

**Chehalis Basin Lead Entity -- Habitat Work Group
September 12, 2022 -- Minutes**

In person: Chehalis Tribe Community Center & Zoom

~ 9:00 am – 12:00 pm ~

<i>Ann Weckback, Lewis County Public Works</i> <i>Alexa Brown, Grays Harbor Stream Team</i> <i>Alex Gustafson, Trout Unlimited</i> <i>Anthony Waldrop, GH Cons. Dist.</i> <i>Bob Amrine, Lewis Cons. Dist.</i> <i>Bob Russel, Lewis County Citizen</i> <i>Brad Murphy, Thurston County</i> <i>Brett DeMond, Streamworks</i> <i>Brian Stewart, Conservation Northwest</i> <i>David Marsell, Pacific Conservation District</i> <i>Drew Mealar, ASRP Implementation</i> <i>Greg Green, Ducks Unlimited</i> <i>Jan Robinson, Chehalis River Basin Land Tr.</i> <i>Jamie Glasgow, Wild Fish Conservancy</i> <i>Jerilyn Walley, Grays Harbor Cons. Dist.</i> <i>Karen Adams, WDFW Region 5</i>	<i>Kathy Jacobson, Outreach Coordinator</i> <i>Kela Hall-Wieckert, Lewis County Weed Board</i> <i>Kelly Verd, Lewis Conservation District</i> <i>Kendall Barameda, RCO</i> <i>Key McMurray, Grays Harbor Citizen</i> <i>Kirsten Harma, Lead Entity Coordinator</i> <i>Lee First, Twin Harbors Waterkeeper</i> <i>Mara Healy, Thurston Conservation District</i> <i>Mara Zimmerman, Coast Salmon Partnership</i> <i>Nat Kale, Office of the Chehalis Basin</i> <i>Ned Pittman, Coast Salmon Partnership</i> <i>Rickie Marion, Chehalis Tribe</i> <i>Sarah Watkins, Grays Harbor Citizen</i> <i>Sasha Medlen, RCO</i>
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1. Welcome, Breakout Rooms, Introductions

2. Minutes Approval

Alex motioned to approve August minutes, and Bob seconded. The motion passed.

3. Organizational Business

a. Chair and Vice Chair Elections

Bob Amrine has been the Habitat Work Group’s Chair since it’s founding in the early 2000s. He is now proposing to step down as Chair and from the Habitat Work Group to focus on other work priorities. The Lead Entity bylaws state that elections for Vice Chair and Chair take place annually on October of every year. Members are encouraged to volunteer for or nominate someone to both of these positions next meeting. Thank you Bob for your years of service!

b. Newaukum Subcommittee

There has been a summer hiatus of this subcommittee and the core team has been working on a NOAA grant application to advance the pilot watershed restoration strategy. It was successfully submitted on time. Alex will reconvene the full group in October.

c. Outreach Updates

The “Wynoochee River: Experience It” first annual swim event was held in August. There was poor attendance by the public, but good participation by exhibitors. Poor attendance was likely due to families wanting to take vacations after years being at home, other regional events, and other factors. Learnings among the exhibitors included the need to talk about water safety at

future events that celebrate the river. GIS professor Mike took some good drone footage of the river during the event. Contact Kathy or Kirsten to see the footage.

The Lewis County Stream Team will be hosting an event at Stan Hedwall Park about freshwater mussels. Lake Sylvia Days will be hosting the Watershed Festival and they need helpers. The Onalaska Apple Festival is coming up. Kathy will host a booth. Bob and Kelly offered to make a map showing the Lewis Conservation District projects in the Newaukum subbasin (including CREP and SRP) that Kathy can showcase at events.

There is an upcoming webinar about the Chehalis Basin Board's studies of the Skookumchuck Dam. Twin Harbors Waterkeeper will be hosting a tour of contaminated sites in Grays Harbor. Contact Lee First for more information. She will send around a press release,

Return of the Salmon is coming to Schafer State Park on November 5th.

Kirsten is listing all of these events on the events page of the Chehalis Lead Entity website.

d. Field Trip Planning

Last meeting, the group discussed some potential locations for project site visits that would focus on celebrating successfully completed projects. October 21st was suggested as a good day to tour some of the sites.

Kathy suggested a tour of Wild Time Farm, owned by John Henrikson. John has been completing restoration on his property for 20 years and can share lots of stories, lessons and successes. Kirsten will coordinate with John to find a good date that works for him.

e. Chehalis Tribe Field Trip - Reflections

The group discussed reflections from the conversation with Dan and William, Chehalis Tribe, after last month's meeting. They enjoyed learning about tribal history and hope to forge stronger connections in the future.

4. Infrastructure Bill Funding Opportunities

The Habitat Work Group approved a letter of support last month for WDFW's application to NOAA Fish Passage grant program that would support projects in Coal Creek and the Newaukum basin. Unfortunately, staff at WDFW did not submit the application on time and thus there will be no opportunity for funding.

Mara shared that there will likely be additional funding opportunities coming out of the Inflation Reduction Act. Stay tuned for more details.

5. Salmon Recovery Funding Board

a. Grant Round 2022 follow up and looking forward to 2023

Kirsten shared the project list that will be presented for funding approval at the September SRFB meeting. Since the Fish Barrier Removal Board ranked list has come out, we have an idea of which of these projects will be successful in getting their match, and which won't. Coal Creek and Middle Fork Newaukum are likely below the funding line and will seek ASRP opportunistic funds, or other sources. Kendall recommends letting RCO know if you think you will pull your projects from the SRFB list given likely lack of match.

b. RFP for projects over \$5 million

The Coast Salmon Partnership is in the middle of determining how to allocate the \$5 million

awarded through the state supplemental budget. The Coast must deliver a decision to the SRFB by October 1st. There were 2 projects submitted for funding consideration: A Willapa Coastal Forest project and a large river restoration project on the Quilute River. There are both excellent projects and the scoring by the Implementation Team reflected this: there was only a 0.2 point difference in scores. The CSP recommends splitting the funding between the two projects. However, an RCO policy may prohibit this from happening. If so, the funding will go to the higher ranking project: Willapa Forest. A vote will take place at the September 29th special board meeting.

6. Presentation: The Missing Link report findings. Eric Erler

Eric Erler, in association with Ducks Unlimited, produced a report titled “The Missing Link: Recovering the Health of the Chehalis Watershed.” Research for the report included a survey of 28 entities currently or potentially working on salmon recovery in the Chehalis Basin, and 25 conservation and community leaders who could provide expert insight from outside the basin. The intended audience of the report includes elected leaders, landowners, and other stakeholders beyond just the restoration community.

The first section of the report speaks to the need for a comprehensive vision. Individual actions are not enough and coordination is needed so that each piece is strategic. Restoring the Chehalis will require working on a landscape scale: both upland and estuarine areas. Public support is essential before a big investment is needed. A vision needs to be bigger than helping salmon: a single place where many values are achieved and sustained will be more likely to attract investment.

Landowner engagement is essential in a watershed that is 76% private and 81% timber. Don't just ask landowners to participate, get them to co-create a vision. There is growing recognition of a need to compensate landowners for ecosystem services. An achievable incentive listed in the report is working with forest managers to allow pre-commercial thinning in buffers to compensate for greater protections elsewhere. Public recognition goes a long way. An example program in Idaho shows public-private access agreements as a working “incentive.”

In administration and oversight of work to restore watershed health, there will need to be greater real estate expertise brought to the basin. It will be more effective to focus on the larger land transactions. Invest in capacity where organizations already have strong administrative structures in place.

Q) How will this report be distributed?

A) They are open to ideas for where to house the report. It has already been distributed to some of the people in this group. They will likely seek funding to develop an outreach strategy. They might come back to the HWG to seek a letter of support at a future meeting.

Q) What do you recommend as next steps for developing landowner incentives for the ASRP?

A) A next step is to determine who would be the best fit to take the lead on different recommendations in the report. Eric would like to develop a conference or seminar to bring the experts interviewed in this report to share more of their recommendations directly. Greg recommends listening to the landowners directly, not just developing a list of incentives.

Comment: This report is relevant to the whole state. Make it available soon so that others can access it. Some options to house the report are the Coast Salmon Partnership website, Lead Entity website, or Chehalis Strategy website.

Bob Russell commented: "I am the missing link," suggesting that more landowners like him need to be involved. The new LAND process is showcasing some of these themes- there are links between economics, UGA expansion, flooding, and salmon. We need to work more closely together.

Kathy recommended putting on another conference like one put on years ago called "Vision 2020." Talk all together about multiple issues on the landscape and create a vision for the future. Centralia College and the Tacoma Dome were listed as potential venues.

The next Salmon Recovery Conference, with abstracts due October 5th, was listed as a forum to share Missing Link findings.

7. Associated Program Updates

a. Lewis County Weed Board

Kela is new staff to the Lewis County Weed Board. The group offers services to landowners like reimbursement for chemicals and equipment to treat weeds. Knotweed is the focus in Lewis County. Their preferred method is to do treatment in headwaters first. They would like access to Weyerhaeuser land but don't have permission. They want to support the restoration community and work on priority areas for salmon recovery.

b. Aquatic Species Restoration Plan

Drew provided updates on staffing. Now is the time to start recruiting new sponsors through an upcoming RFQ – so stay tuned. The ASRP is involved in budget planning for the 2023 binnuem. Regional Implementation Team now meet from 9-2. They have found that meeting all together as a group is the most efficient.

c. Coast Salmon Partnership

The CSP will be developing a climate adaptation strategy. A Hershman fellow will be coming on board soon to support this work.

d. Fish Barrier Removal Board

Related to fish passage, WDFW staff are aware of the need to update our prioritization tool to account for corrected barriers, and will work on this after a "new Cade" is hired. Adam and Casey are our contacts at WDFW fish passage program at this time.

e. Chehalis Basin Partnership

Meeting in person this Friday.

Adjourned.