

**CHEHALIS BASIN PARTNERSHIP
HABITAT WORK GROUP
Lewis County Conservation District Office
1554 Bishop Road
Chehalis, WA
June 12, 2009
9:30 AM**

Meeting Summary

PRESENT:

Lee Napier, Grays Harbor County	Janet Strong, Chehalis River Land Trust
Janel Spaulding, Grays Harbor College	Cheri Lindgren, Puget Sound Meeting Services
Brett Demond, Stream Works Consulting	Lonnie Crumley, Stream Works Consulting
April Boe, The Nature Conservancy	Jamie Glasgow, Wildlife Fish Conservancy
Bob Burkle Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW)	Chris Conklin, Quinault Indian Nation (QIN)
Amy Iverson, WDFW	Miles Batchelder, Washington Coast Sustainable
Mark Swartout, Thurston County	Salmon Partnership (WCSSP)
Miranda Plumb, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service	Craig Swanson, Lewis County
Andy Olson, Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation	Gavin Glore, Mason Conservation District
Bob Amrine, Lewis County Conservation District	Narendran Kodandapani, Grays Harbor College
	Mike Kuttel Jr., Thurston Conservation District

Welcome & Introductions

Miles Batchelder called the June 12, 2009 meeting of the Chehalis Basin Partnership (CBP) Habitat Work Group (HWG) to order at 9:34 a.m.

Washington Coast Sustainable Salmon Partnership – Website Demonstration

Mr. Batchelder provided a demonstration of the Washington Coast Sustainable Salmon Partnership (WCSSP) website. The website will go live on June 16, 2009. The site will ultimately contain a list of project sponsors along with links to lead entity websites. He described future enhancements including meeting and event dates and copies of minutes and agendas as they become available. The site contains a contact page and a list of interlocal agreement signatories.

Discussion ensued on incorporating a direct link to Grays Harbor County and the Partnership's website at www.chehalisbasinpartnership.org, and using common names for salmonid species.

Miranda Plumb offered to provide additional salmonid photos.

Mr. Batchelder reported the WCSSP's annual meeting is on June 17, at the log pavilion in Aberdeen. One objective is electing a Chair and Vice Chair. Nominations are open until June 17. Mark Swartout with Thurston County and James Sellars with the Quinault Indian Nation (QIN) were nominated.

Lee Napier advised that the Marine Resource Committee (MRC) is hosting a public outreach forum on Saturday, June 20, at the log pavilion in Aberdeen beginning at 9:30 a.m. The Surf Rider Foundation is organizing the event on behalf of Grays Harbor County.

Presentation – Lewis and Mason Conservation Districts - Assessments of Barrier, PI Work, and Design Outcomes from Their Efforts

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Ms. Napier reported on efforts to identify barriers within the Chehalis watershed. It makes sense to incorporate information into the lead entity strategy and regional plan. The Wild Salmon Center (WSC) is conducting a needs assessment for the region. WSC requested having lead entities meet and discuss needs. John Kliem is attending the HWG meeting on July 10, and will assist members in identifying data documents currently available on salmon stocks, identifying recovery and/or habitat needs in the watershed, and identifying and prioritizing data gaps on stock status and recovery needs. The Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) funded the projects through the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USWS).

Bob Amrine provided an overview of the project. The Priority Index (PI) work was completed with a Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) II grant. Copies of the Chehalis Basin Salmon Habitat Restoration and Preservation Work Plan for Water Resource Inventory Areas (WRIAs) 2 and 23 dated 2006 and 2007 were provided to participants. Obligations tied to the RCO II grant are completed. Mason and Lewis County Conservation Districts agreed to rank pipes with funds remaining from the grant. A committee developed a formula for ranking purposes. In 2007, Mason Conservation District received a USFW Chehalis Fisheries Restoration Program grant for additional PI and design work for the top 10 culverts. A RCO III grant was used to rank additional pipes. He reviewed the formula the committee believes best quantified the amount of available habitat upstream of the barrier sites.

Ms. Napier asked about the total area surveyed. Mr. Amrine said private and public properties within Lewis and Thurston Counties and most of Grays Harbor County were surveyed. Crossings were identified using aerial photographs and in discussions with landowners.

Gavin Glore reported Mason Conservation District's inventory work was initiated in 2002 for WRIA 22. Data developed by other organizations was synthesized to determine data gaps, which was a focus of the work. The district developed relationships with landowners to build a comprehensive inventory. He distributed a handout. Lewis and Mason Conservation Districts completed a significant amount of work over the last several years. The next step is comparing sites and developing a snapshot view of where the sites might rank out. Mr. Glore referred to the working group that developed ranking criteria strategies. One difficulty was that many of the data sets contained different types of information. An example is the data field, "fill." Another challenge was the sheer volume of 2,662 fish barriers that have been identified within the Chehalis basin.

In response to a question from Mark Swartout, Mr. Glore said road density definitely drives the number of barriers. He reviewed a barrier inventory data gaps map. The west fork of the Satsop and south Chehalis data gap work is completed. A report on the Cloquallum data gap will be released within the next several weeks.

Mr. Amrine advised that the accompanying reports were forwarded to Mr. Lehr. Hard copies and CDs are available.

Ms. Napier said she believes the barrier assessment information is also posted on the lead entity website.

Discussion followed on how habitat is included in the ranking strategy. The working group agreed to limit ranking criteria to three variables essential in estimating the value of habitat upstream of barrier sites:

1. The number of species that may utilize upstream habitat
2. The amount of habitat upstream of the barrier site

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3. The severity of the barrier site (% passable)

The first two variables were determined for each site using WDFW's online mapping utility, Salmonscape. A site may be 0%, 33%, 67%, or 100% passable. A total barrier is 0% and a completely passable structure is 100%. Mr. Gloré said the highest ranking barrier site might not necessarily equate to the top priority project.

Mr. Amrine said the Lewis County Conservation District went a step beyond and ranked pipes in Lewis County. That information is included in the addendum report. The pipes were also ranked on a subbasin level and compared with the top priority pipe in the county.

April Boe asked whether the formula is available to other conservation districts for prioritization purposes. Mr. Gloré indicated that it's available to any district.

Mr. Gloré reviewed GIS and Excel files that can be electronically forwarded to members.

Jamie Glasgow asked whether points are identified in Salmonscape that are passable. Mr. Gloré said the information is not available, as it's considered proprietary. Weyerhaeuser, other timber companies, and possibly the tribes do not want barrier data publicized. Owners are comfortable with conservation districts using data for habitat planning. One idea is eliminating ownership information for data sharing purposes.

Mr. Swartout asked whether property owners are interested in removing barriers. Mr. Gloré said it's dependent upon maintenance requirements. Generally, landowners are receptive.

Mr. Amrine added that 95% of the landowners allowed Lewis County Conservation District to conduct surveys. Nineteen projects involving private landowners have been completed to date. Lewis County Conservation District is working on six this year. Generally, there is no cost to the landowner.

Lonnie Crumley commented that most landowners don't understand fish passage issues. Many barriers are not included within the inventory, particularly along the coast, because old roads "grow in" and barriers are not obvious. He commented on how he and others have found barriers when walking in streams.

Discussion ensued on incorporating data into the lead entity strategy and how to increase usability and accessibility of data to the public and project sponsors.

Mr. Swartout suggested submitting a grant application to the SRFB requesting funds to acquire property for fish passage barrier removal over a specific period of time. The HWG could prioritize culverts and identify willing property owners.

Participants discussed the color-coded system for barriers, such as red identifying a barrier, gray for barriers that are 33% passable, and green signifying a crossing is passable. The system could be incorporated within a map. One consideration is identifying the responsible party for updating the information.

Ms. Napier recommended a pilot project and importing Lewis County Conservation District datasets into the habitat work schedule, which could serve as a common location for maintenance purposes.

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Mr. Amrine commented that the conservation district is interested in working with anyone in Lewis County who is willing to sponsor a project, as sponsorship for barrier projects is typically limited. Lewis County Conservation District's completed data is forwarded to WDFW prior to releasing accompanying reports. Barrier correction forms are also forwarded to WDFW.

Discussion ensued on submitting a grant application to the SRFB to fund property acquisition for fish passage barrier removal. Members commented on raw scores and percentiles assigned to the 2,662 fish passage barriers identified within the Chehalis basin. Mr. Glore said some of the projects that ranked high may not equate to a good project, such as projects involving problems associated with landowner willingness and municipalities having limited funding and other mandates.

Participants commented about the role for private groups interested in promoting fish habitat and greater numbers of fish.

In response to comments by Mr. Crumley, Ms. Napier asked about the possibility of the task force contacting the grant writer about the potential for sponsoring a SRFB grant application to purchase property for fish passage barrier removal. Mr. Crumley advised that it's possible. The amount of funding required is significant. A small barrier project costs approximately \$100,000.

Narendran Kodandapani presented an online map. Together with former member Randy Lehr, a simple ranking system was developed. Using Lewis and Mason Conservation District data, the top 10% of barriers (Tier 1) requiring immediate removal/assessment are identified with red dots. The next 40% of culverts (Tier 2) are identified with violet dots. The remaining 50% not requiring immediate attention (Tier 3) are identified with green dots. Maps were prepared for all 11 subbasins and 2,662 fish passage barriers identified in the Chehalis basin. The map provides a spatial look at culverts within the 11 subbasins.

Mr. Swartout noted that stream names are missing. He proposed removing the mountain range from the map.

Ms. Demond noted that Tier 2 dots are larger. Mr. Kodandapani indicated the larger dots are representative of water quality sampling stations. Ms. Napier suggested eliminating water quality sampling station dots.

Discussion followed on how to identify the locations of barriers. Ms. Plumb asked about an option for viewing latitude/longitude coordinates and culvert and road names. Mr. Kodandapani advised that culvert names and priority ranking fields could be incorporated within the database. He offered to email the maps to Ms. Napier for distribution.

Mr. Amrine indicated he'll forward information on which pipes have been corrected, which will likely update map data.

Members commented about the ability of turning different features on or off, such as water quality sampling stations, expanding Tier 1 barrier sites, or incorporating a footnote on the map explaining the tier structure.

A map of the Humptulips subbasin was presented.

The HWG agreed to change tier structure to reflect:

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- Tier 1 – barrier sites with a percentile of 100% to 80%
- Tier 2 – barrier sites with a percentile of 79% to 50%
- Tier 3 – barrier sites with a percentile of 49% to 0%

Mr. Swartout asked whether it's possible to access increasingly detailed data for each river system. Mr. Kodandapani advised that can users access details for an area of the subbasin or a particular feature activating other labels not visible within the larger scape.

Ms. Napier commented about the benefits of providing internet access during HWG meetings.

Participants shared comments on supplemental information to add to the database, such as new sites and tracking corrections and eliminating owner information to enable access to the public. Mr. Gloré said each Mason Conservation District barrier site contains a unique identifying number, which leads to information stored in the database.

Mr. Amrine described how Lewis County Conservation District sites are identified.

Conversation followed on how barrier conditions have changed particularly in light of the 2007 and 2008 major storm events. The Quinault Indian Nation (QIN) is collaborating with WDFW and landowners on barrier replacements/improvements within WRAs 21, 22, and 23. It was acknowledged that there are difficulties in developing a ranking formula that captures all factors.

Craig Swanson spoke about completing work on a subbasin basis. Lewis County replaces failing culverts annually because of maintenance issues. Funding sources are constrained; however, the county has internal resources to provide engineering permitting and other services required to replace culverts.

Ms. Napier asked about revisiting the ranking discussion based on funding availability for project design. Mr. Gloré advised that he'll follow up on available funding.

Discussion ensued on HWG members revisiting the ranking topic immediately following the July 10 meeting.

Members were asked to forward additional information to Mr. Kodandapani to incorporate within the map data. Mr. Kodandapani noted that he can only edit data from Grays Harbor College. Ms. Napier asked Mr. Gloré to provide a list of fields to HWG members. Members were asked to forward additional data fields to Mr. Kodandapani. Mr. Gloré reminded members not to include landowner information. Additional data fields could include the number of fish species, passability, habitat, and a link to photographs for the high priority projects.

Members expressing interest in attending a meeting immediately following the July 10 HWG meeting to discuss the barrier ranking process included Mr. Gloré, Mr. Kodandapani, Ms. Demond, Mr. Swanson, Ms. Plumb, Mr. Kuttel, Mr. Burkle, and Mr. Glasgow. Ms. Napier said she'll follow up with members via email.

Updates from Project Sponsors Regarding Status of Past Projects or Potential Projects

Mr. Glasgow reviewed comments received on the Delezenne Creek project. The plan includes a modification to the bedrock section to improve passage in the feasibility study as an alternative. Other

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instream elements, such as large woody debris (LWD), will be incorporated upstream from the dam. The two changes will impact the budget.

Mr. Amrine reported on a PI that was completed on the project last week. The information will be forwarded to Mr. Glasgow.

Ms. Napier commented on how participants in the tour were able improve their respective understanding of the Wicket floodplain project after the tour. She encouraged the sponsor to emphasize the value of the habitat in the project application. Mr. Burkle agreed a field review is important for some projects. He suggested including additional maps with more data along with a map of the channel migration zone and a separate floodplain map. Mr. Olson agreed the scale of the Wicket floodplain project is vast. Mr. Swartout suggested highlighting the collaboration between the Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation and WDFW to remove an additional barrier. Additionally, the permit process is simpler than permitting on private property.

Ms. Napier outlined next steps in the SRFB grant cycle. The HWG will review projects on August 14, 2009.

Mr. Swartout offered that the range should be "0-3" rather than "3" for criteria under Partnerships/Outreach on the ranking sheet.

Adjournment

With there being no further business, Chair Amrine adjourned the meeting at 11:57 a.m.

Prepared by Cheri Lindgren, Recording Secretary
Puget Sound Meeting Services