



Chehalis Basin Partnership

Meeting Summary – April 27, 2001

A. GENERAL PARTNERSHIP BUSINESS

Introduction

Vice-Chairman Sodhi welcomed everyone and opened the meeting.

Fifteen of the Partnership's thirty-two member organizations had a representative or alternate at the meeting. Twenty-four additional citizens, alternates, or visitor attended.

Citizens' Advisory Committee

The Citizens' Advisory Committee handed out a summary of its April 11th meeting (attached). The committee reviewed its draft operating procedures and then approved the final version for inclusion in the Partnership operating procedures (currently called by-laws). The committee continued its work on a public outreach strategy. A summary of that work will be circulated. The next meeting is May 9th at the Centralia Timberline Library. *(The results of that meeting are included with this mailing.)*

Annual Plan of Work

The Annual Plan of work was presented to the Partnership for discussion and approval. There are many demands competing for the attention of the Partnership and over the last couple of years these demands have more or less controlled the actions of the Partnership. The Annual Plan of Work will help the Partnership manage its workload by identifying priority activities that need to be accomplished during the year, assigning target dates and responsible parties, and allowing the Partnership to track progress. Suggested changes included incorporating specific dates when elements of special projects are scheduled to be completed, and clear indication of which things have been completed, changes and updates. The schedule portion of the Annual Plan of Work should be sent out each month. The Annual Plan of Work was approved subject to these changes. (Copy of schedule attached)

Water Quality Financial Assistance

A sub-committee reviewed the project applications from the upper basin and developed a local priority list. Only one project was received from the lower basin. The Partnership delegated the responsibility of signing the letters of agreed priority for the Chehalis Basin to the Chair. Letters of Agreed Priority were signed and delivered to Ecology by the April 18, 2001 deadline. A copy of those letters was mailed out with the meeting packet for the April 27th Partnership meeting.

B. SPECIAL PROJECTS

Watershed Planning under RCW 90.82

The Request for Proposals for a consultant to help the Partnership determine the scope of our Watershed Plan was published in the Vidette and the Daily Journal of Commerce. Six applications were received. Grays Harbor County, acting in its role of Lead Agency, coordinated a review of the applications. On May 3, 2001 four of the consultants will make presentations to a selection panel. The panel will then make a recommendation for Grays Harbor County to bring to the Partnership at its May meeting.

Salmon Recovery RCW 77.85

Carol Smith presented the Limiting Factors Analysis for the Upper/Lower Chehalis Basin (including Grays Harbor) to the Partnership. This material is the result of over a year of work by Carol and a Technical Advisory Group. Once it is published in about a month, the Limiting Factors Analysis will be available on a CD through a web site that the Conservation Commission maintains. To view which state basins have Limiting Factors Reports and request a copy of those that have been completed go to the Conservation Commission Web-site at www.conserver.org and select the "salmon" tab. That will take you to the Habitat Limiting Factors page. You can review the status of a report and request a CD for those that have been completed.

The Technical Advisory Group has developed a draft Salmon and Steelhead Restoration Strategy for the Chehalis Basin. The draft strategy includes a description of restoration goals and criteria developed to prioritize between sub-basins. The prioritization will be one of the basic building blocks of a detailed salmon recovery strategy for the basin. A copy of the draft strategy is included with this summary.

After a general discussion of the draft prioritization process, the Partnership reached consensus and agreed that the two prioritization goals (biological diversity based on the number of fish species/stocks present and sub-basins with the most fish habitat potential based on fish miles) are appropriate.

It was recognized that the Habitat Limiting Factors and draft strategy presented to the Partnership today are the result of a lot of hard work and a lot of small decisions along the way. Carol Smith and the members of the Technical Advisory Group were thanked and commended for their efforts and the results.

Flood Control

Centralia Flood Damage Reduction Project

The planning team will be meeting to discuss an U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service letter about the technical report. Additional drilling and shear-wave analysis of the Skookumchuck dam has been completed.

Chehalis Basin Study

Lori Morris (project contact for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers) reported that they are continuing to work with Grays Harbor County to develop the scope of the project. Once the salmon habitat Limiting Factors Analysis is completed the ACOE will look at the data gaps to see if some of them can be filled through this project.

This is a distinct project from the Centralia Flood Damage Reduction project. This project is based on the recognition that there are basin-wide needs for flood control, mitigation and restoring the health of the basin. The two projects are related however, and eventually both projects will work together.

TMDL Updates

Grays Harbor Fecal Coliform Bacteria:

Representatives of the advisory group Ecology established for this TMDL presented an overview of the draft Summary Implementation Strategy to the Partnership for discussion prior to formal release of the TMDL for public review and comment. A technical review of this TMDL was presented at a previous Partnership meeting. The Partnership is not being asked to endorse the TMDL or the Summary Implementation Strategy today.

Originally, this TMDL focused on the Grays Harbor estuary, an area of approximately 90 square miles. The results of the study showed that more than 80% of the total fecal coliform bacteria load to Grays Harbor comes from the rivers entering into the harbor. Approximately 50% of this loading is from the upper Chehalis River drainage (upstream of Porter). So in reality, the actions needed to reduce the loading of fecal coliform bacteria to the harbor have to be implemented to some extent throughout the 2700 square mile basin. A 65% reduction in fecal coliform bacteria loading from the rivers must be achieved to ensure that Grays Harbor meets state water quality standards for fecal coliform bacteria. Failure to ensure that Grays Harbor meets the water quality standards

will affect all the people who make a living off of the crab, clams and oysters grown and harvested in Grays Harbor because shellfish growers are heavily regulated. When there is a violation of fecal coliform bacteria standards in the Harbor, the response is immediate and dramatic – shellfish growers are not allowed to harvest or market their product.

The strategy for controlling sources of fecal coliform bacteria to Grays Harbor includes a lot of things that are being done already by private landowners, conservation districts, cities, towns and County governments. However, in some areas more needs to be done to ensure that the water quality in Grays Harbor is protected.

The presentation resulted in a general discussion of issues related to the Grays Harbor Fecal Coliform TMDL. The issues people raised include:

- The list of the advisory group members includes some that sit on the Partnership, and might be seen by some as a full endorsement of the results and the process used to get there. Local governments still have much to learn about this study and the outcome. Since many of the actions identified as necessary to control fecal coliform bacteria in the basin will fall to local government, more work needs to be done to explain it to them and to obtain their endorsement.
- There are some concerns that the data used as the basis for the study is several years old. In some of the sub-basins identified in the study landowners have implemented many projects to control sources of pollution. It is important to recognize these actions when establishing pollution reduction goals for various sub-basins; some of them may have been achieved already.

The members of the advisory group were recognized for the months of effort they put into this implementation strategy. A thorough public review process is needed to ensure that the interests of communities throughout the basin are considered.

Ecology's goal is to release the draft for formal public review and comment in May and prepare for a formal submittal to the U.S. EPA by the end of June 2001. An announcement of the public comment period for this TMDL is enclosed with this packet.

C. SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Laura Schinnel from Energy Northwest handed out a brochure on the Satsop Energy Project prepared by Duke Energy North America. Laura then used a series of overheads (copies attached) to explain how water will be used for the energy project. Originally, water use was authorized by the Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council (EFSEC) to

support the Satsop Nuclear Power project. The water for that project was transferred to what is now called the Satsop Development Park. This is the site for a proposed natural gas fired combustion turbine facility to generate 600 megawatts of electricity.

Bill Prem from the Williams Gas Pipeline Company then discussed the current status of the “Grays Harbor Lateral Project,” a natural gas pipeline to the Satsop site to provide natural gas for the turbines. Bill is the Project Manager for this project and provided four handouts. Two of the handouts were maps showing the proposed route and an alternative route for the pipeline. In addition, he provided handouts describing the horizontal directional drilling process often used to cross sensitive areas and procedures for crossing streams using flumes. Williams Gas Pipeline does not produce natural gas; they provide the pipelines to transport natural gas.

This project calls for almost 50 miles of 19-inch pipe to be installed, starting near Vail, Washington and ending at the Satsop site. This new pipe will be placed adjacent to existing pipe where possible. There will be approximately 15 miles of new pipe. The impacts of this project include: 14.25 acres of wetlands, crossing 34 streams, crossing 100 roads and highways, crossing 209 property parcels in Thurston County and 69 property parcels in Grays Harbor County. Construction plans call for clearing a minimum of 15 feet on each side of the pipeline of large vegetation or buildings. That is one reason for preferring to run the new pipe alongside the existing pipe whenever possible. The company goal is to work with local groups to identify mitigation projects.

Power for this project is fed into the grid that serves western states. 100 megawatts of the power is reserved for Energy Northwest. Public meetings on the project will be held as part of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. Williams Gas Pipeline Company representatives expressed their willingness to update the Partnership at future meetings.

Due to time constraints, the representatives from AMEC scheduled to be next on today’s agenda offered to return and make their presentation at the May 25 Partnership meeting.

The meeting was adjourned around noon.

The next meeting of the Chehalis Basin Partnership will be at 9:00 a.m. on May 25th at the Lucky Eagle Casino.