

## **Chehalis Basin Partnership Steering and Technical Committee Meeting Summary**

**September 5, 2002**

**Present:** Cynthia Carlstad (*TetraTech/KCM*), Lee Daneker (*US EPA*), Jim Fleming (*City of Centralia*), Kitty Gillespie (*WA Department of Ecology*), Terra Hegy (*WA Department of Fish and Wildlife*), Kahle Jennings (*WA Department of Ecology*), Lori Morris (*US Army Corps of Engineers*), Lee Napier (*Grays Harbor County*), John Sims (*Quinault Indian Nation*) Mark Swartout (*Thurston County*), Bob Wheeler (*Triangle Associates*), and Terry Willis (*Citizen-Grays Harbor County*), Patrick Wiltzius (*City of Chehalis*), Ron Wisner, (*Grays Harbor Conservation District*),

The group reviewed the September 4th meeting of the Water Quality Committee (WQC) and discussed the relationship between the STC and the WQC. The WQC has been referred to as a “subcommittee.” A review of the meeting summary of the full Chehalis Basin Partnership (CBP) meeting when the WQC was established show it was established as a committee of the CBP, not a subcommittee of the STC. The group agreed it would be wise to ask the Partnership to review the operating procedures under development to ensure clear communications between, and the expectations for, the different committees, along with the issue of membership now before the CBP. A draft of the CBP Operating Procedures will be distributed to the Partnership at its September meeting.

The Committee reviewed the in stream flow monitoring work. The project is on track. Thirteen sites have automated flow monitoring devices in place and there have been no vandalism. Three sites have to be measured manually due to the characteristics of the sites. Preliminary flow data will be presented at the October meeting. Three questions need to be answered: 1) Should the data loggers be pulled out of the 13 sites in mid October as planned or left longer? 2) Will this be a normal water year so the data is representative of normal conditions? 3) Where will the resulting data be stored? The group identified the need for more discussion at the Partnership level about in stream flows and the relationship between in stream flows, fish habitat and water quality.

The Water Quantity Evaluation is progressing. EPA is contributing resources that are being used to plot water certificates and permits in the priority sub-basins. Mapping of the location of water rights is important to understanding where water use is concentrated. TetraTech/KCM has been acquiring data and is evaluating that information for credibility. Questions have been raised about the some of the project elements. Clearly there is room for differences of opinion when it comes to estimating water quantity and how that information can be used. What must remain clear is that this study will not answer all the questions about water use and water availability.

US Army Corps of Engineers has contracted with Batelle to complete a basin characterization study. It will assess historical changes in habitat, land use and stream flows. Short-term cycles of climatic changes (10 - 30 years) would be helpful if they can demonstrated. The draft report will be completed by the end of September.

The water quality and multipurpose storage grant applications are moving forward. Ecology's Southwest Regional Office Water Management Team has provided comments to Kahle on the proposals which he reviewed with the Committee. The main issue is the source of the funding may limit what can be addressed in the Grays Harbor Assessment proposal. Suggestions were made on how to revise the applications and Kahle will incorporate those suggestions as he turns the applications into contracts.

The Committee discussed development of the final watershed plan which must be approved by the full Partnership by October, 2003. To meet this schedule, the following timeline was proposed:

October - December, 2002 -- Outline issues, solutions and recommendations.

January - June, 2003 -- Develop detailed plan components including elements on water quality, water quantity, habitat, instream flows and recommendations.

June - September, 2003 -- Finalize the plan.

The committee was assigned some homework in the form of a list of issues that need to each be ranked as high, medium or low priority. Also the committee was asked to think about and identify any issues that are missing. This resulted in a brief discussion on the topic of expectations. Each Partnership member should be asking the group(s) they represent what those groups want to see included in the plan.

The STC also discussed the legal requirements for approval of the plan. There are parts of 8 counties in the Chehalis Basin. For some counties, the county's area in the basin is so small that the counties have indicated they want only to be informed about CBP efforts, but do not expect to be involved in planning process. This does not, however, exempt them from participating in the approval process, which was established by the legislature. This approval process starts once the Partnership reaches agreement on the plan.