**Chehalis Basin Lead Entity -- Habitat Work Group**
**January 4, 2020**
Zoom Meeting

**~ 9:30 am – 12:30 pm ~**

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| Alexa Brown *CBFTF- Grays Harbor Stream Team*<br>Anthony Waldrop- *Grays Harbor Con. Dist.*<br>Bob Amrine- *Lewis Cons. Dist.*<br>Brian Combs- *Citizen*<br>Cade Roler- *WDFW*<br>Caprice Fasano- *Quinault Indian Nation*<br>Charly Wilson- *Citizen*<br>Chris Dwight- *WDFW*<br>Claire Williamson- *WDFW*<br>Colleen Suter -*Chehalis Tribe*<br>Devin DeBono -*Lewis Co. Public Works*<br>Elena Fernandez -*Thurston Co. Public Works*<br>Emilie McKain -*WDFW: Aquatic Species Restoration Plan*<br>Garrett Dalan- *The Nature Conservancy*<br>Greg Green -*Ducks Unlimited* | Jonathan Bradshaw- *LC Citizen, Minutes*<br>Kathy Jacobson- *Lead Entity Education Coordinator*<br>Key McMurry -*Grays Harbor Citizen*<br>Kirsten Harma -*Lead Entity Coordinator*<br>Lee First -*Twin Harbors Waterkeeper*<br>Miranda Plumb -*USFW*<br>Mark Gray -*Chehalis River Basin Land Trust*<br>Mike Scharpf -*WDFW*<br>Ned Pittman -*Coast Salmon Partnership/Fdn*<br>Paula Holroyde -*Thurston Co. LWV*<br>Pete Hammer -*Chehalis River Basin Land Trust*<br>Ryan Walker- *Forterra*<br>Sasha Porter -*Thurston Conserv. Dist.*<br>Shawn Ultican- *Ecology*<br>Steve Hagerdy -*Mason Conserv. Dist.*<br>Thom Woodruff- *Capitol Land Trust* |

1. **Welcome, Introductions**

2. **Networking Time in Breakout Rooms**

3. **Minutes Approval**

   Due to the Holidays, December's minutes will be distributed for approval next month.

4. **Organizational Business**

   1. **Project Successes/Updates**

   Thom Woodruff shared a successful project by sharing a video of a 73-acre Capitol Land Trust acquisition on the Skookumchuck in Thurston County.

   2. **Toxics in Grays Harbor**

   Lee First presented a letter she drafted on behalf of the Habitat Work Group highlighting the toxic concerns in the lower basin of the Chehalis and requesting that Ecology provide more information to the group. Kirsten had reviewed the letter and concurred that it adequately reflected HWG interests. Bob convened a vote to approve his signing of the letter on behalf of the group and sending it off to the Department of Ecology. The vote was unanimous in favor of the submission. Action: Kirsten will make minor changes

requested, add Bob's signature, and submit to Ecology.

Lee then gave an update on cleanup progress at the Hamilton/Labree cleanup site. At this site, N Hamilton Rd at Labree Rd, there was a severe PCE contamination where water moves west and northwest. In the last 6 months, the project has been getting set up: the thermal treatment system has been installed, Berwick Creek has been rerouted, and the biodigestion process has been started. Lee shared imagery of the setup, which uses extreme heat to convert PCE to gas. This gas is then collected on its way out, and treated as condensate: microbes speed up this treatment. Additionally, an air-handling system (air stripper) boils the groundwater, and collects and treats it. The project is both treating it underground and then collecting the groundwater after and treating it directly through the air handling system.

3. **Lead Entity Strategy Update**

**i. Strategy Document Update:**

Kirsten shared some of the work she's done to get this update rolling. The group is looking to get the low-hanging fruit for strategy mostly updated for the coming round of SRFB applications. This update will be preliminary, however: an official update will follow later in the year when climate change considerations have been incorporated into the document.

**ii. Skookumchuck Management Unit**

Devin DeBono of Lewis County Public Works gave a presentation on the Chehalis Strategy's section on the Skookumchuck Management Unit (MU). His full presentation is available upon request. Briefly: Devin noted that the Skookumchuck MU has a particularly high level of human intervention, most notably the Skookumchuck dam. Tier 1 concerns include loss of floodplain function (roads and development in the floodplain, ditching and channels), loss of riparian zone, fish passage barriers. Tier 2 concerns listed are water quantity (low in summer, flooding in winter), and water quality. The pollution legacy of the Transalta plant is a concern, but is something that is being addressed. Restorative approaches that would be effective in this MU include project monitoring, careful restoration site selection, LWD and BDA installation, fish barrier removal, and riparian restoration. Devin noted that it would be helpful to update the strategy to reflect the current state of relevant successes.

5. **Salmon Recovery Funding Board**

1. **Budget Updates**

Kirsten provided an update on the Governor's budget for 2021-2023:
For the SRFB, $40 million of the go-big request of $80 million was supported; WCRRI was supported for a full $15 million request; the Family Fish Forest Passage Program was supported for $36 million of its $65 million request. There were no suggested cuts to LE capacity grant: this funding can help update our LE strategy document. Note that this is just the beginning- House and Senate still need to present their budget proposals in the coming months.

2. **SRFB Updates**

Kaleen Cottingham, the RCO director, is stepping down; Kirsten is serving on the hiring committee for her replacement as the statewide LE representative.

3. **Local Review Team 2021 - Appointment**

The 2021 SRFB review team this year will include Caprice Fasano, Claire Williamson, Colleen Suter (or new Restoration Coordinator for the Tribe), Ned Pittman, Miranda Plumb, Jonathan Bradshaw, Hope Rieden, Megan Tuttle and Laura Lopez (GH Citizen and Stream Team volunteer)
The group would appreciate a couple more review team members who have expertise in engineering and in acquisition.

A vote to approve the current list was convened by Bob, and passed without comment.

Site visits will take place April 13th and 14th, but everyone should expect these to be virtual.

4. **Conceptual Project Presentations**

**i. Collins and Willapa Hills Farm Conservation Easements – Tom Woodruff, Capitol Land Trust**

Tom Woodruff presented two conceptual Conservation Easement (CE) purchase projects, which are side by side geographically.

Mark Collins is the landowner for the first property, which he purchased in 2017. He's looking to sell a conservation easement for the entire property. The easement would prohibit subdivision and development to potential 6 parcels with residences. Other uses would be either prohibited or restricted. Everything west of this site is DNR land, and is flat, with a couple wetlands. It is bordered by the Chehalis on the other 3 sides, with 3,500 feet of riverbank. To the north is the second conceptual project he's presenting. The CE would permit 1-2 residences, restoring/improvement of vegetation and water resources, and a limited camping/ecotourism business. The property is about 120 acres and has an elk herd that frequents it. The cost, at this point, is estimated at $400K.

The second easement would be for a 100 acre property owned by Willapa Hills Farm owned by Amy Turnbull and Steven Huefferd. The farm was formerly a creamery and is now an event center. The property they're looking to put into easement is on the West side of the river from the developed farm. This property has 5100 feet of riverfront, and would likely be around $400K as well. These two properties together could support 11 residences - this CE would guarantee no more than 2 or 3.

Q) How do conservation easements work and how are they managed?
A) CE lands remain in private ownership but have legal limits to use - the land use must be consistent with conservation benefits. CLT usually asks the landowner for a stewardship contribution to help manage the land in perpetuity. But CLT has $1.6 million in its fund for stewardship and the interest is used to pay staff to steward the lands.

Comment – Describe how much money will go back to the landowner in your application
Comment – Describe the Land Trust's plans for reforesting the land in your application

**ii. Littlerock Road SW Fish Passage Crossing -- Elena Fernandez, Thurston County Public Works**

Elena presented on a fish passage project on Little Rock Rd SW, located at ~3.2 miles up, 2 miles ne of Rochester. The project would replace a culvert that is 0% passable due to excessive slope and velocity, and is a priority 2 site. There is over a mile and a half of upstream habitat. The concrete pipe is 103' long, 36" in diameter and has a 2.27% grade. Several year-classes were present in the scour pool - it is active habitat here. There is also an associated, privately owned culvert that is not considered a barrier, though they would like to remove it.

The project would first replace the 36" culvert with 4-sided structure. Unstable soil and high traffic counts require this approach. It would be 16-20' wide, 10-12' tall, and 50' long, and the base would be filled with streambed material. Second, the project would aim to realign the creek upstream to enhance fish passage and meet the stream simulation.

Q) Is this a design or construction grant? If construction, note that you can't request funds for a specific element of the project, but that the grant goes towards the project, overall, and your project is evaluated as a whole.
A) Construction grant. We are looking at 2023 fish window construction, and are asking for a $100K construction grant out of our $1.5 million total.

6. **Coast Salmon Partnership Updates**
The next Implementation Committee meeting is Jan 20. They will provide feedback from the pilot watershed work and receive a presentation from staff on climate change. The next board meeting will be January 25th, and will be a joint board and partnership meeting. They'll be approving the annual report from 2020, and discussing upcoming topics for the year.

7. **Aquatic Species Restoration Plan**
    1. **10 Year Priority Areas and Actions according to Science Review Team**

For both information sharing and for feedback, Emilie McKain provided an update on the 10-year priority areas determined by the SRT for the ASRP. She pointed out that 2020 ASRP work was focused on the general scale of what the plan looks to accomplish, as well as how that would be carried out. Now the team is looking at sequencing the plan. As the plan area is a large area, it is important that the sequencing plans are developed transparently, while also remaining consistent with the overall objectives of the ASRP.

The program is considering a 30 yr timeframe: 2021-31, 2031-41, and 2041-51. (Near, mid, long term.) This sequencing work is taking into consideration the importance of starting early and quickly, given that for many kinds of restoration (e.g. tree planting), a significant portion of the work happens up front.

Guiding principles for the ASRP are as follows: 1. Maintain and restore physical and biological processes; 2. Prioritize actions for most-at-risk species; 3. Protect unique and at-risk core habitats; 4. Use targeted learning projects to improve effectiveness and learn as the project develops; 5. Concentrate restoration to produce demonstrable habitat change in the face of degrading external conditions; 6. Address issues for connectivities across life history of species; 7. Take advantage of opportunities for synergisms - with respect to both the restoration needs of diverse species and synergy between existing conservation entities in the basin; 8. Initiate the plan by beginning with restoration that

has long ramp-up periods (i e planting trees).

These principles were carefully developed in concert with one another through several months of work, thinking about how to achieve the most benefit possible by sequencing both action and areas. Choosing to concentrate on focused areas of the basin (rather than focus basin-wide on broad restoration) offers the best method of accomplishing all of these principles.

Priority areas, then, were developed for the ASRP - the work in these areas will be merged with the ongoing development work in the basin: i.e., Early Action Reaches, 2020 ASRP grant round. Worth noting, priority areas are not inclusive of fish passage barrier priorities: the nature of fish passage isn't compatible with the GSU-focused approach. There will be a separate method for prioritizing this work under development.

Emilie shared a map of the ASRP priority areas with the group. She noted that the actions and areas mapped out are specific and purposeful: the focus at this point is on specific areas and not the full basin, and that's on purpose. The plan looks to concentrate efforts to produce demonstrable change and develop a clear story of restoration to carry forward as the ASRP develops.

Plans for mid- and long-term plans are also being developed. These plans focus on initial guiding principles, and expand that focus to the wider basin.

Near term goals are lofty: in the first 10 years, the plan aims for 235 miles of rest/protection, around 41% of the total planned 550 miles. However, such a front-loaded approach is important, and this is a necessary level of action to strive for. That said, the team realizes that this striving needs to be met with reality re: funding and capacity.

2. **Break out rooms to discuss**

**What are your thoughts on scientific merits of starting in these areas?**

ASRP has done a lot of work to do all this, and analyze the basin. This is great: how will we monitor? How will we be able to deem the work as "success"?

It is good to see land acquisition, etc., recognized and included.

Good to see a separate method for considering barriers is in the works, since these interests don't line up well.

Be sure to include solid maintenance plans with any plantings: it is great to get the trees in the ground, but if this isn't done with forethought and plans for after, it's all for naught.

**What is your reaction to focus on amphibians? What are the differences between what is needed for these diverse kinds of restoration/conservation?**

This is good to see! Glad to have this.

Is this realistic?

It would help to highlight the commonalities in opportunities between Salmon and OSF.

**Will these be realistic from an implementation perspective?**

LO Outreach needs to be a really significant part of that; how to crack that nut. It is absolutely critical to have outreach be an integral part of the ASRP

Agreed: it's a pretty ambitious plan when considering the current capacity of things, but it is good and helpful to aim high.

Yes, this is ambitious: and that is great, not a challenge! It can easily be and should be spun as an opportunity to create jobs, build a good economic impact in the communities of the basin.

**What else do you want to know about sequencing/priority?**

No comment

**Other:**

It'd be great to have Aimee McIntire give a talk on the amphibian portion of the ASRP and what amphibian-oriented restoration projects could look like.