

**CHEHALIS BASIN PARTNERSHIP
HABITAT WORK GROUP
Lewis Conservation District Office
1554 Bishop Road
Chehalis, WA
March 9, 2007
9:30 AM**

Meeting Summary

PEOPLE IN ATTENDANCE

Chanele Holbrook-Shaw, Thurston County Citizen
Bob Amrine, Lewis County Conservation District
Eric Delvin, The Nature Conservancy
Lee Napier, Grays Harbor County
Andy Olson, Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis
Reservation

Randy Lehr, Grays Harbor College
Cheri Lindgren, Puget Sound Meeting Services
John Kliem, Consultant, Creative Community Solutions
Jim Hill, Citizen
Lonnie Crumley, Stream Works Consulting

Announcements and Introductions

Chair Bob Amrine called the Habitat Work Group (HWG) meeting to order at 9:40 a.m. Everyone present provided self-introductions.

Discuss Tier 1 and 2 Criteria

Lee Napier reported the review of the schedule for the Salmon Recovery Fund Board (SRFB) is on the agenda for discussion. The HWG needs to finalize strategy development to advance the SRFB process. The group's next several meetings will focus on the SRFB process, project ranking, and developing a list.

Mr. Crumley explained Mr. Stussy suggested the Tier 1 and Tier 2 criteria as a general approach to rank and prioritize projects. He and Ms. Demond are reviewing the templates and tiering types of projects based on watersheds. As they worked through a couple of projects, it became clear that tiering should be applied on a watershed-by-watershed basis. He said he spoke with other members and it was agreed to use the tiering process as a general approach and go through each watershed based on the templates. Mr. Lehr is working on ranking criteria that could be used to inform the tiering strategy. It was mentioned that there are 11 watershed areas and the need to look at the actions within each subbasin to determine whether a Tier 1 or Tier 2 approach is appropriate.

John Kliem, Creative Community Solutions, said he needs definitions for Tier 1 and Tier 2 levels and why projects are selected as a Tier 1 or Tier 2 to incorporate in the strategy. The definitions are critical when reviewing the strategy. Mr. Crumley replied that generally, Tier 1 would reflect a higher priority than Tier 2. Creating a third tier also would provide a wider range of projects.

Ms. Holbrook-Shaw said ranking activities could help change priorities within the list. An example is a low watershed priority that is identified as a high action.

Mr. Crumley said the group should use the templates developed to tier each subbasin.

Ms. Holbrook-Shaw asked if there is a way to select a specific number of priority actions (such as six) that are tiered and then applied to each basin. Ms. Napier replied the templates have started to articulate

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some of the actions by looking at the processes and features. Mr. Crumley, Ms. Demond, and Mr. Stussy are working to fine tune the templates that will be forwarded to Mr. Kliem. Mr. Kliem commented that the task is significant. What's important will differ for each subbasin. All of the actions are critical for restoring the system. Sequencing based on stocks can make a difference.

Mr. Crumley stated that identifying subbasin characteristics and applying the tiering should result in a better position when trying to secure grant funding. The work products should be filtered through the Ecosystem Diagnosis and Treatment (EDT) process, which will make sense to the SRFB.

Discussion followed about previous prioritizing approaches. Ms. Napier said there is a better correlation between priority areas based on fish usage. Mr. Crumley added that stocks will play an important role when identifying subbasin characteristics.

Mr. Kliem said he'd like to also emphasize extirpated runs. There are a number of streams where Chum runs no longer exist. Ideally, a goal is to restore the runs that no longer exist. Tiering and/or sequencing is expected of the strategy and is clearly outlined in the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) Chapter 77.85, "Salmon Recovery." He read a portion of the text from the statute. Mr. Crumley commented that the process could be referred to as "sequencing" rather than "tiering." Mr. Kliem agreed and said the templates were initially oriented towards sequencing.

Ms. Holbrook-Shaw said focusing on the actions makes sense when looking to address major problems in the system.

Mr. Crumley referred to documenting the process. Other elements that come into consideration include land acquisition, social issues, the Growth Management Act (GMA), and the Chehalis Basin Partnership (CBP).

Mr. Hill said fish is the target. Restoration activities could be classified as Tier 1 (high priority), improvements would be Tier 2, and maintenance could be a third tier. Ms. Napier suggested not expanding beyond Tier 1 and Tier 2 approaches with this round of grant funding. There are discussions about developing a "Habitat Work Schedule" that consists of lead entities, a list of projects, and sequencing the projects.

Discussion ensued about how the tiers can serve as guidance and inform funding sponsors that a lower priority project could have benefits. Mr. Kliem said there might be other projects that are important. However, the likelihood that they will happen might be slim.

Ms. Napier said the most the group can probably secure with this funding cycle is \$600,000. The group needs to be very clear about the top priorities. The SRFB will want to know why a project was selected. Being able to clearly articulate the benefits and project importance to funding sponsors is critical.

Mr. Crumley conveyed that sequencing for each subbasin is a better method. Mr. Kliem said the community data will add another layer.

Members discussed timber and land use practices and tree farming, forest practice permits, and how tree-farming practices benefits both salmon and community awareness.

Mr. Crumley said he will work on documenting the rationale for tiering.

Review Scoring to Rank SRFB Proposals

Mr. Lehr provided a table showing ranking criteria for Phase I and Phase II, scoring, and general considerations. He reviewed the discussions that have led to a logical way to approach ranking potential projects and his interpretation of the discussions. The ranking criteria for projects are in four categories:

- **Fish**
 - Status of stocks benefited
 - Number of stocks benefited
- **Habitat**
 - Barrier removal/acquisition projects (quantity and quality)
 - Enhancement/restoration projects (quantity and alignment with subbasin priorities)
 - Combination projects (quantity, quality, alignment with subbasin priorities)
- **Partnerships/Outreach**
 - Alignment with outreach priorities
 - Partner contribution (matching)
 - Veteran participation
- **Likelihood for Success**
 - Track record/qualification of project manager
 - Monitoring program
 - Cost effectiveness
 - Landowner participation

Mr. Lehr reviewed the ranking criteria, weighted value, number of species, species-specific weighted value for stock status (depressed, healthy, and unknown), and total weighted value. He noted “Unknown” is assuming historical usage can be reasonably demonstrated.

The HWG generally concurred with the weighted value approach presented by Mr. Lehr.

Mr. Delvin asked whether the same ranking should extend to extirpated stocks. Mr. Lehr said it’s captured in the “unknown” category.

Discussion followed about changing “unknown” to “extirpated,” creating two separate categories, and revising the weighted value. Mr. Delvin said a goal is to work on the depressed stocks and keep the healthy stocks. Mr. Kliem stated missing stocks affect nutrients. Mr. Crumley said ranking criteria could include how a project brings missing stocks back.

Mr. Lehr reviewed the habitat ranking criteria and general considerations for the first two categories, summarized as follows:

- Related to “barrier removal/acquisition projects,” the general considerations include:
 - How much habitat will be acquired or accessed by the project?
 - What is the quality of the habitat to be acquired or opened?
- Concerning “enhancement/restoration projects,” the general considerations are as follows:
 - How much habitat (riparian or instream) will be enhanced or restored?
 - How well does the project align with Tier I or Tier II sub-basin priorities?

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Mr. Lehr provided and reviewed a “criteria for comparing habitat” spreadsheet for barrier correction and acquisition projects, and riparian and instream enhancement.

Members discussed overlaying Geographical Information System (GIS) data to determine priority sites, and Viable Salmon Populations (VSP) parameters. Mr. Crumley asked if a grant application using the VSP parameters could be put through the EDT model to see how it fares. Mr. Lehr affirmed the question if the group has the model. The “big dot/little dot” process would also help to justify the quality of the habitat.

In response to a question from Chair Amrine about the EDT, Mr. Lehr explained Mobrand Biometrics (Jones & Stokes) went through the Chehalis basin and developed a model that predicts how to understand habitat quality based on a landscape-level basis. A cursory set of observations was developed. The model could create a comparison of higher quality habitat within different subbasins. Currently, it is not possible to compare differences between the subbasins. Groups can purchase access to the model to make the manipulations and comparisons. The model is constantly updated. A one-time set up cost is approximately \$50,000. The annual fee for updating the model is \$16,000.

Chair Amrine asked if priority indexes can be used to benefit a ranking. Mr. Lehr answered yes.

Discussion followed about GIS capabilities and digital elevation models. Mr. Lehr noted a 10-meter elevation model was developed for the Chehalis basin.

Discussion ensued about riparian enhancement scaling factors and typical project sizes. Ms. Holbrook-Shaw said 100 acres is a lot of property and suggested scaling it back. The average is between five and ten acres and consists of a long and narrow configuration. Thirty acres would be substantial.

Mr. Delvin said if criteria are stream length, the group could identify a standard buffer to simplify the process. Ms. Holbrook-Shaw noted landowners usually are not willing to give up land for a riparian enhancement buffer. Mr. Lehr suggested that using the number of stream miles and a percentage of stream width might be a way to standardize the buffer size.

Mr. Crumley suggested adding “off channel/wetland” as a separate category to the criteria for comparing habitat spreadsheet. There were no objections.

Chair Amrine said the first 50 feet of width along streams is known as providing 80% of the benefit for habitat.

Mr. Lehr said he doesn't have anything for quantifying barrier assessment projects. As the HWG goes through and ranks projects using a version of the ranking sheets, it will inform priorities to rank assessment projects with future grant cycles.

The HWG agreed the sizes depicted for acquisition projects are reasonable.

Mr. Hill suggested tying the 100-acre size (acquisition projects) to the way a section is defined could prove more justifiable rather than an arbitrary number. Mr. Lehr indicated he could investigate other scalars and incorporate those in the habitat table.

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It was agreed to change the first criterion under “barrier corrections projects” from >5 stream miles to >3 stream miles and adjust the remaining categories accordingly.

The HWG reviewed the last two categories of partnerships/outreach and likelihood for success:

- For “combination projects,” the general considerations include:
 - How much habitat will be enhanced, restored, or acquired?
 - What is the quality of the habitat to be acquired or opened?
 - How well does the project align with Tier I and Tier II subbasin priorities?
- For “likelihood for success,” the general considerations are as follows:
 - Is the project sponsor qualified to complete the proposed work?
 - Does the project contain sufficient pre/post-monitoring to demonstrate success?
 - Are the stated costs consistent with the expected outcomes?
 - Does the project demonstrate landowner willingness/consent?

Mr. Lehr asked if prioritized outreach activities have been identified. Mr. Kliem said a goal is to talk about it with the wrap up review of the strategy agenda topic. Ms. Napier suggested incorporating a placeholder. Mr. Lehr proposed a consideration for “alignment with outreach priorities” to read, “Does the project establish an outreach program to engage the public in salmon recovery?”

Ms. Holbrook-Shaw questioned “veteran participation.” Ms. Napier said legislation was passed several years ago recognizing groups involving veterans in fish habitat projects to receive credit. It is criteria that can be used. Mr. Lehr indicated he could refine the consideration statement. Conversation about adding a consideration that recognizes outreach involving school programs and realigning the scoring followed. Chair Amrine added that articles about successful projects could be published in *Drops of Water*.

Members discussed the potential to award points when projects are published and developing factors to consider.

Members reviewed the likelihood for success category. The track record/qualification of project manager criteria might be difficult to rank. Ms. Napier questioned the consideration of alignment with subbasin priorities and asked if it’s not mentioned within the enhancement/restoration projects under Habitat. Mr. Lehr explained his rationale for including the statement. Ms. Napier said a consideration within the likelihood for success section could be whether the project is scheduled and sequenced appropriately. Mr. Lehr commented that it might already be covered in the “Habitat” category.

The HWG agreed to strike, “alignment with subbasins” under the “likelihood for success” considerations to eliminate “double counting.”

Mr. Hill suggested adding a consideration that talks about long-term monitoring, which helps to determine the success of a project: “Does the project contain sufficient pre and post-monitoring to demonstrate project success?”

Discussion ensued about assigning a score value.

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Members discussed scoring “land owner participation.” Ms. Napier said the criteria needs some weight because agencies have had to return grant funds when they didn’t have consent to work on a project. There are differing levels of participation such as whether a contract is signed or not.

The HWG acknowledged that each category could receive a total of 100 points. Mr. Kliem referred to Skagit’s procedure. The organization uses the scoring as a guide to determine the sequencing of projects.

Mr. Olson suggested taking the fish component out for ranking purposes and then using “fish” as the overarching category to break out the projects.

Chair Amrine said the first two categories (fish and habitat) are more important than the bottom two (partnerships/outreach and likelihood for success). Mr. Hill suggested assigning 100 points each to the first two categories and 50 points each to the bottom two. Ms. Napier agreed with Mr. Hill, and said the scoring could be reevaluated once the community values are determined.

Mr. Olson left meeting at 11:32 a.m.

Conversation followed about assigning “partnerships/outreach” 75 points. Mr. Hill noted the outreach component is a requirement for SRFB grant funding.

Mr. Lehr said the projects could be ranked based on fish and habitat first. The partnerships/outreach and likelihood for success categories could serve to fine tune project sequencing.

Chair Amrine said a concern is a project that is good for fish might be missing the outreach component. The project could rank lower, forcing an outreach element. Outreach shouldn’t be the deciding factor about whether a project advances or not. The benefit should be fish and habitat.

Following additional discussion, members agreed to assign partnerships/outreach a total of 75 points, recognizing the scoring could be adjusted in the future.

Review Schedule for SRFB

Ms. Napier said she’d like to finalize the schedule and key milestones for the SRFB process. She distributed a draft schedule:

- March 9, 2007 Finalize the schedule
- March 12, 2007 Distribute Letter of Intent
- April 6, 2007 Letters of Intent (required) due
- April 13, 2007 HWG reviews Letters of Intent
- April 16 – 20, 2007 Feedback to sponsors
- May 9, 2007 First draft due
- June 8 – 15, 2007 Schedule site visits
- August 2, 2007 Final applications due
- August 10, 2007 Review and rank projects
- August 24, 2007 Chehalis Basin Partnership reviews prioritized list
- September 17, 2007 Lead Entity application and projects entered into PRISM
- September 28, 2007 Regional submittal to IAC

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A goal is that the HWG and reviewers attend the next regular meeting to familiarize themselves with the letters of intent. Discussion ensued about a one or two-page letter of intent going out on March 12, 2007. Ms. Napier said a goal of the letter of intent is to know who the project sponsors are, where they work, and how to secure the necessary resources to develop a strong project.

Members discussed the draft schedule. Applicants should be working on their draft applications so HWG has something in June to forward to the SRFB panel and to those local individuals reviewing the projects. Finals applications are due to Ms. Napier no later than August 2, 2007 to enable her to mail the proposals on August 3, 2007. Ms. Napier suggested the May 9, 2007 deadline could be changed to June 8, 2007.

Discussion proceeded about reviewers of the draft applications. Ms. Napier said there are project sponsors that would like to participate in the application review process. Previously, past project sponsors and reviewers have abstained from voting on the projects. She conveyed that Kathy Jacobsen expressed interest in reviewing the draft applications. The following individuals were identified and/or volunteered to serve as project reviewers at this time:

- Kathy Jacobsen
- Eric Delvin (potential project sponsor)
- Jim Hill
- Chad Stussy or Gary Bell
- Bob Amrine (if needed)
- Brian Peck (Lee needs to confirm participation)
- Mark Swartout
- Mike Kuttel (Lee needs to confirm participation)
- Chanele Holbrook-Shaw (if needed) (potential project sponsor)
- Randy Lehr (if needed)
- Andy Olson (Lee needs to confirm participation)

Some HWG members would rather not have project sponsors reviewing the applications. Members discussed their respective June schedules. Mr. Crumley said he is unavailable the first week in June. Mr. Lehr conveyed that the last week of classes at the college is the first week in June followed by finals during the second week.

The April HWG meeting will be held at the Lewis Conservation District Office.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Amrine adjourned the meeting at 12:05 p.m.

Prepared by Cheri Lindgren, Recording Secretary
Puget Sound Meeting Services