

**CHEHALIS BASIN PARTNERSHIP
HABITAT WORK GROUP
Lewis Conservation District Office
1544 Bishop Road
Chehalis, WA
March 14, 2008
9:30 a.m.**

Meeting Summary

PRESENT:

Chad Stussy, Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)	Eric Delvin, The Nature Conservancy
Bob Amrine, Lewis County Conservation District	Valerie Gow, Puget Sound Meeting Services
Lonnie Crumley, LWC Consulting	Randy Lehr, Grays Harbor College
Lee Napier, Grays Harbor County	April Johnson, The Nature Conservancy
Janet Strong, Chehalis Basin Land Trust	Birdie Davenport, Department of Natural Resources
Debbie Knecht, Lewis County	Chanele Holbrook-Shaw, Thurston County Citizen

Welcome, Introductions, and Adjustments to the Agenda

Mr. Amrine called the Chehalis Basin Partnership (CBP) Habitat Work Group (HWG) meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. Everyone present provided self-introductions.

Overview of the 2008 Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) Grant Round – Reviewers and Assignments

Ms. Napier provided a brief update on the 2008 grant cycle. Currently, reviewers for the grant projects included Margaret Rader, Brian Peck, Chad Stussy, Mike Johnson, Andy Olson, Mike Kuttel, and Randy Lehr. Ted Labbe has also volunteered to be a reviewer. Ms. Napier asked for additional volunteers to serve as reviewers or identification of potential individuals who are not involved with a project. Mr. Lehr suggested contacting Kathy Jacobson. Ms. Napier reported she asked Bob Metzger with the National Forest Service to serve as a reviewer, but hasn't received a response. She also contacted Brook Maple with the Marine Resource Committee who is involved in development activities in terms of environmental issues.

Chanele Holbrook-Shaw arrived at 9:33 a.m.

A suggestion was offered to contact Bob Bernard with the Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDW), who is an engineer.

Ms. Holbrook-Shaw suggested contacting Laura Orr from the US Army Corps of Engineers.

Birdie Davenport arrived at 9:35 a.m.

Ms. Napier said she would like to contact Sharon Campbell to see if she is interested in serving as she has expressed interest in habitat projects and may become a project sponsor.

Suggestions were offered to contact Dennis Morr and Lisa Dilly.

Eric Delvin suggested contacting past project sponsors, such as Rick Johnson with Thurston County's Noxious Weed Control Program.

Chehalis Basin Partnership Habitat Work Group

Meeting Summary

March 14, 2008 Page 2 of 9

Ms. Napier proposed that for each project, assigning a reviewer who will serve as the contact person for the specific project site. The reviewer will receive comments from the project reviewers and summarize the information for the project sponsor as well as working with Ms. Napier for summarization of the information for the entire committee. Mr. Amrine suggested inviting several technical representatives from the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) technical committee, who are beneficial to the process. Ms. Napier said she's requested the attendance of several SRFB representatives for the May 15 and 16 tour of sites. The SRFB has requested a confirmation of the tour dates as well as a list of projects.

Janet Strong arrived at the meeting at 9:41 a.m.

Project Review

Ms. Napier said the purpose of the review is to provide feedback to the project sponsor to assist them in strengthening/improving their application. She invited applicants to update the application prior to the May site visits. Any documents that are related to the project should be entered in the PRISM program.

Black River Conservation Initiative: Eric Delvin provided the project review:

- Project involves three properties consisting of approximately 900 acres.
- Project cost is approximately \$6.5 million to \$8.5 million for acquisition of the properties and purchase of water rights.
- Project application focuses on protection of critical habitat of one of the properties of approximately 100 acres located near the headwaters of Mima Creek that includes very good habitat as well as the Black River Ranch, which is a conventional dairy farm of 1,000 head of cattle. The dairy is linked to the fish kill in the early 1990s, which was never proven conclusively. Dairy management has been greatly improved. Owners have a strong desire to sell the property in 2008.
- Partnerships have been pursued for funding to acquire the properties.
- The Black River Ranch project includes protection of the riparian area along the Black River that connects with properties owned by The Nature Conservancy to Glacial Heritage. The remaining property of approximately 400 acres will be owned by a farmland trust and remain in permanent, sustainable agriculture.
- Water rights is a large component of the value on the Black River Ranch with ownership of approximately 950-acre feet of water. Work is underway with the Washington Rivers Conservancy in eastern Washington to assist in determining the amount of the water rights, volume of water available, and the value of the water. The value of water rights is estimated at \$2,000 an acre-foot. The farmland trust needs to retain approximately 550-acre feet for sustainable agriculture. WDFW supports the use of funds to protect water rights.
- The main focus of the funding request is to protect 400-acre feet of water, which is important for salmon. However, including land as a tangible along with the water would be a stronger project and compete better for SRFB funds.

Mr. Delvin asked for comments on the proposed project because he believes it's not possible to pursue the land and water on the ranch because of the complexity. However, he can remove the water component for protection of the 100 acres, which is worth approximately \$2 million. WDFW is currently appraising the property.

Birdie Davenport reported the property has a nice gravelly stream with spawning Coho.

Chehalis Basin Partnership Habitat Work Group

Meeting Summary

March 14, 2008 Page 3 of 9

Mr. Delvin said another option is to pursue funding for water only on the Black River Ranch property. He said he's unsure whether the SRFB supports water-protection only projects.

Ms. Napier recommended asking Jason Lundgren of the SRFB to consult with other members regarding the focus of the project. The project is large and one objective is securing a large match. However, showing the matches can be complicated. She suggested the committee should only list the minimum match. However, she suggested also describing the other partnerships to receive local credit. Showing more than the minimum match within the SRFB funding application does not factor into the ranking. The difficulty in including the information is proving the match from each source, which requires effort and paperwork. Members agreed to include information for meeting the minimum match requirement.

Discussion followed on the 400-acre feet of water rights, which is worth approximately \$800,000. The Nature Conservancy is trying to purchase the property, which includes the water rights. The goal is for the owner not to sell the water rights to someone else. Mr. Lehr said 400-acre feet represent 17 million cubic feet of water per year.

April Johnson asked about the possibility of separating the project requests into the Mima Creek property and the Black River Ranch property. Ms. Napier said project sponsors have until the field visits to fine-tune their application. Lonnie Crumley advised that summer low flows are a limiting factor and if there is water storage with a large volume of acre-feet that will be preserved; the tribes will likely be very interested. He said he would question whether the SRFB reviewers have the necessary knowledge. If not, the project proponent would have to sell that point. The project is tied to fish because its water storage. Mr. Amrine said it's also included in the CBP's strategy. Ms. Napier said it is also a good opportunity for the projects to update the strategy for issues that were not discovered during the initial research.

Mr. Lehr said 400-acre feet of water equals a flow of .05 cubic feet per second.

Ms. Napier said the project is a good opportunity to pull in some other work, such as the TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load) study or the Instream Flow Incremental Methodology (IFIM) study. It will also be better to tie property acquisition to an action to show the correlation of why the property is important.

Mr. Delvin said he has until September to secure funding and approach the landowners. If funding is not available by then, the landowners have indicated there are other interests. Funding for the water rights is a critical piece of the package. He suggested it's possible to demonstrate how the project is protecting the 800 acres.

Ms. Holbrook-Shaw referred to the earlier suggestion of splitting the projects and cautioned about losing one because of the other. If it appears there might be potential development of the Mima Creek property, she suggested focusing on securing the property and pursuing water rights as a separate action.

Members discussed other funding options for protecting water rights. Mr. Delvin advised that the organization is pursuing funding from Department of Ecology (DOE) of approximately \$650,000. However, other funding obtained for the project would be favorably considered by DOE.

Mr. Amrine suggested that if the SRFB hasn't been presented with the issue before, it's timely to begin considering the issue because it's a huge issue in the Chehalis basin.

**Chehalis Basin Partnership Habitat Work Group
Meeting Summary
March 14, 2008 Page 4 of 9**

Mr. Lehr commented on the issues associated with low flows in the summer. There is a broader implication with respect to the project.

Mr. Delvin indicated the Black River is closed for water rights as the area is already over allocated. If the water rights are put into the trust they would be protected to perpetuity.

The committee suggested separating the projects (water rights and Mima Creek property) and obtaining feedback from SRFB members during the site visits. Mr. Lehr said the EDT model values for predicting habitat quality ranks the Mima Creek area high on the value for preservation. EDT is a computer-based model that predicts good locations for restoration or preservation activities. The model was developed by a consultant company for the Chehalis basin.

Mr. Delvin suggested presenting the final draft proposal at the April meeting if time permits.

Preacher's Slough Fish Passage: Birdie Davenport provided the review of the proposal.

The Private Index (PI) number ranked high for the project. Ms. Davenport sought advice on how to utilize the PI within the proposal. Ms. Napier suggested including an attachment. Mr. Amrine suggested including the information with the problem description of the proposal. Ms. Napier suggested attaching a PDF file of the pages related to the particular barrier so reviewers can see the work, as well as, including the information in the application. Mr. Amrine said that because the work was done as a surrogate, the data may not be the same for on-the-ground data. Another process is whether the project was run through ranking criteria, as it would rank high for the overall ranking of the basin. He suggested staff can run the numbers and provide the information to Ms. Davenport.

Mr. Lehr asked whether the area falls into the central fish habitat for bull trout. Ms. Napier said Brian Peck could provide the information, which will benefit the proposal because it's an Endangered Species Act (ESA) issue, which elevates the importance of the project.

Ms. Napier suggested obtaining the Salmon Stock Inventory (SASSI) status as well. Mr. Crumley said SASSI is approximately two years behind. He suggested contacting Curt Holt with WDFW in Region 6. In the last two to three years, WDFW has only attained approximately 25% of the desired escapement for Coho.

Ms. Davenport said she has been working with Mr. Crumley on the amount of fill and costs for building a bridge. The area has public access. DNR has committed publicly to maintain public access. It's a county road with a county easement.

Discussion followed on the type of bridge. Mr. Crumley said a public access bridge must be engineered. The cost for the county to construct the bridge is approximately \$1 million. A company has offered to engineer the bridge and build it for approximately \$250,000. The county and DNR can initiate a letter of transfer of the responsibility of the road to DNR with DNR maintaining the bridge. If DNR owns the bridge, it can be a forest bridge, which reduces the price considerably.

Discussion followed on providing a drawing of the bridge within the application documents. Mr. Crumley suggested having county engineers complete a drawing of the bridge as part of the negotiations with the county to transfer ownership to DNR. Ms. Johnson suggested including the number of miles of restored habitat as well as mentioning large woody debris.

Chehalis Basin Partnership Habitat Work Group
Meeting Summary
March 14, 2008 Page 5 of 9

Ms. Napier encouraged Ms. Davenport to begin entering information in the PRISM program.

Discussion followed on fish access to the area. Ms. Davenport advised that fish have access from the west but need to swim a great length. A student found juveniles near the confluence with the river. However, further up in the slough, the population of juveniles begins to drop off. Mr. Crumley said the area needs to have some tidal influence. Ms. Davenport said the slough has no freshwater input and is basically tidal. Upward of the slough, the habitat is not pristine. Mr. Amrine asked how the project affects the flow of the river. Mr. Crumley said the project will help disperse water by providing a wide channel for dispersing flows. Ms. Davenport reported the student monitored the slough during the summer and found the salinity very low. She said she spoke with the Quinault Indian Nation and they are interested in sponsoring and supporting the project through a match, as well as assisting in the monitoring program.

Ms. Napier suggested including a management plan in the application materials. Ms. Davenport said she can summarize the stakeholder meetings. The SRFB is interested in community participation.

Hoquiam Surge Plain Habitat Acquisition: Janet Strong presented the proposal.

- Project is geographically divided into two sections – the east fork and west fork of the Hoquiam River.
- Nearly all of the areas are surge plain wetlands that are tidally influenced with part of it in old growth forest.
- The area is interlaced with sloughs as well as habitat.
- Originally, the proposal was for an acquisition project although it could be divided into two pieces. The area of the west fork has a strong restoration component because of the old railroad fill cutting through the middle of the site, which is creating blockages.
- The project is large consisting of 1,200 acres and the largest for the land trust.
- A biologist believes the west fork is more ecologically valuable in terms of habitat. However, the east fork is more threatened by development with properties currently for sale.
- If the project is divided, there is concern about the availability of the east fork for purchase when funding becomes available.
- The area includes a variety of habitat types including different wetlands.
- Additional funds may be acquired from Wildlife Forever. Project proponents are also working to become a candidate for mitigation of the wetlands impacted by the pontoon project. The state recently awarded the project to Grays Harbor County. Other funding is being pursued through the Coastal Estuary Program. The surge plain runs into a portion of the estuary, which is under duress.

Ms. Holbrook-Shaw asked if there is any connection with bull trout. Ms. Strong said there is definitely the possibility, but bull trout was not included in the species. Ms. Holbrook-Shaw said including bull trout may assist with securing federal estuary funds if bull trout is present.

Discussion followed on securing mitigation funds, the inability of using mitigation funds as a match in most cases, and division of the proposal as two projects as long as there is some assurance that the landowner will not sell the east fork. The west fork has not been put on the market at this time.

Chehalis Basin Partnership Habitat Work Group
Meeting Summary
March 14, 2008 Page 6 of 9

Ms. Holbrook-Shaw questioned why the focus wouldn't be on securing the east fork because of its listing on the market. Ms. Strong said the west fork is rated as more important biologically. The intent was to combine the projects and pursue them as one project.

Mr. Amrine said depending on the funding decision by the SRFB, there may only be sufficient funds for one project. Ms. Strong said she was advised to include the totality of the project as well as considering a phased project. Mr. Amrine asked whether it's possible to delay a decision until May.

Ms. Napier advised that the basin may only receive a total of \$700,000 in SRFB funding.

Members exchanged ideas on other funding sources for the project. Mr. Lehr indicated the project may be a good candidate for the National Estuary Program.

Lucas Creek Fish Passage Correction MP 4.2 and 4.3: Debbie Knecht presented the project proposals.

Ms. Napier reported Craig Swanson, Lewis County Public Works, separated the returning projects from last year into two separate projects because of limited funding this year.

Ms. Knecht provided pictures of other similar completed projects that were funded previously by the SRFB and WDFW. If the projects are approved, they represent the last of the barriers in the Chehalis basin.

Ms. Holbrook-Shaw asked whether there is abundant habitat or mileage above the project areas. Ms. Knecht replied forestland is located above the project sites.

Mr. Delvin and April Johnson departed from the meeting at 11:03 a.m.

Ms. Knecht reported project MP 4.3 opens habitat of 1.73 miles and MP4.2 is approximately a half of a mile.

Ms. Napier indicated the project sponsor will need to work with the Lewis Conservation District to determine project rankings.

Mr. Stussy pointed out a correction under *Project Objectives* for the MP 4.3 project.

Ms. Holbrook-Shaw asked about the rankings of the projects in terms of importance. Mr. Amrine reported he walked the MP 4.2 project site, which is pristine habitat. It's likely MP 4.3 is also pristine.

Mr. Crumley suggested including information on the width of the stream. Mr. Amrine offered that his office likely has the information.

Mr. Lehr said the culvert was listed as a Tier 1 culvert, which ranks high in the strategy for culvert prioritizations.

Mr. Stussy said during last year's process, there were some comments from the SRFB about the uncertainty of the stream width.

**Chehalis Basin Partnership Habitat Work Group
Meeting Summary
March 14, 2008 Page 7 of 9**

Review Calendar

Next month's project reviews include:

- Eaton Creek
- McCormick Creek
- Sampson Wetland Enhancement Project
- Sam's Canal
- Chehalis Water Type Assessment

Mr. Stussy and Mr. Lehr indicated they have no preference as to which project they will be assigned to as the reviewer.

Ms. Napier questioned whether Ms. Davenport's project management plan supports the Partnership's strategy. Ms. Davenport said biological inventories are supposed to be completed as the plans are developed; however, timing will not enable the completion for the project. All the functions, values, and species are not all known and that there is much about the site that is unknown. Mr. Amrine asked about limiting factors analysis for the area. Mr. Lehr said the surge plain is not specifically called out. The estuary is the most highly ranked component of the whole basin.

Discussion followed about the fill for the road and the possibility of an existing smaller culvert.

Ms. Napier reported the next meeting is on April 11, 2008. Review criteria needs to be developed. The committee will meet again on May 9, 2008. Any projects that need early application adjustments can be reviewed during the May meeting. However, the majority of the May meeting will include developing the review criteria. She said she will work on the schedule for the site visits. She encouraged everyone to attend the March 24, 2008 SRFB Applicant Workshop at the DNR Building.

May 1, 2008 is the last day to make changes to the early applications. Any changes should be addressed during the site visits.

In June and July, the committee will focus on the first drafts of the applications. Final draft applications are due July 31, 2008. The committee will review the projects on August 8, 2008. Project sponsors are responsible for providing copies of the application to project reviewers. Project rankings will be reviewed and approval by the Partnership.

Future Agenda Topic-Roundtable Regarding Project Status

Mr. Stussy offered the suggestion of including a regular agenda item for a roundtable discussion on the ongoing status of projects. Members agreed with the suggestion.

Mr. Amrine commented on the grant extension for work on the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) 3 project for barrier assessments as long as the project is located within the Chehalis basin.

Ms. Davenport reported on a fish passage project along the western shoreline of Andrews Creek. There are 4 fish passages and 17 roadway fill removals consisting of 3.5 miles of roadway adjacent to the shoreline. The project is very expensive with funding from U.S Fish and Wildlife (Brian Peck), Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP), RCO, and other funding sources.

Chehalis Basin Partnership Habitat Work Group

Meeting Summary

March 14, 2008 Page 8 of 9

Ms. Strong reported she is partnering with the City of Centralia on a reach of Chehalis River between Borst Park and the farm. Progress is occurring in restoring the riparian zone and eventually connecting the two locations with a pedestrian trail. Currently, the project is in the property acquisition phase because it involves some WDFW land, the public park, and Port of Centralia land, as well as several other pieces of property. Additionally, there are efforts to seek mitigation funding from Puget Sound Energy for its project.

Mr. Lehr said work is ongoing on the Clearinghouse database. The application has been installed and work is ongoing to finalize the database.

Mr. Crumley reported on his work on some stream surveys involving Scatter Creek and Satsop. He suggested the conservation districts should seek grants to begin walking streams. For every barrier culvert documented, Mr. Crumley reported he found four undocumented barrier culverts. In Scatter Creek there was one he discovered. In Tenino, one culvert was documented and two were not documented. He said he walked the Satsop for the Family, Forest Fish Passage (FFFP) Program and found four undocumented barrier culverts in the upper reaches, and is working to complete the South Bank Road if funding can be secured. He said he will then begin working on Porter Creek. The sites are documented.

Ms. Napier asked whether Mr. Crumley would provide his GPS unit and GPS all the project sites on the field visits. Mr. Crumley confirmed the request.

Mr. Crumley reported on progress with the Bud Creek project, which consists of a low-profile culvert that is 20 feet wide and 3.5 feet high with a stream of habitat of approximately 3 miles above the culvert.

Ms. Holbrook-Shaw reported the last payment was made on the Sampson property. The organization is installing a bridge on a small tributary on the back edge of the property this summer. She said she is also working on a mitigation project with Bonneville Power. The site is located near the Cozy Valley Pond near the headwaters of Scatter Creek in Tenino.

Ms. Davenport offered members solid tree protectors. She has a surplus stock of the protectors.

Ms. Davenport left the meeting.

Ms. Holbrook-Shaw reported she is working with Weyerhaeuser and the City of Tenino to acquire a 20-acre buffer above the park and quarry pool. Weyerhaeuser purchased two parcels above Tenino City Park and the old quarry pool with a goal of logging the property. Work has been ongoing with Weyerhaeuser over the last year with the company agreeing to delay logging until a grant can be obtained. Heernett Foundation is assisting the City of Tenino in acquiring the buffer. The buffer is approximately 500 feet wide.

Ms. Holbrook-Shaw commented on a project on the Sampson property involving a wetland project involving Nadine Romero.

Mr. Stussy reported on the student congress on March 28, 2008 at Grays Harbor College. The congress is an annual meeting of students in Kathy Jacobson's programs who monitor water quality.

Ms. Napier reported Ted Labbe called to advise of his unavailability to attend the meeting.

**Chehalis Basin Partnership Habitat Work Group
Meeting Summary
March 14, 2008 Page 9 of 9**

Mr. Crumley left the meeting.

Call for Photos

Ms. Napier asked members to provide photos of project sites for creating a photo album. Ms. Jacobson was mentioned as a good source of photos.

Adjournment

With there being no further business, Mr. Amrine adjourned the meeting at 12:04 p.m.

Prepared by Valerie Gow, Recording Secretary/President
Puget Sound Meeting Services