

Chehalis Basin Lead Entity -- Habitat Work Group

March 1, 2021

Zoom Meeting

~ 9:00 am – 12:00 pm ~

<p>Ann Weckback - <i>Lewis Co. Public Works</i> Anthony Waldrop - <i>Grays Harbor Conserv. Dist.</i> Brandon Carman - <i>Recreation & Conservation Office</i> Cade Roler - <i>WDFW</i> Caprice Fasano - <i>Quinault Indian Nation</i> Chanelle Holbrook - <i>Citizen</i> Chris Dwight - <i>WDFW</i> Cindy Wilson - <i>Citizen</i> Claire Williamson - <i>WDFW</i> Colleen Suter - <i>Chehalis Tribe</i> Don Watt – <i>Chehalis River Basin Land Trust</i> Elena Fernandez - <i>Thurston Co. Public Works</i> Greg Green - <i>Ducks Unlimited</i> Hope Rieden - <i>Chehalis Tribe DFW</i> Jim Hill - <i>Citizen</i> Josh Giuntoli - <i>WA State Conservation Commission</i> Jonathan Bradshaw - <i>Citizen, Minutes</i></p>	<p>Karin Strelieff - <i>Thurston Conserv. Dist</i> Kathy Jacobson - <i>Lead Entity Education Coordinator</i> Kelly Verd - <i>Lewis Conserv. Dist.</i> Keith Douville - <i>WDFW</i> Key McMurry - <i>Grays Harbor Citizen</i> Kirsten Harma - <i>Lead Entity Coordinator</i> Mara Healy - <i>Thurston Conserv. Dist.</i> Mara Zimmerman - <i>Coast Salmon Partnership/Fdn</i> Mark Gray - <i>Chehalis River Basin Land Trust</i> Megan Tuttle - <i>WDFW</i> Miranda Plumb - <i>USFW</i> Ned Pittman - <i>Coast Salmon Partnership/Fdn</i> Paula Holroyde - <i>Thurston Co. LWV</i> Rickie Marion - <i>Chehalis Tribe Water Qual</i> Sasha Porter - <i>Thurston Conserv. Dist.</i> Steve Hagerty - <i>Mason Conserv. Dist.</i> Thom Woodruff - <i>Capitol Land Trust</i> Tom Kollasch - <i>Grays Harbor Conserv. Dist</i></p>
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1. **Welcome, Introductions**
2. **Networking Time in Breakout Rooms**
3. **Minutes Approval – February**

Tom Kollasch motioned to approve February’s minutes; Thom Woodruff seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

4. **Salmon Recovery Funding Board**
 1. **SRFB Updates**

Brandon Carman shared that the SRFB has a new member, appointed by the governor to replace outgoing member Phil Rockafeller. Leslie Connelly, who worked for many years at RCO and is familiar with salmon recovery, will be taking his place. Kaleen approved Capitol Land Trust’s cost increase request for the Tree Fever property, in the amount of \$30,000, and ASRP will cover \$35,000. Thom has also sought other funds, and if those are obtained, it will reduce the ask of each of these sources.

2. **Conceptual Project Presentations**

i. **Cloquallum Creek @ Cloquallum Rd LWD Design** --- Steve Hagerty, Mason Conservation District

Steve Hagerty shared a project proposal to install LWD and riparian buffers on a stretch of Cloquallum Creek that is highly incised and disconnected from its floodplain. The project spans three properties and would improve water storage, restore floodplain connection, reduce sedimentation, and benefit rearing habitat for salmon. There is adjacent CREP work.

The project budget is estimated to be \$143,000.

DISCUSSION:

Comment: Preliminary chum spawning survey is recommended before work is done; watch for lamprey as well.

Comment: Do you have contingency budgeted? You may well have erosion on either bank from the LWD installation, so bring in high contingency funding.

Comment: Since part of the reach is in CREP, you will have to navigate the already-existing obligations and agreements. Check with Bob or Nikki (Lewis CD).

Comment: \$20K rather than \$5K is recommended for cultural resources. Also, get going as early as possible!

Comment: If this is in a FEMA flood zone, you won't be exempt from floodplain permits; budget time and money for this, to coordinate with local jurisdictions. To budget, check with the county, see what kind of FEMA FZ it's in, and start with talking to county planners, who are working more closely with FEMA. It will cost between 15 to 45K for no rise analysis, likely.

Comment: Include additional funds for hydraulic modelling to know how much anchoring you'll need for wood stability.

Comment: SRFB technical reviewers tend to look poorly at bank protection project applications. Make sure your application specifically addresses *salmon* concerns. Make sure to focus on reach scale, salmon concerns, not infrastructure protection.

i. **Scatter Creek South Tributaries Project Development** -- Karin Strelieff, Thurston Conservation District

Karin Strelieff presented a project proposal to develop a strategy to carry out the conservation and restoration of the 117-acre "Cozy Valley," a floodplain in the headwaters of Scatter Creek owned by the Creekside Conservancy. The plan will benefit all salmon life stages by focusing on this reach to develop a holistic and sustainable restoration plan, explore feasibility of actions, determine sequence of work, and strengthen partnerships.

The project seeks to address ditched streams, lack of shade, loss of wetlands, presence of reed canary grass, absence of floodplain complex and degraded habitat. Further key pieces of planning are to explore a central 15-20 acre gap of valley floor ownership, and address a mid-valley access road.

The project is an opportunity to build on 20 years of community conservation work, and presents a key opportunity to engage the community. There is a lot of opportunity for collaboration in the area.

Project budget would range from \$100,000 - \$120,000

DISCUSSION

Q: Have you considered re-meandering?

A: Absolutely: that's on our list to consider. There's a lot of opportunities, and the point of this is to decide which of the many things to prioritize for effective restoration. We want to develop this coordination and sequencing for the long term.

Q: What's the community response to acquisition? Ag land acquisition can be testy.

A: Chanelle was the Exec. Director of Creekside for 25 years. Typically, this community is very supportive. There is a long, sustained relationship with the community, educational school district and city and county. Quite a bit of adjacent property is under conservation, along with quite a bit of property around Tenino.

Q: How does this part of Scatter Creek and the restoration actions you are considering fit with the Chehalis Basin Lead Entity strategy? Would you talk about how this location and potential restoration actions align with the Tier 1 restoration needs described in the Strategy?

A: This location is high up in the stream system, would assist in low-flow issues, and presents an exceptional opportunity to increase quality and quantity of habitat.

Comment: Great. The more you can line these up clearly and explicitly in your application is really helpful.

Q: Do property owners for the area of interest express interest in selling? Are there land owner geomorph/hydraulic concerns (e.g. flooding) to 'leverage' here?

A: These landowners have been there for 10-15 years, and we have an established relationship with them. Plenty of flooding to lean into for sure, with incised channels. We're just looking at floodplain ownership, not acquiring the homesite. We'll be working with the owners here.

i. **West/East Hoquiam Acquisitions** -- Mark Gray, Chehalis River Basin Land Trust

Mark Gray presented a CRBLT-sponsored proposal to address Tier 1 and 2 concerns for the East and West Fork Hoquiam Rivers through the acquisition of 122.7 acres of land. This would include 0.75 miles of shoreline, 93 acres wetland, and 1600' of fish bearing streams. The properties are approx. one mile north of Hoquiam.

Parcels for acquisition include a 34 acre parcel from Port Blakely at very north end of CRBLT's ownership on the West Hoquiam; the Bolan parcel, a 4 acre parcel in the middle of current ownership on West Hoquiam; a 2.7 acre parcel on the East Hoquiam that fills an important hole in ownership; and the Granberg parcel just north of town, just south of the beginning of CRBLT ownership on the East Hoquiam. All properties are located in the inner-estuary of Grays Harbor, and are all surge plain.

Mark noted that these properties represent ground zero for sea level rise in the area. They are located at the transition from forested tidal swamp to irregularly flooded marsh. With the predicted 1-meter sea rise by the end of the century, these forested tidal swamps will begin to transition to irregularly-flooded marsh by 2025.

Project budget is \$200,000

Contact Pete Hammer with follow-up questions at p.hammer@chehalislandtrust.org

DISCUSSION:

Q: With updated shoreline restrictions/FEMA flood zone considerations, do you know what kind of development is legally possible here?

A: Not sure specifically, but these parcels are all either rural residential or general development. That said, our primary concern is the impacts of informal access.

C: Be sure to include salmon benefits, and be specific about that.

A: We'll beef that up for sure; we've got good info on that from our past work here.

2. Associated Program Updates

1. WDFW Land Acquisitions discussion:

Kirsten opened a discussion on WDFW land acquisitions taking place at the TransAlta business park outside of Centralia, and on the lower Satsop.

Colleen Suter noted that she will be presenting on the project for the Chehalis trivial business committee to consider drafting a letter of support; Colleen will be looking into Lower Satsop as well.

Anthony noted that he's aware of a lot of pushback across the agricultural community, but also that some public comment periods are open to have that discussion. Some of those comment periods have been extended due to community feedback. He also noted a lot of community feedback for a separate project; a SEPA application has been put in for a gravel extraction on the upper Wynoochee. WDFW is keeping an eye on this: Megan Tuttle noted that poor efforts at landowner engagement on the part of the project led to an extended comment period, and comments are due the coming Thursday.

The QIN will be commenting on gravel pits; the CRBLT will be drafting a letter of support for the WDFW TransAlta Acquisition.

2. Coast Salmon Partnership

Ned Pittman shared that the next partnership meeting will be Tuesday March 23rd. There will be a guest speaker: Kyle Martins from DNR, who will be talking about riparian forest management and salmon habitat.

Partnership staff are continuing work on the Pilot Watershed whitepaper, and will be reaching out to Lead Entities next month for input; the project is in its third draft.

The foundation board is working on developing their outreach/funding plan, supported by input from the Lead Entities and the Partnership board.

There will be a Newaukum subcommittee meeting following the HWG on April 5. We will see area modeling updates then.

3. Chehalis Basin Partnership

The CBP is getting rolling on projects to implement their Streamflow Plan. They're looking at a surface/groundwater study, a couple projects on Scatter Creek, and a basinwide assessment to decide where to implement managed aquifer recharge projects.

4. Aquatic Species Restoration Plan

Thom Woodruff shared that the Capitol Land Trust has been working on its ASRP project with Green Diamond on the Skookumchuck. They're in purchase agreement now, and will be closing March 25th. The Conservation District has already done some restoration work out there, and WDFW has already completed a pretty large restoration project with BDAs and LWD.

Anthony Waldrop shared that the GHCD is hoping to go out to bid for their early action reach work on the Satsop/Wynoochee in the next few weeks. They're waiting on a few permits to come in; otherwise they're wrapped up. Work will be happening this summer. He also shared that the district is moving forward with their small scale pilot project on Schafer Creek. They'll be starting groundwater well-monitoring before implementation this summer.

Mara Healy shared that Thurston CD is gearing up for phased planting/invasive work. They'll be starting April 1st.

Colleen Suter is scheduling meetings with various folks to encourage work, including some work with the Thurston Conservation District in Independence Valley. The tribe is also finishing up 8 acres of riparian habitat upstream from porter: this is the "Big Buffer" project moving forward, funded by the USFWS and BIA.

Miranda Plumb shared that the USFWS Chehalis program was able to notify the CBFTF that their Geissler Road project will receive funding. This funding will be serving as match to their current 2021 SRFB project application.

5. Closing