

Chehalis Basin Collaborative for Salmon Habitat

Chehalis Tribe Community Center
461 Secena Rd, Oakville, WA – Classroom B

And Zoom

MINUTES

September 8, 2025

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| Alex James - <i>Capitol Land Trust</i> | Jane Atha - <i>Coast Salmon Partnership/Fdn</i> |
| Alex Bradberry - <i>CSP Outreach</i> | Jacob Baker - <i>Coastal Interpretive Center</i> |
| Alex Gustafson - <i>Trout Unlimited</i> | Jacob Marley - <i>Chehalis River Basin LT</i> |
| Alice Rubin - <i>RCO</i> | James DeMay - <i>Ecology</i> |
| Amelia Schwartz - <i>Thurston County</i> | John Stepanek - <i>Grays Harbor CD</i> |
| Ann Weckback - <i>Lewis County PW</i> | Jonathan Bradshaw - <i>Minutes</i> |
| Anthony Waldrop - <i>Grays Harbor C. Dist</i> | Julie Grobelny - <i>WDFW</i> |
| Bella Padgett - <i>Ducks Unlimited</i> | Kelly Verd - <i>Lewis Conservation District</i> |
| Ben Amidon - <i>Chehalis Tribe, CBCfSH Chair</i> | Key McMurray - <i>Grays Harbor Citizen Rep</i> |
| Bob Russell - <i>Lewis County Citizen</i> | Kirsten Harma - <i>CBCfSH Coordinator</i> |
| Brandon Carman - <i>WDFW</i> | Mack Hunter - <i>Grays Harbor Conserv Dist</i> |
| Brian Combs - <i>Mason Conservation Dist</i> | Molly Paige - <i>Non-Point, Ecology</i> |
| Brett DeMond - <i>CBFTF Streamworks</i> | Peter Lyons - <i>Ecology</i> |
| Caprice Fasano - <i>Quinault Indian Nation</i> | Sam Gray - <i>Chehalis Tribe</i> |
| Darren Williams - <i>WDFW</i> | Sarah Longacre - <i>Non-Point, Ecology</i> |
| Drew Meador - <i>ASRP Implementation Mgr</i> | Sophia Sherman - <i>Chehalis Tribe</i> |
| Farley Youckton - <i>Chehalis Tribe</i> | Vanessa LaValle - <i>Conservation NW/CSP</i> |
| Ha Tran - <i>Ecology</i> | Victoria Knorr - <i>ASRP Program Manager</i> |

1. Welcome & Introductions (9:00)

2. Minutes – August (9:10)

Minutes from the previous meeting were approved without comment.

3. Organizational Business (9:15)

a. CBC-fSH Outreach Updates

Sofia Sherman shared that she was a part of a CBCfSH group who walked with Lee First, Twin Harbors Water Keeper, along the Chehalis near Peace by Piece Farm. They discussed and observed the presence of various invasive species, as well as low flow conditions. Kirsten also noted that a Chronicle article highlighting the walk will be oncoming.

Kirsten further noted that it is a new fiscal year, and as such it is a new contract year. CBCfSH has two subcontracts: one for notetaking, a position that will continue to be filled by Jonathan Bradshaw; and a second for an outreach coordinator. The outreach coordinator position will be

advertised as a two-year contract with an RFP being posted in various local publications and sent directly to several outreach firms. One of those firms will be Kathy Jacobson, who most recently filled that contract. Kirsten asked the group for volunteers to participate in this interview process. Bob volunteered and Martin was “voluntold.”

Kirsten then discussed having an opportunity on CBCfSH’s website for local residents to report salmon sightings, low-flow issues, and other site observations. She has begun the process of working to create a survey tool to this end, that could be used to create a webmap. The next step involves finding an ArcGIS license to work under. It was also noted that storage of this data, particularly photos, can be a limiting factor.

Kirsten shared new stickers with the updated CBCfSH logo.

Finally, Kirsten shared that the Fisheries Taskforce received an outreach grant, and that Tina Neils, Grays Harbor citizen member and Fisheries Taskforce member is asking for participation in an outreach event at the Satsop hatchery, working with kids on conservation and salmon issues. Members interested should reach out to Tina.

b. Bylaws – Update with new name

Kirsten shared an update of the collaborative’s bylaws, changing the Chehalis Lead Entity’s name to the Chehalis Basin Collaborative for Salmon Habitat. Other than simple replacement of the name in the bylaws, the group discussed whether or not to keep the “Habitat Work Group” term in the bylaws, or whether to refer to what is currently described as the Habitat Work Group as simply the “collaborative”. After discussion, the group decided to make a change along the lines of describing the steering body of the collaborative as “sometimes known as the Habitat Work Group”.

Key McMurry moved to accept the changes to the bylaws as suggested, which ??(1:06:45) seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Summer Construction Updates

Kelly shared that construction is complete and successful at a stream reconnection project near Prather Road in Centralia. She will be visiting that site in the afternoon.

Anthony Waldrop shared images of bank stabilization and LWD projects on the Satsop.

Alex Gustafson shared the she has been doing lots of surveying in the Newaukum up Bernier Creek, and will also be sharing images and videos of work on Schaefer Creek in coming meetings.

John Stepanek shared the development of a 19-acre SRFB Riparian planting project on the Mox-Chehalis. He shared a planting map and discussed plant species, particularly explaining the inclusion of ponderosa pine in those plantings. It was noted that these trees have shown to establish where other trees have not succeeded, and that the trees being planted are of genetic stock from the Willamette Valley, not the East Side.

5. Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB)

a. RCO Updates

Alice Rubin shared that the funding meeting is coming up Tuesday of the week following this meeting. Projects on the funding list will have a start date of that day. Early to mid-October, this should translate to agreements going out for signature.

Second, she shared that news about the new grant manager will be coming up, likely by the end of the month. She also shared that there is a vacancy in RCO, with that position posting in the next week or so.

Kirsten shared that the PCSRF award still has not come through from the federal government. The last she heard from Jane Atha, the grant has moved from the Dept of Commerce to NOAA, who is the agency that disperses the grant.

b. 2026 SRFB Grant Round – Review Proposed Schedule

Kirsten shared an updated grant timeline with the group. One hope was to bring up the timing of the site visits to take place early enough to allow projects to be submitted to the state reviewers in time for comments to be received before the LE ranking takes place. This timing would require project applications to be due at the end of February, with site visits taking place early to the middle of March. Beyond that, the schedule would remain the same. This change was accepted by the group.

6. Fish Barrier Tool Update – Review 2024 web-based version Mara updated and check for “red flag” errors*

Kirsten led a discussion reviewing the fish barrier webmap, which the Chehalis Basin uses to prioritize barrier projects. The currently-used version was updated in 2020, and the CSP has been working on producing a more current update. In order to understand whether the 2025 update as it stands is accurate enough to use this grant round, she walked through this 2025 update with the group. After doing so, the group found a number of still-existing issues.

Jane Atha clarified that the Chehalis Barrier tool was a stand-alone project developed by individuals within WDFW’s habitat program. And so, while the product is used by the CSP, it is owned by WDFW. Further, its status as a stand-alone project means it was not developed with a built-in process for maintaining and updating it within WDFW. As such, this has made it challenging for the CSP to navigate using the tool while keeping its information relevant and updated.

After discussion, it was decided that the preliminary 2025 update of the barrier webmap doesn’t seem to provide accurate enough of an update to utilize for the coming grant round. An update in the webmap will be considered going forward for the next grant round.

7. Presentation: Cosmo Specialty Fiber Violation/Clean-Up (Ha Tran, Ecology)

Ha shared a presentation on the Dept of Ecology’s Cosmo Specialty Fiber cleanup project. Her presentation gave an overview of the two Cosmo Fiber sites covered by the project, one of which is the site of the dormant pulp mill, and the other which is the site of wastewater ponds. These sites are connected by a two-mile long pipe. The mill, originally constructed by Weyerhaeuser, is approximately 70 years old. The site was “mothballed” in 2006, and purchased and run by Gores Group as Cosmo Fibers in 2010, who sold it in 2022 to a foreign investment group, Charlestown Investment. Currently, the mill is dormant, but storing

approximately 800,000 chemicals. ECY has found chemical leaks, as well as degrading equipment and tanks, though leaks are currently staying on site. The owner has stated he has plans to make repairs when he reopens the site. The site also has no power or water supply. Ha also shared that the wastewater ponds are a concern, as they cannot be maintained without water or power, and there is concern about winter flows causing overflow. ECY has helped provide security for the site in addition to company-provided security, in order to ensure that vandalism or other issues exacerbate the problem. ECY and EPA do monthly walk-throughs of the mill, as well as regular checks of the wastewater ponds.

Ha then described clean-up plans, under the Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA). The MTCA process is an eight-stage process which the site will move through: from Investigation; to Study; to Cleanup; to Monitoring, Maintenance and Review.

Finally, she shared that a public hearing will be held at 6PM on September 9th at Grays Harbor College, with a comment period through the 19th.

DISCUSSION:

Q: Are there any plans for outreach to the community to educate the public on the issue before the public input opportunities? There are some cultural differences at play within the community.

A: There is an existing process and resources for outreach for these kinds of projects, and use of those resources are in development.

Q: Where do the fines for these violations go to?

A: Our group here doesn't have that info today, unfortunately - we just have cleanup information.

Q: Have there been any studies about leaching from those ponds? Have they ever overtopped?

A: They have not overtopped in the time that ECY has been working with them, but the mill no longer has water or power to maintain them - so this might be a different situation going forward. I don't know of any studies about groundwater leaching.

Q: Can you explain the purpose of the ponds and the potential contaminants in those?

A: They are not treatment ponds, though they do allow for settling. They pre-date the clean water act, which is notable. The ponds are there to pull the water to adjust the pH and fecal coliform before release. The treatment of the pollutants take place at the mill, and then these ponds exist for management of those waters.

Q: There have been extraordinary pH results near the mill, as well as dioxins and furans found at the mill. Can you share a map of where those readings were taken and where the outfalls are?

A: Ha shared the two main outfall points, one on the east of the mill and the other on the western property with the ponds. These were both sources of the dioxin and furan measurements. She then located a sodium dioxide tank on the western end of the mill property, which is where the pH readings were taken.

Q: Previous work like this has looked like what is called a "Brownfield" solution - not necessarily the best possible solution, but the best reachable solution for all parties. Is there going to be a

similar opportunity?

A: It is very dependent on what the owner decides to do. If they decide to sell the property, there are many options. If they decide to start the mill back up, the options will be limited to work monitoring their operations, etc.

Q: What kind of input would be helpful at this stage?

A: We are very early in the process, so we are mostly looking to familiarize you with the project, and connect you to resources to keep updated. The best place for direct input may be during the public comment processes.

Details on their website: <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/cleanupsearch/site/2375>

8. Discussion/Decision on providing comment letter – Lewis Conservation District (all)

Kelly requested a letter of support from CBCfSH for the Conservation District project up for funding by a Voluntary Stewardship Program grant. The project would re-meander a stream channel on Salzer Creek east of Centralia on Proffit Road.

Bob Russell moved to provide this letter, which Key McMurry seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

9. Regional Contractor List (Sofia Sherman)

Sofia shared that the Quinault Indian Nation (QIN) asked her to compile a list of regional contractors for various conservation work, and that she is working on that. She asked CBCfSH members for input on local contractors that sponsors have used - not necessarily as an endorsement, but just to establish a list of resources. This list would be housed most likely at the CBCfSH website and/or the Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA) websites.

Q: Can you share about Plummer Lake findings?

A: Sophia also noted that Plummer Lake is a point source for the Chehalis Basin for elodia. She shared that NWCB has done an initial treatment of diquat and will be going in with a secondary treatment of flouridone as necessary. After that, they will be looking for funding to do followup treatment next summer.

10. Associated Program Updates (11:30)

a. Aquatic Species Restoration Program (Drew, others)

Drew shared that the next RIT meeting will be Sept 18, where they will review projects and share about ongoing work, as well as discuss new funding opportunities. They have also updated their project submission process, so that it is all online.

Secondly, he shared that the ASRP's annual science and sponsor workshop will be in person on October 16th. This will be an opportunity to hear from sponsors and local scientists.

Finally, he shared that the OCB's long term strategy (a wider umbrella than ASRP) outreach open house will be taking place on Sept 25th at the veteran's memorial museum in the evening, with a second one taking place on October 8th.

b. Fish Barrier Removal Board

Alice Rubin shared that at their last meeting FBRB approved their updated manual. October 1st is the date of the next grant round.

She also noted that match requirements are not required for any restoration projects requesting less than \$75K, or for design less than \$500K. There is also an opportunity to request match waiver for hardship. There are three hardship pathways: if your project has a “coordinated pathway” (if your project has a connected barrier within its watershed or stream that has been fixed within four years); if you are a sponsor with organizational hardship (eg an overburdened community); or if your project is a LE-prioritized fish passage barrier.

No board meeting in September, the October meeting will take place in the form of site tours on the 1st and 2nd.

11. Closing – (11:50)