



Chehalis Basin Partnership

Meeting Summary – May 25, 2001

A. GENERAL PARTNERSHIP BUSINESS

Introduction

Chairman for the day Jim Haslett welcomed everyone and opened the meeting. Orville Ball, Mason County's alternate for Commissioner Mary Jo Cady was introduced.

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

Citizens' Advisory Committee

Turnout for the May 9th Citizens' Advisory Committee was small, perhaps due to a late mailing of the meeting announcement and agenda.

The June meeting of the CAC will be held after the Partnership meeting on June 22nd at the Chehalis River Council offices in Oakville.

Annual Plan of Work

Changes to the Annual Plan of work that were suggested prior to its approval at the April Partnership meeting were reviewed. Updates to the Annual Plan of Work will be identified in the meeting summary for the month when they occur. An updated version of the schedule from the Annual Plan of Work will be sent out with the meeting announcement each month. (Copy of schedule attached)

The question of how to make up-to-date information such as the Annual Plan of Work available to Partnership members and the general public was discussed. Eventually the Partnership may need to set up a web-site. Currently, the Chehalis River Council provides information on the Partnership's activities through its web-site.

Record of Decisions

Maintaining a record of Partnership decisions was a recommendation by Mark Swartout several months ago. Kahle Jennings is currently going through all the past meeting summaries and pulling out the decisions they contain. The purpose of creating a record of our decisions is to make sure we don't lose track of those things that have already been decided. This information will be useful as changes in the members of the Partnership occur and as work on Partnership activities moves forward.

There is a question about how the record should be made accessible to Partnership members and the general public once it has been created. It will be updated monthly. One suggestion was to include a section in each meeting summary that reviews the formal decisions made at that meeting.

Other updates

Lew Patton, a member of the Chehalis River Council (CRC) announced that the Chairman of the CRC had resigned and provided the following information.

The Chehalis River Council began in 1992 with the ideas and leadership of Dave Palmer. The mission statement of the CRC is to "Promote the conservation and restoration of the greater Chehalis River Basin Resources."

This past Monday the CRC Board was jolted by the resignation of Dave. The Board does not always agree on everything, but it does agree Dave's leadership has been appreciated, and he will be missed.

The CRC publication "Drops of Water" has been looked forward to each month by thousands of readers in the Chehalis Basin. Because of the difficulty of finding sustained funding it will be an ongoing challenge to continue to publish Drops of Water.

(Note: the CRC web-site has also been a major source of information for the general public about a multitude of Chehalis Basin issues – including the activities of the Partnership.)

A new CRC board is in place. The board is reviewing the makeup, mission, and sources of funding for the activities of the Chehalis River Council. The new Board consists of Margaret Radar (Chair), Rob Schanz (Secretary), Karen Knutsen (Treasurer), Janet Strong and Lew Patton. These Board members are ably assisted by Sally Cox (Citizen's for Preservation of the Upper Chehalis) and Brady Engvall (Friends of Grays Harbor).

B. SPECIAL PROJECTS

Watershed Planning under RCW 90.82

Grays Harbor County staff introduced Bob Wheeler from Triangle Associates. Triangle Associates was selected as the top candidate to assist the Partnership in the development of the scope for the Phase 3 watershed plan. If the Partnership approves the panel's recommendation, Bob Wheeler will be the lead for Triangle on the project.

Triangle has proposed a series interviews with key Partnership members in June/July and a couple of work sessions in July and August. To meet the schedule, one of the work sessions will have to be held on the 13th. This work session will be in addition to the regular July Partnership meeting on the 27th. The schedule for developing the scope of the Phase 3 watershed plan is based on Partnership approval of a final product at its September meeting. The scope for the Phase 3 watershed plan should reflect agreement between the Partnership members about the goals for managing water quantity, quality, and fish habitat in the Chehalis Basin.

Several Partnership members expressed their thoughts about the importance of this stage of the planning process. The scope for the plan will basically determine how the remaining two and a half years of work will proceed and how the grant funds the Partnership has received for the project will be spent.

Acting in its role as Lead Agency for the Partnership, Grays Harbor County made two requests. First, the County requested that the Partnership's approve the selection of Triangle Associates as the firm that will work with the Partnership on developing the scope for our Phase 3 watershed plan. Second, the County requested permission to develop a contract with Triangle Associates for the work. There were no objections to either request, so Grays Harbor County's request was approved by consensus.

Margaret Rader, current chair of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), announced that the decision to move forward into development of the scope for the Phase 3 plan was a point of transition that would be a good time for her to step down as the chair of the TAC. Mark Swartout, alternate Partnership member for Commissioner Kevin O'Sullivan of Thurston County, has expressed the willingness and interest in serving as chair of the committee. Margaret requested that the Partnership appoint Mark as the chair of the TAC.

Margaret was thanked for her work as chair of the Technical Advisory Committee and Mark Swartout was appointed as the new chair.

Salmon Recovery RCW 77.85

In April, Carol Smith presented the Limiting Factors Analysis for the Upper/Lower Chehalis Basin (including Grays Harbor) to the Partnership. Since the April meeting, the salmon recovery Technical Advisory Group has continued to work on 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.

Grays Harbor County staff announced that a workshop has been scheduled on June 21st for groups that are interested in applying for SRF Board salmon recovery funds for projects in the Chehalis Basin. A copy of that announcement is enclosed with this summary.

Brian Peck, USFWS, announced that the replacement hired to fill Mike Kelly's Chehalis Basin Fishery Restoration Program coordinator position has unexpectedly resigned. Brian has been temporarily assigned the responsibility of coordinating USFWS funding for salmon recovery projects. The turn-around time for federal 2001 funds will be very short (applications due by July 6th) because the fiscal year ends September 30th. A copy of the USFWS letter announcing the availability of funds is enclosed with this summary. In closing, there was some discussion of the USFWS formalizing its working relationship with the Partnership and having the Partnership take a stronger role, perhaps by serving as the Steering Committee for the USFWS restoration program.

(To view which Washington State basins have Limiting Factors Reports and to 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.)

Flood Control

Centralia Flood Damage Reduction Project

Lewis County Commissioner Richard Graham provided an update. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has appointed a permanent project manager. There is \$500,000 in the President's budget for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Chehalis project. The County is seeking additional federal funding within the House Transportation Budget. There may be more definite information about this budget within the next month or so.

Dennis Fischer, USACOE, informed the Partnership that Pacific International Engineering submitted the hydraulic model they have been working on for independent review. The USFWS has provided updated wetland maps. In

addition, the USACOE has also recently obtained aerial photos interpreted for land cover and the location of the river.

Chehalis River Basin Ecosystem Restoration Study

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers continues to work with Grays Harbor County to develop a project management plan that will serve as a template for the project.

Leslie Kaye, USACOE Public Affairs office in Seattle, announced that web pages for both Chehalis projects are now active on the USACE web-site and passed out a news release on the topic. A copy of the news release with web-site information is enclosed with this summary.

TMDL Updates

Grays Harbor Fecal Coliform Bacteria:

Currently open for public comments through June 11, 2001.

Upper Chehalis Temperature

Comment period has closed; Ecology is preparing responses.

Humptulips River Temperature

A public meeting was held May 16, 2001 and public comments are being accepted until June 1, 2001. A copy of an Ecology FOCUS Sheet on this TMDL is enclosed with this summary.

Grays Harbor County staff commented that the Humptulips TMDL did catch them by surprise. The County encourages Ecology to integrate TMDL planning into the regular Partnership processes and meeting agendas.

There was a general discussion about TMDLs, how the data is gathered and used, and public process.

C. SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Neil Amondson and Dr. Mark Johns of AMEC Earth & Environmental Inc. presented information on the Decision Prioritization Tool (DPT) that they offer. This computer-based tool allows "what if" questions to be asked in a visual (GIS) format using data available for a specific geographic area. It provides a regional focus with site-specific options.

DPT allows the analysis of information based on the questions and priorities established by the Partnership. It allows multiple considerations to be evaluated simultaneously.

For a copy of the lengthy handout provided, contact Kahle Jennings at (360) 407-6310.

D. OPEN COMMENT

During the meeting a request was made that the Partnership arrange a future special presentation by the Department of Ecology on the provisions of the revised Shorelines Management Act that it has adopted. It was also suggested that if such a presentation is scheduled, the counties that have joined in the lawsuit against Ecology over the revised Shorelines Management Act should be asked to explain their positions on the rule that led to the lawsuit.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30.

The next meeting of the Chehalis Basin Partnership will be at 9:00 a.m. on June 22nd at the Lucky Eagle Casino.

Decisions

- ◆ Approved the selection of Triangle Associates as the firm what will work with the Partnership on developing the scope for the Phase 3 watershed plan.
- ◆ Approved Grays Harbor County negotiating a contract with Triangle Associates for the work.
- ◆ Appointed Mark Swartout as the new chair of the Technical Advisory Committee.

Recommended Future Agenda Items

- ◆ Ecology presentation on the revised Shorelines Management Act the agency adopted.
- ◆ Presentation by County's that joined the lawsuit against the revised Shoreline Management Act.

Changes to Annual Plan of Work

- ◆ No changes made at this meeting.