

Chehalis Basin Partnership Steering and Technical Committee Meeting Summary
October 3, 2002
Thurston County Courthouse Complex, Building 1, Olympia, WA

Present: Cynthia Carlstad (*TetraTech/KCM*), Jim Fleming (*City of Centralia*), Kitty Gillespie (*Ecology*), Chanele Holbrook (*Heernett Foundation*), Kahle Jennings (*Ecology*), Lori Morris (*US Army Corps of Engineers*), Lee Napier (*Grays Harbor County*), Brian Peck (*WA Department of Fish & Wildlife*), J Roach, (*Citizen-Thurston County*), Mark Swartout (*Thurston County*), Chad Stussy (*WA Department of Fish & Wildlife*), Bob Wheeler (*Triangle Associates*), Terry Willis (*Citizen-Grays Harbor County*) and Patrick Wiltzius (*City of Chehalis*)

Ecosystem Restoration Study: Lori Morris updated the committee on the Army Corps of Engineers' Ecosystem Restoration Study of the Chehalis Basin. The Corps is using the Ecosystem Diagnostic Treatment (EDT) model to identify the functions of the basin that historically supported salmonid production. The objective is to identify and restore the functions that would contribute the most. EDT does not address underlying causes. There will still be a need to identify and manage them. Lori said priorities should be set by spring of 2003.

Identifying Issues and Setting Watershed Plan Priorities: The STC will discuss and prioritize issues at a special meeting on November 1st. A matrix of issues and possible activities was sent out to all STC members to prioritize. So far, only two STC members have sent in their prioritized matrix. Triangle requested that other committee members complete their review as soon as practical and return it to Bob Wheeler or Chris Page.

Watershed Plan Development, Committee Meetings and Plan Approval Process: Committee members reviewed the schedule and discussed the work that must be done in order to complete the watershed plan. The possible need for holding STC meetings twice a month was discussed. STC members reviewed the meeting schedule for the near future.

The committee also discussed the plan adoption process. The Partnership must complete the watershed plan by October 2003. Each county with territory in the management area must hold at least one public hearing on the plan. The legislative authorities for all of the counties must then hold a joint session to consider the proposed plan. A suggestion was made that the CBP prepare and distribute information on the plan approval process so county governments will understand the process and what it means for them. Meetings with county governments were proposed for May 2003 to review this approval process.

The committee also discussed the possibility of suggesting legislation that would allow counties with very small land areas in the Chehalis Basin to opt out if they choose not to participate. Under the current law all counties with territory in the planning area must participate in the approval process. A draft letter to local legislators was reviewed. Triangle will work with Grays Harbor County to revise the letter. Copies of the letter should go to the governor and the Department of Ecology. Kahle will share the letter with other watershed leads working with groups across the state.

CBP Operating Procedures: Kahle Jennings handed out the latest draft of the proposed CBP operating procedures. The committee discussed the proposed language on adding new members. All CBP and STC meetings are open to the public and everybody is welcome to participate. The committee acknowledged that this policy carries the risk of impeding progress if new people who do not know the history are continually joining. For this reason, there is some feeling that adding new ‘voting’ members to the Partnership at this time might not be conducive to completing work on the watershed plan. Committee members agreed there might be some advantage to visually identifying the ‘voting’ members of the Partnership so it is clear who they are.

Instream Flow Study: Cynthia handed out information describing flow measurements obtained so far. The measurements show that actual flows are lower than the regulatory minimum flows this year at most of the 15 sites measured. The committee discussed how this could vary from year to year. She said regulatory flows were set at the 90% exceedence rate. This means flows can be expected to be higher than the level set in the regulation 90% of the time and lower than the level set in the regulation 10% of the time. Stream flows in other regional streams and rivers have been near or slightly below average this summer, suggesting that the flows measured under the Instream Flow project are likely to be close to average summer streamflows.

The budget for the gauging work was discussed. Cynthia said if dry weather persists through October, the gauges will be left in the streams until the end of October rather than the middle of October. The reason for this is to attempt to collect data as flows begin to rise for the wet fall and winter season. There may also be some budget remaining for additional analysis next year.

Water Quality and Storage Projects: The proposed water quality and storage projects grant funding were discussed. For the water quality project, Lori said she has need for some of the work proposed for the Level 1 assessment of Grays Harbor. If this work can be completed by others, it would free her to work on other activities. This concept will be explored.

Kahle advised that he added a task to the Multi-Purpose Storage grant that would develop criteria for evaluating storage projects that would have to be adopted before other work begins. He reported that funding for the projects has been reserved pending negotiation of the contracts. The next step is for Ecology to get a contract in place with Grays Harbor County. A letter authorizing expenditure of grant funds prior to signing the contracts is possible.

Future Steering/Technical Committee Meetings are scheduled for:

November 1st (special meeting)

November 7th

December 5th

January 2nd

February 6th