

**Chehalis Basin Lead Entity -- Habitat Work Group
July 11, 2022 -- Minutes**

Zoom

~ 9:00 am – 12:00 pm ~

<i>Ann Weckback, Lewis County Public Works</i> <i>Alex Gustafson, Trout Unlimited</i> <i>Anthony Waldrop, GH Cons. Dist.</i> <i>Bob Amrine, Lewis Cons. Dist.</i> <i>Brad Murphy, Thurston County</i> <i>David Marsell, Pacific Conservation District</i> <i>Elena Fernandez, Thurston County</i> <i>Greg Green, Ducks Unlimited</i> <i>Karen Adams, WDFW Habitat Bio Region 5</i> <i>Kelly Verd, Lewis Conservation District</i>	<i>Key McMurray, Grays Harbor Citizen</i> <i>Kirsten Harma, Lead Entity Coordinator</i> <i>Kitty Weismann, Capitol Land Trust</i> <i>Mara Healy, Thurston Conservation District</i> <i>Mara Zimmerman, Coast Salmon Partnership</i> <i>Megan Tuttle, WDFW</i> <i>Ned Pittman, Coast Salmon Partnership</i> <i>Sarah Watkins, Grays Harbor Citizen</i> <i>Tom Kollasch, Willapa Bay Lead Entity</i>
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1. Welcome, Breakout Rooms

2. Minutes Approval

Ann motioned to approve June’s minutes, and Sarah seconded. The motion passed.

3. Organizational Business

a. Membership Update

Last meeting, a proposal was put forward to elect Alexa Brown to a “Stream Team” seat on the Habitat Work Group, with the understanding that current representative from Wild Fish Conservancy would step in when Alexa is unavailable. Kirsten drafted a motion to capture discussion, concerns, and a path forward.

Draft Motion: “That the “environmental” seat currently held by the Wild Fish Conservancy be switched to a seat for “Stream Team,” with Wild Fish Conservancy acting as an alternate for when the Stream Team representative cannot be present. The “Stream Team” represents the activities and interests of community involvement in stream restoration in the Chehalis Basin and does not represent the fiscal organization that houses the position.”

Group members discussed the proposal. Tom Kollasch motioned to adopt the motion as written. Megan seconded. All in favor.

b. Newaukum Subcommittee

Alex provided an update. The committee has adjourned for the summer. Mara and Ned from the Coast Salmon Partnership are still working on models that will identify stream reaches most in need of restoration. The goal of the modeling is to identify 30 miles of stream for review. Field verification is the next step. The committee will reconvene in October.

c. Outreach Updates

Kathy was not present at the meeting. She has written an annual report on outreach activities.

Alexa provided an update on Stream Team activities. A scotch broom removal volunteer day is coming up. A Middle Satsop restoration party will take place July 30. August 6 is a Wilson Creek clean-up. Kirsten invited work group members who aren't on the Stream Team mailing list to sign up so that they receive notice of all of these great events.

4. Infrastructure Bill – Updates

The main infrastructure bill grant programs that folks are interested in are America the Beautiful, NOAA Fish Passage and NOAA Habitat Restoration. Jess Helsley from Wild Salmon Center is providing grant support. Anthony from GHCD has taken advantage of this opportunity and notes that they will provide support in assessment of project fit to grant and editing, but won't do the bulk of the writing for you. This is still a great offer.

5. Salmon Recovery Funding Board

a. Berwick at Logan (21-1133) Scope and Cost Change request

Ann Weckback had proposed this scope and cost change in writing prior to the meeting. Her request is \$138,074 to allow the County to acquire the parcel where their restoration project is taking place. This will allow for creation of floodplain benches and moving the stream away from the road.

Discussion. The request is small compared to the total project cost. Q) What will the County do with the land? Turn it into a park? Allow homeless camping? A) The land use will need to be consistent with the benefit to salmon as is the purpose of the funds. The County will buy the land on its own if it does not get a SRFB grant. More cultural resources work would be needed if they do additional planting.

Motion: Key: To approve this amendment. Ben seconds. All in favor.

b. 2022 SRFB Grant Round

The Habitat Work Group needs to decide how to use remaining funds from the supplemental budget. With the 2022 grant round project list fully funded, including the above-approved acquisition, there is approximately \$30,000 remaining (*editor's note – this amount was later adjusted based on final PRISM numbers*).

The Coast Region needs to finalize the 2022 grant rounds and at its next Board meeting will decide how to allocate funds between Lead Entities. At this point Willapa LE has a project with approximately \$50,000 in funding need. Mara noted that this project may get funding from the North Coast Lead Entity, or Willapa, who have extra funds. The North Coast has some funds that are in the category of "use it or lose it," as well as all of its supplemental funds.

Discussion: The Coast is used to sharing funds among LEs to make projects whole each year. It's reasonable for the Chehalis to share some of its funds with Willapa. We don't know how much funds, yet, as we don't know what the other LEs will be doing.

Decision: Ben made the motion "To provide up to the amount of the remaining Chehalis LE supplemental allocation." Megan seconded. Tom recused himself. All others in favor.

c. Planned Project Forecast List 2023-2024

Not discussed.

d. RFP for \$5 million “large projects”

The Coast Salmon Partnership issued this RFP July 1. Kirsten was on vacation and has not sent it out. She will do so after this meeting. The RFP is for projects over \$5 million to take advantage of \$4.79 in SRFB funds allocated to the Coast Region. Proposals come to the Lead Entity. The Coast Salmon Partnership’s Implementation Committee will rank the projects and the Coast Salmon Partnership Board will vote. The region needs to have selected a project or projects by October 1.

Discussion: Q) Can we bundle several projects into one application? A) Yes, bundling is allowed, but projects have to be all in the same watershed and have a significant impact on salmon recovery. Reach out to Alissa at RCO for more details on eligibility.

6. Conservation Commission Funding

Anthony provided an overview of this statewide funding opportunity. The Conservation Commission provided \$10 million for “riparian” projects, though many restoration project types are acceptable. Conservation Districts can partner with other organizations to complete these projects. 50 ft is the preferred buffer for planting projects. David from Pacific has produced a flier about this opportunity. The funds must be used by June 2023.

Discussion: Q) Are there limitations on projects that would be mitigation? Projects that the landowner would be required to do anyway? A) These types of projects probably aren’t eligible.

This may be an ongoing funding source if we can show good use of funds this year.

7. Associated Program Updates

a. Aquatic Species Restoration Plan

Anthony reported on the Regional Implementation Teams. There has been a lot of learning through the initial months of these teams’ work. The teams won’t meet in July. There will be another RFQ for another member of the technical review teams soon. Anthony hopes they will reform how those teams work. Other expressed interest in increasing diversity of expertise on those teams. We need aquistics experience, project management or review experience, or otherwise diversify beyond engineering experience. The Stillman Creek restoration is going to construction right now.

b. Coast Salmon Partnership

The WCCRI list will come out August 5th. The FBRB list will come out August 16th.

c. Chehalis Basin Partnership

No updates

