



Chehalis Basin Partnership

Meeting Summary – October 22, 1999

Introduction

Mayor Spahr welcomed members and opened the meeting.

Quorum: The Partnership currently has 30 designated membership positions. Three are unfilled leaving a designated membership roster of 27. Twenty designated members or their alternates were present at the October 22 meeting.

A revised agenda was handed out at the meeting.

Marc Duboiski announced during the meeting that he would no longer be able to provide staff support for the Partnership because he is leaving Lewis County to go to work for the Interagency Committee (IAC). The IAC will be doing the actual contract management of the salmon recovery funds awarded by the Salmon Recovery Funding Board. Members of the Partnership expressed that, with the departure of Marc, the Partnership is losing a person who has done a tremendous amount over the last couple of years to support the goals and work of the Partnership. In spite of the loss this means for the Partnership, members expressed their hope that Marc finds his new work rewarding.

I. 2514 Water Planning

The Envirovision Team provided an update on the status of the data collection portion of the "Level 1 Assessment" project. The team has used up most of the time it had allocated for the data gathering process. There is still data or information that has not been provided, and as it comes in it will be added to the list. The workshop is scheduled for October 29th in Chehalis. There will be three sessions: Fish Habitat, Water Quality and Water Quantity. Specific individuals with expertise in those areas have been invited to each session.

There will be a report prepared on the workshop containing recommendations on how to focus the remainder of the Level 1 Assessment. Work on the assessment will resume once the Partnership has reviewed the report and decided on how it wants the work to proceed. A updated contract between the Partnership and Envirovision will also have to be negotiated by our Lead Agency before the remainder of the Level 1 Assessment can be completed. The Partnership

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selected Envirovision to complete the Level 1 Assessment, but a scope of work was developed for only the first piece – that portion leading up to the workshop, the workshop itself, and the workshop report with recommendations.

II. Citizen's Report

A representative from the Citizen's Advisory Committee reviewed the summary of its October 13 meeting. Some CAC members have expressed interest in attending the Level 1 Assessment workshop on October 29 even though they may not be an expert in any particular subject. The Citizen's group is also interested in seeing the Partnership focus some resources on developing a communication strategy, and on work that will help meet the goal of making data accessible to anyone who is interested.

Mason County Commissioners appointed four citizens to the Citizen Advisory Committee: Peter Hiebert, Laurie Cox, Neal Cox, and Jim Bottorff. This is a welcomed step, and leaves only two vacancies from Grays Harbor that remain to be filled. Also, Grays Harbor and Mason County need to designate which of the four citizens the commissioners appointed to the Citizen's Advisory Committee will represent county citizens at the Chehalis Basin Partnership table.

III. Update on Chehalis Flood Project

Of the \$800,000 grant allocated by DOT to the project, only \$250,000 can be spent before the election November 2. The results of the election could affect the availability of the remainder, but work on revising the flood maps is progressing at a rapid pace. The intent is to complete as much of the work as possible.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers held two Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) scoping meetings in September to get citizen comments on the proposed EIS.

An alternative strategies committee is meeting to develop alternative strategies for flood control that will be evaluated in the EIS.

IV. Data Management Update

The purpose of this effort is to get together as many of the organizations in the basin that use Geographic Information Systems (GIS) as possible so that we can develop a strategy for organizing existing data and making it available to anyone who is interested. A Data Management Committee will be created to follow-up on the recommendations from the initial meeting. Originally a meeting was planned for December 1999, but with the announcement that Marc Duboiski is leaving Lewis County that schedule will be delayed for a month or two.

V. 2496 Salmon Recovery Funding Board Grant Guidelines

The Salmon Recovery Funding Board has released draft guidelines and criteria describing how it would identify and fund high priority salmon recovery projects. Comments on the draft are due before November 1st so that the board can make final decisions at its November 17th meeting. Due to the short period of time between today's Partnership meeting and the comment due date, Partnership members were encouraged to comment individually on the guidelines and criteria. Agreement was reached that a sub-committee of Partnership members should meet to develop a recommendation on how the Partnership should proceed to identify projects that it would recommend for funding.

VI. Round-Table Discussion of Local Issues

Aberdeen – The City is completing an evaluation of the sanitary sewer system. They have overflows during periods of heavy rainfall in the winter. The survey is an important step in developing cost effective solutions, and will be followed by an attempt to attract the funding that is needed to do the actual work. Outdated, undersized, or worn-out infrastructure is a common contributing factor to nuisance flooding.

The industrial water line is another issue that Aberdeen is working on. The system currently provides non-potable water to industrial users in Aberdeen, Cosmopolis and Hoquiam. Portions of the line are old wood-stave construction. The City wants to upgrade the system to increase efficiency and reduce waste, and is trying to get the other cities, the county, and the state involved.

Margaret Rader (Thurston County Citizen) – A “Goals 2000” grant that will focus on watershed education has been awarded to the local school districts. The Partnership should contact the lead for the project and see if the Partnership can support the effort. The recommended contact is Johnny Garcia at the Onalaska High School.

City of Chehalis – The City has a General Sewer Plan under development. The plan updates the City's service area and evaluates several options the City could pursue to meet the very restrictive discharge limits established under the Upper Chehalis River Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL). The TMDL was established by Ecology and approved by EPA. Chehalis is one of several dischargers affected by the reductions that sued Ecology. A settlement to that lawsuit has been negotiated and will soon be formalized by the court. Even under the settlement the costs to Chehalis will be astronomical and the City is still trying to decide what to do.

Under another required permit action, the City is updating its water filtration plant to include a separation pond for the water used to backwash the system.

Ocean Shores – The City received \$3 million from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to rehabilitate the jetty. The total cost of the project is estimated to be approximately \$6 million. The City also received \$100,000 for a feasibility study and to complete the Environmental Impact Statement for the coastal erosion problem they are experiencing. The cost for solving that problem is estimated to be in the range of \$20 to \$30 million.

The City is experimenting with a product called “Aquacube” to see if it can be successfully used to aerate “Bass Canal” and circulate water in the system.

Ocean Shores also just completed a sewer project costing \$50 million that was funded through sewer rates and a Local Improvement District.

Pe Ell – The town has completed four blocks of sewer line replacement. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will install an erosion control project along the Chehalis River that is needed to protect the sewage treatment facility. Pe Ell also has a \$2 million cost for upgrading its water system.

Napavine – Napavine is breaking ground on a \$350,000 water supply project that will result in a new water reservoir. Napavine has been “red-labeled” by the Department of Health over its water supply system. They are growing very rapidly and expect a population of 3,000 in 15 years.

Napavine also shares the wastewater issue that Chehalis has. Napavine owns approximately 10% of the capacity of the Chehalis wastewater treatment facility, so it would be responsible for that share of the cost for whatever solution is chosen. Loss of revenue under Initiative 695 will make things more difficult.

Montesano - The City just completed a \$1 million upgrade of its sewer facility. The project doubled its capacity and increased the quality of the water going back into the river. The City has also recently passed a Local Improvement District to fund improvements in how it handles its stormwater.

There is a concern about flooding of Highway 107 and erosion of the river bank in the vicinity of the sewer facility. A minor erosion control project on Port land was done last year, but they didn’t receive funding this year to complete the project.

Thurston County – County representatives recently attended the Salmon Summit that looked at the problems salmon are facing in Puget Sound. The purpose of the Summit was to develop a regional strategy for salmon recovery and bring people together to begin the process of working as a team. Currently recovery efforts are fragmented.

A threatened listing for the Bull Trout has been signed and will go to the Federal Register for the required review period before going into effect.

Cosmopolis – The City just completed a sewer line replacement project that was needed because of infiltration and inflow (I&I) problems, and is in the process of putting in a new sewer line to serve areas with failing septic systems.

U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service – The Olympia office of the USFWS plans to work closely with the Partnership on salmon recovery projects. Cooperation will allow us to combine resources from various funding programs in a way that will maximize effectiveness and minimize overlap.

Ecology – Ecology’s Water Resources Program is developing a updated strategy for dealing with water allocation. A representative from the program is available to come and explain the strategy to the Partnership.

Washington State Fish and Wildlife – WSDFW has been through a period of real turmoil with staff changes and funding cuts. The agency wants to be involved in providing direct technical assistance to Lead Entities for Salmon Recovery efforts like the Chehalis Basin Partnership. Attempting to provide this level of assistance is straining the remaining staff resources in the region, but we will continue to try and meet the needs of the Local Planning Units.

The Partnership was informed that Steve Keller has been selected to fill the Regional Director position for Region 6. Sara LaBorde left that position earlier this year to take a position in Olympia. Steve has been filling the position on a temporary basis since Sara left, and feels that his strengths include “a commitment to local involvement in watershed planning.”

VII. 2496 Salmon Recovery Grant

Lewis County reported that effort to hire a Fish Biologist to work on salmon recovery efforts under the grant from the state Department of Fish and Wildlife has been delayed until the county can determine if it still has the ability to continue functioning as Lead Entity for the Partnership.

There was a general discussion about who could serve as Lead Entity for the Partnership and how to fill the role if Lewis County can no longer do it. Both Grays Harbor County and Thurston County were asked to consider filling the role, which handles all the contractual issues for the Partnership. Funding is available for one-half of a position to do the work. If a decision is made to change Lead Entity (and Lead Agency under 2514) then the Intergovernmental Agreement will have to be revised. The 2514 contract with Ecology and the 2496 contract with WDFW will also have to be revised.

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VIII. Open Comment

Pete Hiebert introduced himself as one of the recently appointed Citizen Advisory Committee members from Mason County. Partnership members welcomed Mr. Hiebert and stated that they look forward to his participation.

VIII. Wrap Up/Adjourn

Due to conflicts with holidays and the Washing Association of Counties fall Legislative Conference, **the meeting for November was changed from November 19 to December 3rd. The regular December meeting is still planned for Friday December 17th, but a decision on whether or not to hold that meeting will be made on December 3rd.**

The next Chehalis Basin Partnership meeting will be held on **Friday December 3, 1999** at the **Chehalis Tribal Center** starting at **9:00**.