

# Habitat Work Group , Chehalis Basin Lead Entity

**May 6, 2024**

~ 9:00 am – 12:00 pm ~

**Chehalis Tribe Community Center**

Adam Fleming - <i>WDFW</i>	Greg Green - <i>Ducks Unlimited</i>
Adrien Owens - <i>Conservation Northwest</i>	John Stepanek - <i>Grays Harbor CD</i>
Ann Weckback - <i>Lewis County Public Works</i>	Julie Grobelny - <i>WDFW</i>
Alex Gustafson - <i>Trout Unlimited</i>	Kathy Jacobsen - <i>LE Education Coordinator</i>
Alexandra James - <i>Capitol Land Trust</i>	Kim Figlar-Barnes - <i>WDFW</i>
Alice Rubin- <i>Recreation &amp; Conservation Office</i>	Kirsten Harma - <i>LE Coordinator</i>
Ben Amidon - <i>Chehalis Tribe</i>	Mara Healy - <i>Thurston Conservation District</i>
Bill Teitzel - <i>Port of Chehalis</i>	Mara Zimmerman - <i>Coast Salmon Part/Fdn</i>
Bob Russell - <i>Lewis County Citizen</i>	Martin McCallum - <i>Thurston Co Rep</i>
Brett DeMond - <i>CBFTF Streamworks</i>	Mike Scharpf - <i>WDFW</i>
Chenele Holbrook - <i>Dept of Ecology</i>	Ned Pittman - <i>Coast Salmon Part/Fdn</i>
Drew Mealor - <i>ASRP Implementation Mgr</i>	Travis Casey - <i>ECY Water Quality</i>
Garret Dalan - <i>The Nature Conservancy</i>	Victoria Knorr - <i>WDFW</i>

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## 1. Welcome & Introductions

## 2. Minutes

Minutes for March were not available, and will be approved on at the next meeting.

## 3. Organizational Business

### a. Outreach Updates

Kathy shared that this coming Saturday, May 11 is Prairie Appreciation day from 10 - 2. She also shared about her experience working with Onalaska Middle School on their invertebrate monitoring program.

Next, she shared the latest about the newly developed interpretive partnership between WDFW, WA State Parks and Friends of Schaefer and Lake Sylvia State Park (FOSLS). They held an event on Noxious Weeds at Schaefer State Park in March. Additionally, in May, Sarah Watkins (LE GH Citizen Rep) facilitated an interpretive program at Ocean City State Park on management of Scotch Broom.

Kathy was also invited to participate in Earth Day in Tenino on April 20th. It was well attended, with about 100 individuals doing work at the park and learning from various conservation groups.

Kathy then shared pictures from the latest river table demonstration that she helped facilitate at Napavine High School with the help of Bob Russell, Kenna and Chris Volmert.

The first weekend of May, Kathy and Drew Mealor participated in the Shorebird Festival at Hoquiam, where they were able to share with the public about the role of the Lead Entity and various associated programs and efforts.

Finally, Kathy shared that later in May, Satsop Elementary and Mary Knight Schools will be participating in World Fish Migration Day activities at Schaefer State Park.

Bob Russell followed Kathy's update with an affirmation for the outreach work being done in the Lewis County schools. He's excited and encouraged by seeing and participating in this work.

#### **b. Cloquallum PWR**

Ned Pittman shared that the group will be scoring the land types in the wood model at the upcoming meeting, as well as clarifying process and limiting factors. Things are moving forward well. That next meeting will be Monday, May 20th.

### **4. Salmon Recovery Funding Board**

#### **a. SRFB Site Visit Debrief**

Participants in last month's site visits shared their experiences. Alice Rubin shared that it went smoothly, and the review panel got their questions answered. She then shared that the next step is the review panel meeting in the next week. Following that, comments and initial statuses will come out for all reviewed projects. Applications with statuses that require responses are due June 24th.

Martin McCallum then shared his experience with the group. He really enjoyed the opportunity to see all parts of the Chehalis River watershed.

Ben Amidon noted that it was great to have the Grays Harbor College students participating: it really helped in providing an opportunity to bring some of the discussions into generally accessible language, as well.

#### **b. SRFB Timeline Update and Next Steps**

Kirsten then shared an update on next steps for the SRFB process. Following the above site visits, the work group provided feedback to sponsors, and those sponsors have replied. Then, May 2nd, the local review team ranked the traditional SRFB projects, and decided to wait on ranking the Riparian SRFB projects, pending more information from the state review panel. The group will meet a second time to rank those on a date in June. Before that, on May 31st, comment forms and project statuses will be sent out by RCO. As a result of the questions regarding riparian SRFB projects, the formerly scheduled June 3rd HWG vote on ranking will not take place. Instead, that vote will take place at the July 1st HWG meeting.

June 10th and 11th, sponsors will get a chance to discuss any comments from the SRFB Ranking committee via conference calls. The final due date for applicants will then be June 24th.

Final ranking across the Coast Salmon Partnership will occur July 25th, after which surplus funds may be distributed among partially or unfunded projects.

Finally, Alice Rubin shared that the SRFB will decide the funding amount for the next grant round at the board meeting on June 12th and 13th.

Kirsten then described the Local Review Team's ranking process. She stated that the rankings were tight, but that a couple results are clear - the two Trout Unlimited projects in the Newaukum ranked at the top of the list, and that the Lewis County culvert ranked out at the bottom. All other projects fell in the middle, and their funding will depend on how much funds

are ultimately available to this grant round. More detailed notes and comments to all applications will be shared with sponsors.

## **5. Planned Project Forecast List**

Kirsten discussed the development of the upcoming 2023 - 2024 Planned Project Forecast List. She highlighted that this collection of possible future projects across the basin may not necessarily reflect the projects that end up being carried out. That said, the list does serve as a strong tool for legislators to see concrete evidence of community support and ongoing engagement in salmon conservation across the region. To this end, it is useful to keep the list updated regardless of whether the projects on the list align perfectly with what ends up on the ground.

Kirsten then walked the group through the specific information requested from sponsors for their potential projects, and then opened a discussion with sponsors at the meeting reviewing and revising the list as it stands.

**Action:** Bob Russell moved to vote to support this Planned Project Forecast list for submission, which Alex Gustafson seconded. A vote supporting the list's submission passed unanimously.

## **6. Request for Letter of Support – WCRRI**

Alex Gustafson presented two projects that Trout Unlimited (TU) and Grays Harbor Conservation District (GHCD) are submitting to WCRRI for funding. TU and GHCD are requesting a letter of support from this group for these projects, brief descriptions of which follow:

Schaefer Creek Headwaters Restoration - This project was partially funded last grant round, but was not able to receive complete funding - it is being resubmitted for the remaining funding this round.

The project is located in the headwaters of the Wynoochee, on Schaefer Creek. The project would place wood in up to 8 miles of the Schaefer Creek headwaters using hand-built in-stream structures. These structures would improve water and habitat quality and quantity for Coho, fall Chinook and Steelhead. The work is happening within the context of a lot of related conservation work and partnerships in this stream system, including a strategy assessment document assembled by Grays Harbor Conservation District to determine locations for restoration that would best serve the Wynoochee system. Additionally, pilot work already done within the system provides sample designs that will be used to facilitate development of restoration designs.

The proposed project aligns directly with several priorities for the LE Strategy, as well as ASRP priorities. The budget for the project requests \$1,998,699 from WCRRI, which Alex noted includes ten full-time positions for three seasons of work.

West Fork Satsop Headwaters Restoration - This project is a newly developed project, and aims to do essentially what is proposed in the above project in the West Fork of the Satsop. The project would target coho, winter steelhead and resident species by restoring 6 miles of habitat, and the budget for this project totals \$1,534,965.

Q: Would forest practices by landowners allow for these structures to remain in place?

A: Yes, in previous projects Green Diamond has been very willing to leave pilot work alone and continues to be supportive of this type of restoration work on their property.

Action: Bob Russell moved to vote on providing letters of support from the Habitat Work Group, which Martin McCallum seconded. This vote passed unanimously.

## **7. Federal Funding Workshop – Debrief and Next Steps**

Cindy Malay of the Office of Chehalis Basin shared information about the Chehalis Basin Funding Strategy. She also discussed the Federal Funding workshop that took place in January, and the Federal Funding report it produced - which was shared in March.

### Federal Funding Strategy:

Cindy explained that at the beginning of the 2023-2025 biennium, the Chehalis Basin Board directed the Office of the Chehalis Basin to work to leverage their resources to acquire federal funding as efficiently as possible. To that end, the OCB will be hiring a dedicated staff member in addition to continuing to collaborate with the existing work of local partners. They are also working with a federal consultant for guidance in these processes. All of these actions serve the OCB's goal to be in a position to lead and sponsor large federal grant applications.

Cindy also described that in acting as a state sponsor, the OCB hopes to increase the capacity of smaller conservation entities by partnering with them to go for federal funding. One element of accomplishing this goal will be hiring a full time OCB grant development and management employee to decrease the administrative burden on local partners.

### Federal Funding Workshop and Report:

Secondly, Cindy described the Federal Funding workshop held on January 30th at the Chehalis Tribal Center. At this workshop, participants compiled a list of projects that could be a good fit for federal funding. This information was gathered into a report by the OCB's federal funding consultants, which was released in March. Cindy discussed this report with the group. The workshop identified five different project clusters that could be eligible for federal funding. Each cluster targeted specific restoration areas or species: Barriers & Fish Passage; Estuary, Tidal and Coast; Olympic Mountains; Spring Chinook and Cascade; and Wetlands, Black River and Frogs. While these are only suggested groupings, the clusters serve to show how varied projects could be strategically combined to seek large federal grants. The federal funding report then sought to match grant opportunities with those clusters. Three grant opportunities rose to the top as particularly good fits for project clusters as identified: the America the Beautiful Challenge, the National Coast Resilience Fund, and the WaterSMART Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Program. Cindy then described in detail these funds and the project clusters that were most compatible with them.

Next, Cindy shared that in the coming months, OCB will coordinate with project sponsors that were identified as part of well-matched clusters and ask if those sponsors are interested in being included in a large, OCB-sponsored grant proposal. In June, the OCB will coordinate with the ASRP RIT meetings, and potentially begin developing grant applications in the months following that.

## **8. Associated Program Updates**

### **a. Coast Salmon Partnership**

Mara Zimmerman shared that in the coming year, the CSP will be working to raise understanding on how to collaborate instream wood placement and forest management, with

the goal of getting forest management to include more partnerships that get instream wood work happening on managed forests throughout the region. To this end, the Partnership is hosting a workshop with The Nature Conservancy to highlight and discuss an example at their Ellsworth Creek Preserve where this is already happening. The Nature Conservancy is also monitoring the response of Chum salmon to this combined work, and will be discussing this at the workshop.

Mara then asked for feedback from the group on whether members would be interested in attending this workshop, with members responding in the affirmative.

Ned Pittman then provided more general updates from the CSP:

First, he noted, the CSP 2023 Annual Report is about to be released. Second, the communication and outreach committee will meet on Tuesday, May 14th. The committee will be discussing communication strategies on Climate Commitment Act funding and ballot Initiative 2117. Finally, the foundation has finalized its strategic plan, and the foundation board wants to see additional LE and tribal board seats filled - look for communication about this going forward.

Ned also shared that at last month's Implementation Committee meeting, the participants familiarized themselves with the Growth Management Act Critical Area ordinances, and discussed suggestions for more effective and more conservation-aligned enforcement of those rules.

#### **b. Aquatic Species Restoration Plan**

Drew Meador shared an update on the ASRP implementation budget. Of about 24 million, about 10 million has been obligated in the first 10 months of the biennium, with about 14 million remaining for the remaining 14 months of the biennium. As the ASRP is often a source for SRFB match, he wanted to emphasize that any SRFB projects that are within the Chehalis Basin would likely qualify for match funding by ASRP - even if they aren't in ASRP near-term priority areas.

Drew then shared a detailed list on the projects that the ASRP has funded so far this biennium.

Finally, Drew noted that in lieu of the regular RIT meetings in June, the ASRP will host a sponsor and researcher project-planning workshop on June 20th at the Montesano city hall from 9:00AM to 2:15PM. He encouraged anyone with connections to area projects to attend, even if those who may not be sponsors. This will be another opportunity to strategize and collaborate in developing projects and project clusters in the region, and lunch will be provided.

He also noted that with these upcoming events, this upcoming ASRP meeting in May will be the last opportunity for sponsors to apply for funding until August.

It was also noted that the ASRP Symposium recording is available online for anyone who missed this April event.

### **9. Closing**

**\*\*This meeting was followed by a Field Trip to the Berwick Creek restoration site\*\***