

Chehalis Basin Lead Entity -- Habitat Work Group

April 3, 2023 ~ 9:00 am – 12:00 pm ~

Zoom Only

Alex Gustafson - Trout Ultd Cheh Rest. Mgr Ann Weckback - Lewis County Public Works Bill Teitzel - Port of Chehalis Brett DeMond - CBFTF Streamworks Brian Stewart - Conservation Northwest Caprice Fasano - Quinault Tribe DNR Chris Volmert - Lewis Conservation Dist Chanel Holbrook - Ecology, Water Qual. Cindy Wison - Thurston Co Citizen Rep Drew Mealar - ASRP Implementation Grace Adams - Coast Salmon Partnership Greg Green - Ducks Unlimited 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 Conservation Dist. Key McMurry - Pacific County LE Kim Figlar-Barnes - WDFW Fish Program Kirsten Harma - Lead Entity Coordinator Luc Lamarche - Beaver Craftworks, LLC Mara Healy - Thurston Conservation Dist Mara Zimmerman - Coast Salmon Part./Fdn. Nat Kale - Office of Chehalis Basin Planner Ned Pittman - Coast Salmon Partnership/Fdn Sarah Watkins - Grays Harbor Citizen Rep Sasha Medlen - RCO Tara Livingood-Schott - Chehalis Tribe F&W Travis Casey - Dept of Ecology Tom Kollasch - GHCD/Willapa Bay LE
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1. Welcome & Introductions

2. Minutes Approval

A motion to approve March's minutes was made by Sarah Watkins, and seconded by Jerilyn Walley. This motion was passed without comment.

3. Organizational Business

a. Outreach Updates

Kathy Jacobson shared that in March, the River Table was presented to eight classrooms at Simpson Elementary School in Montesano. This included students carrying out mock beaver dam analog designing on the river table. Kathy shared positive feedback from students.

Ben Goldfarb, author of *Eager: The Surprising, Secret Life of Beavers and Why they Matter*, will be giving a talk based in the area via zoom on April 13th at 7 pm. Later in the year, Goldfarb will also be releasing a new book, *Crossings*, on roads and how they interact with the landscape.

The Shorebird Festival in Hoquiam is coming up on May 5 - 7. On Saturday the 6th, the Lead Entity will present the groundwater model table, along with info on group and restoration activities. Any volunteers to help out are welcome.

Prairie Appreciation Days is coming up on May 13th.

Upcoming local outreach articles will include a Watershed Hero story on the Friends of Schafer Lake Sylvia, as well as a Know Your Biologist article featuring Teal Waterstrat.

Sarah Watkins and Luc Lamarche shared a summary of the previous month's field trip to Wild Thyme Farm. They reflected on John Henrikson's valuable input and role in the community, as well as his honesty about successes and challenges. One of the concerns he expressed was the importance of ensuring that smaller timber operations have full information around forestry practice regulations. Other topics of conversation involved the challenges of restoration alongside beaver activity, and the effect of RMZ restrictions on a farm's ability to carry out important restoration management. John is open to further conversation and visits with conservation individuals and entities.

Kirsten Harma shared that on Sat July 22, Tenino is having Oregon Trail Days. The LE is looking for volunteers to help with tabling this event.

b. Newaukum Work Group

Alex Gustafson shared that the draft written plan to accompany the Newaukum group work is ready for review. A Google Doodle will be shared to plan a meeting in early to mid-May. This will be a space for comments and reflections on what's written, as well as to discuss the phases for the next iteration of the work group. Alex emphasized that the work for Newaukum doesn't stop at this written plan. Field verification of this plan is forthcoming, which will be followed by a prioritized list of projects. From there, work can begin.

c. Coast Salmon Partnership – representative needed

The HWG needs a representative for Coast Salmon Partnership meetings. Tom Kollasch shared that this is a great opportunity for folks who are interested in broader coastal issues - it's a space for coastal LEs to confer, and to decide how to share SRFB funding to keep it in the region. It also serves to monitor and guide LE actions so they align with the regional plan.

d. Citizen Member

Kirsten shared that JB McCrummen, a previous citizen representative, passed away 6 months ago with terminal cancer. He was proud of his work putting in beaver ponds on his land, and doing restoration through various funding programs. His children are carrying on his restoration work. Kirsten asked if there might be interest in and support for a tour honoring JB on his land.

e. Capacity Funding Request

Kirsten shared that the HWG has an opportunity to use capacity funding to assist access to the upcoming Salmon Recovery Conference. Aimee Richardson of Creekside Conservancy reached out with interest in this support. However, registration deadlines were such that a decision to provide this funding had to be made without HWG approval. Kirsten decided to approve this funding independently, and sought the group's support for this decision at the present meeting. A motion to approve this spending was made by Sarah Watkins, and seconded by Tom Kollasch. After a unanimous vote, the motion passed without comment.

4. Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB)

a. Legislative/Budget Updates

Mara Zimmerman shared that a lot of work is ongoing to try to address what is very low SRFB funding in the legislative budget, from both the house and senate. Tom Kollasch

shared that he'd received word that Rep. Steve Tharinger - who is the Capital Budget chair and was formerly on the SRFB - stated that legislators are not done with SRFB funding decisions.

b. SRFB grant round schedule and next steps

The deadline for applications has passed, and these applications finished coming in last Friday. Site visits will be taking place in the coming week on Tuesday and Wednesday, with the review team being joined by 16 students from Grays Harbor Community College. Kirsten shared a list of submitted applications: eight projects are currently on the list; some of these may drop off due to pending/contingent funding.

5. Climate Tool Reference Guide: Sea Grant Hirschman Fellow on Climate Adapt. Framework

Grace Adams shared two products released from the Coast Salmon Partnership's Climate Adaptation Framework: a reference guide for navigation of the framework, and an interactive web map. This reference guide is available here:

<https://coastsalmonpartnership.egnyte.com/dl/jvRvbda8MK>

Input or questions regarding this reference guide can be shared with Grace Adams (grace@coastsalmonpartnership.org) or with Mara Zimmerman.

The web map is available at:

<https://coastsalmon.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=dedec4fo7b2a4b68a496f1cc892ff9e7>

Grace also shared information on Phase II of the framework. An interactive web map will be developed for a climate resilience index on a HUC12 level. This index will be composed of exposure, sensitivity and adaptability. To address the social component of this adaptability, Phase II will seek to understand the adaptability of human systems. To this end, Grace asked for input from the LE on plans to host 3 community meetings on this topic in May, June, and Aug or Sept. Grace also is asking for participation from LE members in these upcoming meetings.

6. Federal Funding

Kirsten shared that the Office of the Chehalis Basin (OCB) has assembled a new work group focusing on navigating federal funding for flood damage and habitat restoration work across the Chehalis Basin. The work group is focusing on collaborating on securing funding, to avoid competing across the basin. To this end, the OCB also hired a consultant based out of Washington DC to help navigate federal applications. This work group's focus is oriented toward supporting large, expensive projects.

Mara Healy shared her experience discussing a Thurston Conservation District project with the consultant. She shared that it seems the group will be helpful in lifting some of the burden of grant seeking and help make the process more feasible. She looks forward to moving forward to see how the process plays out.

The group shared questions and input about the developing work group.

Kirsten also shared about two additional opportunities for federal funding: America the Beautiful has an RFP out (this funding is open to NGOs), and the National Fish and Wildlife

Federation (NFWF) is open for proposals. NFWF only requires a two-page proposal, and is welcoming questions - they seem to have a responsive staff.

7. **Associated Programs Updates –**

a. **Aquatic Species Restoration Plan (Drew, Victoria, Others)**

Drew Mealor provided an ASRP update. In reference to the above discussion about federal funding that is available, he highlighted that a useful strategy for larger projects may be to secure ASRP funding first, as the ASRP has a quicker turnaround and a rolling funding window. Once supported, project costs could then be transferred over to a federal grant, and the ASRP funding could be reallocated to support different work.

ASRP staff will host fish exclusion trainings early this summer, hoping to train contractors who will be doing construction in 2024. Training will be in two phases: early June, a virtual training with Q&A; later in June, an in-person phase in the field, location TBD. Specific dates are forthcoming. An opportunity for cultural resources training is coming up as well, with most details TBD.

By way of a project update, Drew shared that the ASRP still has \$4.3 million unused for these last three months of this biennium. That said, there are about \$12 million-worth of projects which have been presented to the ASRP which haven't yet received funding obligation. However, there may not be enough time to obligate funding to those projects by the end of this legislative session. Drew shared that they are hopeful that funding can be reappropriated for the next biennium.

The technical review team (TRT) has recently reviewed and scored two projects: one on the main channel of Newaukum, and a barrier correction on Beeville Road. Both passed TRT, and next go through the Steering Committee. The Lewis County one is large enough that it needs to get through the OCB as well. There are currently 3 more projects in the pipeline.

Kirsten shared that in future, she hopes to invite updates from ASRP Regional Implementation Teams (RITs) as a part of this meeting, to keep the HWG updated. She asked for any such updates from the group.

Tom Kollasch shared that construction on Grays Harbor Conservation District's project on the Lower Satsop has been delayed until 2024 after conversation with landowners. Apart from that, an open house for the project brought in previously unengaged neighbors, and the project was very well received.

b. **Coast Salmon Partnership (CSP)**

Ned Pittman shared the following update from the CSP. 1. The CSP annual report came out this morning; 2. As mentioned above, Phase II of the Climate Adaptation Framework is underway. Input is desired on hosting community meetings on social constraints on salmon restoration. These will be three 2-hour meetings between May and September. Reach out to grace@coastsalmonpartnership.org; 3. The Strong Salmon Future Initiative is ongoing: more project signs are going up this month. Contact alex@coastsalmonpartnership.org about signs for project signage.

c. **Chehalis Basin Partnership**

Kirsten shared that the Chehalis Basin Partnership was given a presentation on the impact of tires on stream water quality. The HWG also expressed interest in this presentation.

Kirsten also shared that she is scheduling a tour of the site of the proposed Hoquiam dam removal/water right source switch project on May 24th.

8. Barrier Prioritization Tool

Mara Zimmerman shared that the CSP has taken on the maintenance of WDFW's Barrier Prioritization Tool. WDFW will maintain the housing of the web map, and the link and access will not change. The CSP will be working to ensure that data continues to remain current, and also address any issues with the function of the tool. Mara emphasized that an updated, correctly-functioning tool is important for ranking of projects in the basin. Going forward, the CSP will annually check in with sponsors throughout the basin to update the tool's data, and run the script annually to produce the ranked list.

One recent concern with the tool involved the issues with the script that outputs the tool's scoring. Mara reached out to Robin Peppin, who developed the script as well as the barrier prioritization tools for the Willapa and North Coast LEs. She was able to get the script working with just a few tweaks. She is also in the process of making some further refinements to bring it in line with how the Willapa and North Coast tools work, and this will make things run more smoothly.

Mara asked the group for input from the group on the logistics of maintaining annual updates of the tool. Specifically, she asked for clarity on the process of reassessment of %-passability for barriers after they have been corrected. After discussion, it became evident that there is a need for a standardized process for this reassessment if %-passability information is to be consistently maintained in the tool.

After a discussion on concerns about general assumptions and design of the tool, Mara led the group in a discussion to share other examples of specific issues members of the group have had with the tool.

Going forward, sponsors should plan for an annual process of sharing updated barrier information, as well as providing specific input on errors, inconsistent data points, or issues experienced with the tool. Further, it is likely that this work will involve a reestablishment of the barrier subcommittee.

9. Closing – (12:00)