



Chehalis Basin Partnership

Meeting Summary – May 28, 1999

Introduction

Mayor Spahr welcomed partnership members and other attendees. He introduced Ecology's new representative to the partnership, Kahle Jennings. Kahle has worked on water quality issues in the Chehalis Basin for the last four years, including some unpopular regulatory programs. Some members of the Partnership have expressed concern that Ecology would appoint someone seen as having a regulatory background to represent the agency on this cooperative effort. The Mayor recognized those concerns and suggested that Kahle should be given the opportunity to earn the trust of the other members of the Partnership.

Brian Walsh, Ecology's departing representative, was not able to be at the opening of the meeting. However, Brian did arrive later in the meeting and was thanked by the group for his support and efforts on behalf of the partnership over the last three years. Brian received a special trophy-memento from Mike Daniels to remind him of how much the partnership appreciated him. Brian did an excellent job getting the partnership started and fostering communication between local communities, local government, and state agencies.

Mayor Spahr announced some agenda changes due to unexpected changes in the schedules of individuals scheduled to make presentations today.

I. Information Sharing

Sue Patnude announced that the City of Ocean Shores Coastal Erosion Management Strategy EIS was available for review and shared a handout explaining the project. Comments on the DEIS are due July 7, 1999. Final decisions on which alternative will be selected are scheduled for August.

Marc Duboiski announced that copies of the quarterly grant report are available to any Partnership member or citizen, if requested.

Marc also announced that the grant application period for lead entities interested in salmon restoration projects under HB 2496 is open. Applications are due by June 14, 1999. A small group will be meeting on June 4, 1999 to discuss the grant application and how to get it submitted by the 14th.

II. RFP Level 1 Assessment

The Focus of the Level 1 assessment is gathering and assembling existing data into a form that can be used by the Partnership to make decisions about what additional data must be collected during a Level 2 assessment.

Marc Duboiski brought the group up-to-date on the status of the consultant selection process for the Level 1 assessment. There have been a lot of inquiries, but no proposals have been submitted as yet. Proposals must be postmarked no later than May 29, 1999. Marc reviewed a handout provided to the group that explained who would represent the Partnership during the selection process and what criteria would be used to evaluate the proposals. During the general discussion that ensued, Partnership members suggested changes to some sections of the selection criteria.

III. Featured Presentation – Salmon Recovery

Phil Miller from the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office spoke to the group on the subject of Salmon recovery and the Endangered Species Act. Phil provided three handouts: a blue page listing individuals on the Governor's Salmon Recovery Team, a packet summarizing the "Extinction is not an Option" program, and volume 1 of the January 1999 draft statewide strategy to recover salmon. Phil displayed a map showing the seven salmon recovery regions, each with its own ESA listing issues. The Chehalis Basin is part of the Washington Coastal area. In the Chehalis Basin the following fish species are being considered for listing:

- Bull Trout – proposed as threatened last year. A decision is expected in June 1999 from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
- Cutthroat Trout – proposed in April 1999. A decision is expected in April 2000 from the National Marine Fisheries Service.
- Coho (Silver) Salmon – this species is a candidate for listing, which means it is under review. It is under review as a threatened species.

A proposal to list a species as threatened or endangered triggers a one-year review period. Designation as an endangered species means that the species is in actual danger of becoming extinct. A designation of "threatened" means that the species is not in danger of extinction, but that it is at risk of becoming endangered. Listing as threatened or endangered triggers prohibitions against "taking" any member of the species. A take is defined as something that kills or harms the species or its habitat. The concept of "taking" has broad implications, and includes such things as reducing river flows to a level below that necessary to support the species. The big battle regarding salmon is over what will be considered a "permitted take" and a "take" that is not permitted and therefore illegal.

Phil then reviewed the state response strategy and explained that there are several issues that the state must address: what the state will propose to do, how will the state implement what is being planned, and how will it be funded. The goal is to have programs that are ESA compliant. Phil reminded the group that "we are in the

early stages of this effort, we are not going to get where we want to go overnight.” The state plan will only go so far and local efforts are necessary for the overall program to be successful. Locally, lead entities are being formed and a lot of activity is getting underway. Phil is interested in how to form the necessary relationships with the local lead organizations (like the Chehalis Basin Partnership) so local efforts can be documented and recognized by the federal government.

Funding will be available at both the state and local level. State oversight of funding will be handled through the Salmon Recovery Board. Local oversight will be handled through local lead entities such as the Chehalis Basin Partnership. Through all this it will be necessary to create balance between protecting good habitat and healthy stocks, and restoring degraded habitat and stocks at risk. Right now, the Chehalis Basin is considered basically healthy and efforts should focus on protection.

In closing, Phil was asked if he would regularly attend Chehalis Basin Partnership meetings. Phil responded that he is the designated contact for the Partnership and if we keep him informed he will be here when he is needed. Phil has been added to the CBP mailing list.

IV. Update on Chehalis Flood Project

Mike Daniels, Grays Harbor County, provided a brief update on the Chehalis River Flood Management Project. The state legislature has been contacted with a request for continued support. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and state Department of Transportation continue to work on project planning. The executive committee includes Centralia, Chehalis, Grays Harbor County, Lewis County, and Thurston County. Any decisions will be made jointly between the participants.

V. Report from Citizens

The Citizens Committee has good representation at their monthly meetings by the members who have been able to be involved. Grays Harbor County needs to appoint a third representative. No one has been attending from Mason County. At the last meeting, Bill Hesselbart talked to the group about additions to the Upper Black River Wildlife Reserve. During general discussion it was suggested that the Partnership might assume the role of leadership in a basin-wide effort to identify and foster recreational opportunities in the basin.

VI. Wrap-Up/Adjourn

The next Chehalis Basin Partnership meeting will be held on **July 9, 1999 at the Chehalis Tribal Center starting at 9:00**. Members and participants were reminded that **this is a change from the normally scheduled meeting date**. The change was being made to allow the committee delegated to screen the Level 1 Assessment proposals time to prepare a recommendation for the full Partnership. **There will be two Partnership meetings in July, on the 9th and the 23rd.**