

Chehalis Basin Lead Entity

Habitat Work Group Meeting

Monday, January 7, 2019

9:30 am – 12:30 pm

Chehalis Tribe Community Center Gathering Room
Oakville, Washington

In attendance:

Alissa Ferrell, RCO	Kelly Verd, Lewis Conservation District
Bob Amrine, Lewis County CD	Kirsten Harma, Lead Entity Coordinator
Cade Roler, WDFW	Mara Zimmerman, Coast Salmon Partnership
Chris Dwight, WDFW	Mark Gray, Chehalis River Basin Land Trust
Colleen Suter, Chehalis Tribe	Omroa Bhagwandin, Citizen
Garret Dalan, The Nature Conservancy	Rick Rouse, Port of Chehalis
Jason Gillie, Chehalis Tribe DNR	Rich Osborne, Coast Salmon Part./ONRC
Jennifer Riedmayer, WA Ecology	Shawn Ultican, WA Ecology
Jonathan Bradshaw, HWG Note-taker	Thom Woodruff, Capitol Land Trust

Meeting Summary

1. Welcome, Introductions, and 2018 Major Accomplishments

Members provided introductions and brief statements of major accomplishments for 2018.

2. Organizational Business

a. Review minutes from December 3, 2018

Minutes were approved without comment. Thom Woodruff moved to approve, Jason Gillie seconded. All in favor. Thom did comment on the usefulness of the minutes to alert members to opportunities, such as touring worksites as he did with Lonnie of the Chehalis Basin Fisheries Task Force.

b. Phone List

Kirsten suggested developing in a phone list to facilitate communication, carpools, etc. Interested parties added their numbers to the sign in sheet.

c. New note taker

Jonathan Bradshaw was introduced as a new note-taker for the group.

d. 2019 HWG Elections and member list update

The member list was edited to reflect changes. Of note: Kirsten put out a request for suggestions for a new citizen member to follow Steve Hallstrom's passing. It is noted that Mark Gray may be the new representative with the CRBLT--and clarified that the CRBLT itself is the voting member, not individuals. The group is looking for more connections to Port/Business interests. Garrett suggests Kris Koski from Aberdeen. A Grays Harbor County representative is desired. Don Smith of GHC forestry was suggested. All State agency reps are ex-officio members. The Ecology seat is vacant, and any suggestions on who to fill that seat are welcome. Bob asked if alternates could be listed as members. Kirsten pointed out again that except for citizens, the group is the member not the individual.

Due to low member turn-out this month, Bob suggested elections be postponed to next month.

e. Introducing Mara Zimmerman, Coast Salmon Partnership E.D.

Mara Zimmerman is replacing Jess Helsey as Executive Director of Coast Salmon Partnership. Mara has been working for WDFW for a decade, and has always worked professionally with river systems. Originally from New England, she acquired an undergrad in Maine, worked in North Carolina, received a PhD at the University of Michigan, and worked with Upper Peninsula fish communities working with native Lake Trout. At WDFW, she has worked with salmon and steelhead in Puget Sound, Lower Columbia and Coast, as well as the Chehalis Aquatic Species Restoration Plan. She has done a lot of scientific work, but is also interested in leadership in her WDFW position and so is excited to take on CSP leadership. Mara summarized the CSP as a partnership of the four coastal lead-entities. Mara is hiring a staff: an admin. assistant and a Program Director. She hopes to enhance CSP's role in peer-to-peer communication, as well communication around salmon recovery with the statewide public. She also explained its further role as aiding in the Coast's Strategy by moving the Sustainable-7 plan forward with each Lead Entity's pilot watershed. Bob asks if the CSP is funded by the legislature. It is.

f. Newaukum Subcommittee – After February 4 HWG

Next HWG will be followed by a convening of the Newaukum subcommittee meeting. Up to now, meetings have been mostly info-sharing. Kirsten shared that she is hoping to shift the committee's focus towards identifying and sequencing projects. Bob pointed out that the barrier projects left in the Newaukum are increasingly of the high-cost, low-return variety, and that going forward, care needs to be taken with that trade-off.

g. Culvert Subcommittee

Chris Dwight from WDFW gave a run-down of the 2008 ranked culvert list vs. current data. There are 3,533 sites on the current list. Of that, 1,744 match with previous list. There are 1,789 new sites. 461 sites are on original list that do not show up on new list. Chris is working to understand and tease out inconsistencies. Cade suggested that inconsistencies may come from site-ID naming differences between old and new sets of data. Chris explained they're focusing on the top third of sites of that need work to manage the high number that need addressed. Their focus is also on barrier re-inventory, barrier status, information correction.

A further difficulty comes with ranking a list of ~4000 sites when ~2000 new sites (used for site prioritization) have no linear gain calculated. The subcommittee is working to fill in this gap with information from Lewis Conservation District's surveys, as well as through GIS consulting work with ICF.

Cade suggested removing federal and large forestland owner barriers from ranking, as those aren't usually a SRFB priority. He is also cleaning up duplicates and repaired culverts that have not been updated as such. Rich Osborne emphasized the Habitat Work Schedule as a significant resource for addressing such problems, and also offered connections to GIS assistance. Bob plans to send an updated list of LCD's completed culvert work.

There will be a Culvert Subcommittee group meeting in mid-February.

h. Chehalis Basin Restoration and Preservation Strategy Plan for WRIAs 22 & 23:

Kirsten pointed out three different concerns: First, the name of the Lead Entity's strategy is unwieldy. She suggests the group establishes a common, useable name for the plan. One suggestion was "Chehalis Lead Entity Strategy." Second, she emphasized that the group needs to understand and actively use the strategy. Third, it needs to be updated (last update was 2011). To those ends, group members volunteered to present on the different sections of the strategy at HWG meetings in the coming months. With an eye to the upcoming SRFB round, Kirsten pointed out that it is important that this strategy be both understood and updated.

Bob asked about the foreseen interaction between the Lead Entity Strategy and the upcoming ASRP. Kirsten points out that the ASRP won't be able to be fully integrated into the strategy, as the ASRP is not exclusive to salmon. She suggests holding off on too intensive of an update until the ASRP comes out and the two plans can be reviewed together. At that point, the strategy can be updated to interact with and include any relevant elements of the ASRP.

3. Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB)

a. SRFB Meeting December 5-6 outcomes

Alissa Ferrell gave an update on the SRFB meeting. Lead Entity funding list was approved so agreements can be written starting any time. Projects can be listed with a start date as early as December 5, 2018. A couple of manual 18 changes have been made, including changes in eligibility of assessments and design criteria for conceptual deliverables. The Board discussed LEAN study recommendations, which were approved. A summary of the LEAN recommendations is that the funding cycle is being streamlined to require less back-and-forth between applicants and reviewers, earlier site-visits, and an earlier full application will be due rather than a pre-application, so that the panel has all information from the get-go. David Trout, the chair of the SRFB is leaving, with Phil Rockefeller taking over.

b. Salmon Recovery Conference – Call for Abstracts: Due January 31st

Kirsten and Alissa provided an update on the conference development. Sessions have been selected, and abstracts may be submitted through January 31st. Registration is currently open. Rich asked whether any sessions are geographically based. Alissa added that there is an intention to prevent focus from being exclusively on Puget Sound.

c. Launch of 2019 Grant Round

Kirsten clarified that LEAN changes won't be made until the 2020 grant round. The official announcement and call for applications will go out in February.

4. Project Presentations

a. Rick Rouse – Berwick Creek projects

Rick Rouse gave a presentation to familiarize the group with the behind the scenes process of upside-down U culvert installation. He emphasized the compatibility of meaningful industrial development and environmental stewardship. Currently, the Port of Chehalis has four projects either completed or in progress. The Port is sponsoring two with support from Lewis County, and two have been completed. Rick also noted that the Port of Chehalis is the

only port in the Seattle Region with a regional general wetland fill permit.

Two upside-down U culverts were shown in process: one for truck traffic over Berwick Creek, and one for a future rail line over a seasonal, jurisdictional ditch that drains into Dillenbaugh Creek. Step-by-step images were shown for the construction of both culverts. Rick emphasized the differences between the requirements for a truck vs. rail culvert, as well as the process of preserving or improving the original stream bed.

Following the presentation, Cade Roler asked for an update on the design progress for the Berwick Creek projects in process. As far as Rick knew, they were about 30% completed at the end of December. As a follow up, Rick also pointed out a \$305,000 culvert removal habitat restoration project in development with the Flood Authority.

Kirsten emphasized the benefit of the Port's emphasis on planning for stewardship in pre-construction for infrastructure, as opposed to fixing problems after the fact.

b. Jennifer Reidmayer and Shawn Ultican - Stearns Creek pollution investigation process presentation

Shawn discussed that Ecology got notice of a high bacteria count in Stearns Creek during summer months downstream from where it crosses under Pleasant Valley Road. He then discussed Ecology's follow-up. The entire area of interest is channelized, and sampling showed high bacterial counts everywhere tested. What is the cause? Possibilities include: active beaver population, a small elk herd, dairy, with septic not likely but not ruled out.

Jennifer then emphasized the positive working relationships through the Dept. of Ag. that allowed for direct contact with landowners. The landowner was willing to work directly with Ecology in a positive manner and work with them as they took samples. He was willing to work with the results, and follow up with the LCD. She further emphasized the possibilities of developing future relationships with landowners in the area through the LCD as well as a fly-over with the Dept. of Ag. to get an aerial view of the issue and potential landowners to contact.

Mara asked about the conclusion of the study, which Shawn clarified is still in process, these were initial efforts: the goal of their presentation was to highlight the process in place and the successes of the relationships involved. Kirsten asked if DNA-based tracking of pollution is being used. Shawn explained that the Ecology staff are uncertain of this tool's reliability, and so it is not currently being used. It's a future possibility.

In summary, the pollution source is probably a combination of several factors, and it will be a process to narrow down the source and respond accordingly. Cade asked about steps that come before regulatory action. Shawn emphasized that preventative best management practices are the focus.

5. Aquatic Species Restoration Plan (ASRP)

a. Reach-Scale River Restoration Projects update (Kirsten & CDs)

Kirsten shared that reach scale projects are moving along well and asked if the group would be interested in having project presentations down the road. The group affirmed that interest.

Bob gave an update of the Newaukum Reach project. He explained that the next day, he would be meeting with involved landowners. He expressed the need to have incentives to offer landowners before asking them to participate. He is concerned that it will be more difficult to get buy-in without a tangible incentive. That said, landowners have, for the most part, been responsive and positive.

Kirsten noted for those interested particularly in Newaukum issues, February's HWG meeting will involve conversations on both Newaukum and South Fork reaches, as well as be followed by a meeting of the Newaukum Subcommittee.

b. ASRP Implementation Update

Kirsten ran the group through the most recent updates on plans for ASRP implementation. Emelie hopes to have a presentation by January 16th to share with the Steering Committee and Board. Kirsten invited feedback and input in putting together this presentation. Cade asked if the ASRP implementation plan includes barriers or if it's just the reach scale. Kirsten clarified that both are elements of the implementation. Cade expressed interest in meeting with Emelie regarding ASRP barrier work.

Kirsten then emphasized the importance of keeping SRFB funding relevant in the shadow of the large pot of funding that is the ASRP. Chris suggested and Kirsten confirmed the importance of considering the existing infrastructure in place for the SRFB in planning the implementation and funding processes of the ASRP. Bob further pushed the importance of not allowing the partial funding available through the SRFB to take a back seat to the full funding available through the ASRP. This is money on the table for projects that shouldn't go by the wayside.

There was also discussion about timing of ASRP vs. SRFB application processes. Kirsten pointed out that these are details that can be worked on down the road, and re-emphasized that the immediate focus is on what the broad process of the ASRP is going to be. Kirsten has Emelie's drafted presentation to share by request.

c. Science Review Team Update

Colleen explained that recent meetings defined the different levels of intensity of restoration that would be made possible for each reach given the different restoration scenarios. Mara pointed out the reason for this focus on possible intensity of restoration was to know how to allocate a limited amount of funding. The goal is to be able to input these values into the NOAA lifecycle and EDT models to understand what specific kinds of benefits will come of different restoration scenarios, to understand cost, and what will be gained by it.

There was concern expressed about the ASRP decision-making processes and structures in place. Cade suggested asking Emelie for a decision-making flowchart. Rich asked which fish are included in the NOAA lifecycle model, and Mara answered that Coho, Spring Chinook, Fall Chinook, and Steelhead are currently included. Only Chum are excluded.

6. Close