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**HABITAT WORK GROUP  
APRIL 6, 2012 MINUTES**

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In attendance:

Lee Napier, GHCo Lead Entity Coordinator

Bob Amrine, Lewis County CD

Ann Weckback, Lewis County

Janel Spaulding, CBP Watershed Coordinator

Mark Swartout, Thurston County

Larry Durham, Chehalis Tribe

Birdie Davenport, DNR

Chris Conklin, Quinault Indian Nation

Tom Gow, Thurston County

Miles Batchelder, WCSSP

Eric Delvin, TNC

Todd Sandell, WFC

Jan Strong, CRBLT

Richard Carlson USFWS

Mark Celedonia USFWS

Debbie Holden, CCS

## AGENDA

### 1. LOCATION:

Lewis CD  
1554 Bishop Road  
Chehalis WA 98532

### 2. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

### 3. PROJECT UPDATES

- Eric Delvin, The Nature Conservancy
- Todd Sandell, The Wild Fish Conservancy

### 4. SRFB CYCLE FOR 2012

## WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Bob Amrine, Chair, called the April 6, 2012 meeting of the Habitat Work Group.

## PROJECT PRESENTATIONS

### ERIC DELVIN, THE NATURE CONSERVANCY, UPDATE ON COAST-WIDE MARINE DEBRIS AND DERELICT GEAR PROJECT

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The Nature Conservancy is working collaboratively with the Quinault Indian Nation (QIN) on a project to remove nets and crab pots from the Grays Harbor Estuary.

This project came about from funding QIN received from a NOAA grant for net removal, together with TNC, WDNR, and GHC MRC.

The team that led the net removal work in Puget Sound will be working in Grays Harbor this summer. They will be focused on removing nets and determining what mechanisms can be put in place so nets don't reaccumulate. The area has

been surveyed with underwater cameras. The team will continue surveying with sidescan sonar which was used successfully in the Puget Sound. QIN plans to remove derelict gear from 5 areas of the estuary. Joe Schumacher prioritized these areas based on historic fishing activity where nets are likely to be found.

In addition to this project, WA Coast MRCs and Treaty tribes are engaged in developing a coast-wide derelict gear project which will likely focus on crab pot removal. Crab pots are a potentially large problem as many pots are lost annually. Their ecological impact is unknown, and they pose a hazard to navigation and fishing efforts. TNC was awarded funding to search two square-mile areas on the coast where the Quinault Indian Nation fishes. TNC will also scope removal of fishing nets on the Columbia River in Wahkiakum County. Other projects include survey of pilings in Pacific County and coastal beach clean ups (debris is coming in from the March 11, 2011 tsunami in Japan).

#### **Prevention.**

For nets: The Quinault tribe will focus on removal of derelict gear first. Later they hope to initiate a program that assures nets don't reaccumulate.

For crab pots: DFW has set up a successful program to allow fishermen to legally pickup abandoned derelict crab pots after the season has closed.

Northwest Straits has a no fault reporting program available to people who lose their nets. They can report the loss and have an opportunity to get gear back without a fine, see <http://www.derelictgeardb.org/reportgear.aspx>. Anyone can send GPS coordinates of found gear. All data on recovered derelict gear will go into Northwest Straits database.

For additional information, see the Gray's Harbor / Lower Chehalis River Derelict Fishing Gear Removal 2011 PowerPoint presentation.

TODD SANDELL, THE WILD FISH CONSERVANCY, GRAYS HARBOR JUVENILE FISH USE ASSESSMENT: 2011

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Last year we sampled 700 sets around 6 zones including primary and secondary sites in the Estuary Mouth, North Bay, Central Estuary, South Bay, Inner Estuary, and Surge Plain.

We used two sampling methods: beach seining and fyke netting. After catching the fish, we put them in buckets, measured, and checked for tags and parasites.

We found the South Bay to be a really productive area for chum and Chinook salmon, with juveniles moving in there and staying for several weeks to months. Contrarily, there were not many chum at all in North Bay – probably due to low salinity.



We identified three main areas for restoration:

1. Bottle Beach State Park area (Ocosta). The tide gate uses a flap which prevents the intrusion of salt water. Remove (preferred) or modernize the tide gate. The adjacent property nearest the estuary is private property.
2. Slough under SR 105 west of South Bay bridge. Remove tide gate.
3. Dikes in John's River slough. Remove dikes. Dikes have caused fingers of slough to dry up. Most vegetation in the area is marine water tolerant. USFW owns some of the property and Audubon may own some. No structures in area, no pastures. This area would be the easiest to correct and would restore the largest amount of habitat for juvenile salmon.

We caught 3 bull trout last year and 1 this year in March (2012). There were all found low salinity areas, brackish and high emergent marsh sites. The 1996 report recorded 15 bull trout were caught in Aberdeen area. Fish were going back up to the Hoh, and returning to Grays Harbor but not reproducing here. Bull trout need cold and clean water to spawn; they may be reproducing up in the Olympics and coming down to feed.

This year we will sample 37 sites using the beach seining method only. We will sample Charlie Creek near the auto wrecking yard site. We will also begin taking genetic samples to see if Columbia River or other fish are in our system. We will also do a historical comparison of the Simenstad and Eggers study, sampling 5 of the same sites they worked at in 1981.

Additional sites will be surveyed for restoration opportunities on the Hoquiam.

For more information, see the Grays Harbor Juvenile Fish Use Assessment: 2011 Report and accompanying PowerPoint Presentation.

## SRFB CYCLE FOR 2012

Pre-application process is a lot more complicated than before. Make sure information is almost complete. RCO suggested that we don't go out to a project site that is not ready. If there are projects that are not clearly articulated in PRSIM step down and bring forth more fully developed next year. Project sponsors put together information for review and rank in June.

Going out in the field to review projects on May 10, 11 – full 2 days.

## AGENDA FOR MAY

May 10 & 11, 2012 – proposed project site visits.