

Chehalis Basin Lead Entity -- Habitat Work Group

Chehalis Tribal Community Center

461 Secena Road, Oakville, WA

February 6, 2023 – Minutes

9:00 am – 12:00 pm

<p>Alex Gustafson - Trout Ultd Cheh Rest. Mgr Ben Amidon - Chehalis Tribe Brad Murphy – Thurston County Brett DeMond – CBFTF/ Streamworks Bob Russell – Lewis County Citizen Caprice Fasano - Quinault Indian Nation Chris Volmert - Lewis Conservation Dist. Devin DeBono - Lewis County Public Works Drew Mealar - ASRP Implemen. Manager Grace Adams - Coast Salmon Partnership Greg Green - Ducks Unlimited Jan Robinson - CRB Land Trust Jacob McMurray - Mason Conservation Dist Jerilyn Walley - Grays Harbor Conserv. Dist Jonathan Bradshaw – Lead Entity -Minutes Kathy Jacobson - Lead Entity Outreach/Ed. Karen Adams - LC WDFW Habitat Biologist Kelly Verd - Lewis Conserv. Dist.</p>	<p>Kendall Barameda - SRFB Grants Manager Key McMurry - Grays Harbor Citizen Kim Figlar-Barnes - WDFW Fish Program Kirsten Harma - Lead Entity Coordinator Luc Lamarche - Beaver Craftworks, LLC Mara Healy - Thurston Conserv. Dist. Mara Zimmerman - Coast Salmon Part./Fdn. Martjn McClallum, Citizen Megan Tuttle – WDFW Habitat Biologist Miranda Plumb - USFWS Nat Kale - Office of Chehalis Basin Planner Ned Pittman - Coast Salmon Partnership/Fdn Sarah Watkins - Grays Harbor Citizen Rep Tom Kollasch - Grays Harbor Conserv. Dist Travis Casey - Dept. of Ecology Water Qual Victoria Knorr - ASRP Program Manager</p>
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1. Welcome, Introductions

2. Minutes Approval

Bob Russell motioned to approve the minutes from January’s meeting, and Jan Robinson seconded the motion. A vote to approve minutes passed without comment.

3. Organizational Business

1. Newaukum Subcommittee

Alex Gustafson shared that Ned Pittman, Kirsten Harma, and Mara Zimmerman are preparing a narrative to accompany the Newaukum modeling plan. Bob Amrine and Alex will then review it, after which they will start hosting meetings again with the full subcommittee. A date for that next subcommittee meeting will be announced when preparations are complete. Alex also noted that the team is still waiting to hear about NOAA funding for field verification for that modeling work.

2. Other Subbasin Notes

Caprice Fasano shared that the Quinault Tribe is using 2015 NOAA Chehalis fisheries disaster funds to carry out a watershed assessment for the Humptulips, similar to the Satsop/Wynoochee assessment done by NSD.

Jerilyn Walley shared that the Grays Harbor Conservation District and Trout Unlimited received a landowner outreach grant for the middle Humptulips basin, which they hope to coordinate with this Humptulips assessment.

3. Outreach Updates

Kathy Jacobson provided an outreach update:

The first annual Chehalis Basin Film Festival is coming up: it will be held on February 25th at the 7th street theatre in Hoquiam, and on March 3rd at Centralia College. It will include several 6-8 minute films about restoration work and natural history of the basin. Participants will also have a chance to engage directly with project partners and visit information tables from various basin conservation groups.

Sarah Watkins will be using the river table with Oakville high school in the coming month.

The CBP purchased a groundwater model, which will be housed at the Chehalis Tribe with Kirsten. It's available for any interested groups, along with resources on its use.

Spring Festivals are coming up: the Lewis County Spring Youth Fair and the Hoquiam Shorebird Festival both take place May 5th - 7th, Fri – Sun.

Kathy will be putting together an updated, relevant brochure on projects by the Lead Entity. **Kathy asked for project to feature from any groups who have recently completed salmon restoration projects.**

She will also be putting together a 'new resident' brochure to educate folks who have moved to the area about local conservation and natural resources.

Mara Zimmerman shared that Coast Salmon Foundation (CSF) has put forward a "Strong Salmon Future" initiative, that is aiming to help the public make connections between salmon restoration work going on throughout the region. An element of this initiative is to install public-facing signs at project sites throughout the basin with a common logo and format. The CSF has met with an initial set of sponsors in Upper and Lower Chehalis to find sites, as well as in the four LEs on the coast. The first set of signs has gone up on the Chehalis. A set of three signs along the Willapa Hills Trail between Chehalis and Adna have been installed, and they highlight 9 different projects in the area on Mill, Van Ornum, Bunker Creek. The CSF has a list of projects they will be highlighting going forward, and **anyone interested in getting a sign for their projects are encouraged to reach out to Mara.** At this point, there is no upper limit for sign funding; the CSF's starting goal is to get 9 signs across the whole region, but there is no endpoint. If you have a good candidate site, please reach out.

Q: How does a project qualify for one of these signs?

A: That it's a project that improves salmon habitat. We are trying to get representation from all four CSP LEs, but the focus is trying to show a connection throughout the region across all the work we're doing.

The group was supportive of this work as a whole, and discussed the importance of focusing on engaging and informing the community on salmon issues; the group discussed that making salmon and salmon restoration projects highly visible is key to conservation success.

4. SRFB

1. Washington Salmon Coalition (WSC)

Kirsten Harma shared an update from the latest WSC meeting. Some SRFB policy changes are being discussed. Notable is a revision of match requirements. **The WSC is looking for concrete, on the ground examples of how the current match requirement affects the life cycle of grant proposals. Please send any examples to Kirsten.** Changes that are under consideration include: remove the requirement completely; calculating % match across entire LE rather than by individual project; adjustable % match requirement by geography (effectively a waiver on underserved communities); and considering “leverage” instead of “match” - emphasizing bringing in and tracking support from other funding sources, but not necessarily calculating any % per project.

Kirsten noted that originally, match served to push participation and investment by local communities, but over time, this support has become well established throughout the region, and % match requirements have become essentially a “grant writing exercise.” There is concern that SRFB will become less relevant if it is unable to evolve with this reality.

The group was encouraged to hear that this is a developing conversation. They described specific and general instances where % match requirements and other complications specific to SRFB grants had affected the success or timing of projects. It was also noted that SRFB grants are important to keep relevant, as they are an important foot-in-the-door grant opportunity for smaller groups and individuals. The point was further made that project delays can be greatly expensive, and % match requirements that cause significant delays are very counterproductive. In sum, discussion showed a lot of support for removing % match requirements, and noted that if the initial intent was to show local community involvement, this is no longer the function it is serving; money is not the only way to accomplish this.

Tom Kollasch mentioned that the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) is having a listening session with certain conservation representatives. The Corps is looking for examples of groups and individuals having problems getting permits. **If anyone has specific examples they would like to share, that would be helpful. Reach out to Tom Kollasch**, as he will be representing our interests in this discussion.

2. SRFB/2023 Grant Round Update

Kendall Barrameda shared about some changes coming to the 2023 SRFB grant round. An updated Salmon Funding workshop video has been put together, and a section of the video is dedicated to these changes to manual 18. Kendall will share a link to this video with the group. Some changes are as follows: design-only projects, which were capped at \$200K, with an 18 month timeline, have been changed to \$350K with a two year timeline; preliminary design deliverables will be due prior to application for projects over \$350K (up from \$200K); language has been changed so that “design/build” projects are now termed “field fit” to reflect the fact that these projects can proceed to construction without the full suite of design deliverables; in Appendix

D: design/restor proj deliverables is laid out much more clearly: gives timeline for when each deliverable is due.

For more information, watch for the Updates Workshop video link. Additionally, a PRISM “help” resource is available for those that are interested.

The Salmon Recovery Conference is coming up April 18th and 19th. Early bird rates are available until March 8th, and discounted room rates are available at a Holiday Inn near the convention center until March 10th. For details about the conference or about the hotel discount, contact Kendall.

Kirsten reminded the group that the Local Review Team site visits are scheduled for April 10th - 12th, most likely the 11th and 12th. Kirsten also shared that this year, a Restoration Techniques class from Grays Harbor College will be joining the Local Review Team on their site visits.

3. Presentation: Natural Habitat Engineering in Mill Creek

Kelly Verd presented a project proposal on behalf of the Lewis Conservation District (LCD) for the restoration of a wetland area in the headwaters of Mill Creek. In an area along 1800 feet of the creek, and comprising 12 acres, there is a heavy infestation of reed canary grass. Historically, beavers have been excluded, and this project aims to restore the area so that once restoration is established, Beaver will move in and provide ecological benefits to the stream system. A Beaver Dam Analogue (BDA) had been considered, but the project team is confident that beavers will arrive if the area is prepared, and this would be a longer-term, self-sustaining solution. Additionally, maintenance of a BDA would be challenging, given the challenging access to this site. Mill Creek is part of an area of focus for the LCD, surrounded by high community involvement, and is on the 303d list for water temperature. This project would benefit Coho, steelhead, and sea run cutthroat. The project plans to plant 14,400 willows, overplanting and physically protecting some. The team is hopeful that they can get this project established before the beaver move from downstream to use the willow. Additionally, the team is using Pacific Willow, which is slightly less preferred by beaver, and plans to plant some dogwood as well. The landowner, Port Blakely, is on board with the project, and will hopefully provide some other tree species. Project cost is estimated to be \$138,000, which is likely an overestimation. Site prep cost is somewhat high because they plan to cut down and spray to get ahead of the reed canary grass and get the willow well established. Match is in progress.

Q: Is a BDA off the table?

A: We could, but it wouldn't be self-sustaining. Same amount of money, and there would be no food source established for the beavers there.

Q: Is the 1800 feet the extent of reed canary grass in the area?

A: There is some up and downstream, but this is the main, wide-open area.

Q: Are you concerned about reed canary grass reinfestation affecting the viability of the project?

A: We just need to get the willows to establish a canopy; the canary grass will not be completely gone, but getting this canopy going is the goal. Once that canopy is established, it will make a big difference in the long-term.

4. Presentation: Allen Creek at Rush Road Fish Passage Design

Devin DeBono presented a culvert replacement project proposal being sponsored by Lewis County Public Works, on behalf of the City of Napavine. The presentation is briefly summarized below, but the full presentation is available upon request, and a recording of the audio is available in the recorded HWG meeting.

The culvert to be replaced is in the Newaukum MU on Allen Creek, just past the confluence of the N and S Forks of the Newaukum. It's located on Rush Road, close to mile 1.3. The project would address the following tiered concerns: Tier 1, riparian, water quality and quantity; Tier 2, fish passage and floodplain connection. The project would replace the existing 0% passable, double box culvert that has 10.5' wide, 5' tall openings. It is impassable due to depth. Low flows August through September restrict coho salmon and winter Steelhead. While there is not a lot of riparian cover immediately above the crossing, there is good habitat upstream. There is high quality rearing habitat throughout Allen Creek downstream of I-5, and high quality spawning habitat upstream on a tributary to Allen Creek.

The project goal is to provide a design to restore fish passage to all life stages by replacing a 0% passable barrier with a 26 foot span, fish passable structure. This would provide 4.62 linear miles of access for Coho and winter Steelhead. When the downstream barrier, which may be corrected with a federal grant, is removed, this barrier will allow access to 14 miles of habitat for Coho and 10 miles for Steelhead - along with 221 acres of freshwater emergent wetland. This barrier is currently ranked 29th, in the top 2% on the Chehalis Basin Fish Passage Mapper. The project cost is \$174,466.72.

Q: *1. Design only? 2. Downstream barrier - where will you get funding?*

A: 1. Yes; 2. Yes, we just applied for it through the AOP program. This comes through Federal Highways Administration (FHWA) from the federal infrastructure bill, and this is the first of 5 funding rounds. It was confirmed that this Allen Creek project is still eligible for SRFB funding even with a barrier downstream.

5. Newaukum Pilot Watershed - Science Methods

Ned Pittman gave a presentation on the background and methods for the Newaukum Pilot Watershed wood opportunity model. In 2015, the Coast Salmon Partnership board decided to pursue a pilot watershed approach in order to achieve meaningful salmon restoration in a meaningful amount of time. Ned developed a white paper to help guide individual LEs in this watershed-scale approach, prioritizing and choosing restoration projects accordingly, and a subgroup of the HWG used that guide to work together to implement restoration projects in the Newaukum pilot watershed. This pilot watershed included the NF and the upper SF of the Newaukum river. All LEs on the

coast determined wood was lacking in the streams, and that adding wood to streams would help significantly. To that end, the team developed a wood opportunity model to determine ideal locations for wood placement throughout the subbasin. The model combines a wide array of data in order to produce pixel-images of the watershed that indicate ideal areas for wood, based on three sub-models. These sub-models were built on different scores: salmon score, wood response, and project feasibility. These sub-models were then combined to produce a final model, which maps out ideal areas for wood placement. Ned emphasized that recent studies indicate that conservation groups are not consistently doing the right thing in the right places, and this model aims at directly addressing that issue. This model has been able to narrow down 407 miles of streams to 26 particularly well-suited miles that should be assessed for wood placement.

Q: Regarding the wood response score, did you include any variables to consider changing flows given climate change?

A: No, we have not put climate change into this model yet. We're just pointing out locations for the work to happen, and projects will consider that individually.

Q: Please provide a quick summary on result and implications of this model vs. the NSD Satsop/Wynoochee model vs. EDT

A: The Satsop/Wynoochee (S/W) work is pretty simple: it doesn't focus on salmon and doesn't consider road access. This wood-placement model is less focused by landowner needs, which the S/W model was more focused on. This model will help with those landowner needs, but is more focused on salmon. In contrast to the EDT, this is a positive model rather than negative model. That is, it says "yes do this here," rather than "salmon are suffering here." This model is more focused on where restoration will generally be most effective, which will help all aquatic species.

6. Associated Programs Updates

1. Coast Salmon Partnership

i. Climate Workshop debrief

Grace Adams, the Hirschman fellow at the CSP, is helping implement their climate adaptation framework. Two weeks ago, she hosted a technical workshop, **and is looking for feedback from those who attended** for an upcoming technical workshop in the fall. Anyone with feedback re: workshop format and logistics, or material covered, would be appreciated. Feedback can be shared in a form at the following link, <https://forms.gle/JnZgRZ22jHGAVarq8>, and she can also be reached directly at grace@coastsalmonpartnership.org

ii. Implementation Committee

Ned shared that the Implementation Committee will meet on Tuesday Feb 28th, and will discuss regulatory effectiveness on sustainability on the coast. The meeting will focus on HPAs by talking with folks who know about it from the ground.

Q: What are the goals and aims of this committee? Are you working to change policies, or talking about enforcement, or...?

A: While the CSP does not have any policy-making jurisdiction, it is written into our regional plan that we will help to promote effective regulatory action to develop sustainability. It talks about doing this from a lot of different angles. We need a full understanding of what those regulations are so we can aid this. First, how do regulations align with the Coast Region plan? Then, how do those who work under those current conditions see these regulations as functioning well or not? We don't make policies, but we work to inform those who make the policies.

2. Federal Funding

Wild Salmon Center is coming out with a revised document next month that will explain all the different federal salmon funding programs and what they do. Kirsten will send out that resource when it comes out.

3. Fish Barrier Removal Board

The HWG is still hoping to get staff to the FBRB at this table, but at present, Kirsten is maintaining outside conversations with WDFW staff. Recently, she was able to clarify an important point with them: projects submitted to the FBRB are assigned more points if they are on a "planned forecast list." This is particular point refers to planned lists generally, and not our specific LE "planned forecast list." For the purposes of FBRB ranking, everything in our tool counts as being on our forecast list.

4. Aquatic Species Restoration Plan

Kirsten stated she would make time in future meetings for HWG members who are attending RIT meetings to have an opportunity to share updates for those HWG members who are not able to attend RIT conversations.

7. Closing

Next HWG meeting will be followed up with a field trip to Wild Thyme Farm, so plan ahead if you would like to join.