

Chehalis Basin Lead Entity -- Habitat Work Group

December 6, 2021 -- Minutes

Zoom Meeting

~ 9:00 am – 12:00 pm ~

Ann Weckback, <i>Lewis County Public Works</i> Alex Gustafson, <i>Trout Unlimited</i> Alexa Brown, <i>CBFTF/GH Stream Team</i> Anthony Waldrop, <i>Grays Harbor Cons Dist.</i> Ben Amidon, <i>Chehalis Tribe DNR</i> Bob Amrine, <i>Lewis Cons. Dist.</i> Brandon Carman, <i>RCO</i> Emelie McKain, <i>ASRP/ WDFW</i> Garrett Dalan, <i>The Nature Conservancy</i> Greg Green, <i>Ducks Unlimited</i> Jennifer Holderman, <i>WDFW ASRP</i> Jill Van Hulle, <i>Aspect Consulting</i> Julie Tyson, <i>WDFW Wildlife</i>	Kathy Jacobson, <i>CBLE Outreach Coordinator</i> Kirsten Harma, <i>Lead Entity Coordinator</i> Keith Underwood, <i>Mason Cons. Dist.</i> Kelly Verd, <i>Lewis Cons. Dist.</i> Key McMurray, <i>Grays Harbor Citizen</i> Lee First, <i>Twin Harbors Water Keeper</i> Mara Healy, <i>Thurston Conservation District</i> Mara Zimmerman, <i>Coast Salmon Partnership</i> Ned Pittman, <i>Coast Salmon Part/Fdn</i> Rickie Marion, <i>Chehalis Tribe</i> Sarah Watkins, <i>Grays Harbor Citizen</i>
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- 1. Welcome, Introductions**
- 2. Networking Time in Breakout Rooms**
- 3. Minutes Approval – November**

Ben motioned to approve October's minutes, and Sarah seconded. The motion passed.

4. Organizational Business

a. Outreach Updates

Kathy is going to be educating youth about river processes with the River Table at 3 schools starting in December (Toledo, Washington & Simpson). She will start with an PowerPoint overview first, since there can be limited kids around the table at any one time. The next dates the table is available is May. Please let Kathy know if you have contacts with other schools.

Kathy has put together a YouTube channel for Lead Entity videos. Please promote this! She will be making more videos about successful projects in the spring.

The Grays Harbor Stream Team had organized a salmon viewing at Schafer State Park but the river was too high and the parking lot was flooding. Since people showed up anyway, Curt Holt took them to the fish hatchery. There is interest in trying this event again in the spring.

Bob Amrine, Bob Russel and Kathy met with the Chronicle editor to explore ways to promote the Lead Entity's work and salmon recovery projects in the basin. The editor was receptive and they will meet again soon.

Stream Team will host another planting project on December 18th.

b. Newaukum subcommittee – to be held after today's meeting.

5. Salmon Recovery Funding Board

a. SRFB General

Brandon provided an overview of highlights from the last Board meeting. The Board adopted the Targeted Investment criteria and a carbon credits policy. They will no longer be supporting match for RMAP projects. The Board will have a retreat in May and will discuss larger policy topics (such as how to deal with increasing project costs, an emergency response fund, etc.). Bob provided an example of a use for an emergency response fund- the CD had to deal with a hole in a culvert on at FFFPP project. The CD fixed it itself and the landowner appreciated the rapid response. Tapping into an external fund source for something like this would be great.

The group discussed a list of contractors and engineers that Ben shared (provided to him by Lonnie). Bob cautioned folks to call this a “small works roster.” Just reach out to folks and let them know a project is coming up. Key recommends a pre-bid meeting on site with all potential contractors present.

b. Chehalis Lead Entity – Project Intake Process

Kirsten explained the need for a more inclusive project intake process this year, happening at the time of our standard SRFB call for proposals. This need is present because of the number of new funding sources this year. The suggested process is that sponsors provide a Conceptual Project Form to the Lead Entity Coordinator for any project idea that advances the Lead Entity Strategy. Kirsten will then invite them to a pre-project meeting to discuss the project further and which funding sources might be a good match for the proposal.

The allocation to SRFB this year may be greater than usual due to Infrastructure Bill funding. The SRFB has not decided how to allocate the funding increase yet – whether to Targeted Investment or to each of the Lead Entity allocations. None the less, we should prepare for an increase in funding, up to a total of \$1M for the Chehalis.

Send in your project ideas!

c. Targeted Investment – Process for Coast Lead Entities

Mara Zimmerman explained the Coast Salmon Partnership’s proposed process for handling the new Targeted Investment grant source being administer by RCO and overseen by the SRFB. Since each Region in the state gets to provide only one project for funding consideration, the Coast Region is handling oversight for selecting the Coast’s project. Projects will be brought forward by each Lead Entity, and the Lead Entity citizen’s group will get to decide which proposed project to endorse. An RFP will come out on January 5th. Each Local Review Team will review the projects and visit them on site visits. The Coast’s Implementation Team will rank the projects according to the SRFB-adopted criteria, and the Coast Salmon Partnership Board will vote on the final project.

The group discussed how to meld this effort with the ASRP. Mara noted that Targeted-Investment projects with more than 50% match will score higher, so the fund source could be a match for ASRP. Kirsten and Mara encouraged sponsors to think about

Chinook projects that aren't in the ASRP's near term focus area, such as in the Humptulips.

d. Final Schedule for 2022 Grant Round

Our site visits are scheduled for April 12-14, 2022.

6. Fish Barrier Removal Board Project & Other Presentations

- a. Newskah Trib at Newskah 2 Fish Passage Const. (Alexa Brown, Chehalis Basin Fisheries Task Force)**

Alexa provided a presentation on the proposed construction project. Her presentation is available on request. The presentation was made in the hopes of receiving a letter of support in advance of its application for Fish Barrier Removal Board funding. Projects aligned with the Lead Entity strategy receive more points in this year/s grant round.

Discussion:

-Anthony noted that he'd driven by the site this season and observed over-road flooding, likely due to the undersized culvert.

Decision:

-A quorum of HWG members was present to hold a vote

-Sarah made a motion to provide a letter of support for the Newskah Construction project. Anthony seconded. All in favor.

- b. West Fork Hoquiam Dam Removal & Water Right Source Switch (Jill Van Hulle, for City of Hoquiam)**

This project presentation was provided to share the project idea with HWG members, gain input and ideas, and if possible, obtain a letter of support. Jill Van Hulle is under contract with the City of Hoquiam to advance a project proposal for Streamflow Restoration funding. The project seeks to move the water right for the City of Hoquiam to a groundwater source, and then later remove the surface water dam. A project information sheet is available on request. The first phase of the project is to drill test wells to determine the extent of the aquifer. Then the city would need to file a new water right application for the groundwater source. The dam removal is a ways in the future, but could provide extensive benefits to fish and watershed process. This is the #2 barrier on the basin-wide ranked list.

Q) What is the daily water use in Hoquiam?

-Comment: Anthony offered support from the Grays Harbor Conservation District

-Comment: Alex mentioned that Trout Unlimited may be able to provide support, but would like more information to pass on to the rest of her team.

Comment: Note that this is a big project and will take a lot of project management and piecing together different funding sources.

7. Associated Program Updates

a. Aquatic Species Restoration Plan – Implementation Plan overview and program updates

Jennifer provided an update. There were 14 responses to the sponsor RFQ. There will be a kick-off meeting for successful sponsors on January 4th. At the meeting, they will discuss Conflict of Interest procedures & Bylaws. Bob suggested that Kirsten be present at the meeting.

Q) Have landowners and other interested citizens been invited to participate on implementation teams?

A) The kick-off meeting invitation was sent to 80 people. The program priority is to get sponsors up to speed first, then landowners could be brought into discussion that focus on a specific geographic area. These are public meetings, so it's ok for anyone to come.

-Another sponsor RFQ will go out in 2022 to continue to recruit new sponsors. If any sponsor doesn't get accepted this round, there will be an opportunity for them to be mentored and apply again at the next intake.

b. Coast Salmon Partnership

Ned provided an update. The next WCRRRI grant round opens with an RFP January 24. There will also be a call for technical review panel team members.

Kirsten told the group that since Hope Rieden's departed from the Chehalis Tribe, there is a vacancy on the Coast Salmon Partnership for a CBLE representative. Mara added that each LE can have up to 6 voting seats. Participation on the Partnership is even more critical now that it will have a role in deciding which project to put forward for Targeted Investment.

c. Chehalis Basin Partnership

Ecology's Streamflow Restoration grant application period will close first of February. Kirsten provided a list of the projects currently known to be requesting funding.

This meeting was followed by a meeting of the Newaukum Subcommittee.