

**Chehalis Basin Lead Entity -- Habitat Work Group
September 13, 2021 -- Minutes**

Zoom Meeting

~ 9:00 am – 12:00 pm ~

<p>Andrew Deffobis, <i>Thurston Co.Planning</i> Alex Gustafson, <i>Trout Unlimited</i> Alexa Brown, <i>CBFTF/GH Stream Team</i> Anthony Waldrop, <i>Grays Harbor CD</i> Ben Amidon, <i>Chehalis Tribe DNR</i> Bob Amrine, <i>Lewis CD</i> Bob Russell, <i>Lewis County Citizen</i> Brian Stewart, <i>Conservation Northwest</i> Chanele Holbrook, <i>Citizen</i> Colleen Suter, <i>Chehalis Tribe DNR</i> Elena Fernandez, <i>Thurston Public Works</i> Emelie McKain, <i>ASRP/WDFW</i> Garrett Dalan, <i>Nature Conservancy</i> Greg Green, <i>Ducks Unlimited</i> Hannah Roe, <i>Ecology Non-Point</i> Hope Rieden, <i>Chehalis Tribe DNR</i></p>	<p>Jamie Glasgow, <i>Wild Fish Conservancy</i> Jennifer Holderman, <i>WDFW ASRP Implement.</i> Kaitlynn Nelson, <i>Thurston County Planning</i> Kathy Jacobson, <i>Lead Entity Outreach</i> Kirsten Harma, <i>Lead Entity Coordinator</i> Kelly Verd, <i>Lewis CD</i> Key McMurray, <i>Grays Harbor Citizen</i> Lee First, <i>Twin Harbors Water Keeper</i> Mara Healy, <i>Thurston Conservation District</i> Mara Zimmerman, <i>Coast Salmon Part/Fdn</i> Megan Tuttle, <i>WDFW Habitat Bio</i> Ned Pittman, <i>Coast Salmon Part/Fdn</i> Paula Holroyde, <i>League of Women Voters</i> Rickie Marion, <i>Chehalis Tribe DNR</i> Tom Kollasch, <i>Grays Harbor CD</i> Vanessa Leigh, <i>Intern, Lewis Co. CD</i></p>
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1. Welcome, Introductions

Everyone provided self-introductions to the whole group. No break-out rooms this month.

Lee First made an announcement: DNR’s Anenome Project is looking for new sites to place water quality probes in the Chehalis. They just installed one at Brady’s Oysters. The purpose of the probe is to collect data that will inform a study on ocean acidification trends. They’d like to place a probe near a new restoration project site, or somewhere else where it might collect relevant data. Reach out to Lee if you have ideas.

2. Minutes Approval – July

Ben motioned to approve August’s minutes, and Key seconded. The motion passed. Kirsten reminded the group that we are looking to hire a note-taker.

3. Organizational Business

a. Membership

Bob Russell expressed interest in taking on the Lewis County Citizen seat on the Habitat Work Group. He has completed a restoration project on his land and is actively looking to provide tours and start up a Wisner Creek Stream Team with support of the new Lewis County Stream Team. He has been an active volunteer with the Grays Harbor Stream Team.

Bob Amrine made a motion to nominate Bob R. to this seat. Alexa Brown seconded. All in favor. Welcome Bob!

b. Outreach updates

Kathy Jacobson provided an update on her current work on outreach for the Chehalis LE. She is about to submit a news release about the heat-related fish kills in the Newaukum River this summer. 23 Chinook salmon were killed, with the heat wave being the #1 contributor, combined with swimming stirring up the cool pools those salmon find refuge in. Megan Tuttle suggested that she refer public to the WDFW website to report fish-kills. Several HWG members showed interest in helping “amplify” the message of these news releases by sharing them through their own newsletters and social media.

Kathy will be at the Onalaska Apple Festival providing outreach on October 2.

Kirsten provided an update on the recent project site tour for a Grays Harbor County Commissioner. It was a great success thanks to the enthusiasm of the Fisheries Task Force staff and Grays Harbor Stream Team volunteers. Another similar tour for a Lewis County Commissioner is planned for October 1.

Kirsten is going to host a beaver pond tour on a local property on September 17. Space is available so please sign up.

c. Newaukum Subcommittee –

The committee met following last month’s meeting. There is new momentum now that the Pilot Watershed White Paper has been released. Next steps include choosing a smaller sub-watershed of the Newaukum to focus on so that meaningful process-based restoration can be implemented over a short time period. Alex Gustafson has volunteered to help organize this effort, so keep an eye out for outreach from Alex! Everyone is welcome to participate in planning, as we hope to replicate this model in other priority areas in the Chehalis Basin.

4. Salmon Recovery Funding Board

a. SRFB Updates

Kirsten read updates provided by Brandon before the meeting. Notably, the SRFB is going to be having its funding meeting September 22 and 23. Sponsors can expect Brandon to start working on their 2021 project agreements after the 22nd.

b. SRFB 2022 & Planned Project Forecast List

All Lead Entities around the state were asked to provide a 2-year project planning prior to last year’s SRFB grant round, as a way to help RCO ask for more funding from the legislature for SRFB projects. In the Chehalis, sponsors helped produce this Planned Project Forecast List for 2021, 2022 and 2023. Kirsten showed the group the 2022 list and asked sponsors to share whether these planning priorities were still correct.

Mara Zimmerman announced that there may be Federal Funding available soon if the infrastructure bill passes. She encouraged sponsors to not limit themselves to planning for the amount of funding available through SRFB. Prepare your construction-ready projects for this fund source. Put time into project development for projects that implement the Lead Entity's Tier 1 priorities. If funds become available, there would be a 5 year window in which to use them.

The WCCRI grant round will open next in January 2022.

Greg Green announced a funding source that Ducks Unlimited plans to apply for in the next grant round: NAWCA – This is a federal funding source with a focus on protecting migratory birds and wetlands, but could overlap with other aquatic species priorities. DU will apply with a “package” of projects, ideally in the lower Chehalis watershed. DU will provide administrative support and could disperse funds to other basin sponsors. For more information, ask Greg.

c. Project Updates

Greg Green and Jamie Glasgow provided a presentation on the finding from their Grayland Assessment project. They hope to complete the project soon and provide a more detailed presentation in December. Their project identified the severity of tidal fish passage barriers, identified coho presence in tributary streams, and laid out initial restoration actions. The next phase of this project could include engineering and additional modeling.

5. Associated Program Updates

a. Aquatic Species Restoration Plan – Implementation Planning – Current Status & Request for Input

Emelie McKain provided an ASRP update. There will be a 2-hour webinar for interested sponsors on September 24th. This webinar will provide a complete picture of how ASRP projects will be developed and funded, and how interested sponsors can get involved. The first step will be an RFQ for project sponsors, which will be released on October 5. The ASRP is going to have a lot of new materials about the funding program, and forms needed to get involved, available on the website chehalisbasinstrategy.com.

b. Coast Salmon Partnership

Ned provided updates. Notably, there will be a symposium on Climate Change information that can help inform restoration priorities on the Washington Coast, October 27, 2021.

c. Chehalis Basin Partnership

Kirsten provided updates. Ecology's Streamflow Restoration Program will release an RFP on November 5. The Chehalis Basin Partnership work groups are preparing a bundle of projects for grant consideration.

d. Fish Barrier Removal Board

We are waiting for more details from the new WDFW staff assigned to the Chehalis.

Satsop-Wynoochee Tributary Assessment – Review of Webtool – Anthony Waldrop, Grays Harbor Conservation District.

The Satsop-Wynoochee Tributary webtool is complete and pilot implementation projects are underway. The goal of this work is to increase alluvial water storage. For one of the project areas, modeling projects 6-8 acre-feet of water storage per mile treated. Pre-construction groundwater and surface water level data is already underway. 1,400 feet of stream have been treated this summer. This is a very economical approach to watershed enhancement above fish use. Labor for their project only cost \$50,000, and materials cost just \$15,000. The Conservation District hopes to scale up this work to a small watershed to see if they can create an even bigger impact.

Anthony invited volunteers to join a working group. He hopes to seek more funding and find more locations for projects in the Satsop and Wynoochee. HWG members expressed interest in joining, but with primary interest in expanding this work to other basin watersheds. There was discussion on how more work could be done to determine best practices in these two watersheds, and the expand the work to other areas at a later time.