



Chehalis Basin Partnership

Meeting Summary – March 24, 2000

Introduction

Mayor Spahr welcomed members and opened the meeting.

Attendance: Fourteen designated members or their alternates attended this meeting. There were twenty additional partners, citizens, or visitors that attended.

Lead Agency Update (Agenda Item #1)

Contract with Envirovision for the Level 1 Assessment

Grays Harbor County is negotiating a contract with Envirovision for the remainder of the work the Partnership selected them to do. The first portion of the work (identifying existing information) has been completed under the proposed budget. The scope of work we are working on now will result in a evaluation of existing information and identification of gaps in existing information that need to be filled before we can develop a meaningful plan to manage water in the Chehalis Basin.

Salmon Recovery Funding Board

The final results from the SRFB are in, and two of the eight projects submitted for the Chehalis Basin will be funded. The first project is an off-channel habitat restoration project in the Newaukum River sub-basin. This project was ranked number 1 on the list the Partnership submitted to the SRFB. The second project that was funded is an estuarine habitat acquisition project in Grays Harbor off the mouth of the Humptulips River. This project was ranked number 6 on the Partnership's priority list.

There was a lengthy discussion about the results of the SRFB project selection process. Emphasis was placed on the following issues:

- The level of dissatisfaction with the local and state processes used to select projects. Critics of the local process stated that they anticipate that steps will be taken that will address their concerns about the local prioritization process, however, they are very concerned about the state process and feel that it is completely unacceptable as it is currently being implemented.
- Representatives from the Chehalis Basin Fisheries Task Force handed out a lengthy report they had prepared documenting the projects they proposed, explaining the problems they have with the process used to select projects and the reasons for their

dissatisfaction with the outcome. They will be sending this report to local legislative representatives and build support for legislative changes to the process.

- There are strong concerns about the apparent bias against funding culvert replacement projects. Many feel that this is one of the quickest ways to open up habitat for fish that is currently inaccessible.
- The state process was difficult to anticipate because it seemed to be changing as it was implemented.
- There is a level of discomfort about the emphasis being placed on habitat acquisition. Public ownership will result in loss of tax revenue to local government and public access.
- Appreciation of the work put into developing recovery project proposals by individuals and organizations, recognition of their concerns about the process, and the need to focus on developing a better process rather than placing blame.
- The results support the importance of preparing both a detailed salmon recovery plan for the basin and a work plan to guide the Partnership in its implementation of the goals identified in the intergovernmental agreement used to form the Partnership. These plans would balance short-term and long-term actions with anticipated results.

There will be an opportunity to provide oral and written comments to the SRFB about the project selection process. Grays Harbor County acting as administrative Lead Entity for the Partnership will coordinate preparing a comment letter.

2514 Watershed Planning Project Work Plan

A draft project work plan was distributed at the meeting. The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) has been working on developing this Project Work Plan to help guide implementation of 2514 efforts and to help track results. Several possible formats have been examined. Two of those versions -- a schematic summary and a narrative description -- are being distributed today. The TAC needs direction from the Partnership. Is this type of document helpful, and should the TAC continue to develop the Project Work Plan? The Partnership agreed the having a Project Work Plan was very useful and that the TAC should continue work on it.

A brief discussion was held about the Technical Advisory Committee. The TAC is where the real detailed work on basin issues is done. The Partnership provides guidance to the TAC and approves its recommendations. If people want to be involved in the actual work they should become involved in the TAC. Margaret Rader is the Chair of the TAC. For more information contact Margaret (360) 273-6697, or Lee Hansmann (360) 249-4222.

Update on 2496 Limiting Factors Analysis (Agenda Item # 2)

Carol Smith presented information on the status of the 2496 Limiting Factors Analysis (LFA). The purpose of 2496 is to address salmon habitat restoration in a coordinated fashion. Limiting Factors are “conditions that limit the ability of habitat to fully sustain populations of salmon.” Limiting Factors does not include the effects of hatcheries, hydropower generation, or harvest. A Technical Advisory Group (TAG) has been working with Carol but participation in the TAG by groups that should be involved has been limited.

Because the Chehalis Basin is so large, it was sub-divided into fifteen sub-basins for the purpose of preparing Limiting Factors Analysis. LFAs have been completed for the Satsop Sub-basin, the South Fork of the Chehalis Sub-basin, and the Upper Chehalis Sub-basin. Draft Limiting Factors Analysis for the Humptulips and the Estuary are being prepared. Common Limiting Factors include access to habitat, sedimentation, channel stability, presence of large wood in the stream to provide habitat and stabilize the system, and water quality.

Carol displayed a sample of the type of maps that would be generated after the LFA is complete. The plan is for the completed LFA to be available on a CD for general use.

CCWF/SRF Project Ranking (Agenda Item #3)

Water Quality project applications for state fiscal year 2001 grant/loan funds are due to the Department of Ecology by 5:00 p.m. on February 29th. Ecology has an established process for evaluating and ranking the proposals. In addition to this established ranking process, beginning last year each project is eligible for up to 100 additional points based on how the project is prioritized at the local level. Ecology uses these additional points when it calculates the project's overall rank on the state priority list. This local prioritization is optional, but if the Local Planning Unit (the Partnership) chooses not to do it then the projects from the Upper and Lower Chehalis will not receive the additional points. This puts them at a disadvantage when they are ranked on the statewide priority list.

Ecology's grant guidance establishes WRIA's as the geographic basis for determining which projects will be compared during the local ranking process. The Chehalis Basin contains two WRIAs (22 and 23) so we have the opportunity to develop two priority lists. At the January meeting the Partnership established a subcommittee to look at the local prioritization issue. The subcommittee recommends that the Partnership take on the responsibility of performing the local prioritization. Based on last year's experience the subcommittee also recommends that projects from each WRIA be evaluated and ranked by a group made up of representatives from the other WRIA. For example, the projects in the upper basin (WRIA 23) would be ranked by a group of people who come from the lower basin. This will help to avoid the appearance of conflicts of interest that could occur when project proponents are on the ranking committee.

The Partnership agreed by consensus that the local ranking should be done so basin projects benefit from having the additional points. A committee of six was appointed to carry out the local ranking and report the results back to the Partnership at the April

meeting. The Partnership also agreed that the Chair (Mayor Spahr, Chehalis) should sign the letter submitting the local ranking so we can meet the April 14 deadline. A copy of the local priority list should be sent to all grant applicants and the five required entities identified in Ecology's guidance.

Report from Citizen's Advisory Committee (Agenda Item #4)

J. Roach arranged for DNR to present its work on Geographical Information System (GIS) projects at the March 8th CAC meeting. The Citizen's Advisory Committee recommends that the Partnership become formally involved in the Framework Process that DNR described at the February meeting. This would help support the move towards statewide GIS data compatibility and availability, and it would help the Partnership stay prepared to take advantage of the increasing ability to share GIS data/information.

At the March 8th meeting the CAC members also discussed establishing a more formal organizational structure for the committee. This will be included on the agenda for the April 12 CAC meeting along with a discussion of "buffers." Any one interested in attending the April 12 meeting to hear about buffers is welcome. The meeting location has not been determined. If you are interested contact a CAC member or Kahle Jennings.

The Partnership agreed by consensus to become formally involved with the Data Framework process. J Roach will be the primary contact.

Update on Flood Projects (Agenda Item #5)

Lewis County sent letters to its local legislative representatives urging them to coordinate the House and Senate Budgets to that the Upper Chehalis Flood project is funded. The Senate budget includes \$1.55 million for the project.

Open Comment (Agenda Item # 6)

Nancy Winters (SAIC) announced that a demonstration of SAIC's web-based information clearing house that allows information/data to be accessed over the internet, displayed and analyzed will be held at the Ecology building on April 26th from 9:00 until noon. For information on the meeting location contact Nancy Winters (360) 357-7377 or Kahle Jennings (360) 407-6310. The staff that developed this package will be in town to demonstrate it.

Wrap-up/Adjourn

The next Chehalis Basin Partnership meeting will be held on **Friday April 28, 2000 at the Chehalis Tribal Center from 9:00 to 11:30 a.m.**