



Chehalis Basin Collaborative
for Salmon Habitat

Chehalis Basin Collaborative for Salmon Habitat

MINUTES

June 1, 2026

9:00 am- 12:00 pm

Chehalis Tribe Community Center Class 1b

461 Secena Rd, Oakville, WA – Library

Alex Bradberry – Coast Salmon Partnership	John Stepankek – <i>Grays Harbor Cons. Dist</i>
Alex James – <i>Capitol Land Trust</i>	Julie Grobelny – <i>WDFW ASRP</i>
Alex Gustafson - <i>Trout Unlimited</i>	Kathy Jacobson - <i>CBC-fSH Outreach Coordin.</i>
Ann Weckback - <i>Lewis County PW</i>	Kelly Verd - <i>Lewis Conservation District</i>
Amelia Schwartz – <i>Thurston County</i>	Key McMurry - <i>Citizen</i>
Arthur Smith – <i>Lewis Conservation Dist.</i>	Kirsten Harma - <i>CBCfSH Coordinator</i>
Anthony Waldrop – <i>Grays Harbor Cons. Dist.</i>	Kim Figlar-Barnes – <i>WDFW Region 6</i>
Bella Padgett - <i>Ducks Unlimited</i>	Lisa Nelson - <i>RCO</i>
Ben Amidon - <i>Chehalis Tribe, CBCfSH Chair</i>	Martin McCallum - <i>Thurston County Citizen</i>
Bob Russell - <i>Lewis County Citizen</i>	Molly Paige – <i>Ecology Non-Point</i>
Brandon Carman – <i>WDFW Region 6</i>	Neina Chapa – <i>American Rivers</i>
Brett Demond - <i>Streamworks, CBFTF</i>	Olivia Williams - <i>USFWS</i>
Caprice Fasano - <i>Quinault Indian Nation</i>	Sarah Longacre – <i>Ecology Non-Point</i>
Drew Mealor - <i>ASRP Implementation Mgr</i>	Sofia Sherman - <i>Chehalis Tribe Noxious Weeds</i>
Farley Youktan – <i>Chehalis Tribe DNR</i>	Tina Neils - <i>Grays Harbor County Citizen</i>
Jacob Murray - <i>Mason Conservation Dist</i>	Vanessa LaValle - <i>Conservation NW/CSP</i>
Jane Atha - <i>CSP Executive Director</i>	Victoria Knorr - <i>WDFW</i>
Jeff Mach – <i>Grays Harbor Cons. Dist.</i>	
Jesse McMahan - <i>Chehalis Tribe Fisheries</i>	

1. Welcome, Introductions

2. Minutes – April

Minutes were approved by the group without further comment. Jonathan will no longer be our note-taker. After this meeting, Kirsten will use AI-based programs to generate the draft notes.

3. Organizational Business

- a. Appointment of an *interim* new Board Member to Coast Salmon Foundation from Chehalis Basin (Discussion/Decision)

Chase Johnson has submitted an application to serve as the interim Board member representing the Chehalis Basin at the Coast Salmon Foundation. His bio was circulated with the agenda. If approved, he will attend the June CSP meeting and decide after that if he wants to continue.

Discussion: The CSF representative does not need to attend Habitat Work Group meetings as a requirement of this position, but it is encourage.

Motion: Bob made a motion to nominate Chase Johnson to the board of the Coast Salmon Foundation. Jacob seconded. Anthony abstained. All others in favor.

b. CBC-fSH Outreach

Kathy Jacobson provided updates on the multiple outreach and education events that she has led or participated in in the past two months. Notable is presentation of the River Table at basin schools, where 150 students at 9 classes received trainings. Pre- and post-activity surveys helped document their learning.

Other outreach: Grays Harbor Shorebird Festival: More locals than in the past; Prairie Appreciation: more than 1500 in attendance; World Fish Migration Day: Curt Holt gave a steelhead talk; Lower Satsop River Field Day: students saw what they learned at the River Table in real life. Kathy thinks we should keep developing this activity and repeat and grow it in coming years.

c. Cloquallum Subcommittee update

John Stepanek shared that the committee reconvened to tour the Cloquallum and Wildcat Creek basins. This provided early model validation. Grays Harbor and Mason Conservation Districts have applied for an ASRP grant to take the PWR work to the next phase – rapid habitat assessments in the highest-ranking reaches. Mason Co’s project will also included a floodplain reconnection analysis. Both projects will start in the fall, if funded.

4. Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB)

a. Determination of Quorum

It was noted that a quorum of voting members without a conflict of interest in the SRFB project list is present.

b. Summary of Project Ranking Process (Review Team)

Martin noted the thoughtful review by all review team members. Sponsors can rest assured that reviewers did not take their job lightly.

c. Presentation of Draft Ranked List

Kirsten presented the Draft Ranked List.

	Score	Percent
Assessment	67	79.8%
Scatter	66.5	79.2%
Loosestrife	64	76.2%
Independence	62	73.8%
Garrard	59	70.2%
Vance	50	59.5%

d.

e. Full group discussion of ranked list and questions for Review Team

Question re: why Loosestrife project lost points for “overall benefit.” Reviewer response was that there is still very little science regarding how it affects salmon. There is limited use by multiple life stages in this part of the river.

Draft Conditions: The review team suggested conditions for three of the projects. The wording of these conditions has not yet been discussed with the sponsors and the conditions aren’t final.

Assessment project – The Local Review Team would like to see specific requirements that the sponsor engage the Habitat Work Group throughout the project, and that they document their methods for duplication in other parts of the basin. Drew suggested that the language more specifically define “involvement” and clarify who has decision-making authority to provide HWG guidance on the strategy. Will it be approval by everyone or just a few representatives? Will approval be needed at every phase? The sponsor recommended quarterly updates at HWG meetings, similar to how the subcommittees provide updates. The vote should occur at the point they refine the methods. The final product should be adopted by the HWG.
ACTION: Anthony will write a Lead Entity involvement plan to approve at a HWG meeting upon project funding.

Scatter Creek project – The Local Review Team would like the chance to review the project again before it goes to construction. The phase and timing of this review were not specified. Since conditions have not come out from the State Review Team yet (ETA- August 6), and we don’t know if the project is a “Project of Concern” the local review team would like to provide specific wording later.

Vance Creek Trib project – The Local Review Team was concerned about the low overall score of this project and they did not have consensus on whether or not they should recommend it for funding. They suggested a middle path by providing the project with a condition:

“The sponsor will present the Alternatives Analysis to the Chehalis Basin Collaborative for Salmon Habitat’s Habitat Work Group prior to selecting a preferred alternative for preliminary design. The group will indicate which of the options they find the most likely to be acceptable for SRFB funding for the next phase of the project.”

Bob said this is a good condition that sends the right signal to design a project that provides the most benefit to fish and directs funding where there could be the most benefit-cost. Reviewers questioned the benefit of correcting all of the barriers because they just get fish up into urban streams and ditches. The creek is dry part of the year. The team is concerned that the properties will potentially be developed and don’t want to see the culverts sized to handle urban traffic.

Jeff agreed that he could bring the project concepts to the HWG to ensure SRFB would approve the next project phase. He reassured the group that all designs will be for existing uses, not sized for development.

The group agreed to keep the project on the local list with a condition like this in place (wording to be finalized later).

Independence Creek Trib project – No conditions were suggested by the Local Review Team during the ranking project. Prior to this meeting, new information was provided by the sponsor that might affect funding recommendation decisions. The county crossing under Independence Road, downstream of the proposed project, was determined to be a barrier, but of unknown passability. The crossing could not be fully assessed because it is partially submerged. The county is unable to commit resources to a project site if there is a barrier downstream. Thus, if Backman moves forward with design, the county will not be able to construct it until after designs are also underway for Independence.

Marcus, Thurston County staff proposed changing the scope of this project to do feasibility work on this, more downstream culvert, instead of the one under Backman Road. Marcus alternatively offered that the county may provide match for work on the downstream crossing using its internal funding. The idea here is that would design work occurring for the Independence crossing, first, the county would more quickly move to construction.

HWG members were not comfortable changing the proposed feasibility work for Backman Road. The scoring of this project would likely change if the project becomes a totally new worksite. Team members were comfortable funding an upstream barrier first, since sponsors often work that way, as opportunities are present. Sofia noted that the Independence Road crossing is not a complete fish passage barrier at present.

f. Vote! (All voting members without a conflict of interest)

Motion: Tina made a motion to accept the ranking and fund the projects in the order of the list. Bob seconded. All in favor.

Voting on the language of the conditions will take place at the August HWG meeting.

5. Planned Project Forecast List Exercise....

Kirsten presented the draft Planned Project Forecast List, which is required bi-annually from the Recreation and Conservation Office. Work Group members provided additional project information and suggestions.

Motion: Bob made a motion to approve the Planned Project Forecast List, with the edits suggested today. Key seconded. All in favor.

6. Request for Letter of Support – Lewis Conservation District

Arthur presented a grant proposal to the Conservation Commission's Riparian Grant Program that the Conservation District is developing. He presented how work at each property would help implement Tier 1 and Tier 2 concerns in the Lead Entity Strategy.

Motion: Tina made a motion to approve a letter of support for Riparian funding for the Lewis Conservation District project. Bob seconded. All in favor.

7. Marwood Farms Project Update – Nate Johnson, Washington State Parks

State Parks' acquisition of the Marwood Farms property is complete. Parks plans to do some invasive species control to improve habitat value, and also plans to develop the site for hiker-biker camping. The property has existing CREP-funded plantings, which they will maintain. For any other more extensive enhancements of salmon habitat, including a restoration plan, Parks would seek outside grant funding and partnerships.

Kelly Verd commented on the Lewis Conservation District's previous grant application to correct a barrier on the site. Funding was rejected then because reach-scale treatments are needed. She sees Parks ownership as appropriate for supporting both barrier correction and channel restoration work.

Individuals and groups interested in helping develop a project on this property should contact Nate: Nathan.Johnson@parks.wa.gov.

8. Associated Program Updates

- a.** Coast Salmon Partnership: Liz Allen is the new Program Director! She is based in Forks and was already working for CSP. She is a good fit and primed to move into this role. Given her location, we will most likely see Jane representing at Chehalis meetings.
- b.** Coast Salmon Partnership: Is currently interviewing candidates for a Coastal Resilience Fellowship. This will be a huge boost to the organization's capacity!
- c.** The CSP technical review team met and recommended that the board not advance Trout Unlimited's Dry Creek Culvert project forward for funding. The Coast Region only gets to submit two regional projects for funding, and there were two other higher scoring projects.
- d.** Jane and Kirsten are working on developing a legislative tour. Getting input from our citizen reps on sites and messages is the next step.
- e.** ASRP continues to approve projects for funding.
- f.** Grays Harbor Stream Team Coordinator, Breana Downs, provided a written update on Stream Team activities, which Tina read for the group.
- g.** False Brome has been sited near Hoodsport. Contact Sofia if you would like more information on how to ID it.
- h.** USFWS's Chehalis Restoration Program will issue an RFP in mid-June. The grant will support small funding amounts – up to \$50,000

9. Meeting Closing