

**CHEHALIS BASIN PARTNERSHIP
HABITAT WORK GROUP
Lewis County Conservation District Office
1554 Bishop Road
Chehalis, WA
February 11, 2011
9:30 AM**

Draft Meeting Summary

PRESENT:

Lee Napier, Grays Harbor County	Tom Gow, Puget Sound Meeting Services
Bob Burkle, WA Department of Fish Wildlife (WDFW)	Chris Holcomb
Miranda Plumb, US Fish & Wildlife Service	Nelson Majone
Bob Amrine, Lewis County Conservation District	Don Loft, The Evergreen State College
Gavin Glore, Mason Conservation District	Jamie Glasgow, Wild Fish Conservancy
Craig Swanson, Lewis County	Janet Strong, Chehalis River Basin Land Trust
Janel Spaulding, CBP/Grays Harbor College	

Welcome & Introductions

Lee Napier convened the meeting at 9:42 a.m. of the Chehalis Basin Partnership (CBP) Habitat Work Group (HWG). Attendees provided self-introductions.

Ms. Napier reviewed the agenda.

Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) Grant Cycle Update

Ms. Napier reminded project sponsors of the link she forwarded for Manual 18. She encouraged everyone to read the manual because of changes to the manual each year. She is checking on the availability of a Lead Entity Workshop and is inclined to require attendance by project sponsors.

Officially, the grant cycle has been initiated. Early applications or letter of intent are considered the early application and are due in PRISM by April 1 to be considered for this grant cycle. She urged members to register as a user of PRISM and as well as becoming updated on the software since the last grant cycle. She offered to assist project sponsors who may need some additional help. The April and June HWG meetings will be available for project sponsors to obtain feedback on project applications. Site visits will be conducted by the HWG review team and the SRFB review team. If the project is an assessment or is not accessible, another location will be determined for a presentation. Site visits are tentatively scheduled for May 12-13. Ms. Napier said she's solicited for team members and some previous members have volunteered to serve along with several new members. A technical and citizen review is scheduled on July 8 to rank the projects. CBP members will be asked to serve on the review team as well. The recommended list will be forwarded to the Grays Harbor County Board of Commissioners for review on July 25. The final selection by the Commission will be forwarded to the SRFB by August 12, which is two weeks before the SRFB deadline. Project sponsors should have the majority of the project application inputted into PRISM by June 24. The early submittal date should not be problematic for any project sponsor. There haven't been many changes in the process in terms of eligibility and types of projects during this funding round.

Jamie Glasgow acknowledged that the small changes occurring over time has led to some differences especially in PRISM. He encouraged project sponsors to review the changes in PRISM to ensure they can process applications on a timely basis. He suggested scheduling a brief overview of some of the

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changes in PRISM. Ms. Napier replied that she will ask Kathryn Moore with Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) to provide an overview at a future meeting or other venue.

Craig Swanson arrived at the meeting.

Dan Loft acknowledged that he's new to the SRFB grant process and is part of a group developing a project proposal involving Coffee Creek for a feasibility study to restore a wetland located in Thurston County. Ms. Napier asked whether the group has been sponsored by an eligible sponsor. Mr. Loft said the group is organizing as a business. The project site is above Growing Places Farm and Energy Park. He spoke with Danielle Craig about possibly becoming the sponsor. However, at that time she didn't express interest. Ms. Napier recommended reviewing Manual 18 and becoming familiar with SRFB requirements. Additionally, if the project is not ready for this funding round, it's important to consider adding the project to the conceptual list in the Habitat Work Schedule (HWS).

Several members offered potential names of sponsors to contact. Mr. Loft shared information on the project location. The landowners will need to be identified. Mr. Loft was advised to visit the Thurston Regional Planning Council website and Google Thurston County Geodata center for mapping information on the site.

Habitat Work Schedule Conceptual Project Drive Update

Ms. Napier referred to email messages from Debbie Holden for project information. Ms. Holden is leading the email project drive. Project sponsors should contact her to provide project information. John Kleim will attend the March meeting to discuss the outcome of the project drive. The March meeting includes a discussion on next steps. One outstanding issue is how to handle barrier assessment projects. The intent is to populate the HWS with some barrier assessment data as well as other types of projects. Input is required by the HWG on the cut-off point for the number of projects in terms of what is reasonable from a project perspective as well as from a data entry perspective.

Bob Burkle suggested the overview category is the logical place to include assessments. In WRIA 10, a levee setback feasibility study funded by the SRFB identified numerous sites. The decision was to include the feasibility study in Tier 1 at the overview level. As individual projects developed, they were added to the next tier. There is a location for large overviews. That's a possible option. The next level is determining what is practical to input in the top 10, 100, etc.

Ms. Napier said the intent is including conceptual projects that are at this point just an idea. Until a project is proposed for funding, it will remain at the conceptual stage. Mr. Burkle suggested considering the way the watershed is defined and select the top five in each of the watersheds.

Ms. Napier said ideas and planning will drive the organization of HWS. At the March meeting, time will be spent working with Mr. Kleim to discuss the results of the drive and next steps. A committee was formed to look into ranking and prioritizing conceptual projects. It will require separate meetings outside the monthly HWG meetings or extending the meeting time. Some members agreed to a longer meeting.

Ms. Napier asked members if they had an opportunity to review subbasin actions or the strategy to provide feedback to refine the strategy.

Mr. Burkle asked Mr. Loft about the possibility of identifying a student intern to assist in entering data in HWS. The Lead Entity Coordinator for WRIA 10 was able to secure the assistance of a student intern from the University of Washington Tacoma Campus to enter information into the HWS. The student

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learned about the HWS through the process and became the local expert for the region. The partnership benefitted both the WRIA and the student by giving the student the opportunity to develop expertise on a database.

Mr. Loft said he's been involved in several basin projects involving the culvert assessment project and the water quality assessment he completed of water quality testing results for the basin. His long-term goal is a similar mapping process throughout Western Washington that's accessible in a GIS mapping format. The information could include data on restoration projects, water quality results in particular streams, and location of barriers, etc. His goal is collecting data and producing a map of all watersheds in Western Washington. He asked about what's involved in the HWS.

Mr. Burkle advised that the HWS is a statewide mapping and project tracking tool for Lead Entities to input habitat protection and restoration projects. The HWS will become the platform for entering applications. Ms. Napier said she's unsure whether that will occur. There is discussion on a potential interface between PRISM and HWS. However, some Lead Entities use HWS for entering early applications. However, they also require entering the data in PRISM as well.

Mr. Burkle described the HWS as a very important tool that is worth learning about. The opportunity is available to involve a student.

Mr. Loft said his group is comprised of several Master of Environmental Studies students from The Evergreen State College, who are forming a group to provide habitat restoration consulting for GIS, data analysis, and data entry. The group wants to become involved with all agencies and collect information that can be distributed to agencies for accessibility by everyone. Another aspect of the work is restoration projects, such as Coffee Creek, involving feasibility studies and drafting plans for restoration and monitoring of wetlands. Mr. Loft said he personally has no engineering experience but has drafting skills. The intent is to hire engineers for field work. One of the students has experience in survey work. The group represents a variety of skill sets. Currently, the group is defining the business model.

Gavin Glore advocated for becoming involved in HWS. Some personnel in the Mason Conservation District are involved in the HWS and one of the benefits is working with project sponsors completing work in the area. Mr. Burkle suggested contacting Tom Kantz, Lead Entity Coordinator, WIRA 10, for more information on the HWS.

Mr. Burkle commented on projects the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is developing for mitigation for the levee project. Bob Thomas is the project manager for the Corps. A field trip is supposed to be scheduled to some potential sites. A field trip to several mitigation bank sites field trip is scheduled on February 24, which is a separate project that can be used by other projects needing mitigation. The project is privately funded. The Corps of Engineers oversees the process but the impetus of the project is through a private venture.

Follow Up Discussion with the Wild Fish Conservancy Regarding Selection of the Next Area to Assess for Stream Typing

Mr. Glasgow reported the briefing is a follow-up to last month's discussion on the agency's project to continue water type assessment that essentially is ground-truthing regulatory water type maps to improve accuracy so that existing regulations based on the maps can be more effective in protecting habitat. The work completed in Western Washington reveals major discrepancies between the Department of Natural Resource (DNR) maps and current conditions on the ground. DNR acknowledges the maps may have some inaccuracies and that they are intended to be used as a starting point for on-the-ground surveys for

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forest practices. However, there are implications outside of forest practices because most local governments are relying on the same maps to identify critical areas required by the Growth Management Act. There is an opportunity to increase the amount of protection streams receive under existing regulations by simply improving accuracy of maps by identifying the location of streams, habitat, and fish. The process is state-sanctioned and is described in WAC.

At this point, water type assessments have been performed through field surveys of Wildcat Creek. This season, which begins next month and runs through July, will rely on input from the HWG for areas that could receive a benefit, such as areas under threat from significant development. The focus is outside of Forest Practices because that process is in place to identify those areas. Other considerations for locations include areas where fish may be present or areas where permission from landowners has been obtained. Last month, the committee discussed potential locations based on remaining funds in the grants. They included Bush Creek and Beaver Creek/Black River.

Mr. Glasgow displayed maps of the areas and described the survey work.

Janet Strong commented that there is conversion underway in the Bush Creek and Powers Creek areas. Weyerhaeuser is converting much land in the Powers Creek drainage basin. Wetlands have been compromised because of development.

Craig Swanson reported that some efforts are underway against DNR and Weyerhaeuser for Forest Practices because of the number of bridges destroyed along the Chehalis during the 2007 flood.

Mr. Glasgow said that even when the maps are used correctly and typing is accurate there are many opportunities to improve forest practices. There are many places where streams are not protected because of inaccurate maps. The model that the state developed with help from Weyerhaeuser to predict the distribution of streams and fish habitat is based on a 10-meter digital elevation model. However, there are new tools with much better capability for predicting. Wild Fish Conservancy uses Lidar data when it's available.

Mr. Glasgow identified Beaver Creek where it flows into the Black River. From a Forest Practices standpoint, this area would be easier to assess. There are a number of headwater streams where discrepancies have been found that are outside Forest Practices with much of the area located within growth boundaries. He suggested focusing on that area.

Mr. Swanson commented on his personal observation with the widening of the I-5 corridor and the effects of the road construction especially in the Cowlitz basin where all the species are listed. He suggested looking at the tributary headwaters. Mr. Burkle said the Cowlitz is not in the Grays Harbor Lead Entity.

Ms. Napier said only several weeks of funds are available to work on the project, which helps to also determine the scope of the project site. Mr. Glasgow recommended considering Beaver Creek as the site for this effort knowing that future efforts can focus on Bush Creek.

Mr. Glasgow added that not all streams can be surveyed on the ground; the focus is selecting case studies to help leverage the organization's ability to encourage the state to use Lidar. Additionally, no previous work has been done in the Black River.

There was general agreement to move forward with Beaver Creek.

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Mr. Glasgow provided an update on the Grays Harbor Juvenile Fish Use Assessment project. He noted that he wants to rename the project the Grays Harbor Estuary Juvenile Fish Use Assessment to accurately describe the area. Information will be emailed to Ms. Napier next week to include the draft literature review that includes the habitat assessment study plan and literature identifying data gaps and the work previously completed. Currently, a list of potential sampling sites is being examined. The organization has issued a call for volunteers and interns to assist in the field work. In this economy, the agency has been able to attract some highly qualified individuals to work pro bono for months. Ms. Strong suggested contacting Grays Harbor College. Mr. Loft suggested contacting Gail Wootan, MES Assistant Director, at The Evergreen State College for internship opportunities.

Mr. Glasgow said the logic in habitat assessment is described in detail in the study design, which the HWG will receive next week for an opportunity to review and provide feedback. The estuary was divided into six geographic zones to ensure different habitat classifications are included.

Mr. Burkle mentioned the name of a contact for securing an airboat. Janel Spaulding asked if a mooring location has been identified. Mr. Glasgow said a landowner in Aberdeen has provided a storage location but a mooring location hasn't been identified at this point.

Ms. Napier asked members to be prepared to review the habitat assessment study plan and other information associated with the project.

Mr. Glasgow shared information on a possible role the HWG could play in securing funding in the next funding round for an undersized culvert under a Thurston County Road located in a tributary to the Black River on Pants Creeks. The culvert is undersized and a partial barrier. He is working with the county to determine if there is a role the agency can play to assist in securing some funding to address the culvert. There is over a mile of fish habitat upstream and two new bridges that were managed by Lonnie Crumley through the Family Forest Fish Passage Program.

Miranda Plumb shared additional information about the project and the county's efforts since 2003 to secure funding through her agency. Several agencies have been involved in addition to Mr. Crumley's involvement. Chris Conklin with the Quinault Indian Nation took some measurements of the culvert. The culvert is undersized. However, the county's public works engineer believes the culvert is too large. It's been difficult to demonstrate to the engineer that the culvert is improperly sized. Mr. Glasgow said he suspected other issues were at play when he met with county representatives. Ms. Plumb suggested contacting Mr. Conklin to obtain more information about the issue.

Presentation by Mason Conservation District-Barrier Assessment Integration into a GIS Application

Gavin Glor reported the Mason Conservation District received a grant from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to collect all barrier evaluation data completed in the basin and determine some parameters for site comparisons. That information will assist in identifying the best projects. Mr. Loft completed much of the ranking data work. The grant provided funds for the ranking and for some project development.

Mr. Loft provided an overview of the rankings based on the number of species that may use upstream habitat after barrier removal, the amount of available habitat, and the percent of passability. A formula was created to determine the rankings. For example, if there is 4.2 miles of upstream utilized by Coho, cutthroat, and steelhead and the culvert is 33% passable, the formula breaks down to provide a ranking score. The score was converted to a percentile. Tier 1 is 75% to 100%, which is a high priority culvert,

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Tier 2 represents 50% to 74.9%, which is a medium priority with low priority from 0% to 49%. He displayed a map of the ranking and priority percentile and ranking of Tier 1, Tier 2, or Tier 3.

Mr. Loft demonstrated the GIS application using Coffee Creek as a demonstration site. Approximately 2,662 culverts were assessed as part of the project. Mr. Glore explained that all the culverts that were included in the ranking are housed in a central database at WDFW. Since 12 different groups contributed data to the effort and because many of the group experienced a turnover in personnel or the groups are no longer established, it was determined to use the source where it's centrally located to obtain additional information. The site ID numbers are discreet numbers assigned to those locations by the field teams who originally gathered the data. They are unique identifiers within the state database that contain the information unique to those sites. Mr. Loft added that not all data that came from the 12 agencies included what species utilize a particular site. Some will be populated with that information and some will not. The ArcGIS maps are more robust than the arcReader maps enabling the user to pull up tables. The tool is very useful for habitat restoration and enables expansion of data. The site ID is used to create the features.

Mr. Glore said since the district is unable to dedicate time in the future to the project, his objective is to determine if there is a mechanism to update the HWS to provide a central location that can be updated as well as a mechanism to track culverts that have been corrected. The goal is to update data annually.

Discussion followed on the current process for tracking culvert replacements and corrections. Concerns were shared that not all information is updated when forms are submitted to DNR.

Craig Swanson left the meeting.

Mr. Loft commented on the Grays Harbor College server that was purchased when Randy Lehr worked with the Chehalis Basin Partnership. At that time, it was to house all the basin information. The server is not active at this time. Part of the issue was the college could not provide the bandwidth, which was then moved to Satsop Industrial Park. However, funding was no longer available to continue hosting the server. Ms. Napier said the Partnership discussed options but no action resulted. Grays Harbor County took possession of the server since it's the CPB's fiscal agent.

Janet Strong left the meeting

Mr. Loft demonstrated other mapping and data features.

Mr. Glore noted that DNR's RMAP sites were not included in the ranking because the receipt of data was too late to include and because critical variables for percent passability are not recorded in RMAPs.

Mr. Glore distributed CDs to members of the GIS maps.

Mr. Glore explained how the application is a tool many can use in project development. Although a site may be the top ranked site for replacement, it might be too expensive, which is a consideration when pursuing projects. He said when the project was initiated it was his hope and intent to have the tool quantify costs. The tool is useful but if there had been consistent data across the region, it would have been possible to quantify costs. It's a useful tool with continued funding the main concern.

Ms. Napier asked whether the 2600 barriers are streams with fish presence. Mr. Glore said the sites are mapped as fish habitat and may not necessarily contain fish. There were numerous sites that have not

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been ground-truthed and there were culverts where there was no mapped stream. In those instances where the stream wasn't mapped an arbitrary length of 2.1 miles was assigned. The DNR layer has more mapped streams than Salmonscape. The Salmonscape layer is not included. Another goal of the project was combining all data into an Access database on all parameters. However, the state has a similar program and efforts by others could move that process forward.

Members discussed some discrepancies in DNR RMAP data and the process in place to submit updated data to DNR.

Mr. Glasgow asked whether the application provides a distinction between public and private ownerships. Mr. Glore advised that ownership type wasn't included as it was difficult to link the data. Many private owners are assured that if access is granted, the information will not be shared with other agencies. Some private landowners are not willing to grant access if the information is shared. Mr. Loft said there was much effort to find a way to standardize the formatting. It took eight weeks to sort through the data supplied by the agencies.

Mr. Glore said when the effort was initiated he contacted other groups who had completed similar efforts. One group, South Puget Sound Enhancement Group, was contacted as the group had completed some similar efforts. He met with representatives several times and reviewed the data only to find the group had 300 sites. The intent was creating a versatile resource that could be used basin-wide. He described how to access the data. Program data on the CD includes a free copy of arcReader. For additional information Brian Benson at Mason County is the first point of contact. Mr. Glore offered to provide additional CDs. Ms. Napier asked about a format for posting in the Partnership's library. Mr. Glore offered to provide a pdf format for the library.

Next Meeting Agenda

Ms. Napier reviewed the March agenda:

- Update on Habitat Work Schedule
- Continued discussion on SRFB project applications

Adjournment

With there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:51 a.m.

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