

**CHEHALIS BASIN PARTNERSHIP
STEERING TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Building
600 Capitol Way
Olympia, WA
May 3, 2007
9:30 AM**

Meeting Summary

PRESENT

Steve Craig, WA State Department of Ecology
Glen Connelly, Confederated Tribes of the
Chehalis Reservation
Lee Napier, Grays Harbor County
Terra Hegy, WA State Department of Fish and Wildlife
Mark Swartout, Thurston County
Kahle Jennings, City of Centralia
Chanele Holbrook-Shaw, Citizen, Thurston County
Terry Willis, Citizen, Grays Harbor County

Cheri Lindgren, Puget Sound Meeting Services
Steve Boessow, WA State Department of Fish and
Wildlife Habitat Program

Announcements and Introductions

Chair Mark Swartout called the Chehalis Basin Partnership (CBP) Steering Technical Committee (STC) meeting to order at 9:48 a.m.

Agenda

Mr. Swartout reviewed the meeting agenda:

- Discuss April 24, 2007 workshop
- Scope of work for Phase 4 Year 2 Grant
- Review work plan for Detailed Implementation Plan (DIP) Strategies 1 - 3 (include update of timber and agriculture on the ground)
- CBP Agenda for the May meeting

Discuss April 24, 2007 Workshop

Lee Napier distributed copies of a document detailing outcomes from the April 24, 2007 workshop.

Kahle Jennings provided the STC with an overview of the workshop. Attendance was good, and a number of new faces came to the meeting. Workshop attendees received an overview of the CBP planning process. At the workshop, other agency representatives provided information concerning instream flows and Instream Flow Incremental Methodology (IFIM).

The STC discussed the current controversy about interpreting water law, as some say instream flows are the same as base flows.

Mr. Jennings explained that workshop participants tentatively decided to add another Interim Milestone to Strategy #3 (#3.5) and by including the work plan identified in Strategy #18.

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Ms. Napier described the workshop strategy, which varied from the approach used at previous workshops. Attendees believed they could contribute because the work was not completed. It generated more discussion and interest.

Mr. Jennings reported workshop participants discussed how Strategy #18 fits within the DIP. The strategy is different and developed in enough detail to keep it as a separate milestone.

Ms. Napier said the US Geological Survey (USGS) was represented at the workshop. USGS staff shared that the agency is unable to provide input about how to develop a work plan, but can provide technical support. Representatives from the Department of Health also attended and are interested in participating at future meetings. They are evaluating how they fit in with the watershed planning work.

Mr. Jennings said a follow up workshop is scheduled for May 22, 2007, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., at DOE.

Mr. Jennings reported the City of Centralia applied for a water right on the Skookumchuck River last month. The City has spoken with the Chehalis and Quinault Tribes, TransAlta, and DOE about placing the Newaukum rights into trust status and pursuing an inner-basin trade. Discussion ensued about current TransAlta and Centralia water right capacity. Mr. Jennings said TransAlta doesn't want to give up any of its 54 cubic feet per second (CFS) output for industrial development. The power generating facility will continue to operate as long as it is economically feasible.

Steve Craig offered his observations about the workshop. It appears the attendees recognized the need for a systematic approach concerning instream flows, developing the science upfront, and laying the groundwork before regulations and rule making are implemented. However, the benefit might be questionable because existing water rights might not be affected and the basin could remain closed.

Mr. Swartout suggested focusing on where instream flow data are missing within the basin.

Terra Hegy explained that instream flows are set differently than in the 1970s. There may be more water available in winter than identified by the 1970 instream flows and less in the summer. Mainstems probably have more water available than when instream flows were set. Three categories of streams were discussed at the workshop - those with flows already set, setting flows for some streams based on available data, and streams with no habitat data or IFIM and little flows.

Mr. Swartout said the activities follow Track B shown on the document detailing outcomes from the April 24, 2007 workshop. It seems reasonable to scope the instream flows project, identify the purpose, outcomes, and whether to pursue it.

Mr. Jennings said the idea is to incorporate and apply current best available science (BAS) IFIM to determine whether there is a difference to help inform future management decisions. There was no decision to apply the data and turn it into new instream flows.

Discussion ensued about scoping the project so it doesn't include an expectation about setting new instream flows, begin with data gathering, comparing flows, decision points, and determining next steps.

Mr. Swartout recognized that the STC should be cautious about expectations and potential outcomes.

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Ms. Willis referred to a white paper about agriculture addressing irrigation and the 13,000 acres with certified wells. The study showed only half are presently being watered. Agriculture might not be affecting instream flows. Some water right permits refer to base flows, which were established prior to 1976 flows. DOE has the right to interrupt any water right when base flows drop below identified levels. There is a difference of opinion between base and instream flows.

Mr. Craig said he supports Mr. Swartout's suggestion of creating a flow chart with decision points and milestones and incorporating questions that need answering into the process. The Quinault Indian Nation (QIN) is recommending the Partnership take a hard look at storage and how it relates to instream flow. Having water available for low flow periods is beneficial. He asked if the issue should be included in the process.

Mr. Swartout said there are two tracts - establishing instream flows and determining whether the actions to achieve instream flows have been identified in the DIP. The tasks tied to Tract B should be completed regardless because instream flows are not currently achieved.

Dialogue followed about a consultant doing the work, limited funding and staffing resources within the Partnership, and whether to look at storage as contributing to a potential solution.

Glen Connelly said the tribe is interested in preserving habitat for fish and improving instream flows to benefit all wildlife. The Chehalis Tribe didn't get involved with the QIN letter and discussion. However, the Chehalis Tribe's concerns are documented.

Further discussion ensued about looking at winter flows for storage projects that benefit fish and provide water, not setting new flows in the summer, other creative solutions to address instream flows, relinquished water rights, differences between water trust programs and water bank programs, deciding on a methodology for target flows, and municipalities acquiring agriculture water rights.

Mr. Connelly conveyed that it makes sense to know what the flows are now. A question is whether it is worthwhile spending the money to set a new flow rule based on today's science that's different from the 1976 flows because it won't affect anyone's water rights previous to the new flow.

Mr. Jennings said it's possible to end up buying water rights to increase instream flows.

Ms. Hegy referred to Walla Walla's watershed planning effort that focused on determining during the year the availability of extra water (December to May) and setting an amount of water to be allocated for Environmental Enhancement Projects (EEPs). The EEPs must benefit fish and there were restrictions.

Mr. Swartout offered an idea that if the quantity of the instream rule isn't changed, the instream flow rule could be changed to introduce creative ideas.

Ms. Hegy agreed that there could be an exception for projects recognizing that there may be water available above the instream flows. A technical committee (tribes, local governments, state agencies) would define the criteria and regulations. She indicated she would follow up with copies of Walla Walla's language.

Mr. Swartout said another question is what the instream rule can be used for.

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Mr. Craig said he and Mr. Jennings are meeting with Tom Loranger next week.

Ms. Willis said she supports further discussions and work as long as the outcomes aren't predicted, such as instream flows will absolutely change. The options related to changing instream flows should remain open. The Partnership shouldn't imply that a decision has already been made and that the only outcome is to change instream flows. The STC is pursuing other alternatives.

Mr. Craig proposed creating a draft flow chart with actions, decision points, and milestones for discussion purposes at the meeting next week and presenting it at the May 22, 2007 workshop for feedback.

Ms. Napier requested that Mr. Jennings forward the product to Mr. Kliem for the workshop.

Mr. Jennings announced he will be out-of-town from May 11-16, 2007.

Ms. Willis reported she's unable to attend the May 22, 2007 workshop.

Scope of Work for Phase 4 Year 2 Grant

Ms. Napier distributed a Year 2 Watershed Plan Implementation project description, scope of work (SOW), and budget document. The STC provided input about how to allocate Phase 4 Year 2 grant funds. The Partnership refined the SOW and it was submitted to DOE.

Ms. Napier reviewed the tasks and subtasks listed in the SOW. She noted administration (Task 1) refers to fiscal administration only. Tasks 2 and 3 have been completed. Task 4 consists of general staff support that includes her time providing project coordination and staff support to the CBP and standing committees and the meeting summaries provided by Puget Sound Meeting Services (PSMS).

Mr. Craig reported legislation was approved allocating funds to DOE for planning unit administration support for watershed planning units above the Legislative appropriation for the Chehalis Watershed. The grants range from \$30,000 to \$60,000. The Chehalis Watershed is in a position to receive a grant. The STC should consider how to expend the additional money.

Ms. Napier said the Partnership can refine and amend the contract. The Partnership must be clear about what it will accomplish each year, set a budget, and meet the deliverables. The SOW is a starting point.

Discussion ensued about creating a document for tracking the status and progress of tasks and subtasks, budget allocations, expenditures, and milestones. Ms. Napier reported she circulated a draft budget summary document at the last Partnership meeting.

Ms. Willis suggested Ms. Napier brief the STC regularly (monthly) about the status of the budget and work tasks. Ms. Napier said a goal is to track the tasks and budget components using the Plan 2 Fund tool.

Discussion followed about the status of funds received from a lawsuit, an additional allocation for salmon recovery, how to identify and track in-kind contributions, and Plan 2 Fund and EXCEL capabilities and report outputs.

The STC reviewed tasks 5 and 6. Ms. Napier said task 6 is new and talks about developing a new outreach tool.

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Mr. Craig commented that the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) is not functioning well and there are only a few that are actively engaged. A CAC cannot function on its own and needs staff support. There is no process in place to recruit new members. The CAC has the potential to be a strong link.

Discussion ensued about the budget and whether the funds are sufficient to fund staff support for the CAC. Ms. Napier reminded the STC that Bill Jarocki from Boise State University will facilitate a discussion with decision makers about developing an organizational structure to implement the Chehalis Watershed Plan.

Conversation followed about funding resources to backfill Ms. Napier's position, finding someone that also possesses accounting experience, identifying decision points for the June discussion with Mr. Jarocki, and the need to make some decisions in July. Ms. Napier said she plans to present information supplied by Mr. Jarocki at the CBP's May meeting.

Members discussed the make-up and operating procedures of the CAC and ways to re-energize the committee. Mr. Swartout suggested identifying current Partnership needs for the June meeting with Mr. Jarocki. Further discussion followed about the CAC governance structure, including a sub-task under 6 that talks about revitalizing the CAC, the estimated budget for the task, that grant funding available from DOE could be used to help hire someone to work with the CAC, completion of work products, and creating a video brochure about the Chehalis Basin that could be used as an outreach tool. Ms. Napier asked that the STC delay amending task 6 following the Partnership's June meeting.

Mr. Swartout asked if a separate work plan is required for the new legislative appropriation of \$569,000. Ms. Napier answered yes.

Ms. Napier reviewed concerns expressed at the last Partnership meeting concerning task #7 and the changes before the STC based on that feedback.

Mr. Jennings offered a solution for task #7. Centralia's Skookumchuck project could be designated as the pilot water right mapping project referred to in subtasks a and b. The City plans to hire HDR to complete the pilot project. The remainder of the budget could be used to implement sub-task c. Dialogue followed about asking HDR to also provide an estimate on what it will cost to develop the SOW for an assessment of water right claims in the Chehalis Basin with the subtask a and b work.

Ms. Napier reported the SOW was submitted to DOE. DOE is expediting the development of a grant contract based on the SOW for the next biennium.

Discussion ensued about an e-mail concerning an annual watershed meeting later in the month. The agenda is unknown. Mr. Craig said he would follow-up on an agenda for the May 31, 2007 meeting at the Tacoma Art Museum. Ms. Napier announced she is unable to attend the meeting.

Further conversation about task 6 followed. Mr. Craig suggested amending the title for task 6 read, "Work with citizen volunteers to develop and implement an education and outreach work plan."

Chair Swartout recessed the meeting from 12:03 p.m. to 12:55 p.m.

Chanele Holbrook-Shaw arrived during the lunch break.

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Ms. Hegy left the meeting during the lunch break.

CBP Agenda

Members reviewed a draft agenda for the CBP May meeting:

- Prepare the Partnership about the June meeting (plan to transition) with Mr. Jarocki
- Provide the CBP with a briefing about the STC's discussions concerning the workshop, a recap of next week's meeting, and reporting out of the follow-up workshop
- Update the members about the revised DIP
- Chehalis Basin Education Consortium students are scheduled to attend the meeting at 10:30 a.m. to provide a presentation
- An update of the Geographical Information System (GIS) Clearinghouse project (standing agenda topic)
 - Progress on the draft watershed map

Mr. Craig suggested the STC contact Ms. Jacobsen about creating a one-page lesson plan for teachers on how to use the watershed map.

Dialogue proceeded about a sustainability vision for the Chehalis Watershed, what would it look like, setting aside lands for forestry and agriculture, Community Sustainable Agriculture (CSA), partnering with the Secretary of Agriculture to sponsor a summit to brainstorm future farming, purchase and transfer of development rights, financial implications to the agriculture community concerning mandatory buffers, and conservation futures.

Ms. Napier suggested that Ms. Holbrook-Shaw's Evergreen students provide a presentation about their water quality monitoring activities along Scatter Creek at the June 14, 2007 Water Quality Subcommittee meeting.

Discussion followed about Cascadia Energy Corporation expressing an interest for participating in the Chehalis Basin planning program and potential benefits (data, financial) and mitigation through the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) process for restoration projects resulting from construction of required infrastructure.

Ms. Napier reported Lewis County is sponsoring a mitigation databank pilot project within its portion of the Chehalis Basin.

Steve Boessow arrived at 1:24 pm.

Ms. Willis asked if there is a grant program that supports outreaching and educating non-commercial farmers about Best Management Practices (BMPs). Ms. Napier referred her to the *Director of Watershed Resources* on Boise State's website, and suggested she could also contact Ann Wick.

Review Work Plan for Detailed Implementation Plan Strategies 1-3

Ms. Napier briefed the STC about the DIP process to date. She provided an overview of the Plan 2 Fund application tool (an access database) developed by Boise State University. She distributed a handout titled *Comprehensive Planning Summary*. The Plan 2 Fund tool can be used to help organize the Partnership's planning work. Data from some of the strategies have been entered.

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The database has the ability to track other things in addition to DIP strategies and information. All of the information related to implementing the Chehalis Basin watershed plan is captured under the same file.

Objective numbers refer to interim milestones. Each interim milestone has a set of tasks. Ms. Napier described how the planning summary is organized, different ways to track data, how the contact information was entered, tracking budgets by task, financial contributions data entry page, and a grant tracking feature. Members recognized Ms. Napier's time to enter all of the data is limited and that additional information from the stakeholders is needed.

Throughout Ms. Napier's presentation, members brainstormed database enhancements to help serve the Partnership's needs:

- A monthly reporting feature would be beneficial.
- The ability to manipulate a number of report outputs.
- Tracking non-financial and/or in-kind contributions.
- Establish a clearinghouse for the Plan 2 Fund program.
- A way to track milestones and budget information based on a calendar year.
- The ability to enter a project duration timeframe and/or start and end dates
- In addition to identifying the project lead, distinguish the resource team for each task.

Ms. Napier provided examples of software limitations encountered while entering the information. Conversation proceeded about other applications that could benefit from Plan 2 Fund, and adding another layer to the database. A key difference between Plan 2 Fund and EXCEL is that the Plan 2 Fund offers a variety of reporting mechanisms.

Discussion followed about Grays Harbor Community College or the GIS clearinghouse taking over the Plan 2 Fund function and adapting it to fit the Partnership's needs. Mr. Swartout said GIS could perform a function, but not the administrative function of the Partnership.

Ms. Napier added Boise State is willing to consider changes to the database.

Mr. Swartout drew an example on the whiteboard of a reporting format feature Mr. Craig would like to see (a monthly project status tracking report). It is necessary to set up a mechanism to enter the data into one place that is continually up-to-date.

Ms. Napier encouraged members to present their ideas at the June meeting with Mr. Jarocki.

Mr. Swartout reminded the STC that the Partnership directs Ms. Napier's work program. Any information requests should be funneled through the CBP.

Ms. Napier said she's interested in feedback from the project leads about how they plan to use the Plan 2 Fund database and provide her direction about what data should be entered.

Dialogue followed that the agriculture and forestry components will be added to the Water Quality Subcommittee. Mr. Swartout stated the STC is a coordinating body for the Partnership. Each subcommittee reports back to the Partnership.

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Members talked about identifying a specific contact person for each task and the responsible entity. Ms. Napier emphasized she's not looking for answers today, but is pointing out current data gaps.

Further dialogue about Plan 2 Fund data entry and reporting capabilities followed.

Water Quantity Discussion

Mr. Boessow conveyed he was asked to attend the meeting to answer questions about water quantity and his role in the DIP planning process. He said his interest is how the process affects his ability to make recommendations to DOE about water rights in general and/or mitigation.

Mr. Swartout provided a brief recap of the water rights and instream flow discussions that took place earlier in the meeting. In response to Mr. Swartout's recap about instream flows, Mr. Boessow offered as an example that instream flows could remain the same, but that there could be a restriction on wells in continuity with streams that are regulated. Standards about mitigating for adverse impacts vary depending on the watershed. Mr. Swartout said a question is what scope can an instream flow rule take on.

Other Business

Mr. Craig reported DOE is revisiting funds allocated for operating and capital budget categories that are in addition to the \$30,000 - \$60,000 grant program, and the Legislative appropriation. The agency plans to mail out a notice that grant funds are available. He outlined the types of programs eligible for funding, and project ranking criteria. The final project request forms are tentatively due by June 15, 2007. The agency will review and rank the proposals through July 1, 2007. Dialogue about who can apply for the grant funds followed.

Ms. Napier left the meeting at 2:50 p.m.

Mr. Swartout said the Partnership should be briefed about the grant program. He asked Mr. Craig to forward an e-mail to Ms. Napier about the grant opportunity. Ms. Napier could then forward the e-mail to STC members.

Adjournment

With no further business, Chair Swartout adjourned the meeting at 3:00 p.m.

Prepared by Cheri Lindgren, Recording Secretary
Puget Sound Meeting Services