

Chehalis Basin Lead Entity -- Habitat Work Group

Chehalis Tribal Community Center

461 Secena Road, Oakville, WA

March 6, 2023 – Minutes

9:00 am – 12:00 pm

<p>Aimee Richardson - <i>Creekside Conservancy</i> Alex Gustafson - <i>Trout Ultd Cheh Rest. Mgr</i> Angie Hanners - <i>Mason Conservation District</i> Anthony Waldrop - <i>Grays Harbor Conservation Dist.</i> Ben Amidon - <i>Chehalis Tribe Restoration</i> Bill Teitzel - <i>Port of Chehalis</i> Brad Murphy - <i>Thurston County Planner</i> Brett DeMond - <i>CBFTF Streamworks</i> Brad Murphy - <i>Thurston County Planner</i> Bob Russell - <i>LC Citizen Representative</i> Chris Palmer - <i>Lews Conservation Dist</i> Cindy Wison - <i>Thurston Co Citizen Rep</i> Devin DeBono - <i>Lewis County Public Works</i> Drew Mealor - <i>ASRP Implementation Manager</i> Farley Youckton - <i>Chehalis Tribe Water Qual</i> Greg Green - <i>Ducks Unlimited</i> Jan Robinson - <i>CRB Land Trust</i> Jacob Murray - <i>Mason Conservation Dist</i> Jerilyn Walley - <i>Grays Harbor Conserv. Dist</i></p>	<p>Jonathan Bradshaw - <i>Lead Entity Minutes</i> Kathy Jacobson - <i>Lead Entity Outreach/Ed.</i> Karen Adams - <i>LC WDFW Habitat Biologist</i> Karen Strelloff - <i>Thurston Conservation Dist.</i> Kelly Verd - <i>Lewis Conservation Dist.</i> Kendall Barameda - <i>SRFB Grants Manager</i> Key McMurry - <i>Pacific County LE</i> Kim Figlar-Barnes - <i>WDFW Fish Program</i> Kirsten Harma - <i>Lead Entity Coordinator</i> Luc Lamarche - <i>Beaver Craftworks, LLC</i> Mara Zimmerman - <i>Coast Salmon Part./Fdn.</i> Megan Tuttle - <i>WDFW</i> Miranda Plumb - <i>USFW</i> Nat Kale - <i>Office of Chehalis Basin Planner</i> Ned Pittman - <i>Coast Salmon Partnership/Fdn</i> Sarah Watkins - <i>Grays Harbor Citizen Rep</i> Sasha Medlen - <i>RCO Chehalis Basin Strategy</i> Tara Livingood-Schott - <i>Chehalis Tribe F&W</i> Travis Casey - <i>Dept. of Ecology Water Qual</i> Victoria Knorr - <i>ASRP Program Manager</i></p>
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1. Welcome, Introductions

2. Minutes Approval

Bob Russell moved to approve last month's minutes; Cindy Wilson seconded the motion. Ben Amidon led a vote to approve the motion, which passed without comment.

3. Organizational Business

a. Outreach Updates

The Chehalis Basin Film Festival took place in the last month, with one showing in Hoquiam, and a second at Centralia College. At both events, there was good audience participation of all ages. Members who attended stated that it was well put together and very well attended. Attendees were from a wide variety of backgrounds from across the community.

Kathy shared that Sarah Watkins shared a presentation at Oakville High School with the Lead Entity's River Table. She presented to 3 different classes. She and Ricki Marion, with the Chehalis Tribe, enjoyed the opportunity to build relationships with those educators. In the week following the present HWG meeting, the River Table will be presented at Simpson Elementary in Montesano as well.

Kathy also shared about an upcoming “Get to know your local WDFW biologist” article that will be highlighting Teal Waterstrat. This will come out in the Daily World, and Kathy will reach out when it’s published.

Lead Entity Outreach will participate in the following upcoming events: Grays Harbor Shorebird Festival, May 5-7; Prairie Appreciation Day, May 13th; SW WA Fair, August 15 - 20.

Bob Russell shared that the Lewis County Stream Team held a planting event on a property on Lucas Creek, a tributary of the North Fork Newaukum. There were 20 - 25 people in attendance; at least 5 were other area landowners, with three participating for the first time.

b. Newaukum Work Group

Alex Gustafson shared that the Newaukum Work Group is working on developing a written plan to document the restoration strategy. This document has circulated extensively between Ned, Mara, and Kirsten, and is now being reviewed by Alex and Bob Amrine. After this has been reviewed, the larger subcommittee will begin to meet up again to read and review the plan as a group. More information will be available in the next month or so.

Kelly Verd shared that a building of concern that is in danger of falling into the Newaukum is on Lewis Conservation District’s radar. They are in conversation with the landowner who is working on the issue, and will be visiting them the day following the meeting.

c. Humptulips Work Group

A work group is in development in the Humptulips that is modeled after the Newaukum Work Group’s work. Information is forthcoming.

4. SRFB

a. Presentation: Damon Creek at Kirkpatrick Fish Passage

Brett DeMond presented a construction project proposal on behalf of the Chehalis Basin Fisheries Task Force (CBFTF) for the replacement of a fish barrier on Damon Creek at Kirkpatrick Road, on the lower Humptulips. A brief summary of the project details follow, and the project PowerPoint is available by request.

The barrier, located on Kirkpatrick Road at road mile 2.05, NE of Copalis Crossing, is at the mouth of the creek where it enters the Humptulips at RM 10.3. The project would open up 5.8 miles of barrier free, excellent spawning and rearing habitat in upstream forestland, which includes Damon Lake.

This project will replace a 7’ x 5’ x 100’ squash pipe, very deep in roadfill. As such, it will be an expensive project. There is a public boat launch at the site of this project, and an improvement of this boat launch for the community is an element of this project. The site is also located on a tsunami evacuation route.

Coho and Cutthroat are documented species in Damon Creek; and Chinook, Chum, and Steelhead are documented in the Humptulips. Bull trout are presumed present in the Humptulips as well, and all species would likely use this passage when corrected.

Design of this project was funded by a SRFB grant, and the construction would replace the culvert with a 30' span x 21' height x 80' bottomless culvert, built on pilings. The project timeline is slated to be Feb 2024 to March 2025.

Project total cost is \$3,224,118, and SRFB request is 7% of that, at \$237,059.

Q: Why not a bridge here?

A: We considered a bridge; because of bad soils, it would've required 6' wide and 80' long piers, and the bridge would've had to be over 100' long due to deep road fill and poor soils.

b. Presentation: Chenois Creek at Chenois Valley Road Fish Passage Design

Brett DeMond presented a design project proposal on behalf of the Chehalis Basin Fisheries Task Force (CBFTF) for the replacement of a fish barrier at Chenois Valley Road on Chenois Creek, which flows into Grays Harbor. A brief summary of the project details follow, and the project PowerPoint is available by request.

This project would seek to remove two ~6' x 3' squash culverts, opening up 6.96 miles of good spawning and rearing habitat. There is low development downstream, and this is the last remaining barrier of several that were on this creek; with the exception of one remaining 67% passable barrier which cuts off a 0.5 mile side channel, a reach that is not included in that 6.96 mile measurement.

This barrier ranks 4th on the Chehalis Basin Prioritized List, and in the top 0.15% on the WDFW Chehalis Fish Passage Barrier Prioritization. Chinook, Coho, Chum, Steelhead, Cutthroat would benefit, and have been documented in the stream.

The anticipated correction would be a 50' x 30' x 18" precast concrete bridge, placed on steel H-piles. The road would be raised by a few feet to allow for high flows, and climate change factors would be included for bankfull width and 100-year flow.

Project timeline would be about 16 months from signed agreement in Dec '23. Total cost would be \$165,550; SRFB ask would be \$140,718, with the County contributing \$24,833 for a 15% match, though it's not required for design.

Q: Does this design cost seem high compared to others, for example the Wildcat project?

A: No, it's pretty typical, and a fairly good deal, especially for a bridge. We are hiring a geotech for this project, which is an added cost. The Wildcat project's low cost is an exception, in part due to the fact that the current engineer is retiring.

c. Presentation: Cozy Valley Creek Kimball Acquisition

Aimee Richardson presented an acquisition project proposal on behalf of Creekside Conservancy. A brief summary of the project details follow, and the project PowerPoint is available by request.

The acquisition would be an element of the Cozy Valley Project, which has been in process for 29 years. Nearly all of the property ownership of this project has been SRFB funded. The 6.5 acre parcel (with ~2 acres upland, ~4 acres wetland) being considered is immediately adjacent to and between current Cozy Valley Project ownership. There is concern that this parcel (with an existing well and power) may be sold for development,

or else used for grazing, right up to the creek that is its southern border. Upstream of this project are six culvert replacement and enhancement projects; downstream is the project's 80-acre Sampson land acquisition, and the Samson wetland enhancement project.

Coho, steelhead, and cutthroat would benefit from this project, along with a wide range of area wildlife.

Appraisal would be slated for Winter 2024, with acquisition taking place that summer, and signage being posted in the winter.

Total SRFB request is \$135,000; with 75K for parcel purchase.

Q: Is that land really developable or even farmable with the large majority being wetland? Don't you need at least 5 acres of dry land to do that?

Comment: That wetland rule concerns the subdivision of an existing parcel - you have to subtract wetland acreage from the required 5 acres you're calculating for subdivision. In order to develop, you only need an acre or two to be able to put in septic.

C: Beyond that, historically farmed land has somewhat of a pass. Continued grazing is an even greater threat than development, and is a real concern.

Q: After this purchase, there's still that parcel south of it. Would you be able to re-meander the stream without that final parcel?

A: As part of our current design development, we're in conversation with that landowner about the driveway to their property. We've been working with her to replace failing culverts; as a part of that conversation, we'd likely be able to do some re-meandering.

d. Presentation MF Newaukum Trip Krueger Fish Passage Construction

Ann Weckback presented a project proposal on behalf of Lewis County Public Works for construction of a fish passable structure on a tributary of the Middle Fork Newaukum. A brief summary of the project details follow, and the project PowerPoint is available by request.

The existing 5' by 3.5' twin culverts are 33% passable due to depth, as well as lack of substrate. There is also a high flow issue between December and February. Fish passage, riparian cover, and sedimentation are all tier 1 concerns for the basin that replacement of this culvert would address. Correction would immediately restore 0.68 linear miles of habitat. However, the proposal for removal of two structures upstream is in process by the Lewis Conservation District, and this would open up 3.09 linear miles for steelhead, and 4.3 miles for Coho. Upstream habitat is high quality, with 84% canopy cover, and with 39 acres of wetland upstream, including beaver complexes.

This barrier would be replaced by a 21' x 11' x 43' box culvert.

The project was selected for funding during the 2021 grant round, but did not have match, which has been secured this year.

Current project SRFB ask is for \$266,968, though this ask may be \$102,206 cheaper, pending USFWS funding. This decision should come down in April.

14 barriers in the subbasin have been removed since 2014; after this, with two additional priority barriers in the subbasin, all tier 1 and 2 barriers will be replaced.

e. Presentation: Lucas Creek Trib MP 4.39 Fish Passage Construction

Ann Weckback presented a project proposal on behalf of Lewis County Public Works for construction of a fish passable structure on Lucas Creek, a tributary of North Fork Newaukum, at MP 4.39 on Lucas Creek Road. A brief summary of the project details follow, and the project PowerPoint is available by request.

This project would replace 6' x 4' squash culvert, which is 33% passable due to a 1.7% slope and a lack of substrate in the non-countersunk culvert, causing a 7" water drop in September.

Replacement of this culvert with a 20' x 13' x 78' box culvert would restore immediate, unimpeded access to 1.88 linear miles for coho and for steelhead. Upstream habitat is high quality, with 100% canopy cover, 2.44 acres of wetland providing cool water input as well as 3,384 sq meters of spawning habitat and 2,081 sq meters of rearing habitat

This project was also selected for funding by the Lead Entity in 2021, but match was not secured at the time. At this point, match through FBRB looks very likely, but is not secured. The current SRFB grant request is \$376,150; with pending additional match, this request could be \$213,291. Total project cost is \$1,045,798.

f. Presentation: Dry Bed Creek at W. Beeville Loop Road Fish Passage and Reach Design

Alex Gustafson presented a fish passage and reach design project on behalf of Trout Unlimited and Mason County on Dry Bed Creek, at West Beeville Creek Road. The barrier is ranked 5th in the basin. Dry Bed Creek is a tributary to Dekker Creek, near Matlock. A brief summary of the project details follow, and the project PowerPoint is available by request.

The current 15' x 3' x 53' squash culvert is 33% passable. Correction of this barrier would restore access to 5.46 miles of stream, with no upstream or downstream barriers. There is documented Coho spawning just downstream of the barrier. In addition, the project is looking at a two-mile reach-scale development and design, just upstream and downstream from the proposed correction.

This approach would address a wide variety of limiting factors by combining both barrier replacement and the reach scale design. This proposal would fund a completed design for the barrier, and the development and design of the reach scale project, from development to preliminary designs. These projects are being proposed together as a way to utilize all the synergy involved: it's not just a barrier or just a reach project; they are working in unique conjunction at this site.

Project timeline would be 12-24 months for design, 3-5 years for construction, with a completion date around 2030.

Q: Is there a level of assessment you could do before this request to feel out if this reach scale project is viable?

A: Good question. What I can say is that I would structure the project such that before starting the bid and procurement for contractors to develop preliminary designs for this site, I would do walkthroughs with Green Diamond, WDFW, conservation districts, to get their input and feedback.

C: Yeah, check the previous surveys, compile your data with WDFW and Green Diamond.

Q: I see you excluded a portion of the creek with landowners other than Green Diamond. Have you reached out to them?

A: There are 6-7 LOs in that one-mile area. For simplicity, I've excluded that area, but only at this point. Mason Conservation District is doing a landowner outreach project already, and hopefully we can work to organize those landowners in the future.

5. Associated Programs Updates

a. WCRRI - Request for Letter of Support

Key McMurray shared that earlier in the year, the Coast Salmon Partnership had intended to request a letter of support from the HWG for their WCRRI program project list. This request did not take place, however, and a letter of support is needed as soon as is possible. After brief discussion, the group voted to approve a motion put forward by Bob Russell, which Ann Weckback seconded. The motion stated that the HWG strongly supports the entirety of the \$17.6 million dollar project list being submitted by the Coast Salmon Partnership to WCRRI; with a special mention of support for the four projects from the list taking place in the Chehalis River basin.

b. Coast Salmon Partnership/Foundation (CSP/F)

Ned Pittman shared the following updates regarding the CSP/F:

1. The CSP joint board meeting will take place Thursday, March 23rd, where boards will jointly discuss their work and future directions, as well as seek approval the 2022 annual report.
2. The CSP's outreach director, Alex Bradbury, is working with project partners to get Strong Salmon Future signs up. Reach out if you would like a sign for your project.
3. The CSP Climate Adaptation Reference Guide will be released this month.

Additionally, the HWG provided positive feedback for the CSP's annual report, which had been shared for the group's review by Mara Zimmerman.

c. ASRP

Victoria Knorr gave a quick ASRP update. Most noteworthy is that the end of the window for spending from the current biennium's funding is coming to an end. It's looking at this point like there will be approximately \$1M left from the current biennium.

d. Other:

The Grays Harbor Conservation District has applied for funding to purchase a refrigerated trailer for use across the basin. This allows projects to hold bare root plants through the season. If this comes through, it would be available for any sponsor throughout the basin to store plants.

6. Closing

Note: Today's HWG meeting was followed by a field trip to Wild Thyme Farm outside of Oakville. Several HWG members toured a range of restoration work and riparian plantings carried out on the property by landowner John Henrickson. He shared successes, challenges, and lessons learned in various locations on his property.