

# Chehalis Basin Collaborative for Salmon Habitat

## MINUTES August 4, 2025

Adam High - *Thurston County PW*  
Alex James - *Capitol Land Trust*  
Alice Rubin - *RCO*  
Ann Weckback - *Lewis County PW*  
Amelia Schwartz - *Thurston County*  
Bella Padgett - *Ducks Unlimited*  
Bob Russell - *Lewis County Citizen*  
Brandon Carman – *WDFW Region 5*  
Brett DeMond - *CBFTF Streamworks*  
Caprice Fasano - *Quinault Indian Nation*  
Donna Albert - *Chehalis River Basin LT*  
Garrett Dalan – *The Nature Conservancy*  
Jacob Baker - *Coastal Interpretive Center*  
Jacob Murray - *Mason Conservation District*  
Jane Atha - *Coast Salmon Partnership/Fdn*  
Julie Grobelny, *WDFW*  
Kelly Verd - *Lewis Conservation District*  
Kirsten Harma – *CBC-fSH Coordinator*  
Martin McCallum - *Thurston Co Citizen*  
Miles Heisel – *Coastal Interpretive C Intern*  
Kim Figlar-Barnes -*WDFW*  
Mack Hunter - *Grays Harbor Conserv Dist*  
Mara Healy - *Thurston Conservation Dist*  
Olivia Williams - *USFWS*  
Sarah Longacre - *Non-Point, Ecology*  
Shannon Shula - *Thurston County PW*  
Sophia Sherman – *Invasive Species*  
Tina Niels – *Grays Harbor Citizen*  
Victoria Knorr - *ASRP Program Manager*

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### 1. **Welcome & Introductions**

Determination of Quorum: upon introductions, a sufficient quorum was found to be present.

### 2. **Minutes – June**

No changes or additions were discussed.

### 3. Organizational Business

#### a. CBC-fSH Outreach Updates

Kathy Jacobson is currently working on another contract. We'll discuss her contract renewal tasks next meeting. Prepare to discuss how much time and resources to put toward a new website vs more community-oriented outreach tasks.

Kirsten sent out a press release about the low water levels (either at or approaching historic levels as recorded since the 1920s)

Twin Harbors Waterkeeper has been taking photo observations from the river. How should we track these and make them publicly available? Drew suggested "Google My-Maps" – could this fit with a map of salmon observations that may go onto the Lead Entity new website? Whatever service we use, it should be an easy process, and not add to much to the number of webmaps in use already.

Bob Russell mentioned that counties will be updating the Critical Areas Ordinance portions of their Comprehensive Plans soon. Public comment makes a difference. Amelia noted that Thurston County will be hosting an open house for public comment on Wednesday night.

Julie Grobelny is organizing a riverwalk near Lee First's house to look at the historic low flow conditions in the Chehalis River. It will be a 3-hour commitment. Sofia wants to use this as an opportunity to try our I-Naturalist. Action: Reach out to Julie if you want to participate.

Julie is currently working on an ASRP outreach strategy whose goal is to get sponsors what they need for outreach to landowners.

The Coastal Interpretive Center hosted a Grays Harbor Teachers training. Many grew up in the area, but have a long way to go to understand the science of ecology. Funding was through the DNR, and has not been cut yet, like many other environmental education programs.

Tina shared that the Chehalis Basin Fisheries Task Force has a grant to get students up to the fish hatchery. They are looking for volunteers to "run a station" as well as stickers to give as prizes. Action: Get in touch with Tina if you can help out.

Kirsten mentioned recently learning about a new rails-tour out of Chehalis. Had an idea to work with the company that runs the tour to provide an educational talk about the Chehalis River. Participants found the name of the company: "Joy Rails." Kirsten will reach out to them to see if they are interested.

#### b. Committee Updates (Cloquallum, Newaukum, Barrier)

There is some progress on the Cloquallum work, as CSP staffer Vanessa is working on "interpreting Ned's brain" from remaining GIS files. The Committee plans to start back up on

September.

Kirsten asked for any updates from Kelly on working with the Onalaska Alliance about their interest in replacing/upgrading the Carlyle Lake pond. Kelly shared that they are looking for options to fix the spillway. LCD has reached out recently but they haven't responded.

c. **Bylaws**

Kirsten shared that we need to update our group's bylaws to reflect the new name. The bylaws were last update in 2017.

**4. Presentation: Coastal Interpretive Center Intern – summer internships overview (Miles Heisel)**

Miles is an intern from Western Washington University. He is collecting environmental data to inform conservation. These include things like water quality, green crab presence, new zealand mud snail presence, and microplastics. He will come back to the HWG with his results once internship finishes.

**5. Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB)**

a. **RCO Updates**

Alice has been promoted and will no longer be our grant manager. CBC-fSH needs to submit the SRFB project list by Friday. PCSRF funding has not yet been eliminated, but neither is that funding certain.

b. **2025 SRFB Update**

Update by Martin and Kirsten on the Project List and Coast Salmon Partnership decision. The outcome is that we will just be able to use our regular allocation – we won't get any extra from other Coast Lead Entities to fully fund alternate projects. The CSP Board decided to allocated extra funding from the Willapa LE to the North Pacific Coast LE for their Ruby Creek culvert repair.

Of the Chehalis projects, Thompson, Ripple and Romerman, and the W. Satsop Riparian project will be fully funded. The Ripple at Haywire project is above the funding line, but the sponsor, Lewis County, may still choose to decline funding so that they can fund the match to their Berwick Creek project.

c. **2025 SRFB Grant Round --- Potential Timeline Change**

During the last grant round, the Local Review Team briefly discussed the merits of changing the SRFB timeline so that the Local Review Team will be able to see the State Reviewer comments and sponsor replies before doing their own ranking. Kirsten worked with the group on an

activity to lay out the pros and cons of a shift in grant round timelines. The main “con” is that the weather will be worse for site visits in March than April.

Decision: There were no objections to attempting a “Track 1” (earlier site visits) timeline this year.

#### d. **2026 Riparian Projects – Preparing Potential Projects**

The SRFB Riparian allocation from last grant round will be available for new projects in 2026. The Coast Salmon Partnership may be able to offer technical assistance to project development, project selection, and prioritization. Jane was present to ask what would be beneficial to the group.

Anthony stressed that no amount of prioritization is needed and any riparian project with a willing landowner is a good project. Helpful technical support would include: scientific guidance on whether or not tree density impacts the services of the riparian area to salmon; benefits of silvopasture; functions of alder-dominated vs. conifer forest; communication tools that can be used to give landowners a deeper understanding of the benefits of converting pasture to trees.

Bob asked for outreach support conveying that more riparian work is needed at the forestry-urban interface. Find ways to convince landowners that there are benefits for the stream interfaces besides being able to see down to the water.

Additional types of technical support:

-What actions are needed within a site potential tree height buffer?

-Training for sponsors on how to connect the outcomes of the riparian action to the life history benefit to salmon

Kirsten asked the group how we can promote SRFB’s riparian funding source, when the Conservation Commission funding is much easier to get. Others shared that the only disadvantages with CC money is that it doesn’t roll over from end of biennium so it can’t be used for maintenance, but that policy might change. SRFB is currently good for maintenance projects, and is useful to non-Conservation District sponsors.

## **6. Presentation: Forest Practices Rule Change (Welles Bretherton, Ecology)**

Welles provided an overview of the proposed rule change. The rule change will create additional protections for riparian areas associated with Np stream segments to ensure the buffers protect water quality and other aquatic resources from potential temperature increases. Changes being considered are adding full to partial buffers of between 50 to 75 feet to “non-fish” streams. The “Hard Rock” study from McIntire et. al determined that the current buffer prescriptions for forest adjacent to Type Np waters were insufficient to ensure that streams consistently meet state water quality standards

with regard to stream temperature, and that there were negative impacts to amphibians up to 7-8 years after harvest. Welles presented the study results. A very lengthy discussion on the trade-offs associated with the rule change can be found here: <https://tvw.org/video/forest-practices-board-2025051022/>. Comment letters are due by the end of August.

Should the CBC-fSH provide a public comment letter?

Discussion:

- There could be unintended consequences to nature of the rule change, such as driving timber property owners to sell the land for housing because timber is no longer viable.
- DNR Some forestry companies already have Np buffers on their land
- A \$1.2 billion loss in timber revenue is too great a cost
- Most HWG members would abstain from a vote given the perspectives of their host organizations

Decision: CBC-fSH will not send a comment letter on the proposed rule change.

## **7. Associated Program Updates**

- a. **Office of the Chehalis Basin**
- b. **Coast Salmon Partnership**

Jane Atha reported that the CSP will host a Chinook Symposium October 8-9<sup>th</sup>. Everyone is welcome!

- c. **Aquatic Species Restoration Plan**

There will be an ASRP symposium on October 16<sup>th</sup> with a poster session.

- d. **Fish Barrier Removal Board**

The next grant round will be open in the fall. Kirsten worked with the Washington Salmon Coalition (WSC) to comment on the Board's consideration of a match waiver. The Board is considering offering the waiver based on economic need (based on location of sponsor organization), local prioritization (defined as top 20% barriers on a local or prioritized list), and/or synergy with a nearby (within HUC10), recently-completed project. The WSC offers support for this policy decision.

- e. **Stream Teams**

Nothing to report this month.

## **8. Other**

Bob Russell shared that County Comprehensive Plans are being rewritten for the counties within the basin this year, and that on June 27<sup>th</sup>, the Chehalis Basin Partnership has requested presentations from those counties on their updated comprehensive plans. He encouraged that CBCfSH members attend.

## 9. Closing