



Chehalis Basin Partnership

Meeting Summary – June 27, 2003

A. GENERAL PARTNERSHIP BUSINESS

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

This will be the last meeting for three of our long standing participants: Jim Hillery, who works for Weyerhaeuser and represents forestry interests on the Partnership, is retiring. Annette Grainger will be taking over his role at Weyerhaeuser. Ron Wisner is leaving Grays Harbor Conservation District because they have run out of funding. Lori Morris will not be attending Partnership meetings from the end of June until the new federal budget takes effect because the funds that were supporting her attendance will be re-directed to fund stream flow gauging again this summer.

Citizens' Advisory Committee -- Chanele Holbrook is the new chair. There will be a brief meeting of the committee today after the Partnership meeting.

Steering/Technical Advisory Committee -- The committee continues to meet twice a month to discuss planning issues and develop recommendations. Partnership members are encouraged to have a representative attend.

Water Quality Committee -- There was a committee meeting on June 12. Craig Graber (Ecology) was not able to attend to discuss the Detailed Implementation Plan for the Humptulips River Temperature TMDL at this meeting. Craig did make an extra effort to ensure that every one who was interested received a draft so they could review it and provide comment. This effort was made to address concerns that during earlier attempts to gather public comment not enough notification was provided.

Dave Rountry (Ecology) met with the committee to continue to discuss the Detailed Implementation Plan for the Chehalis River TMDLs that the committee has been working on for the last two years. He is now near completion of the first official draft that will be presented to the Partnership and the general public for comment. The goal is to have the Detailed Implementation Plan integrated with and completed on the same schedule as the watershed plan.

Lee Daneker made a presentation on bacteriological indicators of water quality, EPA's research and why water quality standards for bacteria are changing. It was a very interesting discussion and some questions were raised that will require follow-up.

The next WQC meeting is July 10th. In addition to follow-up on the bacteria presentation and the detailed implementation plans for the Chehalis and Humptulips, Cynthia Carlstad will be discussing the basin water quality monitoring plan.

Chairman Spahr commented that Dave Rountry has done a lot of work on the Detailed Implementation Plan for the Chehalis River TMDLs. It is the first that the Partnership has been really involved in, and the outcome demonstrated the benefit of local involvement.

Terry Willis commented that she is pleased with the working relationships that have developed and that she believes the resulting detailed implementation plans have a real chance to actually clean up the environment. Dave Rountry did what he was asked to do. He contacted people that the committee asked him to contact to find out their issues, take their comments and he responded to the things they said.

B. SPECIAL PROJECTS -- Watershed Planning under RCW 90.82

Land Use Issue Paper – a copy of the long version was distributed with the meeting packet for this. There is a connection between the use of land and the effects on water quantity, water quality and habitat. It is a complex relationship and this paper really does not address the whole issue. It is written from the perspective of a city/county land use planner.

- There is a bullet in the presentation that states that subdivisions are approved only after a determination has been made that adequate supplies of quantity/quality of water are available. What is the relationship between our watershed planning effort and the Growth Management Act? GMA is not something that can be ignored. Once GMA plans are completed they limit the amount of discretion local government has regarding land use decisions.
- One of the things missing from all the issue papers is some evaluation of the immediate and long-term costs. County Commissioners will want this information when it comes time to approve the plan.
- If you want to protect water quality you have to make it profitable for resource companies (forestry, agriculture) to stay in business.
- The watershed plan we are working on will make general observations and recommendations -- the vision of what we want to have happen in the Chehalis Basin. The plan won't have specific solutions to every specific problem we face in the basin. (There was general agreement on this point).

Today's discussion of land use was intended to bring to light what the issues are, get feedback on the recommendations and hear from the Partnership what is missing from the paper.

Flooding Issue Paper – the short version of the Flooding issue paper discussed today does not present actual recommendations. It is a general discussion of flooding impacts and storm water planning, and is intended to set the stage for flood management plans to be revised so that they are coordinated with the two U.S. Army Corps of Engineers projects in the Chehalis Basin and the Watershed plan.

- Keeping people out of the flood plain is the best way to keep them from being harmed by flooding.
- Counties should participate in FEMA's rating system. If they did, that would accomplish just about anything we could do to reduce flood damage.

- The flood plain up-and-down-stream of the Flood Damage Reduction project (setback levees) will be re-mapped to reflect the changes brought about by the construction of setback levees. Impacts to the floodplain will be assessed using computer models.

An issue paper on the **Economic Value of Recreation** was presented. There wasn't a lot of discussion recorded about the issue paper.

Public Information Issue Paper

- The Chehalis Basin is a big watershed with the result that there is no uniform way for information to be shared. For example the Chronicle covered the new state water quality standards but the Aberdeen World did not. The Chehalis River Council web site tries to provide comprehensive coverage, but it is a voluntary effort.
- What is implementation (under the watershed plan) and when will we know we have been successful? (*This is a topic that will be addressed in a separate issue paper.*)
- The Partnership needs a clear communication strategy and talking points.

Multipurpose Storage and Water Quality Projects

These projects end June 30th. The multipurpose storage project was reviewed with the Partnership in May. The reports are being finalized.

- A brief discussion of the high-yield/low-yield format for recommendations was held and the Partnership endorsed that approach.
- The Partnership would like to see an information piece on the changes in the state water quality standards that allow consideration of use-based standards.
- Is sediment included in the water quality evaluation? It was identified as an issue in the Limiting Factors Analysis. There has not been a comprehensive study on the extent of the problem. On forest lands the assumption is that the standards agreed to in the Forest and Fish Agreement should address the problem over time. Private and state forest land owners are spending millions of dollars to address sediment over the next few years – presumably this is being done to correct a problem. A recommendation should be made to the Salmon Recovery Funding Board that they provide grants for assessment of sediment problems.

Flow Monitoring - Lori Morris (USACE) has donated the remainder of her project's funding for this fiscal year to continue flow monitoring again this summer in areas where we have very little data. A staff person from EPA is available to coordinate the effort and help with flow monitoring. The work will be done using a network of agency people and volunteers. This means Lori will not be able to attend the Partnership committee meetings she has been attending.

Closing Comments from the representative from the Quinault Indian Nation

Recent actions by the state legislature have the Quinault Indian Nation very, very concerned; particularly with regard to use of the very large but undeveloped municipal water rights. The Quinault Indian Nation wants to see the Chehalis Basin Planning effort succeed and is very interested in continuing to participate and the outcome of this effort. But it is unclear if federal reserved and treaty water rights will be acknowledged in the plan. The fish are what the Quinault stand for -- they are an integral part of the Quinault culture and the fish must be protected.

The next meeting of the Chehalis Basin Partnership will be at 9:00 a.m. on Friday July 25, 2003 at the Lucky Eagle Casino.