



# *Chehalis Basin Partnership*

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Meeting Summary – August 27, 1999

## **Introduction**

Mayor Spahr welcomed members and opened the meeting.

Quorum: According to the interim by-laws of the Partnership, a quorum exists when any number of planning unit members are in attendance at any regularly scheduled meeting. However, a simple majority of the total number of planning unit members must be present for action to be taken. The Partnership currently has 30 designated membership positions. Three are unfilled leaving a designated membership roster of 27. Fourteen designated members or their alternates were present at the August 27 meeting. (see attached sign-up sheet).

## **I. Small Towns Environment Program (STEP)**

Janice Roderick announced the upcoming infrastructure financing workshop “Putting it all Together” that will be held November 3 – 5 in Wenatchee (see announcement). One Partnership member commented that it would be good for this group to have a presentation on the different funding sources and timing requirements. Janice recommended that this be worked out with the Infrastructure Assistance Coordinating Council (IACC) and said she would be willing to help arrange such a presentation. One idea would be to go over the brochure for the Wenatchee 3-day workshop and pick two or three of the presentations for presentation at an future Partnership meeting.

Janice then described the STEP program using the experiences of several small Washington State communities as examples. STEP works best for small, unincorporated communities with populations of 1500 to 5000. The purpose of the STEP program is to help small communities save money as they make necessary improvements in their wastewater treatment systems. The program has resulted in many positive projects. For example, the town of Edison improved its wastewater treatment system and as a result shellfish beds that had been closed were re-opened. As with any program, STEP hasn't worked well in every community.

Janice was ask how STEP gets around the Davis-Bakon Act and labor union objections? The state has an informal opinion from the Attorney General's office stating that as long as the work is being done by volunteers and not

by paid labor it does not cause a problem. Other concerns raised by Partnership member included liability for injury or property damage. Communities do need to meet all applicable Labor & Industry safety requirements.

Janice is available to help communities that think they may be able to benefit from participation in STEP. She can be reached at (360) 407-6426.

## **II. 2496 Salmon Recovery Grant**

The Partnership has received a Salmon Recovery Grant through the state Department of Fish and Wildlife. The project provides funds for identifying habitat impediments which negatively affect natural spawning salmon populations (Limiting Factors Analysis) and develop/oversee a process for identifying habitat restoration projects in the basin. There is enough in the grant to fund a full-time staff position for two years and some supporting GIS work. Three options for staffing the grant project were presented and discussed:

- Contract with WDFW to temporarily assign an existing WDFW position to Lewis County for the duration of the project.
- Contract with a consultant to staff the project.
- Have the organization handling the project administration for the Partnership (in this case Lewis County) create and fill a position to implement the project.

In the general discussion that followed several additional options or variations were suggested, along with advantages and disadvantages of each option. Additional options mentioned include using volunteers and college students, consider amending contract with Envirovision Corp. to incorporate the 2496 project, having staff from private timber companies do the work, and contacting WDFW to see if they would consider splitting the cost of funding the position (50% grant, 50% WDFW general fund) since using WDFW staff would benefit their budget.

Some of the major advantages/disadvantages of the various options discussed include:

- Contracting with WDFW will get us started quicker and we'll get someone with background in the basin, but there is a concern that using WDFW staff may bias the outcome towards state interests. Using private timber company staff might provide a different type of bias. Why would the state pay twice for the same work -- the 2496 grant is state money administered through the WDFW. These are pass-through dollars appropriated by the state legislature. WDFW is just administering the funds, they do not come out of the WDFW budget. If WDFW pays half the cost, will they want half the control?

- Amending the contract with the Envirovision Team would be quick, and would result in dedicated time for the project, but does the teams fishery biologist have time for the project, and could the Partnership face allegations that it did not follow proper procedures because we didn't advertise.

After this discussion the group directed the Scoping committee to examine these options and bring a recommendation to the September 24 Partnership meeting.

### **III. Citizen's Report**

Margaret Rader summarized the major issues of the August Citizen's Advisory Committee meeting. A summary of that meeting was mailed out with the agenda for this meeting. The four major issues were:

- There needs to be more citizen involvement and the counties should make it a high priority to appoint citizen's to represent them on the Citizen's Advisory Committee. Also, not every county has designated a Citizen representative to the Partnership. This also needs to be done.
- The Citizen's Advisory Committee would like to see more emphasis places in public communication. To advance this issue, the CAC will be exploring this issue in more detail at its September meeting.
- The citizen's on the Advisory Committee want to be offered more direct opportunities to be involved.
- There is some concern that not enough staff time from Lewis County is dedicated to coordinating the work under the 2514 grant. The additional workload brought about by the 2496 grant will only make things worse.

### **IV. Update on Chehalis Flood Project**

Commissioner Graham explained the different project funds that are available to continue the flood control effort. Yesterday, a grant providing \$300,000 was signed in Olympia. An additional \$800,000 from a different fund is available once the details can be worked out with the state Department of Transportation. The amount of time it is taking to work out the details is a source of frustration for Commissioner Graham. The project is being delayed and this is the best time of year for completing some of the work. Several Partnership members made comments encouraging DOT to complete the agreements necessary to make the funding available.

## **V. Update on 2514 Budget**

Marc Duboiski was not able to attend today's meeting so Kahle Jennings used material provided by Marc to provide an update on the budget. A copy of the chart Marc prepared is attached. One item of discussion was funding for "Drops of Water" the Chehalis River Council water quality newsletter. \$8,000 was set aside in the budget for education and outreach using this newsletter. The group directed staff to review previous meeting summaries to document the decision, work with the CRC to make the funds available, and send a summary of each Partnership meeting to CRC so the major issues could be included in the newsletter.

## **VI. Open Comment**

Mr. "Red" Cox expressed his mistrust of state agencies and his belief that they want to take his property without paying him for it. He expressed his intent to fight them over this issue.

Chairman Spahr shared his concerns about the mixed messages that state agencies send. As an example he cited two letters from the state. The first letter, dated February 2, 1999 outlines state agency concerns about proceeding with then current flood control project approach that may not meet federal and state requirements, or provide effective flood control for the entire watershed. The second letter dated June 14, 1999 was from the Governor and stated that "twelve state natural resource agencies have agreed on principles and procedures they will follow in working with local planning units. These agencies will cooperate to improve the state's contributions to watershed planning." The chairman believes that the messages in these two letters conflict with each other and that staff representing state agencies on the Partnership are not always consulted before agencies take action.

## **VII. Wrap Up/Adjourn**

Due to conflicts with holidays, the **meetings for November and December were changed to November 19<sup>th</sup> and December 17<sup>th</sup>**. They will be held at the regular time at the Casino.

The next Chehalis Basin Partnership meeting will be held on **September 24, 1999 at the Chehalis Tribal Center starting at 9:00.**

### Enclosures

- Attendance list for August 27, 1999 meeting
- IACC Infrastructure Workshop Announcement
- Summary of September Citizen Advisory Committee meeting
- Budget Summary