

Habitat Work Group

Chehalis Basin Collaborative for Salmon Habitat

Zoom ONLY

MINUTES

December 2, 2024

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| Alex James - <i>Capitol Land Trust</i> | Janet Strong - <i>Grays Harbor Citizen</i> |
| Alex Gustafson - <i>Trout Unlimited</i> | Jennifer Lewis - <i>Office of Chehalis, ASRP</i> |
| Alice Rubin - <i>RCO</i> | Kathy Jacobson - <i>LE Education Coordinator</i> |
| Ann Weckback - <i>LC Public Works</i> | Key McMurray - <i>Grays Harbor Citizen Rep</i> |
| Ben Amidon - <i>Chehalis Tribe</i> | Kirsten Harma - <i>LE Coordinator</i> |
| Bob Russell - <i>Lewis County Citizen</i> | Kim Figlar-Barnes - <i>WDFW</i> |
| Brandon Carman - <i>WDFW</i> | Martin McCallum - <i>Thurston Citizen Rep.</i> |
| Brett DeMond - <i>CBFTF Streamworks</i> | Molly Paige - <i>Non-Point Coordinator, Ecology</i> |
| Caprice Fasano - <i>Quinault Indian Nation</i> | Ned Pittman - <i>Coast Salmon Part/Fdn</i> |
| Daron Williams - <i>WDFW</i> | Rebekah Brooks - <i>Coast Salmon Partnership</i> |
| Donna Albert - <i>Chehalis River Basin LT</i> | Tara Livingood-Schott - <i>Chehalis Tribe</i> |
| Drew Meador - <i>ASRP Implementation Mgr</i> | Tina Niels - <i>Grays Harbor Citizen</i> |
| Farley Youckton - <i>Chehalis Tribe</i> | Victoria Knorr - <i>WDFW</i> |

1. Welcome & Break-Out Rooms

Kirsten Harma introduced Tina Niels, of the Chehalis Basin Fisheries Task Force and the Stream Team steering committee, as a potential new CBC-fSH citizen representative for Grays Harbor County. Kirsten noted that if she continues to be interested in the position, her membership would be voted on during January's meeting.

2. Minutes

Minutes were approved by the group with no changes offered.

3. Organizational Business

a. Outreach

Kathy Jacobsen shared that she was able to meet with both of the basin's new stream team coordinators, Breana Downs (GH Stream Team) and Maddie Wilcox (LC Stream Team). She has been able to pass on some of her information to them both, and has enjoyed meeting them. In November, Kathy also gave a talk to the League of Women Voters on the interconnectedness of water sources, including sharing the water table model. Kathy also shared her Spring Chinook informational publication with members of the group for review, and has received good feedback. She also shared that she is working to coordinate river table presentations to schools in the coming year throughout the Newaukum Basin, as well as in Grays Harbor.

First Day hikes will be taking place at Lake Sylvia State park on January 1st with the theme of the connection between Salmon Health and Forest Health.

Finally, Kathy and Kirsten reminded the group to be in contact with Kathy about any local community members who are focused on conservation for the LE's Watershed Heroes series.

Kirsten shared with the group that she met with Patrick Mahoney of Grays Harbor Community College, and had a productive conversation about finding a better way for his students to be directly involved with work that the Lead Entity does. They discussed his students learning more about the grant process itself. Kirsten will be presenting on the SRFB grant round to the students, after which technical review team members will have a conversation with students in the following weeks, leading them through their own ranking of SRFB projects for 2024-2025.

Bob Russell shared that he enjoyed meeting with the new LC Stream Team coordinator. He also shared that there was a lot of salmon activity in the last week in many creeks local to Chehalis, and that he shared photos and videos of this activity to Kirsten. Kirsten reminded the group that such videos and photos are always welcome!

b. Cloquallum PWR Update

John Stepanek was not present; a Cloquallum update can be expected at the next meeting.

c. Barrier Subcommittee

Kirsten shared that Mara Zimmerman has run the barrier prioritization model for the Chehalis Basin with an update that accounts for corrected barriers. She is looking to reconvene the culvert subcommittee in December to get the Lead Entity's support for the update and send it on to WDFW.

Kirsten also shared that in response to RCO money made available for barriers in the coastal region, Mara is looking to also engage the culvert subcommittee to create a prioritized list for potential barrier projects that could use this funding.

4. Tracking Projects in the Newaukum in an "Umbrella" in Salmon Recovery Portal

Rebekah Brooks, the Salmon Recovery Portal data steward for the Coast Region, shared the details of navigating the portal. She explained the use of what has become the Newaukum Headwaters Prioritized Restoration Plan Umbrella Project tool. She shared that the umbrella tool was designed to roll up several elements of individual projects, or connect closely related projects within the ASRP. Lead Entities including CBCfSH, however, have used this tool more broadly to link watershed-wide projects, in this case in the Newaukum Prioritized Watershed. The SRP is working to develop tools specifically designed for this larger-scale use, but is - in the meantime - working to make the umbrella tool work for this use. Rebekah walked the group through the use of this tool for this purpose.

Kirsten also reminded the group that the annual review of SRP project information is upcoming - sponsors should expect to hear from her regarding QA/QC of projects.

5. Salmon Recovery Funding Board-

a. RCO Updates

Alice Rubin shared that the last board meeting of the year will be on Dec. 18/19. They will be discussion manual 18 updates, in addition to other topics. Alice shared as well that as the CCA

was not repealed, funding approved for the RCO that was contingent on that decision will be available January 1. This includes supplemental funds for WCRRI, ASRP, SRFB and FBRB.

Kirsten also shared that abstracts for the Salmon Recovery Conference in April have been chosen. This will include one from the four Kirsten submitted, as it was a very competitive round this year. Alice noted as well that sponsors should keep an eye out for early registration starting January 6th.

b. Training on Budget

Kirsten then shared that Alice Rubin will be providing a training on grant applications for SRFB, particularly on putting together budgets. To this end, Alice asked the group to reach out to her with topics the group has questions about. She also reminded the group that there would be a state-wide training for SRFB grants in January, and Kirsten reminded the group that the CBCfSH has their own in February, as well.

c. Monitoring SRFB 2025 Grant Process Update

Ned Pittman shared that the regional technical committee is meeting December 12th to review the grant project ideas and topics put forward by the coastal LEs, and the CSP will then decide whether the region has a project to submit to the statewide monitoring grant. After that, this proposal will come back to the LEs. He also noted that wood placement effectiveness monitoring, several of which were suggested, will likely not get chosen for submission, as this topic has already received a lot of study in other areas.

Ned also clarified that there will likely be a window for potential monitoring projects to be submitted to the technical committee after their update in January, as well.

d. Local Review Team: Updated Project Evaluation Criteria

Kirsten shared about criteria updates discussed by the Local Review Team at their most recent meeting. She shared that the group added a new category for Climate Resilience to the Overall Benefit portion of the ranking. She also shared that as this is the first year they have added new criteria, the points assigned to this new category would only represent 5% of the total score this year. Additionally, she also shared a guidance sheet outlining what this new category would consider.

6. Conceptual Project Presentations

No conceptual project presentations were brought to the present meeting.

7. Associated Program Updates

a. Open Federal Funding NOFOs, OCB Federal Funding bundle planning

Jennifer Lewis shared that the Office of the Chehalis Basin (OCB) is looking at a couple possible submissions for the Watersmart Grant, though the notice of funding opportunity (NOFO) has not yet been put out. One of these is looking at the impact of climate change on the hydrology of Oregon Spotted Frog habitat; the second is a proposal to remove culverts and restore a tributary of the Humptulips River, along with some other associated work. These proposals will likely be due in February.

Jennifer also shared that the OCB is looking to submit grant applications to the America the Beautiful grant.

Finally, Jennifer reminded the group to reach out for assistance on any federal grant applications, and also shared that the OCB is hiring a new federal grant coordinator.

Bob Russel asked if the OCB's federal funding assistance resources would be a good resource for the in-development Coal Creek project. Jennifer shared that this would be welcome, and that this process is also still in development.

The OCB will be holding a board meeting in the coming week.

b. Coast Salmon Partnership

Ned Pittman shared a CSP update, as follows:

1. The Regional Technical Committee (RTC) will meet Dec 12, 9AM - 12PM, when they will develop recommendations for the 2025 regional monitoring grants focused on life-cycle bottlenecks, limiting factors, or effectiveness monitoring. Ned emphasized that if groups have such project proposals, these should be sent to him before that meeting; and 2. The Coast Salmon Foundation is recruiting for a new executive director. An announcement will be released on Friday, Dec 6th. Anyone interested in more information should reach out to the current executive director, Mara Zimmerman.

Ned also shared more details about the monitoring project proposals discussed at the former RTC meeting. Key proposals discussed include projects focused on estuary smolt migration bottlenecks; engineered log jam effectiveness; and fish use of barrier-corrected passages.

c. Ecology Non-Point

Molly Paige shared that Ecology has hired a new non-point specialist for the Upper Chehalis service area, who will be starting December 30th. Molly shared that her area includes the Lower Chehalis area.

d. Aquatic Species Restoration Plan

Drew Mealor shared that there are few major updates from ASRP. He shared that the transition from RCO to Ecology is still in process, and that the last RIT meeting discussed this at length. He shared that a main difference will involve the pay-advance process. ECY may not be set up to carry out this process quite yet. However, the hope is that Ecology guidance will be on file for new projects in January. That said, transition of existing projects from RCO to Ecology will still continue into the new year.

Drew also shared that the ASRP is looking to be able to obligate all of the roughly \$25M in funding in the present grant round. In the coming biennium, the ASRP will likely receive the same amount of funding as previously, which will be slightly less than \$25M - as this figure included approximately \$5M in rollover funding.

Additionally, Drew noted that a number of local strategy and project-development grants have been funded, and that as such there are many work groups coming together around this work.

Finally, he noted that a Steering committee is taking place in the coming week, and that an in-person RIT meeting will take place December 19th.

8. Closing – (11:55)