



Chehalis Basin Partnership

Meeting Summary – November 17, 2000

Introduction

Dr. C.S. Sodhi welcomed members and opened the meeting.

Attendance: 15 designated representatives or their alternates attended this meeting. There were 15 additional citizens, alternates, or visitors that attended.

Lead Agency Update

Nominations of Partnership Chair and Vice-Chairs -- Nominations for the Partnership Chair and Vice-Chair were opened. A discussion of who is eligible followed. The by-laws do not set any parameters on who can serve as Chair or Vice-Chair. Some Partnership members have expressed their preference in the past that the Chair of the Partnership be someone who has been elected to a public office. One of the reasons for that preference is that an elected official has a higher level of public accountability. The counterpoint was made that while it may be true that elected officials represent their constituency, some of the citizens who volunteer their time to participate in the Partnership have been much more conscientious about attending the regular meetings and participating in sub-committees that do the work of the Partnership than elected officials. The main difference is that an elected official can be held accountable and removed from office each election cycle while the private citizen does not have the same constraints on their actions.

Bob Spahr, Mayor of Chehalis, and Dr. C.S. Sodhi, Director of the Department of Natural Resources for the Chehalis Tribe, were nominated to serve another one-year term as Chair and Vice-Chair respectively. If there are no further nominations before the December Partnership meeting confirmation by consensus will occur at that time.

The nomination process also led to a discussion about who are the actual members of the Chehalis Basin Partnership. The Intergovernmental Agreement used to form the Chehalis Basin Partnership says the following about the composition of the Chehalis River Basin Partnership (page 2, Section 4.0).

The Chehalis River Basin Partnership and Planning Unit may include, but are not limited to:

- **Counties:** each county in the Chehalis River Basin, appointed by the respective county;
- **Cities:** each interested city and town in the Chehalis River Basin, appointed by the respective jurisdictions;
- **Tribes:** the Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Indian Reservation and Quinault Indian Nation;

- **Water Supply Utilities:** a representative appointed jointly by the water supply utilities in the Chehalis River Basin;
- **Port Districts:** a representative appointed jointly by the port districts in the Chehalis River Basin;
- **State Departments:** Washington State Departments of Fish and Wildlife, Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Ecology;
- **Federal Agencies:** Bureau of Indian Affairs, Geological Survey, Bureau of Reclamation, Fish and Wildlife Service, Environmental Protection Agency, National Marine Fisheries Service, Forest Service, Corps of Engineers and Natural Resources Conservation Service;
- **Major Interests:** a minimum of four members representing various major interests in the Chehalis River Basin, appointed jointly by the counties and the tribes. Major interests include but are not limited to timber, agriculture, business, fisheries, recreational, environmental, and industrial water users.
- **Private Citizens:** one private Citizen from each of the counties, appointed by the respective counties.

The ambiguous language of the Intergovernmental Agreement (“may include, but are not limited to” and “each interested city”) makes it difficult to provide an exact count of actual Chehalis Basin Partnership membership. Up until now, membership has been based on which of the above groups have actually signed the agreement (where a signature block was provided) and active involvement in the Partnership. A list of members based on these criteria is attached. If the list is found to be inaccurate, corrections can be made.

A sub-committee was set up to review the by-laws, evaluate how they are working and make recommendations on changes that may be needed. No request has made at this time that the by-laws be changed to require that the Chair be an elected official. There is no intent to modify the consensus-based decision making process that has been adopted by the Partnership. The sub-committee will meet during the afternoon of November 30th.

The chair suggested that a letter be sent to Partnership members who have not been attending asking them to reconsider their role. If they are not able to attend they should consider delegating an alternate. It was also suggested that we identify those who have signature blocks on the Interagency Agreement but have not yet signed the agreement and obtain those signatures. Grays Harbor County, acting as lead agency for the Partnership will prepare a letter.

Meeting of the original Initiating Governments for the 2514 Watershed Planning Process -- Grays Harbor County informed the Partnership that a meeting of the original initiating governments has been set up for the morning of November 30th. Under the Watershed Planning Act (90.82 RCW) local watershed planning could not begin unless specific governmental bodies identified in the law sponsored it. These “initiating governments” met and designated the Chehalis Basin Partnership as the 2514 Local Planning Unit for the Chehalis Basin. The Intergovernmental Agreement formalizing the Chehalis Basin Partnership recognizes the 90.82 RCW (2514) Watershed Planning responsibilities as one of many interests of the Partnership. The Intergovernmental Agreement identifies the purpose of the Chehalis River Basin Partnership as: “assessing and managing the water resources of the Chehalis River Basin and to pursue strategies within the Chehalis River Basin which include the key elements of flood reduction, fisheries, recreation, water quality and water quantity and examine their relationship to economic health and sustainability.” (Page 2, Section 2.0).

When the Chehalis Basin Partnership, acting in its role as Local Planning Unit for the Chehalis Basin, has completed and approved the water management plan called for in RCW 90.82 that plan must be submitted to the county governments within the basin for approval. If all the counties approve the plan everything is fine and implementation of the plan can begin. If all the counties do not approve the plan, under the law the plan is returned to the Local Planning Unit (the Chehalis Basin Partnership) with recommendations for revisions. The Local Planning Unit then must revise the plan, approve the revised plan, and resubmit it to the counties. If the Counties do not approve the revised plan, the whole process terminates.

Some of the original initiating governments have not been consistent about attending Partnership meetings. The meeting on the 30th is an attempt to bring them up-to-date on the status of the project, check with them to find out how they feel about the work that has been done, find out why they aren't more involved, and try to re-engage them in the Partnership and planning process. The meeting of the initiating governments is not an attempt to restructure the Chehalis Basin partnership or how we do business. The counties in particular are very important to the eventual success of the water management plan developed by the Partnership. It is important that they be involved in the process so that the resulting plan is acceptable to them when it becomes time for approval. The time to influence the planning process is while it is occurring, not at the end of a four-year effort. By then there won't be enough time or funds remaining to re-do it.

Concerns were expressed that some of the "other" issues that the Chehalis Basin Partnership was formed to pursue have not been given much attention. One example is flood control. Coordination on flood control is occurring at the local level. Updates are provided to the Partnership when something of substance has occurred. The December meeting will focus almost entirely on some of the flood control computer modeling that has been done.

Salmon Recovery Projects-- The applications have been turned in to the Salmon Recovery Funding Board. Grays Harbor County will be meeting with the SRFB project review panel on December 7th to go over the projects. Project sponsors will be encouraged to attend that meeting so they can provide specific information in response to questions from the review panel. The final decisions about which projects will be funded are expected at the January meeting of the Salmon Recovery Funding Board. Grays Harbor County will attend in its role as Lead Entity for Salmon Recovery efforts. The January SRF Board meeting falls on the same day as the Chehalis Basin Partnership would normally meet, so Grays Harbor County's request that the Partnership meeting be re-scheduled to Friday February 2 was approved.

2514 Level 1 Assessment Update-- the comment period on the draft assessment has ended. The Technical Advisory Committee and Citizen's Advisory Committee have meet several times to discuss and review the draft. A final meeting of these groups is scheduled for Tuesday November 21st in Oakville at the offices of the Chehalis River Council.

Citizen's Advisory Committee Report

The CAC has been coordinating its meeting dates/times with the Technical Advisory Committee so members can participate in the review of the Level 1 Assessment. We expect this to continue through the end of December. The CAC will probably go back to meeting separately in January of 2001.

Salmon Recovery Data Viewer CD – DNR is working on an upgrade to the draft version of the CD to fix a couple of bugs that became apparent. The CD currently covers only WRIA 22 and the Partnership needs to find the funds to support DNR to do the work for WRIA 23 so we don't get bumped to the bottom of the priority list. The initial work on WRIA 22 was done by DNR at no cost to the Partnership because they used WRIA 22 to develop the prototype. The cost to prepare a data CD for WRIA 23 is estimated to be \$10,000.

Update on Flood Projects

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers provided an update on the status of the two on-going flood control projects in the Chehalis Basin. Copies of the update and a press release are attached to this summary.

Wrap-up/Adjourn

Several closing announcements and comments were made:

- The state Data Framework Committee continues to meet and progress is being made on a standard framework to ensure that data accumulated by various agencies is compatible and can be shared.
- Salmon Habitat Inventory and Assessment Project (SHIAP) – would the Partnership consider sending a letter encouraging the legislature to provide funding for this effort?
- Could the by-laws subcommittee consider how members of the Partnership being recommendations to the group for discussion and subsequent action?
- Thurston County is sponsoring an Endangered Species Act seminar on Saturday November 18th from 9 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Interested persons are invited to attend.

Next Meeting -- Due to the Christmas Holidays the December meeting of the Partnership has been changed from the fourth Friday of December to **December 15th at the Chehalis Tribal Center from 9:00 to 11:30 a.m.**