
**HABITAT WORK GROUP
MARCH 9, 2012 MINUTES**

In attendance:

Lee Napier, GHCo Lead Entity Coordinator

Ann Weckback, Lewis County

Lonnie Crumley, Streamworks

Birdie Davenport, DNR

Larry Durham, Chehalis Tribe

Mark Swartout, Thurston County

Jan Strong, CRBLT

Rob Fancher, Rayonier

Bob Amrine, Lewis County CD

Chanele Holbrook-Shaw, Heernett Foundation

Janel Spaulding, CBP Watershed Coordinator

Chris Conklin, Quinault Indian Nation

Tom Gow, Thurston County

Nikki Wilson, Lewis County CD

Miles Batchelder, WCSSP

Debbie Holden, CCS

AGENDA

1. LOCATION:

Grays Harbor County Forestry Building
310 W. Spruce Street
Montesano, WA 98563

2. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

3. CONCEPTUAL PROJECT PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSION

- Rob Fancher, Rayonier
- Jamie Glasgow, The Wild Fish Conservancy

4. SRFB CYCLE FOR 2012

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Bob Amrine, Chair, called the March 9, 2012 meeting of the Habitat Work Group.

CONCEPTUAL PROJECT PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSION

BOB AMRINE, LEWIS CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Bunker Creek

Bob provided handouts showing the site location and a comparison between engineering for a concrete bridge (\$75,850) and a railcar bridge (\$65,000). The HWG considered this project last year. The bridge location has moved since last year to create a straight access from the field instead of a sharp turn onto the bridge. Hydraulic analysis for the project is still underway. The new CD engineer is from DNR, Mark Stevens, who replaces Sam Giese from SW Washington. After construction, the area will be replanted.

Bob would appreciate comments on the project.

Discussion:

While the CD would like to use the railcar bridge, which is more aesthetically pleasing, but last year the SRFB showed a preference toward concrete bridges. Chris suggested that Bob should talk with Rick Kuykendall from FFFPP about the design. The engineer from the Franklin Corporation will stamp the railcar bridge. They may have to put up signage on the bridge that states it is for farm equipment and small vehicles only. It will be the landowner's responsibility to control any use of the bridge.

The landowner has plans to farm part of the site. While there are no plans to develop the property, it could accommodate one to two building sites. However, once the bridge is in, it will be difficult for the property owner to get a concrete across the river.

Is the property designated agriculture lands of long-term significance? The zoning is residential 1/20 based on hydric soils. The roadside is under CREP and the landowner is planning on planting more.

CHANELE HOLBROOK SHAW, HEERNETT FOUNDATION

Scatter Creek / Chehalis River Wein Farm Acquisition

Chanele provided maps of the property. This is a 150 acre farm property that has been agriculture for a number of years. It was Dolman Dairy, and recently hay production (10 years). The Weins' get five cuts of hay off the fields compared to most farms that get 2-3 cuts a year; the property has some of the best prime agricultural soil in the Chehalis Basin.

South of the South Community Farm Land Trust will keep the top portion of the property, about 100 acres, to farm permanently. Heernet will purchase the lower 50 acres, which has two tributaries that are potentially good juvenile salmonid habitat. WDFW recently marked redds in stream; there is significant spawning in this reach of Scatter Creek.

The Chehalis River is causing some erosion in the lower field. The proposed project will replant the riparian zone to create a living flood fence. Heernet will plant along the two tributaries and increase the riparian areas for juveniles. The couple of existing culverts on the site look adequate. There also is a lot of beaver activity in this area. The long-term plan is to have an outdoor classroom for agriculture production, including a farm incubator program with hands-on activities for students such as testing, planting, and restoration activities. The project will leave both functioning culverts in as teaching tools.

There are 280-acre feet of water rights with the property; farming activities will use about 200-acre feet. Heernet is looking at acquiring the remaining 80 - 100 acre feet of water rights. The acquisition of irrigation water rights will stop pumping off the river.

Farmers sometimes irrigate during the summer just to show the electric companies and water rights stakeholders that the water is essential for agricultural practices. Chanele would like to work with this group to create a water trust for other farmers to use during summer periodically. This would be a good opportunity to begin a water-banking program that protects water rights and teaches people how the concept works.

Discussion:

Janet agrees this is a great project idea and suggests consulting with peers in Eastern Washington. The concept is to make water use and irrigation more efficient by using less water while achieving same end goals. Currently there is no incentive for a farmer to save water – reduced use may end up having their water rights taken away.

Miles suggested that Chanel purchase easements with water rights instead of purchasing the property. Purchasing easements would be less expensive and more in tune with Manual 18 and SRFB.

There was a suggestion to phase the project: bring forth a conservation easement this year and in the future begin the restoration work.

MARK SWARTOUT, CHEHALIS BASIN PARTNERSHIP

Mark announced that the Chehalis Basin Partnership is looking at doing a water-banking project that protects water rights. An owner of water rights can place them into a water bank for a river, including attaching conditions. A water bank will support agriculture, discourage selling off property to residential.

Discussion: Chris felt that this would not be something the Lead Entity would want to support because there is not enough water to begin with – he does not agree that we should bank water and then use it – it should remain in the river.

SRFB CYCLE FOR 2012

Lee asked the group to confirm the List of Projects she entered into HWS last month after confirmation with the project sponsors regarding their interest in submitting them for 2012 SRFB grant consideration. These projects are:

- Allen Creek Restoration Project
- Bunker Creek Barrier Removal Project
- Bunker Creek Barrier Removal Project MP 5.678
- Bunker Creek Road MP 2.386 Barrier Removal Project
- Campbell Slough Fish Barrier Project (6 corrections)
- Ceres Hill Rd 09.56 Unnamed Creek Barrier Removal Project
- E. Fork Chenois Creek Fish Barrier Correction
- Elliott Slough Acquisition
- Mill Creek Dam Removal
- Rayonier Chenois Creek Fish Barrier Projects (14 corrections)
- W. Fork Chenois Creek Fish Barrier Culvert Correction
- Wein's Farm Riparian Acquisition & Restoration

Lee reminded the group that the deadline is coming up. She provided a handout from RCO, which has a new requirement this year that a project must be entered in both PRISM and HWS. Lee has imported our twelve projects into PRISM. Project sponsors should review the budget section to make corrections to the amount she entered. RCO recently featured Grays Harbor Lead Entity projects in HWS projects to teach LEGs how to import projects into PRISM. Miles got really good feedback from RCO; they are impressed with our work.

The project proposal process is different this year so be sure to use the new forms, especially for those projects that went forward last year. RCO is changing pre-site visit requirements: you have to have the project entered into PRISM by April 20th (name, description, funding request), provide location and vicinity maps, detailed site or parcel map, aerial photos if available, design plans or sketches, estimated budget, and draft project proposal.

Final drafts are due by June 28, 2012. Sponsors should enter everything into PRISM, then print the information and get copies to Lee. Lee can review applications if they are provided to her in early June. Make sure to have your project proposal form complete before the ranking process. We are in need of a biologist for the review team. Miles suggested Pad Smith or Dave King.

Is anyone interested in revisiting the ranking process? Miles stated it is the most user-friendly process in the area and makes sense. Mark said it does not work well for people who have not been on a field visit. The group was reminded that we have a requirement for people ranking projects to have gone out on the site visits.

Washington Coast Sustainable Salmon Foundation (WCSSF)

Miles reported that funding is looking sketchier this year for the Lead Entity Regional Recovery Organizations. They are expecting a 20% reduction from \$80 million to about \$65 million. Since there is less funding this year, WCSSP is considering budget cuts. The WCSSP Regional Board is creating a sister foundation to work as a funding group, the Washington Coast Sustainable Salmon Foundation (WCSSF). In March, WCCP anticipates approving a set of Bylaws and Articles for WCSSF. There are a number of seats designated by WCSSP. Mark Swartout, WCSSP Chair, will serve on the board. There will be four additional places and all designated tribes will be offered a seat.

National Fish Habitat Partnership

Miles provided a handout from the National Fish Habitat Partnership (www.fishhabitat.org). The Pacific Marine and Estuarine Fish Habitat Partnership was recently recognized by the Board. This is a potential place for additional funding for estuary projects. Lisa DeBruyckere will be at the Partnership Meeting this month to provide information about the National Fish Habitat Partnership.

MEETING DATE AND AGENDA FOR APRIL MEETING

April 6, 2012 (changed from April 13)

Agenda: Grays Harbor Fish Assessment, TNC derelict gear