
Habitat Work Group September 9, 2011 Minutes

In attendance:

Bob Amrine, Lewis County CD
Lee Napier, Grays Harbor County Lead Entity Coordinator
Ann Weckback, Lewis County
Janel Spaulding, Chehalis Basin Partnership Watershed Coordinator
Miles Batchelder, Washington Coast Sustainable Salmon Partnership
Bob Burkle, WDFW
Chanele Holbrook Shaw, Heernet Foundation
Paul Schlenger, Anchor QEA
Jim Shannon, Anchor QEA
Aaron Short, Anchor QEA
Margaret Murphy, Anchor QEA
John Kliem and Debbie Holden, CCS

Chairman Bob Amrine called the September 2011 meeting of the Habitat Work Group to order.

1. ANCHOR QEA Flood Authority Comprehensive Enhancement Plan Update

Anchor QEA presented its projects under a contract with the Chehalis Flood Authority:

- Fish study (mainstem from upper Chehalis to Porter RM33)
- Enhancement plan (tributaries that drain into mainstem Chehalis in the same area)

Fish Study Project

Anchor is conducting the study along seven reaches 2 miles south of Pe Ell to just south of RM 21 (Mainstem) – where tidal influence ends.

This project is still in its data gathering and report compilation phases. The intent is to use applicable existing and new data to characterize habitat conditions in the mainstem Chehalis River (upstream of River Mile 33) that contribute to salmon. Also, to use existing and new data to characterize three mainstem Chehalis River salmon populations: spring Chinook salmon, coho salmon, and winter steelhead. Anchor did not have the scope or time to walk the rivers to inventory current salmon runs.

If dam project proceeds, there will be a need for further studies.

Comprehensive Enhancement Plan

This project explores habitat enhancement opportunities along tributaries of the Chehalis mainstem upstream of RM 33. The enhancement plan focuses on salmon in general and does not concentrate on specific salmonid species. The outcome of the study is not intended as a mitigation

response for a potential dam. The draft report is due in early November, with the final being available for release in December.

Task 1 is gathering information, using reports, getting GIS watershed map, identifying major tributaries, and determining where habitat enhancement opportunities exist. Task 2 is reviewing all data sources to look at enhancement plans.

The scale of projects identified through the study will likely exceed the cost of those normally associated with salmon recovery grants. However, culvert replacements are included in the assessment.

Anchor intends to coordinate the enhancement study with the Lead Entity strategy, especially in relation to the conceptual projects program. The study will not prioritize proposed projects, however. Napier suggested that the study should sort proposed enhancement projects using the subbasin organization scheme used in the strategy.

There will a full day workshop in October for stakeholder review and comment on the study results. The workshop will focus on developing criteria and determine what to do in what order. The invitation list will include Habitat Work Group members, the Flood Authority, people who have worked in the basin, and perennial project sponsors.

Other group discussions about both studies:

- The larger project formats will integrate well into the larger conceptual project effort, especially in recruiting partners for large-scale projects.
- The US Army Corps of Engineers has identified several projects through levy project. While the Corps has been reluctant to release potential projects to the conceptual projects program, Anchor may prove more successful at securing that information.
- When making the projects so big and skipping the small projects, people assume the Corps will be the only ones who can take them on.
- Identify strategic opportunities that are scalable into smaller components that smaller project sponsors can take on.

Burkle discussed an approach in Hood Canal proposing an impact fee approach for development instead of doing smaller mitigation projects. Collecting and pooling the money for use in larger projects may be more effective than doing smaller mitigation projects. This could help fund these larger enhancement projects identified in the Anchor study.

Amrine requested that Anchor meet with the Habitat Work Group on a monthly basis to update on the project. Napier will remain in contact with Anchor regarding info for the next meeting. Meeting with the Conceptual Projects committee might also prove beneficial.

Conceptual Projects Committee and Meeting Dates

The following membership was proposed for the Conceptual Projects Committee of the Habitat Work Group:

- Bob Burkle
- Bob Amrine
- Janel Spaulding
- Chanele Holbrook
- Ann Weckback
- Miranda Plumb
- Chris Conklin

The group agreed to hold its Habitat Work Group meetings in the mornings (9:30 to 12:00) and to hold the Conceptual Project Committee meetings in the afternoons (12:00 to 2:00). The upcoming schedule will apply:

- Oct 7th Habitat Work Group / Conceptual Project Committee
- Nov 4th Habitat Work Group / Conceptual Committee
- Dec 9th Habitat Work Group / Conceptual Committee
- Jan 13th Habitat Work Group / Conceptual Committee

Invite (potential project sponsors) to come to a specific meeting:

Eric Beach & Meghan Tuttle (Rayonier)

Bill Wamsley

Rick Johnson (Thurston County)