

CHEHALIS BASIN PARTNERSHIP
Chehalis Tribe “Lucky Eagle” Casino
Rochester, Washington
March 23, 2007
9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Approved Meeting Summary

MEMBERS & ALTERNATES PRESENT

Terry Willis, Citizen, Grays Harbor
Steve Craig, Department of Ecology
Lyle Hojem, Citizen, Lewis County
Glen Connelly, Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis
(Alternate)
Bob Beerbower, Grays Harbor
Ann Wick, WA Department of Agriculture
Ron Schillinger, City of Montesano
Ron Mauer, Lewis County Farm Bureau
Charles Caldwell, Port of Grays Harbor

Mark Swartout, Thurston County (Alternate)
Bob Macleod, Thurston County
Chanele Holbrook-Shaw, Citizen, Thurston
County
Kahle Jennings, City of Centralia (Alternate)
Robert Fink, Mason County (Alternate)
Terry Harris, City of Chehalis
Art Lehman, Port of Centralia

OTHERS PRESENT

Randy Lehr, Grays Harbor College
Bruce Jones, Quinault Indian Nation
Jim Hill, Lewis County Citizen (Alternate)
J Roach, Thurston County Citizen
Vicki Cline, Department of Ecology (DOE)
Steve Thurin, HDR Engineering

Petra Shenk, UCSB
Valerie Gow, Recording Secretary, Puget Sound
Meeting Services
Curt Holt, Washington State Department of Fish
& Wildlife (WDFW)
Narendran Kodandapani, Grays Harbor College

GENERAL PARTNERSHIP BUSINESS

Welcome, Introductions and Roundtable Comments

Commissioner Beerbower called the meeting to order at 9:39 a.m. Everyone present provided self-introductions.

Discuss and Adopt Draft Meeting Summaries for February 23, 2007 Meeting

A correction was requested to the minutes to change the first reference of “95%” on page 6 to reflect “90%.”

The Partnership approved the minutes of the February 23, 2007 as amended by consensus.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Follow Up Discussion – Interruptible Water Rights in the Chehalis Basin

Vicki Cline, Department of Ecology, Water Resources Program, provided an update on the series of workshops conducted on interruptible water rights that were issued in the 1970s to meet instream rules issued in 1976. Approximately 100 water right holders are affected by instream flows. During low flows, owners of the water rights are required to discontinue withdrawing water from rivers and streams that are identified on the water rights.

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On February 26, 2007, DOE sent letters to the water rights holders and encouraged them to attend workshops to discuss interruptible water rights. The workshops were held on March 13, 14, and 15, 2007 at local granges. Overall, the workshops went well. The largest attendance was at the Newaukum Grange on March 14. There were many questions, which DOE will summarize. Most of the questions concerned specific water rights and some general questions about what local municipalities are doing during low flow conditions. There was also discussion about DOE's website, which is currently under development. A flow hotline will be available in April for holders to call to determine if they can utilize their respective water right.

Ms. Cline reported many Chehalis Basin Partnership members also attended the workshop, which was very helpful.

DOE will continue to monitor flows. If flows drop, notices will be mailed to the water rights holders to alert them to call the hotline or look on the website for steps to take to monitor their withdrawals of water.

Terry Willis asked how many of the attendees are actual holders of interruptible water rights. Ms. Cline indicated that the largest group of water rights holders was present at the New Newaukum workshop. Approximately 30 of the 113 holders contacted attended the workshops. However, Ms. Cline said she has received many phone calls and e-mails. Follow up is occurring on a daily basis.

Mark Swartout said the Partnership was represented well at all the workshops, which provided an opportunity to introduce members to attendees. Follow up responses to the questions will also be helpful to the CBP. He asked Ms. Cline to provide a summary of questions she is receiving so the CBP can ascertain as a watershed planning unit, what it can do to help solve some problems.

J Roach indicated he also attended all the workshops. Many of the issues were clarified during the workshops.

Jim Hill asked whether DOE plans to publish a press release on the outcome of the workshops and findings. Ms. Cline said DOE's Public Information Officer (PIO) was not present during the debriefing after the meetings but that there have been discussions about publicizing the results of the workshops. She offered to follow up with the PIO. Mr. Hill suggested there is value in publicizing the results of the workshops.

Kahle Jennings acknowledged members attending the workshops. There were many questions about municipal water rights and whether they are interruptible and actions municipalities are doing during low instream flows.

Mr. Hill asked about the value for Chehalis users to recharge the basin during low flows if farmers and other users can't withdraw water. Mr. Jennings said under the dissolved oxygen TMDL study, the Chehalis was given a wastewater allocation of zero. It is difficult to remove all BOD from wastewater, so Chehalis chose a land application to recharge because it also addressed the temperature TMDL study that was on the horizon. When Chehalis applied for land application, it required water reclaimed standards or water reclamation. Under the water reclamation regulation, which is administered jointly by the Department of Health and DOE, it required discharged water that is treated and used for a different beneficial use to be mitigated because the use takes water from the river. Mr. Jennings said he believes the City of Chehalis gave up some municipal water rights to mitigate flows removed from the river.

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Terry Harris said he did not believe the City gave up any water rights. The issue was that the quality side of science and the quantity side of science were represented within the same organization, providing different parameters. He said he believes it was mitigated. The mitigation was based on the old plant. The new plant is much more efficient.

Mr. Hill said the issue of some people not able to withdraw while others can't recharge needs to be considered.

Mr. Swartout said he believes that none of the participants at each of the two workshops he attended asked a question that wasn't previously asked or addressed by the Steering Technical Committee or the CBP. Members are asking the same questions as citizens, which speaks well of the Partnership and its representation of citizen concerns.

Ms. Cline thanked members for attending the workshops.

GIS Clearinghouse Welcome and Project Overview

Randy Lehr, Grays Harbor College, introduced Narendran Kodandapani, GIS Instructor, Grays Harbor College. Mr. Kodandapani joins the college from Michigan State University. His background is in geospatial databases and information to analyze biodiversity, forest fire frequency, and other areas.

Mr. Lehr reported there has been ongoing work between the college and the CBP to take existing and future information and convert it to a more understandable format, such as geographical systems and maps that have information tied to specific areas regarding land use, water quality, and quantity. The project began as a partnership between Grays Harbor College and DOE to synthesize and organize GIS information and develop a product that enhances accessibility to users in a web-based environment with perhaps another level of access for obtaining raw data. Another layer of access could include working at the college through the college's instructional programs to create new data layers and new maps that essentially serve broader issues within the basin.

Mr. Kodandapani provided a briefing on the potential for geospatial technologies and techniques for analysis, potential ways to disseminate information, and an example of how to incorporate geospatial technologies to resolve conflicts and problems within the environment.

There are a number of organizations that are collecting GIS data. There are different layers of GIS data. The advantage of GIS is the spatial component which can provide different scenarios for solving different issues. One important aspect is assigning priorities. Along with the capability of geospatial technologies, there is also an abundance of information. By having a GIS clearinghouse, there is the ability to optimize data collection efforts and provide access.

Mr. Kodandapani reviewed potential forms of Internet delivery systems that would meet the needs of users. There are various software applications and methods for disseminating information through a clearinghouse. Mr. Kodandapani reviewed ArcIMS, a centrally managed database for distributing GIS capabilities via the Internet. The system can customize a variety of tools. ArcIMS is extremely compatible with different browsers, such as Explorer. The overall objective is to share information that has been obtained.

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Mr. Kodandapani displayed a graphic of the ArcIMS system. The potential advantages of the system is the generation of maps, management of geographic data, and downloading information to conduct further analysis.

Mr. Kodandapani reported Grays Harbor will host the server and the equipment, assess the best software that best meets all needs, as well as manage the clearinghouse.

Mr. Kodandapani provided an example of how someone could use the information via a watershed map to manage salmon problems due to the inability to migrate upstream. There is an abundance of geospatial data with a need to manage as well as disseminate information that can be modeled to develop more effective solutions and identify environmental problems within the region.

Art Lehman asked whether there has been consideration for creating an aerial map of the complete Chehalis River basin that could be divided into sections. Mr. Kodandapani said there is the capability of preparing information from various sources as well as information from satellite information. There are different kinds of spatial information which can be applied in the analysis. Mr. Lehr added that there are some efforts at the state level to obtain aerial photos of the entire state that are updated every six years to a resolution of approximately 10 meters. There are also some local efforts that are interested in generating more data specific to the Chehalis Basin. A proposal is pending to conduct some flight surveys of the rivers and immediate riparian buffer zones. There are also some efforts on developing LIDAR information, which is a more detailed understanding of the land cover that is specific to the Chehalis Basin. There are many groups working to secure more information about the basin.

Mr. Kodandapani responded to questions about considering other software programs as well as the capabilities of the new technology. Mr. Lehr advised that there are tradeoffs between different types of technologies. It is important from the college perspective for using a combination of several programs as the college wants to provide a challenging training environment for the school.

Steve Craig extended a welcome to Mr. Kodandapani and commented about the importance of the program. The Chehalis Basin is in a cutting edge position relative to integrating data. The clearinghouse will put the CBP in a leadership position to other watershed groups. Mr. Craig said the system will be used to make more informed and better decisions as well as shifting from a feedback mode to a feed forward mode to anticipate problems and solving them in advance. DOE is in the process of creating a map that will be provided to classrooms throughout the watershed to given students a sense of place and what a watershed means.

Bob Macleod asked whether DOE is providing funding support. Mr. Craig reported the watershed has funding for two years. However, efforts are always underway to secure additional funding. Mr. Macleod asked whether DOE is lobbying to implement the plan. Mr. Craig said DOE is pursuing funding for all watershed plans. Mr. Swartout offered additional comments about visits to legislators to seek funding for the Partnership.

Mr. Hill suggested having Mr. Lehr provide a presentation to local students to show progress on the clearinghouse.

Chanele Holbrook-Shaw asked about the likelihood and timing of when students in the classroom especially in the rural areas could access the program and use the information. Mr. Kodandapani indicated that users only need an internet connection and a browser. With a browser, students could

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access the data. The spatial capability will be established during the process. Mr. Lehr added that there are different ways the data can be presented online. He described how data might be presented and how it could be accessed. Ms. Holbrook-Shaw stressed the need to understand how the application could be utilized by both students and adults. Mr. Lehr said another component that could be included is the gauging stations for measuring stream flows with hyperlinks between actual real time data. It is just another level of functionality that could be included. It will take time to complete all the components but the capability exists. Mr. Kodandapani said it will take approximately six months to complete a basic version with other components added over time.

Mr. Hill commented on the necessity to promote the resource within each county.

Mr. Harris cautioned that many people living in the rural areas will have challenges reaching the website on a dial-up modem. He suggested that as another layer, considering libraries as well as granges that might have high speed access that might volunteer as an outlet for the information. It will be important to reach everyone that needs access. Mr. Lehr advised that in the short-term there will be the capability of printing maps in different sizes and formats. If there are specific types of data that are most useful for people it is possible to print them and distribute them if they don't have access to high speed Internet.

Mr. Craig offered the suggestion of considering a Partnership website at some point. Also emerging within the United States is the green revolution and sustainability. In the future, cities and towns will transition to a sustainable society and will begin to identify and characterize what that means. It will be an evolving process. The system will be a powerful tool and will be a cutting edge in advancing the revolution.

Ms. Willis commented on the issues associated with internet connection within the rural areas and offered the idea of undertaking more research to determine how well rural residents are connected to the Internet. There are some survey mechanisms that could ask the question. Ann Wick offered to ask USDA about adding the questions to the survey.

Mr. Beerbower thanked Mr. Lehr and Mr. Kodandapani for their presentation.

2006-2007 Salmon Run Summary

Curt Holt, WDFW, provided a PowerPoint presentation on salmon in the Chehalis Basin. The presentation covered spawning escapements, total run size per stock to include harvest and catch of Chinook, Coho, and Chum.

Predictions for fall Chinook came in quite well. Last year, the prediction for Chinook in the Chehalis Basin was for 13,000 fish to return. There were actually 14,000 fish that returned. The figure includes the harvest total by both the Quinault Indian Nation and the non-Indian gill net fishery and sports fishery. For Coho, the preseason prediction was 66,000 fish. The number of fish actually entering Grays Harbor was 18,000. The escapement level or how many actually made it to the spawning grounds was actually 12,500 with a goal of 31,000 fish. There were several contributing factors regarding preseason predictions and outcome. They included ocean conditions, extreme environmental conditions, and huge dead zones off the coast that were as large as Rhode Island. Over the last five years, Grays Harbor has been in a downward trend for wild Coho.

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The prediction for Chum was 21,000 fish for escapement in the Chehalis Basin. Actual was 11,000 fish. Chum is also in a four-year downtrend. The escapement goals have not been achieved in the last three years.

Mr. Holt used a roll of paper to demonstrate the number of different fish species. He cited the weather systems occurring in the fall of 2006. For Coho, the severe weather pushed Coho far up into the system but it also created scour. High fast water creates scour activity. In the case of Chinook, it is detrimental to the population.

Mr. Holt displayed a slide highlighting the number of new spawning beds on the east fork of the Satsop River in 2004. In 2005, the population spawned a week earlier. In 2006, the main population spawned in December. However, there are many sources that indicate fall Chinook spawn in October and November and never mention the December runs. He cautioned members to be watchful of what is included on the Internet. Many people have missed the December spawning as they believe spawning only occurs in October and November. He cited the importance of monitoring the entire population and not just a segment.

Mr. Holt described conditions in tributaries versus the main stem and how fish move in the system.

Mr. Holt commented about trout fishing opportunities. The limit is five fish. He encouraged everyone to participate in trout fishing.

Mr. Holt summarized his presentation and indicated in the coming year, it appears the downward trend will continue for Chinook and Coho.

Mr. Lehman asked whether larger fish need a more abundant supply of food. Mr. Holt said larger fish are raised differently with a different type of feed and are held longer.

Mr. Craig asked if WDFW ever conducts tissue analysis in terms of the quality of the fish. He said he is somewhat suspect about what might be contained in the tissue in terms of their feed and environment. Mr. Holt said the department is providing opportunities for catching fish. If there were problems health wise with the fish, the department would not be in the hatchery business.

Mr. Holt said in some of the lakes the department manages, the lakes are planted with large fish for fish derbies.

Ms. Willis referred to the data on the Satsop River for fish returns. At other meetings, information was presented showing the Satsop River did not meet instream flows more so than other tributaries on the Chehalis River. She asked if the fish return statistics between the Satsop River and the Chehalis would reflect a similar correlation. Mr. Holt said he was unsure. Mr. Swartout said the question is an analogy of whether low flows relate to lower fish runs in the Satsop. Mr. Holt said the data also shows hatchery production as well and that component would need to be removed. Ms. Willis asked whether the department could analyze the information by removing the hatchery component. Mr. Holt confirmed that it is possible to perform such an analysis to determine if instream flows are impacting returning fish.

Mr. Jennings asked if returning fish from the ocean during severe weather events were smaller. Mr. Holt said in some cases the fish were smaller. However, in some instances there were fewer fish but they were larger.

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Mr. Roach asked about the department's remodeling of the fishery system. Mr. Holt said the department undertook a Hatchery System Reform Group process that looked at different factors, such as habitat, hatcheries, and harvest to examine hatchery production and the benefits. The components were examined for benefits and risks. Each hatchery system is being reviewed as well as the type of fish, whether it is a natural origin or wild production. All the factors are considered in developing different strategies. In some cases, the recommendation is to close hatcheries or change processes to improve better production.

Mr. Roach commented that the purpose of the review is to ensure hatchery fish do not spawn upstream. Mr. Holt said it depends because in some cases 30% of hatchery fish population can seed the system without any problems. In other systems, the intent is to build up a population using natural fish. In some cases, there are too many hatchery fish on spawning grounds. The goal is to figure out how to remove them from the spawning grounds.

Mr. Roach said most watershed groups overlook the importance of estuaries. Mr. Holt commented on a project underway that is examining conditions in the estuary and ocean that are affecting Willapa Chum runs.

Mr. Holt said the value of a fish is approximately \$130. The department is providing an opportunity for people to fish. He encouraged everyone to fish.

STC Report Regarding DIP Revision to Address the Quinault Indian Nation's Letter

Mr. Swartout reported the CBP adopted the Detailed Implementation Plan (DIP) for 2007-2008 with strategies 1 through 5. The CBP received a letter from the Quinault Indian Nation with a request to do more work on the plan. The issue involved strategy #18 and convening agencies to look at instream flows in the Chehalis Basin. The recommendation is to move the strategy under Interim Milestone 3. A work group representing basin-wide interests and agencies is hosting a planning workshop on April 24, 2007 from 9 am to 12 pm at the Lacey Community Center. The purpose of the workshop is drawing a greater audience of technical experts to review the strategy and consider any potential changes to the tasks.

After the workshop, the STC will present a revised DIP to the SBP in April or May for adoption.

It was noted that the letter of invitation to the workshop did not include the date of the workshop.

Mr. Swartout referred to Alternate B as identified at the January workshop. Alternate B is to try to prioritize the work that needs to be completed this year. Mr. Swartout identified the leads for each of the interim milestones within the DIP:

- Interim Milestones #1 and #3 Water Quantity – Kahle Jennings
- Interim Milestone #2 – Recommend adequate funding levels for water resources management – Steering Technical Committee
- Interim Milestone #4 – Develop approaches to keep forestry and agriculture on the land – Terry Willis
- Interim Milestone #5 – The Partnership recommends exploring a range of approaches to improve communication, coordination, and consolidation of all habitat efforts in the Chehalis Basin – Chad Stussy, WDFW

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Next Meeting

The next meeting of the CBP is on April 27, 2007

Adjournment

There being no further business, Mr. Beerbower adjourned the meeting at 11:30 a.m.

Prepared by Valerie Gow, Recording Secretary
Puget Sound Meeting Services