



Chehalis Basin Partnership

Meeting Summary – February 28, 2003

A. GENERAL PARTNERSHIP BUSINESS

Introduction

Chairman Spahr welcomed everyone and opened the meeting. Fourteen of the Partnership's thirty-two member organizations had a representative or alternate in attendance. Nine additional citizens, alternates, or visitors were at the meeting.

The following changes to the January 24th CBP meeting summary was agreed upon for the presentation on In-Stream Flow under section "B. Special Projects" (deletions are lined out and additions are underlined):

The ~~conclusions~~ preliminary findings of the study so far are:

- Actual flows fell below the regulatory minimum flow at most sites in 2002.
- Actual flows probably fall below "regulatory" minimum flows during ~~most~~ some years.

A **revised January 24th meeting summary** incorporating these changes will be prepared and sent out with this summary.

Citizens' Advisory Committee

There have been a couple of changes on the Citizens' Advisory Committee. Rob Shanz (Lewis County member and Chairman) has resigned and Lewis County will appoint a replacement. Bill Halbert (Thurston County member) has also been unable to fulfill his role and a replacement will be appointed by Thurston County. J. Roach is the Vice Chair of the committee and will assume the Chairman's role until a replacement is voted on by the committee.

Steering/Technical Advisory Committee

A summary of the January 30th and February 29th STC meetings was distributed (**copy attached**). Issues the STC focused on in January will be discussed later during this meeting. The next meetings of the STC will be on March 6th and March 21st.

Water Quality Committee

Meeting summaries for the January 9th and February 12th Water Quality Committee meetings were sent out in the packet for this meeting. A correction to the January 9th summary was noted.

A draft letter providing comments on the proposed changes to the Washington State Water Quality Standards was included in the packet for this meeting. A general discussion of the contents of the letter was held. Not everyone on the Partnership agreed completely with each

comment in the draft letter, but since each Partnership member and the organization they represent can comment separately on the proposed changes to the standards, it was agreed that the draft comment letter (with some changes made at the CBP meeting) should be sent.

The next meeting of the Water Quality Committee will be on March 13, 2003, in the Grays Harbor Forestry Building from 9:00 a.m. until noon. The Detailed Implementation Plan for Chehalis River TMDLs will be a topic of discussion.

Other Business

Lewis County sent a letter to the Partnership recommending that Brian Thompson of the Lewis County Farm Bureau be appointed to fill the agricultural representative position that is vacant. Brian is a board member of the Lewis County Farm Bureau. The Partnership agreed that the Washington Cattlemen's Association should be contacted prior to making this decision because they were the appointed agricultural representative until the vacancy occurred.

B. SPECIAL PROJECTS

Watershed Planning under RCW 90.82

Grant Opportunities – EPA has some grant funds under its Regional Geographic Initiative (RGI) that could be a source of support for additional work in the Chehalis Basin. The STC has reviewed the criteria and recommends that the Partnership submit a request that will fund an assessment of chemical and physical water quality attributes in the lower basin and combines that with an assessment of the biological communities (bugs) that live there. This study would compliment a similar study that was done in the upper basin. Applications are due in March. The Partnership reached consensus agreement that the project should be submitted.

Legislation – The legislature is considering language that would provide limited funding for implementation of watershed plans. Members of the Partnership have testified before legislative committees and have been contacting individual legislators in support of an amendment to the Watershed Planning Act (RCW 90.82) that would allow counties with a very small land area to “opt out” of the plan approval process. Without the “opt out” language it will be necessary to bring together eight counties to approve the Chehalis Plan (Cowlitz, Grays Harbor, Jefferson, Lewis, Mason, Pacific, Thurston and Wahkiakum). With the amendment four of those counties with very small land areas would not have to participate in plan approval (Cowlitz, Jefferson, Pacific and Wahkiakum). Combined these counties have less than three percent of the land area of the basin, and most if not all of that is federal land or lands owned by large timber companies that are managed under the Forest and Fish agreement.

Update on Watershed Planning – Bob Wheeler (Triangle Associates) reviewed some proposed changes to the outline for the watershed plan. The important thing to remember is that the outline will continue to evolve as work on the plan progresses. The Partnership agreed by consensus on that approach and the current proposed changes to the outline.

Bob then reviewed the list of issue papers being worked on by the Steering/Technical Committee. These issue papers will form the skeleton of the watershed plan. To give the Partnership an idea of what the issue papers look like, a brief overview of one of the issue papers “Protecting High Quality Water Resources” was provided. A copy of this issue paper was sent out in the packet for this meeting. Some of the points provided in the overview include:

- The Chehalis Basin is in relatively good shape – it contains a lot of forest land and the population is not high compared to the land area.
- Most water quality efforts focus on improving degraded waters. The focus of this paper is to remind us that we should not ignore areas where the water quality is not degraded. It is far easier to prevent degradation than to correct it once it has occurred.
- When appropriate, issue papers will include references that cite sources of information.

The process of developing, reviewing and finalizing the issue papers was covered in the discussion that followed. Issue papers go through extensive review by the Steering/Technical Committee and then discussion with the Partnership. Once agreement is reached the issue papers will be placed in the watershed plan binder. Whether or not to provide a separate opportunity for public review of the issue papers before they are adopted by the Partnership and how to provide that opportunity for review still must be determined. In order to have a draft plan by July the Partnership will need to begin review of individual issue papers as early as its March meeting. Due to the number of issue papers and how complex some of them may be Partnership members will be encouraged to review them before they are discussed at a Partnership meeting.

Salmon Recovery Project

The Chehalis Basin Salmonid habitat Restoration and Preservation Work Plan that provides a vision, strategic directions and actions that will guide the restoration of salmonid habitat was introduced. The work plan will help the Partnership develop competitive applications for Salmon Recovery Funding Board and other restoration funds such as those available through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or (eventually it is hoped) the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Ecosystem Restoration Project.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Work in the Chehalis Basin

Flood Damage Reduction Project sponsored by Lewis County: no report due to the special presentation topic today.

Ecosystem Restoration Project sponsored by Grays Harbor County: This is the topic of the special presentation today.

C. SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Lori Morris from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers provided an overview of the Ecosystem Restoration Project sponsored by Grays Harbor County. Rather than try to summarize this lengthy presentation and discussion a copy of the presentation is **attached**.

The next meeting of the Chehalis Basin Partnership will be at 9:00 a.m. on March 28, 2003 at the Lucky Eagle Casino.

Decisions

- Corrections to the January 24th CBP meeting Summary.
- The revised letter on the proposed changes to state water quality standards should be sent.
- To contact the Cattlemen's Assoc. on an agricultural representative replacement.
- To submit a RGI project proposal to EPA.
- Agreed on proposed changes to the plan outline and that the outline will evolve as planning moves forward.