



Chehalis Basin Partnership

Meeting Summary – May 26, 2000

Introduction

Mayor Spahr welcomed members and opened the meeting.

Attendance: Seventeen designated representatives or their alternates attended this meeting. There were eighteen additional citizens, alternates, or visitors that attended.

Lead Agency Update (Agenda Item #1)

2514 Level 1 Assessment (Envirovision Contract)

Work is progressing on the Level 1 Assessment. An annotated table of contents was handed out. The Partnership will continue to receive updates as different portions of the assessment are completed.

The Level 1 Assessment was broken into two stages. Stage one (identifying existing information) has been completed under the previous contract. This contract is for stage 2 of the Level 1 Assessment, which will evaluate the existing information to identify gaps in the existing information that need to be filled before we can effectively develop recommendations for water use in the Chehalis Basin.

Salmon Recovery

A summary of comments received by staff for the SRF Board and a copy of the comments sent in by Grays Harbor County on behalf of the Partnership were handed out. This was followed by a general discussion of some of the major issues.

The proposed schedule for the next application period – referred to as the “Late 2000” Grant Cycle – may be extended for one month. This would mean that project lists would be submitted to the SRFB by Lead Entities by the end of October 2000. The SRF Board is considering making assessment and monitoring projects eligible – but a definition of what would be eligible still needs to be worked out. A modification of the policy regarding the eligibility of fish blockage projects (culvert replacement) is expected. This last point led to a discussion of what criteria for culvert replacement projects the SRF Board would adopt. It is anticipated that the criteria will be a combination of existing WDFW criteria and legislation passed during the most recent session. A request was made that WDFW come to the next meeting (June 23) and explain its criteria.

To prepare for the “Late 2000” grant cycle, the Partnership needs to begin the process of establishing basin-specific criteria, and a project review/ranking committee. Volunteers for that effort are needed.

The Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife is establishing a Lead Entity League. Members of this committee will advise WDFW and other state agencies working on salmon recovery based on their local experience with the Lead Entity process. The Partnership has an opportunity to nominate someone for appointment to this committee. After discussion, it was agreed that the Partnership would nominate J. Roach to sit on the Lead Entity League. Brian Shea and Lonnie Crumley will be nominated as alternates.

2514 Grant Application for Phase 3 (Plan Development) Funding

Grays Harbor County is working on the 2514 grant application for Phase 3 planning funds. Some of the activities we are currently doing would qualify as planning, and having the Phase 3 funding would allow us to conserve our existing Phase 2 (assessment) funding for gathering the new data we will need to prepare an effective plan. Grays Harbor County staff offered to send out the draft application to anyone who is interested. One or two Partnership members expressed interest at the meeting in receiving the draft application.

Water Conservancy Board of Thurston County

The Water Conservancy Board of Thurston County sent a letter to the Partnership inviting comment on a proposed change of use and transfer of location for a water right that the Conservancy Board has been asked to consider. The use would be changed from the current 52 acre-feet of water for agricultural irrigation between May and October, to 52 acre feet for year-round multiple domestic use in a sub-division to be built on property near Sunnydale. The request would also transfer the existing right on the Skookumchuck sub-basin to the Scatter Creek sub-basin.

A discussion followed and it was agreed that the Partnership should find out more about the mission of Water Conservancy Boards before making any comment. There seems to be some overlap in water interests between the Partnership and Water Conservancy Boards. The Water Conservancy Board of Thurston County will be invited to the June meeting to share information on its activities.

Chehalis Basin Fisheries Task Force (Agenda Item #2)

John Penberth presented a brief summary of the mission of the Chehalis Basin Fisheries Task Force and reviewed some of the fish restoration projects they have been involved in. The CBFTF is dedicated to the production of salmon for sport and commercial fisheries. They do not get involved in the allocation of the catch between competing sources.

The CBFTF is very close to publishing a report that will explain the group's mission, background information on the Task Force, and highlight its accomplishments. The report will be distributed to Partnership members when it is available.

The discussion then moved to the subject of water law in the state of Washington. Mr. Penberth cited several state laws (RCW) and regulations (WAC) that regulate water use. During the lively discussion that followed, it was clear that there is a great degree of anxiety about the state's (Department of Ecology) power to regulate water use. Reservations were expressed about possible manipulation of local planning units like the Chehalis Basin Partnership to achieve state (Ecology) objectives regarding water use.

The Ecology representative to the Partnership assured the group that the Department of Ecology is committed to participating in local planning groups to achieve the objectives of the Watershed Planning Act of 1998 (90.82 RCW, ESHB 2514). Ecology is a member of this Partnership to help the Partnership accomplish the work spelled out in the Watershed Planning Act, not to direct the Partnership or to do the work for the Partnership.

By the close of the discussion it was agreed that the Partnership should seek out more information about water law in Washington State. An effort will be made to build presentations on water law into the agendas for future meetings.

Report from Citizen's Advisory Committee (Agenda Item #3)

The Citizen's Advisory Committee has been putting effort into understanding the 2514 project work plan that is being developed. Members provided comments on the draft work plan at that last CAC meeting. Perhaps when the work plan is completed, the Partnership can use it to get the state to support the Partnership's priorities, rather than always being in the position of reacting to state priorities and initiatives.

The CAC suggested that the members of the Partnership actually get out on the river and see what is happening from the water. The CAC will be organizing some trips to make that possible. Partnership members will be invited.

Update on the subject of information management: the Partnership has been invited to send its representative to the meetings of the state framework project. The framework project is intended to make it easier to share data between agencies and organizations. The GIS compact disc that DNR has been working on for the Chehalis Basin should be ready in a couple of weeks. Copies will be available to Partnership participants.

Update on Flood Projects (Agenda Item #4)

The legislature approved funding to move the Upper Chehalis Flood Control Project forward. The amount is between \$1.0 and \$1.2 million and will serve as the local share of

the project cost. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers should hear her soon about the federal share for the project.

There are three concurrent projects going on in the basin. These projects are being coordinated through the Partnership and an executive committee to ensure that they are done efficiently and do not duplicate work. The three projects are:

- Chehalis Flood Control – Lewis County is the lead and Pacific International Engineering (PIE) is the consultant.
- Flood Mitigation Planning – Grays Harbor County is the lead and CH2MHill is the consultant.
- Flood Reduction and Environmental Restoration – The Army Corps of Engineers is the Lead.

Open Comment (Agenda Item #5)

Some members of the audience expressed their thoughts that there is too much federal assistance already related to water issues and salmon recovery. The Partnership should be cautious about more government involvement.

The Chair of the Partnership reminded the members that comments made during Partnership meetings are an indication that various members do, from time-to-time, have problems with agency decisions. These comments are not directed towards the specific individuals representing these agencies on the Partnership.

Wrap-up/Adjourn (Agenda Item #6)

The next Chehalis Basin Partnership meeting will be held on **Friday June 23, 2000 at the Chehalis Tribal Center from 9:00 to 11:30 a.m.**