

Habitat Work Group, Chehalis Basin Lead Entity

MINUTES

June 5, 2023

~ 9:00 am – 12:00 pm ~

In Person & Zoom:

Chehalis Tribe Community Center ~ Library Classroom ~ 461 Secena Road, Oakville, WA

<p>Aimee Richardson - <i>Creekside Conservancy</i> Alex Bradberry - <i>CSP Outreach</i> Alex Gustafson - <i>Trout Ultd</i> Ann Weckback - <i>Lewis County Public Works</i> Ben Amidon - <i>Chehalis Tribe Restoration</i> Bill Teitzel - <i>Port of Chehalis</i> Bob Russel - <i>Lewis County Citizen</i> Brad Murphy - <i>Thurston County Planner</i> Brett DeMond - <i>CBFTF Streamworks</i> Caprice Fasano - <i>Quinault Tribe DNR</i> Chris Volmert - <i>Lewis Conservation Dist</i> Chanele Holbrook - <i>WA Dept of Ecology</i> Cindy Wilson - <i>Thurston Co Citizen</i> Drew Mealor - <i>ASRP Implementation</i> Elena Fernandez - <i>Thurston Co Public Works</i> Farley Youckton - <i>Chehalis Tribe Water Qual</i> Garrett Dalan - <i>The Nature Conservancy</i> Greg Green - <i>Ducks Unlimited</i> Jan Robinson - <i>Chehalis R. Basin Land Trust</i> Jacob Murray - <i>Mason Conservation Dist</i></p>	<p>Jonathan Bradshaw - <i>HWG Minutes</i> Kathy Jacobson - <i>Lead Entity Outreach/Ed.</i> Karen Adams - <i>WDFW Habitat Biologist</i> Kelly Verd - <i>Lewis Conservation Dist.</i> Key McMurry - <i>Pacific County LE</i> Kendall Barrameda - <i>RCO</i> Kim Figlar-Barnes - <i>WDFW</i> Kirsten Harma - <i>Lead Entity Coordinator</i> Luc Lamarche - <i>Beaver Craftworks, LLC</i> Mara Zimmerman - <i>Coast Salmon Part./Fdn.</i> Martin McCallum - <i>Thurston County Citizen</i> Mike Scharpf - <i>WDFW</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</i> Tara Livingood-Schott - <i>Chehalis Tribe F&W</i> Tom Kollasch - <i>GHCD/Willapa Bay LE</i> Victoria Knorr - <i>ASRP Program Manager</i></p>
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1. **Welcome & Introductions**

2. **Minutes Approval**

Jan Robinson moved to approve May's minutes, which Farley Youckton seconded. The vote to approve the minutes passed without comment.

3. **Organizational Business**

a. **Determination of Quorum**

Kirsten shared a list of the voting members and confirmed that a quorum is present for the vote to be taken later in the meeting.

b. **Outreach Updates**

Kathy shared that the Shorebird Festival and the Prairie Appreciation days were both very successful. She also noted that while there was a large number of out-of-the-area attendants as typical, there was also a very strong attendance from local residents. Sarah Watkins and Farley Youckton, who also

participated, shared about the Prairie Appreciation Day as well. Sarah noted that water rights was a very common topic for attendees.

Kirsten asked if people appreciated receiving forwards of job announcements related to salmon and restoration in the Chehalis Basin. Bob Russell noted that in his role as a citizen representative, he has appreciated receiving word about conservation job opportunities, as he likes to share these opportunities.

Karen Adams shared that a fish salvage workshop will be put on through the ASRP. A one-hour webinar will take place on Friday June 23rd, followed by a field day on Monday the 26th which will involve learning the work in the water with nets & discussing best practices. This is a first for the event, which is mostly aimed at ASRP sponsors with projects going in this summer. It will take place at Margaret McKinney campground on Waddell Creek.

Alex Gustafson shared that she brought the Trout Unlimited Olympia chapter to the Camp Creek project site. She worked with Kylie Smith to do a Jewelweed pull there with about a dozen participants.

c. Newaukum Work Group

Alex Gustafson shared that the full Newaukum Work Group met last month. The plan has been written, edited, approved, and passed on to the contractor who will assemble it for distribution. The group is also working on coordinating with Weyerhaeuser to carry out SF Newaukum field verification. Ned, Mara, Bob, and Kirsten have been helping with this coordination to gain access. Barring any unforeseen issues, the next meeting will be either after the field verification, or after the plan is completed. Those involved will receive word when this is planned.

Bob Russell encouraged a press release to the Chronicle upon the distribution of the Plan.

Kirsten noted that plans are in the works for a Newaukum Lake summer field trip. She also noted that there is interest in developing prioritized watershed plans for either the Humptulips or the Cloquallum watersheds, as well. Ned noted that the Quinault Tribe is already working on a plan for a significant portion of the Humptulips, and so this is a part of the consideration.

d. 2023-2025 Lead Entity Budget

Kirsten shared that it is time to prepare a new budget for the next Biennium, reminding members that the HWG is the steering body for the Chehalis Lead Entity. She then led a conversation about this upcoming budget.

For the first time in a decade, the budget has seen an increase in the capacity budget for the LE. The budget is up by \$28,584, from \$60K to \$88,584. Kirsten shared that some of this funding (\$17,300) will fund the purchase of a new laptop and cover overhead for administrative support by the Chehalis Tribe. To date, the Tribe had been providing this service without charge. These costs leave \$11,284 to apportion. Kirsten shared 5 possibilities for this funding: 1. Increase the outreach budget from \$15K to \$20K; 2. Expand the contract (currently at \$2,500) for the HWG notetaker, to include more duties; 3. Produce and layout a new Lead Entity Strategy Update; 4. Use the funding to provide project development grants to sponsors; 5. Pool all funding toward hiring an assistant (approx. \$30K) to help with outreach, note taking, meeting prep, and other tasks.

DISCUSSION:

Bob Russell encouraged leaning into outreach expansion possibilities.

Q: Regarding the LE Strategy Update option - would this be funding for Kirsten's time, or would the update be contracted out?

A: This funding would not be for writing the update, only to contract the layout of the update.

Bob Russell proposed 50%/25%/25% split of the \$11,284 to fund the outreach/strategy update/notetaker options, respectively.

Kelly Verd commented that she likes the idea of a project development grant for sponsors.

Sarah Watkins asked if splitting this relatively small amount will render the funding less effective than it could be.

Kirsten recommended keeping the increase in the outreach budget at \$5K, bringing the total outreach contract at \$20K. If the contract increases to higher than \$20K, it crosses a logistical policy threshold, which would require Grays Harbor County to put out a new RFP for the contract.

Bob Russell motioned that the group vote to apportion \$5k for the outreach coordinator contract, and have a future discussion on apportioning the remaining \$6,284 - likely for use on options 2, 3, and/or 4. This motion was seconded by Sarah Watkins, and with no further discussion, the group voted to pass the motion.

4. Salmon Recovery Funding Board –

a. Legislative/Budget Updates

Kirsten shared a brief update on the SRFB budget. The total grant round allocation is still not known. The federal funding portion won't be determined until the end of June, and it won't be as large of an influx as last year. Also, carryover SRFB funding from the previous round will be put toward either targeted investment or the 2024 grant round. All things considered, this grant round will be smaller than last year's. Regardless, Kirsten encouraged the LE to keep their project list long.

b. Project Ranking process debrief

The SRFB Ranking team shared about the ranking process. Sarah Watkins shared that at the beginning, the process was simple and straightforward. Toward the end, however, the group had to do some refiguring - even so, that went quickly. She noted that last year, the group was able to fund all of the projects with the extra federal funding; this year was difficult because the group had a hard funding line to work with, and liked all the projects. Ned Pittman shared that the process went smoothly, with everyone in agreement on projects and their scores: there was no question on how that went. The refiguring was a result of doing due diligence, and was an error that was resolved clearly.

Bob Russell shared that as a citizen, he appreciates the diligent process, and knowing that tax dollars are being well spent.

Key McMurray agreed that the process went smoothly.

c. Ranked Project List

Kirsten confirmed quorum, ensuring that there were at least 8 voting members present, 6 of whom had no conflict of interest with the projects being ranked.

i. Presentation of List

Kirsten shared the ranked list of projects, with a full score being 80.

Damon Creek Passage Construction (74);
Chenois Creek Passage Design (71);
Natural Habitat Engineering in Mill Creek (68);
Lucas Creek Tributary Passage Construction (65);
West Beeville Loop Passage and Reach Design (63);
MF Newaukum Trib. Passage (62);
Cozy Valley Acquisition (58);
Allen Creek Passage (55).

Kirsten shared a breakdown of the score components to highlight the importance of different elements of an application, notably including community involvement, letters of support, etc.

In summary: Lucas Creek is slated for partial funding, and all projects above that funding line (Damon Creek, Chenois Creek, Mill Creek), are slated to receive full funding. Depending on Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund (PCSRF) funding, the funding line is either \$767,563 or \$840,104. As such, partial funds available to Lucas Creek would be either \$243,509 or \$316,050 of the \$376,150 ask.

Kirsten also noted that this year, all Lead Entity members of the Coast Salmon Partnership have full project lists and will be using their full funding amounts. As such, there won't be sharing among LEs, beyond the change left over after funding exact figures.

ii. Discussion

Kirsten opened a discussion about the funding list. Ann Weckback shared that Lucas and Kreuger, which are at and below the SRFB funding line respectively, are getting FBRB funding. Brett DeMond shared that Damon Creek is applying for a NOAA fish passage grant. They may request enough that SRFB funds won't be needed - but this won't be settled until the end of the year. (As an aside, she also noted that NOAA has changed their culvert size requirements to 1.5x bankfull width as of 2022 - but that the Damon project has been allowed to move forward with its previous design.) Kirsten noted that if a sponsor relinquishes funds within the first year, those funds return to the project's LE, not the statewide fund.

Drew Meador noted that the Beeville project is out for ASRP funding, and should be going to the steering committee this Wednesday. Funding should be known by next month; if it gets funding, it will come off SRFB list.

DISCUSSION:

Q: Aimee Richardson asked: My project isn't slated to receive funding, and I have some loose ends to tie up still. Would it be worth it to still wrap things up?

A: Kirsten replied: As long as your project is still viable, get it updated by the deadline. Funding isn't set in stone until then, and change in projects above the funding line is always possible.

iii. Decision – if ready

Garrett Dalan motioned to accept the Review Team's ranking as proposed, which Key McMurray seconded. A vote to pass the motion passed without comment.

d. Next Steps in SRFB Round

The work of the HWG is done until the next round. The sponsors had an opportunity to talk with the state review panel, but none needed it.

5. Project Updates & Pending Summer Construction

Kirsten asked the group for updates on projects that will be going to construction this summer.

Brett Demond shared that the Schaefer Boom project is starting in mid August, with the culvert delivery 10 days before that.

Anthony Waldrop shared that the District will be doing work on their post-assisted log structures. They'll be building and staging a lot of brush bundles, and if permits come through, they'll get to instream work in late summer. There will be volunteer opportunities up there if so. If not this summer, the project will be well-positioned to start next year.

Alex Gustafson shared that Coal Creek has started the design process. They've received their first report from the engineer, and hydrological analysis will come in the next couple weeks. After that, they'll be moving forward on schedule.

Bob Russell shared that he's been in conversation with Kirsten about future visioning for the HWG. He shared that he would like to encourage continuing to focus on signage that will get and keep the public aware of the presence of local creeks and the work being done to restore them. He would also

like to discuss the possibility of coordinating reach-level work in the coming couple years on the lowest mile-or-so of Coal Creek, and possibly some of Salzer Creek. He feels there is a lot of potential for support, and that it is a good time to work on these creeks, with particular respect to synergy with ongoing flood management interests.

6. Federal Funding Opportunities

Kirsten led a discussion on federal funding opportunities.

Anthony Waldrop shared that GHCD is applying for NFWF's National Coastal Resilience Grant for a 2 mile stretch of the Lower Satsop. Their proposal will build on other work there. Has an ASRP-funded design that is near completion to do a lot of wood installation, bank resloping, floodplain reengagement, and riparian restoration. It's an expensive \$8M dollar project, and so a good fit for the NFWF grant. The project was accepted for a full proposal, which will be due June 28th. They will be seeking letters of support from lots of entities: members may hear about this via email between meetings.

Kirsten shared that with several upcoming federal grant RFPs, the ASRP steering committee has discussed putting together a bundle of local projects that could compete in these grant rounds. Members expressed concern that this might lead to some smaller projects also within the basin being out-competed by this bundled approach. Alex Gustafson suggested it would be helpful to set aside some time at a HWG meeting or a similar forum for all interested sponsors and entities to brainstorm a basin-focused project package like this. Kirsten added that a strategy in the Puget Sound was to assemble a few "flashy" anchor projects in a bundle, with smaller projects included. Greg Green suggested it may be more helpful to put together the partnership first, and then go find funding for it, rather than building a partnership to develop projects for a grant. It was also suggested that the HWG coordinate with the OCB, as they have access to federal funding advisory resources.

7. Associated Programs Updates –

a. Aquatic Species Restoration Plan

Drew Mealor reminded the group about the fish exclusion workshop described above. He shared that there will also be a webinar on Wednesday the 28th from 9 - 10AM to lay out the process for ASRP process's approach to cultural resources. Drew shared that at the upcoming steering committee, a Lower Chehalis Elodia survey project will be presented and hopefully voted on, as well as a project to do further work at the Natural Habitat Engineering project site on Mill Creek. Further, three projects are at design review: the sediment wedge experimental project and the Schaefer Creek Powers project are in or near final review, and the River Bend Ranch project on the Skookumchuck, which is the largest ASRP-funded project, is in preliminary design review.

Anthony Waldrop also shared that there was an ASRP public webinar last week. Bob Amrine, Kiana Sinner and himself presented. The next RIT meeting is Thursday, June 15 at 9am. Anyone is always welcome, from sponsors to anyone with interest.

b. Coast Salmon Partnership

Alex Bradberry gave an update on CSP outreach. She shared details about the Strong Salmon Future signs: there are eight of them at projects all along the coast, with a few in the Chehalis LE area. They have QR codes and maps for projects and a description of project sponsors. Nine more are in the works, and they hope to continue to install more. Anyone interested should reach out: it's about \$300 to implement and this is paid for by the CSP.

Second, she shared a "Get Involved" flier that has been designed for distribution to small businesses and others in the community. It lists ideas for involvement with CSP, and links to a portal to contact the CSP for volunteering opportunities.

Grace should be here in July with an update. She just went through her South and North Coast climate groups.

c. **Chehalis Basin Partnership** (Kirsten)

Kirsten shared that last week, the CBP toured the Hoquiam dam removal project. There was a lot of enthusiasm among the group.

Two interns from UW will be working with Kirsten through the CBP this summer: one on water conservation in area municipalities, and the other on public perceptions around beaver.