost would be approximately \$230,000, including 3-5 years of management.

ii. **MF Newaukum Trib @ Alpha Fish Passage Construction**

Kelly Verd presented a proposed Lewis Conservation District project to restore passage on the Middle Fork Newaukum through replacement of two barriers. The first barrier opens 1.05 miles of habitat up to the second barrier, and would replace 4 compromised culverts with a minimal flat rack bridge. The second barrier would open up 1.77 miles of habitat and is the last significant barrier in the subbasin. This barrier would be replaced with a steel bridge. Both of these projects would restore access to really strong rearing habitat with active beaver populations.

Cost estimations for these projects are still in process.

7. Other Business

Caprice Fasano shared that the QIN is hiring for a senior habitat fish biologist, and the position will be open through January 31st.

8. Closing