**Habitat Work Group , Chehalis Basin Lead Entity**

**June 3, 2024**

~ 9:00 am – 12:00 pm ~

**\*Zoom Only\***

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| Adrien Owens - *Conservation Northwest*  Alex Bradbury – *Coast Salmon Partnership*  Alexandra James - *Capitol Land Trust*  Ann Weckback - *Lewis County Public Works*  Amelia , *Thurston County*  Alice Rubin- *Recreation & Conservation Office*  Ben Amidon - *Chehalis Tribe*  Bob Russell - *Lewis County Citizen*  Brett DeMond - *CBFTF Streamworks*  Chenele Holbrook - *Dept of Ecology*  Drew Mealor - *ASRP Implementation Mgr*  Jacob Baker, *Coast Salmon Interpretive Cent.*  James Blacklaw, *Conservation Northwest*  Jennie Lewis, *Office of Chehalis, ASRP* | Julie Grobelny - *WDFW*  Kathy Jacobsen - *LE Education Coordinator*  Key McMurry – *Grays Harbor Citizen*  Kim Figlar-Barnes - *WDFW*  Kirsten Harma - *LE Coordinator*  Lee First – *TwinHarbors Waterkeeper*  Mack Hunter – *Grays Harbor Cons. Dist*  Mara Healy - *Thurston Conservation District*  Mara Zimmerman - Coast Salmon Part/Fdn  Martin McClallum - *Thurston Co Rep*  Megan Tuttle – WDFW Region 6  Ned Pittman - *Coast Salmon Part/Fdn*  Olivia Williams - USFWS  Travis Casey - ECY Water Quality  Victoria Knorr - *WDFW* |

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1. **Welcome & Introductions & Breakout Groups**

The meeting commenced with break-out groups for small conversations. Full group introductions did not take place.

1. **Minutes**

Minutes for March and May were approved.

1. **Organizational Business**
   1. **Outreach Updates**

Kathy provided updates on her outreach work for the Lead Entity. Notable was the Prairie Appreciation Days event, where she hosted an educational booth along with citizen volunteer Sarah Watkins. Over 900 people were in attendance!  
  
The Office of the Chehalis supports an educational article series with the Centralia Chronicle staff with the support of communications staff and consultants. They are interested in hearing new story ideas and in getting others to help write articles. Kirsten presented this opportunity to the group and asked for input.

* Bob suggested a story about with the Lead Entity/Habitat Work Group is. Many people don’t know we exist. Alex B. suggested that the story include how we fit into salmon recovery on the Coast, including where funding comes from and the process of including local voices and technical experts in project review. Alex B. offered to write the story.
* Chanelle suggested a story about the educational programs in the basin, especially the Chehalis Basin Education Consortium, which has been ongoing for year. There are great stories here as these programs impact the students throughout their lives, lead to careers in natural resource management, etc.
* How people are working to help landowners
* Global perspective – how we’re the last place where “civilization” has destroyed habitat, so it should be easier to fix here.

Bob Russell is also in contact with a reporter in the Chronicle, so we wouldn’t need to run our stories through the OCB if needed.  
  
Lee First presented a short slide show on an erosion issue she had witnessed on the mainstem Chehalis River. As of last week, a house has completely fallen into the river. Participants on the call let her know about the OCB Erosion Management program, which provides funding for immediate erosion concerns – but those funds from this biennium have been completely allocated. Alice Rubin noted that both SRFB and WCRRI allow for debris removal as an eligible expense. A project that includes removal of debris at multiple locations, and includes planting afterwards, could be particularly competitive. Ann Weckback noted that Lewis County collects tires from homeowners at an event once per year, but that program likely won’t come back until July 2025 since it has run out of funding. Adam Flemming, with the NRCS program, is a good person to talk to to learn about their new tire program.

* 1. **Cloquallum PWR**

Ned provided an update on the modeling work he is doing for this restoration plan.

* 1. **Habitat Work Group, Bylaws, Conflict of Interest**

Kirsten reviewed the current list of Habitat Work Group members with the Habitat Work Group. Often people forget if they are a voting member or not, since we only have our most formal voting process for the SRFB project ranking meeting. Positions are for 2 years. We will likely need to review our citizen seats in the fall, as the representatives, except for Martin, have been participating for more than 2 years.   
  
The Conflict of Interest form was sent out with the announcement for this meeting. Members with a conflict of interest with the 2024 SRFB project list are encouraged to disclose this through signing the form.

1. **Salmon Recovery Funding Board**
   1. **SRFB Updates**

Alice provided SRFB updates. The state Review panel members have provided status’s on all of our project. The Wynoochee project received a “POC” which is project of concern. If the issues the review panel members identified aren’t resolved by the time final applications are in, the Lead Entity will need to defend the project to the full SRFB, with the risk of losing the funds from the Lead Entity. All the other projects received “Needs More Information” – with just answers to a few questions the review panel member questions will likely be resolved.

Q) What comments did the State review panel members provide on the Newaukum fish passage project (by Lewis CD)?

A) They askes for clarification on the projects’ benefits: fish passage or habitat improvement, and asked if the sponsor would consider turning the crossing into a two-span bridge.

Kirsten noted that the sponsor already replied to these comments and will not be pursuing a “two-span” option.

Grays Harbor County’s Chenois project may return its SRFB 2023 grant if it cannot address its staffing shortfall. If this occurs, the County has until September to return the funds for them to be eligible for use within the Chehalis Lead Entity. Eligible uses of those funds are funding an “alternate” on the SRFB project list, or any cost increases on 2023 projects.

Alice provided clarity on how ASRP will work as a source of match funds for SRFB projects. There will be separate agreements for each fund source, but the scope of work for the overall project will remain the same. Sponsors are used to using multiple fund sources to support a project, tracking costs, etc., so this is more of a granting agency challenge to resolve than one the sponsors need to worry about.

* 1. **SRFB Timeline Update and Next Steps**

The review team will finalize the project ranked list on June 25th. The full Habitat Work Group will vote on the list at their July 1 meeting.

* 1. **Targeted Investment**

The SRFB had a special funding class this year to fund large projects (larger than can be supported by regular allocations). None were submitted by the Chehalis Basin. Mara Zimmerman provided an update on the two projects submitted by other Coast lead entities. They are both large wood placement projects – one in the QIN Lead Entity, and the other in the Willapa. A coast-established technical review team will review these projects. If they are cleared, these will go to the Coast Salmon Partnership Board to vote on, and then will be submitted to the state for funding consideration. Mara stated that these two projects represent just 1/10th of the funding available to the state. The caveat is that these are funded through Climate Commitment Act. If the voter repeal initiative is approved in the fall (a “yes” vote means no more funding), then these projects will not receive funding.

1. **Coastal Interpretive Center – New Education and Collaboration Opportunities** (Jacob Baker, Director)

Jacob is new Executive Director for the CIC, and new to the state of Washington. He is excited to expand the position of the center from one that expects the public to come to it, to one that goes out and meetings people where they are at. He would like to see the center offer internships to local high school and college students, as well as participate in community science and monitoring. His philosophy is “don’t just reach out when you need something,” a sentiment that Ben Amidon appreciated.

1. **Associated Program Updates**
   1. **Coast Salmon Partnership  
        
      General CSP Updates:**

(From Ned)

**Coast Salmon Foundation representatives** from each Lead Entity on the Coast serve for two years. The Chehalis’s representative, Bob Russell, has a term that is coming to an end. He would like to continue to serve for another two years. Mara requested that the Lead Entity nominate him as their representative again.

Action: xx made a motion to approve Bob as the Coast Salmon Foundation representative. Xx seconded. All in favor (a quorum of 9 was present).

Kirsten requested that Bob provide regular updates (monthly or quarterly) to the Habitat work Group so that we know what he is doing as our representative.  
  
  
**Letter of support** is needed from each Lead Entity in order for the Coast region to support an assessment project being funded with SRFB funds, even when those funds come from a Lead Entity’s own allocation. Mara provided an overview of the project and members who had read the letter shared that it looked good. Members felt comfortable with their representatives to the Coast Salmon Partnership voting in favor of this proposal. No action was taken.  
  
**Communication and Outreach Committee updates.** Alex Bradbury provided an update on the Communications and Outreach committee. The committee was active getting the Strong Salmon Futures campaign up and running. Now that program is mostly self-sustaining. The new focus of the outreach committee will be on building the business donation program – soliciting donations from both small, local business, and local corporations. Volunteers with relevant skills are encouraged to participate. Alex has also been working on an outreach venue known as the “Salmon Minute” which airs on local radio. Files are permanently archived on the Coast Salmon Partnership website and anyone can listen to them. These are neat informational soundbites! <https://www.coastsalmonpartnership.org/current-initiatives/strong-salmon-future/salmon-minutes/>

* 1. **Aquatic Species Restoration Plan**

Drew provided updates

Victoria provided updates

1. **Closing**

Ben thanked everyone for attending, thanked the new people who attended today, and thanks presenters Jacob and Alex.