

**CHEHALIS BASIN PARTNERSHIP
HABITAT WORK GROUP
WORKSHOP
Lewis County Conservation District Office
1554 Bishop Road
Chehalis, WA
September 11, 2009
9:30 AM**

Meeting Summary

PRESENT:

Lee Napier, Grays Harbor County	Mike Kuttel Jr., Thurston Conservation District
John Kleim, Creative Community Solutions	William Gow II, Puget Sound Meeting Services
April Boe, The Nature Conservancy	Lonnie Crumley, StreamWorks Consulting
Bob Amrine, Lewis County Conservation District	Chris Conklin, Quinault Indian Nation
Amy Iverson, Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW)	Miles Batchelder, Washington Coast Sustainable Salmon Partnership (WCSSP)

Welcome & Introductions

Lee Napier convened the meeting at 9:40 a.m. and welcomed everyone to the September 11, 2009 meeting of the Chehalis Basin Partnership (CBP) Habitat Work Group (HWG).

Debriefing on 2009 Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) Cycle

Ms. Napier reported the committee reviewed nine project proposals last month. Project ranking included:

1. Preacher's Slough
2. Wicket Floodplain
3. Hoquiam River Surge Plain
4. China Creek
5. Frase Creek
6. Sampson Stream Restoration
7. Lucas Creek Milepost 4.2
8. Lucas Creek Milepost 4.3
9. McCleary

Out of the projects, the three top projects are recommended for funding of \$702,000. That's approximately \$120,000 short of fully funding the projects. China Creek was submitted as an alternate project for a project cost of \$56,000. No other projects were submitted as alternates. The scores were 41, 35, 34, and 25 respectively. Another reason for not including other alternates was because the next project had some design issues. The projects were submitted to the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) by the submittal deadline of September 1, 2009. Next steps include meeting with the regional review panel on October 15 to review the information in PRISM and to provide feedback on the projects. By mid-October to November, the SRFB review team will release a report on the projects. The SRFB will issue a determination on the project list in mid-December. The SRFB review team will release comments on each of the projects.

Ms. Napier described the process used for selecting the projects, beginning with the early application process in spring. The information is entered into PRISM and available to the review panel. The review

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panel visited sites in May and June. A full application is then prepared for review and ranking by the local review team and entered into PRISM as a pre-application. Many project sponsors have indicated it's too much work, especially if the project doesn't move forward for funding. The issue is whether to impose an earlier cut-off to help project sponsors determine whether the project is ready for submission for funding. It was noted that it would be difficult to make that determination until after the initial site visit.

Ms. Napier said that during the early application stage, some proposals appear to be good potential projects for funding only to discover during the site visits that the projects are not ready to move forward. There are several repeat projects that appear annually.

Bob Amrine suggested the current process is acceptable as it's up to the sponsor whether they want to withdraw the project. Ms. Napier agreed to retain the current process even though it may add an extra burden to reviewers. Often, some projects may appear not to be strong candidates for SRFB funding, but by including the project on a prioritized list it exposes that project to other funding sources.

Ms. Napier asked about the effectiveness of the review and criteria process. Members agreed the process works well. John Kleim said the last process appeared to be effective. Miles Batchelder said he observed the process of all four lead entities in the region. The Grays Harbor Lead Entity process was the most effective and efficient method.

Mr. Amrine questioned the ranking of the China Creek project because it doesn't appear to benefit salmon. Ms. Napier described the ranking of the project against the criteria. The project scored 25 in overall points and although it wasn't the strongest project for salmon, the project builds community support. Many of the other projects did not rank as well for community support.

Mike Kuttel asked whether social benefits can outweigh the benefit to salmon in the rating process. Ms. Napier said the project will likely never outweigh a strong project, such as Preacher's Slough.

Mr. Kleim suggested it might be helpful to contact project sponsors whose projects were not funded and share information on why the project wasn't funded, as well as how the project scored overall. That information would be helpful to project sponsors for future submissions. Ms. Napier described how project sponsors receive feedback after initial site visits and the lead entity review panel. During the early review, design issues are discussed as well. Of the nine projects, five projects were not recommended for funding. Those five projects were previously submitted. Those project sponsors received previous feedback as well. With the exception of one project, sponsors resubmitted the same project proposal. It's frustrating when project sponsors continually do not address the issue raised during the reviews. Reviewers volunteer their time to conduct site visits as well as reviewing project proposals.

Mr. Amrine referred to rumors on the possibility of relocating China Creek as part of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' levee project. He suggested confirming the information prior to pursuing any projects. Lonnie Crumley suggested contacting Kim Ashmore at the City of Centralia. The issue is a rumor at this point, however, WDFW favors moving the creek because the creek travels under several buildings. That process will take years because of right-of-way acquisition and potential condemnation of property. Ms. Napier advised that Janel Spaulding and Mr. Ashmore have been in contact with the Corps about potential contribution to the China Creek project.

Mr. Kuttel asked whether project sponsors are informed of the possibility that their project may not be funded but may be retained on the list because of other potential funding opportunities. Ms. Napier said

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project sponsors submit a completed SRFB application that are entered into PRISM, but the submit button is not activated. SRFB reviews only those project applications that have been submitted. They essentially are included on the habitat list for the year, but not on the SRFB list. The projects can also be eligible for other sources of funding. Project sponsors understand which projects move forward for SRFB funding. Applicants reapplying can copy application data previously submitted in PRISM. As the September deadline nears, projects in PRISM in “preapp” status are moved and other projects not moving forward are moved to an inactive status. It’s clear which projects will be considered for the lead entity.

Ms. Napier referred to the strategy, which was last updated in 2007/2008. John Kleim has been assisting in updating the strategy. The last time the strategy was updated, barrier assessments were included as a placeholder under each subbasin. She suggested more emphasis should be focused on resolving how barrier assessments should be included. There is also a placeholder regarding invasive species through April Boe’s survey work, which should also be incorporated within the strategy. Another issue is riparian areas, which communities consistently rank as a high value. It’s important to incorporate that into the strategy as well. Another possible addition is hosting an early application workshop to help project sponsors understand the strategy and how their respective projects should fit with the strategy.

Mr. Kleim said he was asked to draft the strategy summary in relationship to the projects submitted to the SRFB. There are some unique issues that presented problems for both the strategy and projects. WRIAs 22 and 23 are large and it appears there is a trend for projects focusing away from the main stems to tributaries, which the strategy doesn’t often address. Several project examples include Preacher’s Slough and Wicket Floodplain, which are both located on the main stem of the Chehalis. According to the strategy, there are no Tier 1 barrier issues on the main stem. It was difficult to justify how Preacher’s Slough fulfills the strategy because it’s primarily a barrier project. There should be some discussion about tributaries. Additionally, acquisitions are not adequately addressed. He asked members to consider how the strategy helped or hindered project applications during the last funding cycle.

Mr. Crumley said the Wicket project involved a barrier of the floodplain rather than the river, which wasn’t addressed in the tiers. The strategy also doesn’t address dikes. Mr. Kleim offered that it appears to be a Tier 1 issue for floodplain connectivity. Mr. Crumley said it also should be addressed as a barrier. Farmers in that valley will maintain the dikes because if they don’t they will lose farmland. Another tributary in the Wicket project is Davis Creek, which did fall under all tier processes for barriers because there are two existing barriers. Dikes are an issue difficult to address.

Ms. DeMond said the tiers can be used very effectively except for the previous issues. The ranking process allowed the tier process to be included within the scoring effectively. Mr. Amrine said he didn’t use the strategy this year, however, in previous project proposals the strategy was very helpful.

Ms. Boe said some sponsors are not inclined to submit acquisition projects because it’s not specifically addressed within the strategy. Mr. Kleim agreed that it’s an element missing in the strategy. He asked for ideas on ways to include acquisition. Ms. Napier said Capitol Land Trust previously considered sponsoring an assessment proposal that could be incorporated within the strategy. However, the organization’s workload has limited its ability in moving forward on the proposal. It’s been difficult to identify a project sponsor to take the lead to sponsor the work. However, the lead entity could also work on the issue.

Mr. Amrine suggested it involves identifying areas of importance for protection. Ms. DeMond added that some of the actions within the strategy address protecting and preserving riparian habitat. Ms. Napier noted that most acquisition projects previously submitted used those actions to meet the strategy,

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however, strategic actions involving a specific subbasin, such as identifying properties in a particular order and pursuing landowner willingness are more difficult to justify as actions fitting the strategy.

Mr. Kleim said it's likely that within subbasins there are areas that should be identified for protection. They would likely qualify as a Tier 1 acquisition. It shouldn't be a difficult process. He suggested establishing a subcommittee to look at how to integrate data conveniently into the strategy for each subbasin. Ms. DeMond suggested the existing workgroup might be a possibility. The ranking can be sorted by subbasin. Members discussed possible approaches and existing data that could be used. Mr. Kleim suggested establishing subcommittees to work on invasive species and acquisitions to develop suggestions to submit to the committee as the most efficient way to update the strategy. Another long-term issue is tributaries and how the strategy only addresses main stems and often ignores tributaries.

Mr. Crumley described a last remaining barrier project that should have a higher priority for completing all barriers within that particular watershed. Ms. Boe suggested it might not necessarily need to be addressed within the strategy. If project sponsors effectively describe the project in the application, the ranking should be high. Mr. Crumley described the difficulty in fitting the strategy to that specific type of project. Ms. DeMond said the scoring within the project ranking for fitting to strategy is a small component of the overall ranking. Ms. Napier said it may be a piece of the overall ranking, but panel reviewers question how the proposal fits the strategy. She suggested considering the issue from the perspective of how panel reviewers are searching for information within the application.

Mr. Kleim noted that SRFB reviewers are reviewing hundreds of projects and use an easy formula because they don't have the benefit of all the conversations and knowledge about a particular project. The project must be a clear fit. Ms. Napier said because of the extensive review process the Grays Harbor Lead Entity undertakes with its project proposals, the SRFB doesn't ask questions that are often asked of other lead entity groups.

Mr. Kleim recommended forming subcommittees to review and refine the strategy. There may be a way of developing a series of unique circumstances for projects to meet certain types of criteria that could be included as an appendix. Mr. Amrine suggested a subcommittee on acquisitions should consider what criteria would make an acquisition more feasible to succeed as a project application, such as excellent spawning habitat within a riparian area or an off channel area needing protection.

Members agreed to form the following subcommittees with members volunteering/assigned:

- Invasive species – April Boe (lead), Birdie Davenport, Miranda Plumb, Amy Iverson, Miles Batchelder, and invite members of Chehalis Basin Aquatic Weed Management Group (Ms. Boe offered to email the group).
- Culverts – Brett DeMond (lead), Laura Till, Bob Amrine, Chris Conklin (tentative), Gavin Glore, Miranda Plumb, Miles Batchelder, and Mike Kuttel.
- Acquisition – Kat Moore, Nichole Hill (lead), Janet Strong, Chanele Holbrook-Shaw, Amy Iverson (will check with Lands Division), Miles Batchelder, and Bertie Davenport.

Mr. Kleim said each subcommittee will be facilitated with results from each subcommittee presented to the work group. He suggested developing recommendations by December. Ms. Napier said in early 2010, the next funding round will begin for submission of letters of intent. Project sponsors will need to know the strategy. Mr. Kleim said he envisions scheduling meetings in early October.

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Ms. Napier suggested members should also consider other projects to pursue outside of SRFB for leveraging other resources. The strategy is not just for SRFB projects, but for other funding possibilities as well.

Chris Conklin shared information on some of his activities and an area experiencing fish kill problems because of the presence of cattle and no fencing.

Identification of Potential Stakeholders for Regional Plan on Salmon Recovery

Mr. Batchelder briefed members on the recent regional planning committee meeting of the Washington Coast Sustainable Salmon Partnership (WCSSP), which is in the early stages of developing a regional plan for salmon recovery of the whole coast region, which will include a link to and incorporation of lead entity strategies. The effort is utilizing the Conservation Action Planning Process from The Nature Conservancy involving a series of workshops to identify focal targets around which the plan will be developed and assessments to those targets and threats and strategies to respond to those threats. The work at this point is focusing on identifying all potential stakeholders who should be involved at different stages of the process. Individuals who are identified should take ownership to ensure the right person has been identified for each respective group. WCSSP currently has a contact list of many individuals and organizations, but it's important to ensure the list is inclusive of all groups that should be involved in the process.

Ms. Napier is reviewing all categories for stakeholders from timber, fisheries, agriculture, recreation, co-managers, tribes, WDFW, nongovernmental organizations, counties, cities, ports, state, federal government, and others.

Mr. Amrine recommended sending out the initial list so everyone can review the list for adding individuals.

Members suggested contacting the following individuals and organizations:

- Ian Hanna, The Evergreen State College Alumni Entrepreneurs Association (timber)
- Steve Stinson, Family Forest Foundation (timber)
- Forest practice foresters with DNR have a list of consultants for small forest landowners (timber)
- Julie Balmelli-Powe (agriculture)
- Brady Engvall, shellfish (agriculture)
- Chehalis Basin Fisheries Task Force (fisheries)
- All conservation districts (already on list)
- Gillnetters Association – Alan Hollingsworth
- Coastal Conservation Association (fisheries)
- Olympia Trout Unlimited
- Jamie Glasgow, Wild Fish Conservancy
- Regional Fisheries Enhancement Group Coalition (contact Diane Ludwig in Olympia)
- Mark White, Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation
- Kat Moore and Nichole Hill
- Jim Hill, Citizen, Lewis County
- Chris Mendoza, Citizen and consultant who previously was in Miranda Plumb's position
- Vince Crane, citizen who lives on the Satsop River
- Steve Hallstrom, lives on the Chehalis River main stem

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Members discussed inviting a representative from the CBP.

Mr. Batchelder advised that he will forward a list electronically to members.

Other Business

Mr. Amrine reported he contacted Centralia Community College about housing the GIS Clearinghouse. The college is not able to house the program.

Ms. Napier provided an update on the program and the status of employment for Joel Green and Don Loft. Both Joel Green and Don Loft's employment with the college has ended. Mark White is looking at the possibility of the Tribe assuming some of the responsibility of the GIS Clearinghouse. The server for the clearinghouse needs to be relocated. It's currently located at the Satsop Business Park at a cost of several hundred dollars a month. The college has not been forthcoming on whether the college can house the server and maintain the database. Mr. White has expressed some interest in hosting the server, but at this point, there are many unknowns associated with the entire program. The goal is maintaining the programs until someone can assume responsibility.

Agenda Topics for Next Meeting

Possible update on projects

Potential tour of project sites

Mr. Batchelder advised that the regional presentations are scheduled on October 15 from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Adjournment

With there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:44 a.m.

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