

Chehalis Basin Lead Entity
Habitat Work Group Meeting Minutes
November 8, 2013

The November 8, 2013 meeting of the Chehalis Basin Lead Entity was held at the Lewis Conservation District Office, Chehalis, Washington. Chair Bob Amrine called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. In attendance were:

John Kliem, Creative Community Solutions	Miles Batchelder, WCSSP
Janet Strong, Chehalis River Basin Land Trust	Ann Weckback, Lewis County Public Works
Dave Geroux, Center for Natural Lands Management	Jane Atha, Centralia College / LE Coordinator
Omroa Bhagwandin, Chehalis Tribe and Onalaska Alliance	Caitlin Guthrie, Capital Lands Management
Mark Swartout, Thurston County Citizen	James Fletcher, Wild Fish Conservancy
Miranda Plumb, US Fish and Wildlife	Todd Sandell, Wild Fish Conservancy
Cindy Wilson, Thurston County	Bob Amrine, Lewis County Conservation District
David Rounry, Department of Ecology	Jim Hill, Lewis County Citizen

Agenda Items

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Updates and Announcements
 1. Humptulips sub-basin workshops
 2. Knotweed sub-committee discussion
 3. SRFB 2013 project updates
3. Chehalis Basin Strategy “Reducing Flood Damage and Enhancing Aquatic Species” Technical Workshop debriefing from Jane
4. Coastal Legislative Initiative projects for WRIAs 22-23.
 1. Updates
 2. Sites for fieldtrips (?)
5. SRFB 2014 process and potential improvements
 1. Schedule
 2. Conceptual project form
 3. PRISM and Habitat Work Schedule
6. WCSSP Updates
 1. Regional strategy
 2. Regional communication and outreach
 3. Others

7. Agenda for next HWG meeting December 13, 2013

Updates and Announcements

Humptulips Sub-basin Workshops

John Kliem told the group about two workshops being held in November to determine a desired future condition for the Humptulips sub-basin as a whole and then on a reach-scale. There is a challenge in getting everyone we would like to participate at the meetings. The meetings are being held close together in order to keep up the momentum with the workshop goals. Several meeting members discussed a new distribution list for the Humptulips sub-committee.

Knotweed Control Coordination

Dave Geroux told the group about a coordinated effort among Mike Nordin (Grays Harbor Conservation District) and Eric Delvin (Nature Conservancy) within multiple sub-basins of the Chehalis to remove knotweed and provide riparian enhancement. The effort is being made in order to seek and manage grant funding in a coordinated and more efficient manner. There is a desire to hire a coordinator to help manage these efforts. Bob Amrine asked if he sees a knotweed patch who he should call. Geroux said to contact him with a lat/long coordinate and they can work from there. There was some discussion regarding the challenges with land owners regarding knotweed control in the basin. It was concluded that landowners are best convinced by their neighbors to take part in stewardship programs.

Grays Harbor Management Plan

Mark Swartout updated the group on the Grays Harbor Management Plan on the harbor side of things. The lead entity has opened up a lot of habitat and the basin has a lot more capacity for spawning. Chehalis communities need to let more fish upstream for spawning. The management plan is a 5 month process and it might be of interest to the group to participate and try to get the fish up to these systems. There was discussion about collecting the stream miles opened up for WRIAs 22-23 in order to convey the need to allow more fish upstream for spawning. Miranda Plumb and Miles Batchelder mentioned they could make an organized list of river miles opened up in the Chehalis. This is a controversial and difficult issue to navigate, but this is a good opportunity to bring it up.

SRFB 2013 Funding Update

The Grays Harbor Juvenile Fish Assessment maintains the project of concern status after the technical review panel committee meeting. Batchelder updated the group of the options at this time. If the lead entity decides to support the project, the sponsors and the lead entity can take the project to the SRFB meeting in December and make the case for funding once

again. If SRFB makes the decision not to fund the project, the money allotted to the region goes back to the state. If the project is pulled by the project sponsor or the lead entity, the money allotted for that Juvenile Fish Assessment will go down list. In that case, all of the Grays Harbor LE projects in addition to all of the other regional projects will be funded. The group discussed the review panel comments and their final assessment that it was not worth the money to get a fourth year of data as part of the Assessment (the project has been funded for three previous years). James Fletcher and Todd Sandell discussed the details of the modeling and the need for a low escapement year as input for the model. There was much discussion surrounding SRFB requirements, timeline between review committee comments, and the importance of Juvenile Fish Assessment project for the region. The climate change component of the Juvenile Fish Assessment did not have much impact with the review panel. Sandell, Fletcher, and Atha relayed their conversation with Kelly Jorgenson, the Technical Review Panel Chair, and her perspective on climate change studies with SRFB. Essentially, SRFB tends to be more reactive than proactive with new project types. The more climate change projects they see, the more likely they'll be to fund them. The group assessed that the current SRFB stance doesn't give much comfort to project sponsors putting forward climate change components with their projects. Also for that reason, the climate change component of the Juvenile Fish Assessment did not factor into the review panel's decision on whether or not to continue funding for the project. The final decision was made by Wild Fish Conservancy to pull the project and the Habitat Work Group committed to helping find alternative funding in order to carry the project over for another year. The idea was discussed to rework the proposal for the 2014 grant round in order to make it more of a framework/synthesis for approaching restoration, protection, and land acquisition for the estuary. The group considered many different options for the project and affirmed the importance of seeing this project continue in some capacity. Batchelder discussed with the group the next steps for the region in light of the Juvenile project being pulled. The group decided to draft a letter of support as needed for alternative funding for the Grays Harbor Juvenile Fish Assessment.

Coastal Legislative Initiative projects for WRIAs 22-23

Atha distributed an updated project list for the Washington Coast Legislative Initiative. Atha reminded the group of the nature of this initiative and its intent to approach the legislature on a yearly basis. This brought about conversation regarding the need to have strong conceptual projects for WRIAs 22-23 for possible funding opportunities beyond SRFB.

SRFB 2014 process and potential improvements

Atha initiated conversation regarding the conceptual project form and the idea was put forth to make it more general in order to allow for conceptual projects from new project

sponsors to have an initial starting point. Atha brought up the challenges of prioritizing sub-basins and/or species as part of the lead entity strategy. Swartout mentioned one thing to know is that there isn't a mechanism through SRFB to really develop a strategic plan. Kliem mentioned that he outlines the LE strategy with the guidelines for SRFB and he hopes with the Humptulips model we can then extrapolate a successful strategy to the other sub-basins. The group continued discussion of how assessment and monitoring projects, a key component to basin strategy and prioritization, do not easily fit into the SRFB requirements for funding. Janet Strong suggested that rather than try to fit the monitoring and assessment projects into SRFB criteria, we should encourage sponsors to find majority funding from other sources and use SRFB as a smaller funding portion. The group acknowledged that it is really important to have a strong list for possible funding. Omroa Bhagwandin raised the point that it is difficult for first-time project sponsors to know the process for submitting conceptual projects and that may be an issue for others not knowing how to put them forward. Kliem mentioned that he has developed a straightforward strategy with directions on the website and that it is available there. The group mentioned that it may be useful to direct the group to the strategy on the website when soliciting for conceptual projects. Swartout mentioned that it is important to have a robust list of sponsors out there looking for projects and that we need the counties in the basin to also submit projects. Kliem reminded the group that initially there was a Conceptual Projects Committee that would help project sponsors fine-tune their proposals to make them "SRFB ready".

WCSSP Updates

There were no updates at that time beyond what was discussed relating to the regional SRFB funding status.

Amrine adjourned the meeting at 12:10p.

NEXT MEETING: Friday, December 13, 2013, 9:30 AM at the Lewis County Conservation District, in Chehalis.