

Habitat Work Group, Chehalis Basin Lead Entity

AGENDA

September 11, 2023

Online Only

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| <i>Alex Bradberry - Coast Salmon Partnership</i> | <i>Devin DeBono - Lewis Co Public Works</i> |
| <i>Alex Gustafson - Trout Ultd</i> | <i>Farley Youckton - Chehalis Tribe Water Qual</i> |
| <i>Ben Amidon - Chehalis Tribe Restoration</i> | <i>Kathy Jacobsen - LE Outreach</i> |
| <i>Brian Stewart - Conservation Northwest</i> | <i>Kelly Verd - Lewis Conservation Dist.</i> |
| <i>Bill Teitzel - Port of Chehalis</i> | <i>Key McMurry - Pacific County LE</i> |
| <i>Bob Russel - Lewis County Citizen</i> | <i>Luc Lamarche - Beaver Craftworks, LLC</i> |
| <i>Brett DeMond - CBFTF Streamworks</i> | <i>Mara Zimmerman - Coast Salmon Part/Fdn</i> |
| <i>Caprice Fasano - Quinault Tribe DNR</i> | <i>Martin McCallum - Thurston County Citizen</i> |
| <i>Chris Volmert - Lewis Conservation Dist</i> | <i>Miranda Plumb - USFWS</i> |
| | <i>Sarah Watkins - Grays Harbor County Citizen</i> |

1. Welcome & Introductions

2. Minutes Approval- August

Bob Russel moved to approve August's minutes, which Farley Youckton seconded. A vote on the motion passed unanimously.

3. Organizational Business

a. Outreach Updates

Kathy Jacobsen shared that she met with Kirsten over the last month to put together an outreach work plan for the coming year. Kathy will be starting with a Newaukum Pilot Watershed Plan presentation, to be shared with Newaukum Basin schools, including Napavine, Onalaska and Chehalis.

Kathy also shared that she will be putting together a "meet our local watershed hero" story featuring Caprice Fasano's work for the Quinault Tribe.

Kathy also stated that Lake Sylvia Day took place September 10th, with the Grays Harbor Conservation District, GH Stream Team, Audubon Society, and Chehalis Lead Entity represented. She shared that there was good attendance, with good engagement.

The Onalaska Harvest Festival is coming up, and Kathy will be tabling for the LE along with Farley Youckton.

Kathy is also putting together a factsheet for streamside landowners on stream health, which will also be accompanied by a 3-5 minute video.

b. Newaukum PWR

Alex Gustafson provided an update on the Newaukum pilot watershed. Those involved with the upcoming subcommittee can plan on having an informational and update meeting at the end of October. The Plan has been released; though public promotion of the plan is awaiting some stakeholder details, notably regarding relevant Weyerhaeuser permitting.

Alex also shared that Mara and Kirsten have been working with the City of Chehalis and WDFW on moving forward with the fishway on the Newaukum at the water intake section of the water facility. Next steps for the plan involve pursuit of funding options for plan projects.

c. **Cloquallum PWR**

No current updates on the Cloquallum Pilot Watershed

d. **Coal Creek Watershed**

Bob Russel shared an update on the Coal Creek Watershed project he is developing with community members, and noted that the group was able to meet with the mayor of Chehalis in the past month. Bob then provided a map of the parcels that would be involved, describing plans, various stakeholders and property owners. In the next month the group, along with Kirsten Harma, has a meeting scheduled with the mayor, which will likely lead to a presentation to the city council discussing the donation of a central 66 acres of city-owned wetland.

The project would involve acquisition and restoration of properties along the reach of Coal Creek that runs between Centralia and Chehalis and joins Salzer Creek to enter the mainstem Chehalis. It is in the discussion and conceptual stage, but looks to create a narrative of natural conservation and natural community spaces; particularly within the context of a large hillside housing development, the Centralia Station, and public access projects being considered by a local branch of the Blue Zones organization.

DISCUSSION

Comment, Brian Stewart: This region is the third linkage for wildlife connectivity across I-5. It's currently a weak corridor, and so projects like this one could be a great asset to improving it. I would be happy to support this project and provide talks.

Comment, Kathy Jacobsen: Ben Goldfarb, who has written a new book on the impact of roads on wildlife, will be speaking this Friday night at Browser's Books in Olympia.

Q, Ben Amidon: Have you been in conversation with the LAND group?

A: Yes, we're already in discussion with them and have found strong synergy.

4. **Salmon Recovery Funding Board**

a. **2023 SRFB Meeting – Pending Policy Discussions**

Mara Zimmeran shared that the SRFB is meeting next week, and will be asked to approve the 2023 list of projects for funding. She also shared that the board will be discussing options for changing match requirements. There won't be a decision made, but this is a good time for input from anyone invested in the issue.

Further, she noted that the SRFB will be making a decision regarding the fund distribution structure for their new riparian restoration grant program. \$25m has been made available statewide for riparian restoration through the upcoming SRFB grant cycle. The board's decision will determine whether these funds will be distributed more directly through lead entities and regions, or through a statewide competition.

Mara noted that regardless of how this funding structure shakes out, a significant amount of funding will be available for riparian restoration across the coast region: this is an important opportunity to move forward high priority riparian work. She noted that land acquisitions will qualify for this funding, as well. The SRFB meeting is an open meeting, and anyone can and is encouraged to attend to make public comment.

Q, Chanele Holbrook: What kind of buffer width would be required for these SRFB riparian funding?

A: They would lean toward their own manual's policy, which requires a buffer width of a 200-year site-potential tree height - roughly 150 feet. That said, they do allow exceptions, and qualifying exceptions are listed in the manual.

Q: What about urban areas? Some of these landowners only have a half-acre.

A: True: the policy written does not differentiate between land-use types, this is a potential issue. For further clarification, contact Kendall Barrameda.

b. 2024 SRFB Planned/Conceptual Projects

Brett DeMond shared that Grays Harbor County is looking at applying for matching funds for a federally-funded county grant for Workman Creek. The County received 5 grants through federal fish passage funding. Workman Creek is one of them, and would open 20 miles of habitat south of Elma. The county is required to provide a \$5,000 match, which is high for their capacity.

Bob Russel asked what the logistics are for filling out a conceptual project form - whether he as a citizen can submit one. Key McMurray and Mara Zimmerman clarified that while eventually a project sponsor will need to be found, any individual can and is encouraged to submit a conceptual project form, even without a sponsor.

5. Newaukum Lakes Trip report

Alex Gustafson shared a brief reflection of a field trip by group members to Newaukum Lake, the source for the South Fork Newaukum. She shared that it was interesting to see the forestry practices on the way up to the lakes, and to see the role of riparian buffers from a nearly birds-eye view. She noted they saw some wildlife at the lakes, and a few potential opportunities for restoration, but also noted that the cost/benefit of such projects might not pencil out, given the remote location.

After Alex's summary, Mara showed photos of the day, as well.

6. Requests for Letters of Support – Federal Funding

a. Damon Creek @ Kirkpatrick – Brett DeMond

Brett shared a request for a letter of support for Grays Harbor County's project applying for funds from the NOAA fish passage grant program, due in October. Currently, the project has a \$237K grant from SRFB, and a FBRB grant for \$740,500. The project applied for WCRRI funding, which did not come through. The site is a currently 33% passable fish barrier at the mouth of Damon Creek at Kirkpatrick Road, RM 10.3 in the lower Humptulips basin. The design and permitting was funded through SRFB previously, and the project would open 5.28 miles of upstream habitat, where 8 barriers have already been corrected. The structure to be replaced is a 7' by 5' steel culvert, which will be replaced by a bottomless arch with a 35' span and a 22' rise. The road is the only tsunami evacuation route in the area, and the project would also improve an associated boat launch.

The cost is \$3.22M, and so current funding is at about 30% match, with approx. a \$2.2M ask from NOAA.

Bob Russel expressed strong support and moved to vote on approving a letter of support from the HWG. Sarah Watkins seconded the motion, and a vote on the motion passed unanimously.

When asked, Mara Zimmerman also confirmed that RCO will be putting forward a request to the legislature for the supplemental session for funding for additional WCRRI projects recommended for funding that were not included in the legislature package for 2023. This decision would likely come down in approx. March of 2024.

b. Stowell Creek Fish Passage – Devin DeBono

Devin Debono presented Lewis County's Stowell Creek Fish Passage project to the group, requesting a letter of support. The project bundles four fish passage projects for funding through NOAA's fish passage grant. The project would complete designs for the correction of four barriers, as well as construction of the downstream-most barrier. The project would restore 7.97 stream miles for coho, and 7.55 stream miles for steelhead, for a total of \$2.8M.

Bob Russel moved to vote on approving a letter of support from the HWG. Farley Youckton seconded the motion, and a vote on the motion passed unanimously.

7. Presentation: Beaver Co-existence Strategies

Luc Lamarche shared the vision and work of his company, Beaver Craftworks. He lives in the Lincoln Creek watershed, and became progressively more involved with conservation work through his relationship with the land and the community it is located in. He comes from a background in civil engineering, and he moved toward beaver co-existence work as a way to work directly in conservation and restoration work in a holistic, impactful way.

Luc spoke to the intrinsic potential of beaver, outlining the outsized role they played historically, the similarly outsized role they can play in restoration work today, as well as the conflict that beaver structures can cause. While there are many good solutions, he also pointed out examples of beaver/infrastructure conflict without simple solutions, to show that beaver co-existence work is an evolving, dynamic field. Even so, there is a developing body of experience and best practices, with a publicly-available manual produced by Jakob Shockey in 2023.

Luc then shared strategies for beaver coexistence. First, he shared that the social element can be the most challenging step. Careful listening and consideration of human needs and practicalities, as well as the needs of involved wetlands and beaver, is key. Then he described pond levelers, which allow beaver to keep their dams in place while maintaining the level of the beaver pond below a desired threshold. Finally, he described a range of culvert protection strategies.

8. Coast Salmon Foundation Survey

Mara Zimmerman led the group through a survey on behalf of the Coast Salmon Foundation, seeking input for their strategic plan.

By way of introduction to the survey, Mara described the background of the Coast Salmon Partnership and Foundation. The Washington Coast Salmon Recovery Region encompasses all of the watersheds that drain directly into the Pacific. The four coast lead entities that represent this region came together to coordinate a shared salmon recovery vision, forming the Coast Salmon Partnership. This partnership shares SRFB funding across the region, sends letters to the legislature, and submits comments to environmental impact statements. Alongside the Partnership, the Coast Salmon Foundation is the fiscal sponsor for the partnership. Their role is to secure diverse public and private funds to promote growth of the Partnership's salmon recovery activities in addition to the SRFB funding. In addition, the foundation works to raise visibility of activities and projects from the four lead entities. They also work to fund projects that fill information gaps, e.g. a region-wide stream temperature model.

The Coast Salmon Foundation is currently developing a strategic plan for the next 5-10 years, and is seeking input from the involved LEs on future direction for the Foundation. Mara asked all meeting participants to take the survey, which is available here: <https://forms.gle/pQ6MzCKS18Pn46149>

9. Project Updates

Devin DeBono shared that Lewis County went to construction on the Kruger Road project, and that construction is moving forward well, with little flow in the river.

Caprice Fasano shared that the Quinault Indian Nation is continuing to develop their Humptulips restoration strategy. They are working to create an interactive web map and a restoration strategy document to identify priority actions and areas to restore Coho habitat within the Humptulips

watershed. The strategy is modeled after the Wynoochee/Satsop project carried out by the Grays Harbor Conservation District, working with Natural Systems Design.

Last week was the first week of field review for the model, and the next stakeholder workgroup meeting will be in October or early November, to hold a workshop to prioritize project metrics. Look for a link coordinating this meeting time, as well as a draft report and draft web-map for review.

Brett DeMond shared that the Chehalis Basin Fisheries Task Force (CBFTF) is completing a project on Camp Creek on Schaefer Boom Road, which is mostly done, apart from reinstalling fencing. A barrier just upstream is also going into design, for likely construction next year.

10. Associated Programs Updates

a. Coast Salmon Partnership

Mara shared that the next board meeting is coming up this month on Thursday, September 28th from 10-2, and is open to the public, in-person or virtually. At this meeting, the board is accepting nominations for vice-chair. There will also be a guest speaker, Kristen Jaeger from USGS. She will be talking about her work in the Quileute watershed, looking at suspended sediment as it relates to land-cover disturbance. Also, the CSP's second Climate Resiliency workshop will be coming up on Tuesday, November 14th. It will be an all-day event at the Ocean Shores convention center, and registration will open in mid-September.

If you would like to be on the mailing list for CSP board meetings and other CSP events, reach out to Mara at mara@coastsalmonpartnership.org.

b. Aquatic Species Restoration Plan

Brett DeMond shared an update on the CBFTF's ASRP-funded projects. She shared that the third bridge is finishing up, while the other two bridges have been asphalted and wrapped up. All three corrections should be wrapped up in the next week.

11. Other Business

Ben Amidon shared that Drew Mealor wanted to remind attendees that there is an upcoming RIT meeting on September 21st.

Miranda Plumb shared that the national fish program has annual funding that is unconnected to the bipartisan infrastructure law funding, which is coming out soon. This is typically around \$200,000 - \$300,000, so reach out to Mara if you have a project to propose. The bipartisan infrastructure law funding should be out soon - watch for upcoming information on that development.

12. Closing

Note, there will not be a HWG meeting in October; the next meeting will be in November.