

**CHEHALIS BASIN PARTNERSHIP  
STEERING TECHNICAL COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES  
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Building  
600 Capitol Way  
Olympia, WA  
April 3, 2008  
9:30 AM**

**Meeting Summary**

---

**PRESENT**

Lee Napier, Grays Harbor County

Mark Swartout, Thurston County

Christine Hempleman, Department of Ecology

Kahle Jennings, City of Centralia

Terry Willis, Citizen, Thurston County

Glen Connelly, Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis  
Reservation

Jim Hill, Citizen, Lewis County

Samuel Iwenofu, Quinault Indian Nation

Lonnie Crumley, Stream Works Consulting

Cheri Lindgren, Puget Sound Meeting Services

**Welcome & Introductions**

Chair Mark Swartout called the April 3, 2008 meeting of the Chehalis Basin Partnership (CBP) Steering Technical Committee (STC) to order at 9:40 a.m.

**Meeting Agenda**

Chair Swartout reviewed the meeting agenda.

**Discuss Implementation Project List – Response to Ecology Upcoming Budget and Groundwater Characterization – Continue Discussion of Next Steps**

Chair Swartout reviewed options to secure \$800,000 for the USGS groundwater characterization study. The MODFLOW model will inform a basin-wide flood study and identify alternatives for storing groundwater.

The Legislature allocated \$2.5 million for a basin-wide flood study. It appears the Office of Financial Management (OFM) has determined \$2.5 million will be provided to the Chehalis Flood Executive Committee (CFEC), which is a nonfunctioning group at this time. Additionally, OFM will not allocate to the executive committee the Governor's \$50 million appropriation until the CFEC is activated by an interlocal agreement of all three counties - Thurston, Grays Harbor, and Lewis. The CFEC's could provide the Partnership with \$800,000 to complete the MODFLOW model.

In response to a question from Ms. Willis, Chair Swartout reported Mr. Gordon White is working with Keith Phillips from the Governor's Office on the issue.

Mr. Jennings provided an explanation of DOE's Shorelands and Environmental Assistance Program.

Chair Swartout said the \$50 million bonding authority approved by the Legislature does two things. It provides \$47.5 million for the levee project in Centralia/Chehalis and \$2.5 million for a basin-wide flood reduction study. The US Geological Survey (USGS) groundwater model is important when considering flood reduction in the Chehalis Basin. The \$800,000 could also be added to DOE's budget package to the Legislature. Two years ago, the CPB was awarded \$650,000, which was deducted from DOE's allocation

to manage watershed planning. It's possible that the \$50 million (of which \$2.5 million is a piece) will funnel to DOE for management purposes. He suggested the CBP should partner with DOE when approaching the Legislature to secure \$800,000 for the model.

*Mr. Iwenofu arrived.*

Chair Swartout said he conveyed to Mr. White that a public process is required when making decisions on how to spend the \$2.5 million. A component of the Ecosystem Restoration Project could look at flood reduction. Grays Harbor County would act as the local sponsor. A tri-county commissioners meeting is scheduled for April 14, 2008 at the Thurston County Courthouse. The purpose of the meeting is to receive the proposal from Lewis County about forming a flood district. No action is anticipated.

Chair Swartout said the draft interlocal agreement does not recognize a role for the Partnership. Commissioner Macleod believes the CFEC would handle the policy issues while the technical side could reside with the Partnership. One issue is whether the interlocal should include language defining the Partnership's role. Thurston County, Grays Harbor County, and the Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation were invited to comment on the old agreement, which expired on December 31, 2003.

Discussion followed on the prior interlocal agreement, how that agreement relates to the tribes, and who is driving the current proposal.

Mr. Jennings asked if Commissioner Macleod believes the Partnership could play a technical role based on abilities within the organization rather than obtaining other technical resources. Chair Swartout reported Commissioner Macleod has participated on the executive committee in the past. The executive committee has considered policy related issues. Mr. Jennings said USGS and other experts provide information to the group. There are additional costs associated with detailed analysis. Chair Swartout suggested the preferable outcome is for the Partnership to receive \$800,000 to fund the MODFLOW model. Mr. Jennings commented that Lewis County is interested in securing the \$2.5 million.

Chair Swartout reported Thurston County has indicated that there is no decision making process defined within the interlocal agreement. He outlined voting options under discussion by the CFEC. Thurston County is suggesting the inclusion of all municipal corporations within the floodplain. Gordon White has indicated no funds will be allocated to an organization if all three counties have not participated in the interlocal agreement. Upcoming CFEC meetings include:

- April 4, 2008 in the Council Chambers of the Lewis County Courthouse at 10:00 a.m.
- April 17, 2008 at the Lewis County Courthouse from 1:30–4:00 p.m.
- April 29, 2008 in the training room at the Lewis County Law and Justice Building from 9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

Mr. Jennings referred to a provision in the DOE document stating, "This is not an application for project funding." He asked if the document serves as a preliminary project proposal. Ms. Hempleman confirmed that it's her understanding as well. Chair Swartout said it's a needs assessment and applicants should be realistic when proposing and estimating projects.

Ms. Napier reviewed a list of projects for the STC to consider, which include the GIS Clearinghouse, Coordinated Water Quality Monitoring Program, water storage, and water rights. The Partnership received funds for the first three projects. There is a connection between the water storage project and the

flood control project. Chair Swartout said there are limits of a storage project without the watershed characterization model.

Ms. Napier reported funds were not obtained for water rights. DOE was in the process of working on the interruptible water rights issue. The Chehalis Basin was high on that priority list. However, nothing has occurred on either side.

Chair Swartout asked if there are funds remaining from the \$650,000 legislative appropriation. Ms. Napier replied that most of the funds have been appropriated, but there is approximately \$100,000 remaining for groundwater characterization.

Mr. Hill suggested moving forward with the USGS proposal. Ms. Napier said there are funds to advance to the next step. She said she is unclear as to whether committee is going forward with USGS.

Mr. Jennings clarified that it's his understanding that the STC wants to move forward with the project and that USGS has proposed to do the work. HDR is claiming it can complete the project faster and for less money but the company is not providing any match.

Chair Swartout said the Partnership focused on the gaining/losing reach component and not the entire project. He suggested the Partnership should make a decision and move to the next phase prior to asking DOE for an additional \$800,000.

Discussion followed on the next steps. Chair Swartout said the Partnership could ask USGS to do the work and USGS could subcontract a portion of the work to a private firm. If the CBP selects USGS, the agency will provide \$500,000 in matching funds. That demonstrates to the Legislature that the CBP is moving forward with the groundwater characterization project. Mr. Jennings questioned whether the STC has evaluated an alternative to the USGS approach. He offered to contact a company to provide a presentation to the STC. Chair Swartout said the discussion should present to the Partnership for a decision. Ms. Willis suggested the STC should ask the questions and present the information to the Partnership to help inform a decision.

Mr. Hill expressed interest in learning about the difference between USGS and a private approach, possibly merging the two, and learning how future deliverables could be affected.

Mr. Iwenofu indicated that USGS provides cost sharing for projects, which typically means less cost to the contracting agency. The Quinault Tribe has Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with most federal agencies to include USGS. He said he's unsure how that applies to the Chehalis Basin.

Chair Swartout asked for feedback on a strategy that could include STC providing a recommendation to the Partnership as well as having the STC receive a private industry perspective. Mr. Jennings said the first step concerns the credibility of the information when it first comes out. He reiterated his question about whether the STC wants to consider an alternative to inform a decision or to move ahead with the USGS proposal.

Chair Swartout suggested if the CBP receives \$800,000 it's likely USGS could complete the groundwater characterization.

Members offered the following comments on the benefits of using USGS to complete groundwater characterization rather than another firm:

- A concern is the longevity of project. Private industry has a tendency to come and go. USGS is a permanent agency.
- Work products are available to the public.
- USGS is a reliable organization.
- USGS uses peer review for final deliverables.
- It is likely that the information will be good.
- The agency has a track record of accomplishments.
- USGS is trustworthy and willing to fund half the cost.
- USGS supports the tribes.

Chair Swartout suggested engaging with the federal agency for a long-term project while working with a private firm for a short-term proposal. Private industry could be involved with the smaller elements of the work while USGS is responsible for the larger project. DOE would contract with USGS for the venture.

Members generally agreed to recommend using USGS for completing the characterization study and model.

Ms. Napier suggested resubmitting a two-year \$250,000 request for the water rights project. A small pilot project for water rights has been identified. She reviewed the project statement for the larger water rights project to advance local efforts in identifying alternatives for sharing water within the Chehalis Basin watershed to meet an array of current and future needs. A portion of Phase 4 Year 2 funding will be allocated to Centralia for the pilot project. It's important to build on that work.

Ms. Napier reported that as requested by the Quinault Indian Nation (QIN), DOE agreed to enforce interruptible water rights last year. Mr. Iwenofu said he'll discuss the project with the QIN director. The tribe is very interested in the water rights issue.

Ms. Napier said she will refine and distribute the list to members for review and input. The project list could then be resubmitted to DOE. Mr. Hill and Mr. Jennings expressed support for the water rights project. Mr. Jennings added that the groundwater model data is fundamental to managing water resources. Ms. Napier indicated the list will include the water rights review project and groundwater characterization using the USGS Scope of Work (SOW).

#### **Anatomy and Outcomes of the December 2007 Storm – CBP Meeting Follow Up**

Mr. Hill suggested inviting Dr. Hendrickson to the next CBP meeting to discuss "One Voice."

Ms. Willis shared that she, Grays Harbor Commissioner Carter, and Jay Gordon (landowner and Executive Director, WA Dairy Federation in Grays Harbor) plan to attend a One Voice meeting.

Mr. Hill said he understands One Voice is focused on a basin-wide approach.

Chair Swartout reported Laura Orr with the US Corps of Engineers did a good job in responding to questions during the last CBP meeting. The Governor wants a phased approach. Phase 1 involves the levy project. Phase 2 pertains to basin-wide flood intervention. Some people are not interested in a phased approach or moving the levy project forward without looking at the basin as a whole. The Corps' participation requires analyzing costs and benefits within urbanized areas. Attendees at the CBP meeting commented that there are different sources of federal funding for other projects within the basin.

Mr. Jennings suggested there is some perception that the levy project could relieve pressure on the issue. He asked how basin-wide solutions will advance after the protection of I-5 and the cities of Centralia and Chehalis are determined.

In response to a request from Ms. Hempleman, Ms. Napier explained the history of the Ecosystem Restoration Project, which is focused on restoring habitat and ecosystem functions. Chair Swartout said he understands the Ecosystem Restoration Project is to mitigate impacts of the levy project. Ms. Napier said a flood control project is supposed to mitigate impacts. The levy and Ecosystem Restoration Project are separate projects. The Ecosystem Restoration Project was intended to gather data on the basin and identify projects, one of which was the Satsop Floodplain Project. The Ecosystem Restoration Project received a small federal appropriation over the last several years. The project requires a non-federal sponsor. Ecosystem projects could include barriers. Ms. Orr has stated ecosystem restoration could have a flood control component, which was never pursued under the old program. The project management plan is vague and there isn't sufficient funding. Additionally, the previous process was cumbersome and people lost interest.

Discussion followed about the Satsop floodplain project, which can resume if funding becomes available.

Members discussed agenda topics for the Partnership's April meeting.

Mr. Hill expressed a desire for more interaction and information sharing at CBP meetings. Chair Swartout said the meetings are topic driven. Asking questions could help facilitate additional discussion. He asked whether the agenda should include a discussion on the interlocal agreement and the Partnership's role. Mr. Hill suggested the Partnership should be involved. A basin-wide approach includes the watershed.

Ms. Hempleman asked if the topic of the Partnership's involvement should be raised at one of the upcoming CFEC meetings. Chair Swartout indicated he will speak with Thurston County Commissioners about the Partnership's role in the interlocal agreement. Mr. Connelly advised that he will contact Mark White or David Burnett as well and is also planning to attend the CFEC meeting.

Discussion followed regarding tribal participation in basin-wide issues and a one-day tribal training session offered by the Governor's Office. Chair Swartout noted that 70% of the Chehalis Reservation is located in the floodplain.

Mr. Hill said he would appreciate having Ms. Orr attend the next Partnership meeting. Ms. Napier indicated she will follow up and confirm Ms. Orr's attendance.

Ms. Hempleman said much of the "hot wash" information was not carried forward to the Partnership.

Discussion ensued on debris dams and sedimentation associated with the debris and gaining a better understanding of lahars. Mr. Hill commented that old growth trees at Rainbow Falls Park helped retain debris within the river channel.

Chair Swartout suggested members should define their questions and identify the best person to provide additional information.

Mr. Hill said sedimentation is part of the overall issue. He referred to a data point at the former wastewater treatment plant indicating the basin has filled in 14 feet at that point over the last 7,000 years. The debris flow must have been a contributing factor in prehistoric times as well.

Members brainstormed potential questions, such as, “Did the flow of woody debris add to the destructive force of the flood, was the event different than any other event occurring in the basin, or was the event in December unique in the basin?”

Members agreed overarching questions should focus on the science rather than human and/or emergency response to the event as well as the uniqueness of the December flood.

Members discussed the likelihood of future impacts associated with climate change, a similar flood event in 2006 in the vicinity of Mount Rainier, and time of travel, which hasn’t been analyzed by USGS.

Chair Swartout suggested the question involving the uniqueness of the event in history and the likelihood that it will happen again captures the global warming issue and basin history.

Mr. Jennings suggested providing LIDAR pictures and interpreting the photos. Chair Swartout asked whether Grays Harbor College or another agency could assemble available LIDAR data for all three counties and the tribe with the data overlaid on the basin. Members expressed an interest in examining soil characteristics and hydrogeologic history. Several members agreed land use and risk management are underlying issues.

Chair Swartout asked Ms. Hempleman to speak to Mr. Sokol about identifying representatives (perhaps USGS or Patricia Olson with DOE) to attend the CBP meeting to address questions and provide supplemental information..

#### **Develop CBP Agenda for April**

The following is a summary of agenda topics discussed by STC members for the April meeting:

- What’s the role of the CBP in relationship to the “flood” organizations?
- Discuss the CFEC decision-making process.
- What transpired at the CFEC meeting?
- What transpired at the flood district meeting?
- What transpired at the April 14, 2008 tri-county meeting?
- Who and what is “One Voice?”
- Was the December 2007 flood a unique event in the Chehalis Basin and what is the hydrologic history of the Chehalis Basin?
- Placeholder – Consider contracting with USGS and use the remaining \$100,000 for the next phase of the groundwater characterization project

#### **Develop STC Agenda for May**

- Results from the Watershed Facilitator interview process.
- Briefing on outcomes of the Partnership’s April meeting.

#### **Adjournment**

With there being no further business, Chair Swartout adjourned the meeting at 12:18 p.m.

Prepared by Cheri Lindgren, Recording Secretary  
Puget Sound Meeting Services