

# Chehalis Basin Lead Entity -- Habitat Work Group

## March 7, 2022 -- Minutes

Zoom Meeting

~ 9:00 am – 12:00 pm ~

<p>Ann Weckback, <i>Lewis County Public Works</i> Alex Gustafson, <i>Trout Unlimited</i> Andrew Deffobis, <i>Thurston County</i> Anthony Waldrop, <i>GH Cons. Dist.</i> Ben Amidon, <i>Chehalis Tribe DNR</i> Bob Amrine, <i>Lewis Cons. Dist.</i> Bob Russell, <i>Lewis County Citizen</i> Bill Teitzel, <i>Port of Chehalis</i> Brandon Carman, <i>RCO</i> Elena Fernandez, <i>Thurston County</i> Emelie McKain, <i>WDFW ASRP</i> Greg Green, <i>Ducks Unlimited</i> Hannah Coe, <i>Ecology Non-Point</i> Jerilyn Walley, <i>GH Cons. Dist.</i> Kathy Jacobson, <i>CBLE Outreach Coordinator</i></p>	<p>Kirsten Harma, <i>Lead Entity Coordinator</i> Kelly Verd, <i>Lewis Cons. Dist.</i> Keith Underwood, <i>Mason Conservation Dist.</i> Key McMurry, <i>Grays Harbor Citizen</i> Kiley Smith, <i>WSU Extension</i> Lee First, <i>Twin Harbors Water Keeper</i> Lonnie Crumley, <i>Chehalis Basin Fisheries T. F.</i> Mara Zimmerman, <i>Coast Salmon Partnership</i> Megan Tuttle, <i>WDFW Region 6</i> Nat Kale, <i>Office of the Chehalis Basin</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></p>
---	--

### 1. Welcome, Introductions

### 2. Networking Time in Breakout Rooms

### 3. Minutes Approval – January

Sarah motioned to approve January's minutes, and Bob seconded. The motion passed.

### 4. Organizational Business

#### a. Membership

Introducing new member – Bill Teitzel! Bill is new staff at the Port of Chehalis and will represent the Port on this board.

#### b. Note-Taker Contract

We have successfully recruited a note-taker! We are awaiting the signed contract with Grays Harbor County before bringing her on board. Her name is Melissa and she has a Master's in environmental writing. We are very excited to have her on board!

#### c. Newaukum Subcommittee

Alex provided an update on the committee's work to date.

#### d. Conflict of Interest Form

The Lead Entity has a conflict of interest form used to disclose any conflict of interest with projects in the current grant cycle. Voting members of the HWG need to sign this

every year. Kirsten asked members to sign and send just the signature page of the form and she'll keep it on file. Digital copies are best.

#### **e. Outreach Updates**

Bob Russell mentioned talking to some people on Jested Creek, near Senn Road. They were concerned about beaver dams and flooding, and didn't seem to know about salmon habitat work happening in their area. Ann from Lewis County said that the County is planning to correct a barrier culvert in that system. Bob encourages more education about local projects like this.

Kathy reported that she has been doing river education with regional schools using the River Table. This has been a very successful education activity! If we can't learn directly from the river, the River Table is the next best thing. In her training, she showcased deltas, estuaries, and the effects of protection actions, and participants learned that rivers are wild and what happens on the land affects the river. 150 children received this training. Kathy provided testimonials from some of the children. She will do another training for high school students in May. The River Table requires a lot of work to set up, so if you would like Kathy to set up an event, please provide committed helpers who can move and staff the table.

Liz Banze put on a training on the how and why of news releases. In summary, news rooms are understaffed and news releases are valuable. In your news release, make your title meaningful, and in the body, use analogies to explain scientific concepts. Kathy will make the materials from this training available to interested HWG members.

Prairie Appreciation Day is coming up this year May 14 at the Glacial Heritage Preserve. Kathy will staff a booth and teach people about groundwater using a groundwater model.

#### **f. Other/ Presentation**

Lee First shared a power point presentation showcasing a recent paddle trip down the Chehalis River. She photographed activities impacting the river. A few highlights are: silage bales wrapped in plastic that got into the river; flow entering the river from a large pipe of Highway 12; Ecology-blocks that fell in the water; fishing nets wound up and caught in branches; un-permitted shack close to river.

### **5. Salmon Recovery Funding Board**

#### **a. Update about 2022 SRFB Budget**

Kirsten provided an update on the 2022 SRFB budget. In November 2021, Congress passed the Infrastructure Bill which provides an additional \$34.4 million to the Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery Fund (PCSRF) for the next five years. But, based on specific allocations from PCSRF, combined with a recent decision by the SRFB to put any additional funds towards their new "Targeted Investment" program, we aren't likely to have as big of a grant round in 2022 as we had previously thought. It will be less than the \$1 million that was a potential for the Chehalis. Our allocation will be approximately \$765,000. The current ask is for \$1,320,000. Kirsten encouraged sponsors to keep

working on their applications so that we have a robust project list with plenty of alternates.

#### **b. Cost Increases**

One thing discussed at the SRFB Board meeting was cost increases being observed throughout the state. Project sponsors and grant managers also reported that there is a shortage of cost increases and some projects aren't even getting any bids.

Kirsten asked if the project sponsors present were seeing cost increases. Bob A. noted that bids for their FFFPP projects are coming in 25%-30% over expected cost. Brandon told the group that SRFB-funded projects can't include a contingency line item. To account for these cost increases, sponsors are going to need to build in an increase to each line item. He recommends getting these expected cost increases into your budget now.

#### **c. Cost Increase Request – Geissler Creek 21-1081**

Lonnie Crumley presented the group with a request to approve a cost increase request from the SRFB for their project on Geissler Creek. He spoke to the merits of the project, including the creek's use by 5 species of salmonids, landowner support, and synergy with recently corrected upstream and downstream fish passage corrections. Their cost estimate for a new bridge a year ago was \$82,500. The bid estimate came in at \$135,000. There are also increased costs with steel, guardrail, and gravel. Lonnie's request is for \$170,000 in funds from the SRFB Cost Increase fund to cover unexpected costs.

Brandon noted that the SRFB's unwritten policy is that cost increase awards are capped at \$100,000. He is willing to take the full request to RCO Director Megan Duffy. He will mention the Task Force's good track record of completing projects under-budget and returning funds for use by other projects.

There was discussion on applying return funds from other active Task Force grants to meet this cost increase request. The group's final conclusion was to separate these actions and just make a motion related to the cost increase request at this time, leaving any approval of allocating return funds to the next meeting.

Motion: Tom made the motion to "Approve full cost increase request of \$170,000 from the statewide cost increase request pot, with the caveat that this will likely be reduced using returned funds to support that request." Bob Russell seconded, all in favor.

Sponsors were reminded to provide a Power Point presentation with budget numbers when making cost increase requests in the future.

#### **d. Project Presentations.**

**Berwick at Labree Fish Passage Correction 22-1134.** (Ann Weckback, Lewis County)

Ann provided project details. This project is in the Dillenbaugh Creek sub-basin, Newaukum Management Unit. Fish Passage is a Tier 1 concern in this basin, according

to the Lead Entity Strategy. The ASRP also points out fish passage as a limiting factor. The barrier is a Priority 1 according to the new culvert prioritization. The correction will include a low flow notch. Upstream habitat has 63% canopy cover, and beaver complexes providing high quality rearing habitat. The new structure will be in the same location as the old one, with minimal re-grade. The downstream barrier is a WSDOT barrier that is being proposed for replacement; there is one additional County barrier upstream. 3 barriers have been replaced in this system since 2015. They are requesting \$261,295 from SRFB as match to an FBRB grant for this project.

Comment – a landowner on Dillenbaugh used to see salmon on the creek, but isn't seeing them anymore.

Comment - add a sign to this site! Berwick crosses Jackson Highway – there could be a great place for a sign here.

Q) What will funds be used for, specifically?

A) These funds are just match for FBRB funds. The ask is 15% of construction costs.

### **Berwick at Logan Fish Passage Construction. (22-1053) Ann Weckback, Lewis County**

Ann provided project details. This project is in the Dillenbaugh Creek sub-basin, Newaukum Management Unit. Fish Passage is a Tier 1 concern in this basin, according to the Lead Entity Strategy. It is a priority 1 in the culvert tool's assessment. The barrier is a 0% passable slope. A barrier during low flow due to limited substrate under bridge. It's also a barrier due to high flows in March. 6.61 miles for Coho would be improved by correcting this barrier. Project will add a low-flow notch. They will add LWD over 300feet. Upstream habitat is 73% canopy cover, and there are cool water inputs and beaver pond complexes for rearing. The proposed design will reactive the floodplain but keep it within the floodplain and channel (not road or houses). Complet archaeological testing has been completed at this site. Design will proceed once archaeological recommendation approved. The SRFB grant would match a FBRB grant.

Q) Is someone else correcting the other barriers in this stream?

A) Yes, WSDOT is working on the lowest one. It may be expedited as part of mitigation for another structure they are required to replace but that is not feasible to replace. The County also is working on some of the upstream culverts (2nd and 5th in system), the Pot is working on the 4th in the system. The 3rd is on hold because the landowner is looking to sell property and doesn't want to commit to testing. The County will approach the next landowner once that property sells.

### Lewis County projects applying for FBRB funding.

Ann next spoke about Lewis County's grant applications to the Brian Abbott Fish Barrier Removal Board (FBRB). The FBRB gives extra points to applications supported by the local salmon Lead Entity. She is applying for funding for the match for the Lucas and Logan projects just presented, as well as Kruger and Lucas 4.39 projects which were

both alternates for funding in the last FBRB grant round, and which would have received SRFB funding if the FBRB match hadn't fallen through. The Habitat Work Group has seen presentations on all of these projects. There is another project on Lucas Creek that the County is seeking to fund, but the HWG has not been provided with detailed information about it.

Bob Amrine spoke in favor of supporting the Labree and Logan projects, whose details we just learned about.

Motion: Megan made a motion to write a letter of support in favor of Logan and Labree fish passage projects. Bob Russell seconded. All in favor.

The group was comfortable supporting project supported in the last grant round, but not projects they have not seen.

Motion: Bob Russell made a motion to write a letter of support for the Kruger and Lucas 4.39 projects. Ben seconded. All in favor.

Kirsten will write separate letters of support for these two sets of projects.

## **6. Associated Program Updates**

### **a. Aquatic Species Restoration Plan –**

Emelie provided an update. The Steering Committee has seen the first set of projects seeking funding through this biennium's grant round. The projects are undergoing policy review. The projects have already made it through technical review.

Please attend the ASRP symposium! This will be held April 20 and 21 and is virtual. Register now! Spread the word!

Bob Amrine encouraged project sponsors to get their project ideas ready and take advantage of this funding opportunity.

Kirsten mentioned that the Steering Committee is interested in discussing how to support sponsor capacity in the basin. She suggested adding this to the agenda as a future discussion topic at the Habitat Work Group, where all sponsors and more are present.

### **b. Coast Salmon Partnership**

WCRRI will close to any new grant applications after this Thursday at 5 pm. There is a good technical team lined up for review this year. RCO staff is doing eligibility screening, then site visits will take place.

### **c. Fish Barrier Removal Board**

Kirsten noted that she has heard that the FBRB will likely not be receiving Infrastructure Bill funds directly. Sponsors are encouraged to develop project concepts and be ready to take advantage of funding, no matter the source.

## **Other Business**

Alex asked when the Habitat Work Group meetings will be held in person. Chanelle noted that she won't be able to participate in person since she works during meeting times and can't take that much time away from work. She has observed that hybrid meetings are a "hot mess." It is always hard for people online to hear who is in the room and vice versa. She has seen that the ability to attend virtually increases participation, and supports continued virtual meetings. Kirsten added that she is not looking forward to trying to do virtual meetings, and the Tribe Gathering room is especially poor for both audio and sound quality. She added that the group has supported every-other meeting being in person in previous conversations on this topic. She took an informal poll to see who likes the every-other-meeting idea, and the majority of those present supported this.

Kirsten will talk with Bob about options for future meetings, and will check with the Tribe about meeting in the Gathering Room.