



## *Chehalis Basin Partnership*

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### Meeting Summary – March 19, 2002

**NOTE: This Partnership meeting was held in conjunction with one of the four study area meetings so the meeting was shorter than usual. This summary does not include the study area portion of the meeting.**

#### **Introduction**

The acting Chair opened the Chehalis Basin Partnership portion of the meeting. Fifteen of the Partnership's thirty-two member organizations had a representative or alternate at the meeting. Sixteen additional citizens, alternates, or visitors signed the attendance record.

#### **Level 1 Assessment Detailed Summary**

Cynthia Carlstad from TetraTech/KCM presented an overview of the detailed summary of the Level 1 Assessment. A copy of the executive summary of this document was included in the packet sent out for the meeting. This presentation was on the final product. A short general discussion of the detailed summary ended with consensus to approve the detailed summary of the Level 1 Assessment.

One specific question was recorded: "Does the Level 1 Assessment include an analysis of municipal water (or other water) that is withdrawn from the river/tributary system under a water right, permit, etc., used, and the remaining water returned to the system?" The answer is No. The Level 1 Assessment focused on compiling existing information and information on return flows or actual consumptive use has never been compiled. This is the kind of information that can be considered under the Level 2 portion of the assessment which focuses on filling data gaps.

#### **Flow Monitoring Grant Proposal**

The legislature amended the Watershed Planning Act to provide supplemental funding for Local Planning Units that choose to evaluate the need for, and recommend in-stream flows. In basins where the Local Planning Unit chooses not to do the work, the Department of Ecology is delegated the responsibility for setting flows.

Regulatory in-stream flows were set at 31 control points in the Chehalis Basin in 1976. Several flow gauging stations were established. However, flow monitoring has not occurred at 15 of the 31 control stations. The result is that no one can say whether or not all the in-stream flows set in 1976 are being met.

A scope of work for the supplemental funding to monitor flows at the 15 stations where data is not available has been developed. This data can then be compared to the 1976 regulatory flows and more recent work that has been done on the flows necessary to support salmon. The result will be a better understanding of whether the 1976 regulatory flows are adequate. If not, the Partnership could recommend amending the 1976 regulatory flows, or establish non-regulatory flows that would be used in the watershed planning process as planning targets.

The Departments of Fish and Wildlife and Ecology have approved the scope of work for this project. At the February 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting the Partnership referred this proposal to the Steering/Technical Committee for a recommendation on how this work might be accomplished. The STC recommends that the Partnership extend its contract with Triangle-TetraTech/KCM to include development of a detailed scope of work for monitoring flows in the Chehalis Basin. The current contract with this consulting team was designed to be broad enough to allow extending the contract for additional services. The Partnership has a good working relationship with the consulting team and taking this approach will save at least two months of time. Since the Partnership's watershed plan is due in October 2003 that leaves barely a year to measure flows so that the data can be incorporated into the planning process. It would really be good to begin measuring flows as soon as possible so that the data represents all of one summer's flows.

Some concerns were raised. Several members question the value of flow data for only one year. While it is agreed that one year's worth of flow data is not anywhere near ideal, it would be more than we currently have and could be supplemented with additional long-term flow monitoring if resources become available. Since the intent stated in the proposal to Ecology is to develop flow recommendations that would be used as planning targets and not for amending the 1976 regulatory flows the results would be consistent with the Partnership's stated preference for voluntary approaches to managing water. Additional clarification was requested about the legality of extending the contract with Triangle-TetraTech/KCM without going through a competitive process. This can be done but that the lead agency will confirm this with its attorney before taking action.

At the conclusion of the discussion consensus was reached to extend the contract with Triangle-TetraTech/KCM to include the flow monitoring and analysis work described in the proposal to Ecology.

### **Local Prioritization of Water Quality Grants and Loans**

This discussion was inadvertently left off of the agenda sent out for this meeting but an April 25<sup>th</sup> deadline for submitting the local prioritization of grant and loans applications to the Department of Ecology makes it necessary to include it. The next meeting of the Partnership is not scheduled until April 26<sup>th</sup>.

Each year Ecology awards several million dollars in grants and loans for projects that improve water quality. The grants go through a review and ranking process at Ecology. One of the elements (worth up to 100 points) of Ecology's ranking process is how the projects are prioritized by a local planning group. In the Chehalis Basin this local planning group is the Partnership. For the last several years the Partnership has appointed a committee to review the projects, develop a local priority list and submit it to Ecology under the signature of the Partnership's chair by the deadline. The results are reported back to the Partnership and decision to concur with the list made at the next Partnership meeting. This process has been necessary because the deadline for submitting the locally prioritized list always seems to fall just

before the Partnership's April meeting and the information necessary for preparing the local priority list isn't released in time to complete the work before the March meeting.

This year the local prioritization will be done by the newly established water quality sub-committee.

The Partnership reached consensus and directed the Water Quality Sub-Committee to develop a local priority list for state fiscal year 2003 water quality grants and loans, and authorized the Chair of the Partnership to sign the letter of agreed priority and report the results back to the full Partnership at the April meeting.

**The next meeting of the Chehalis Basin Partnership will be at 9:00 a.m. on April 26<sup>th</sup> in the auditorium of the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries building located at 7273 Linderson Way SW in Tumwater Washington.**

### **Decisions**

- Approved the detailed summary of the Level 1 Assessment.
- Approved extending the contract with Triangle-TetraTech/KCM to include the flow monitoring and analysis work described in the proposal to Ecology.
- Directed the Water Quality Sub-Committee to develop a local priority list for state fiscal year 2003 water quality grants and loans, and authorized the Chair of the Partnership to sign the letter of agreed priority and report the results back to the full Partnership at the April meeting.