

**CHEHALIS BASIN PARTNERSHIP  
STEERING TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY  
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Building  
600 Capitol Way  
Olympia, WA  
March 6, 2008  
9:30 AM**

**Meeting Summary**

---

**PRESENT**

Lee Napier, Grays Harbor County	Chanele Holbrook-Shaw, Citizen, Thurston County
Mark Swartout, Thurston County	Cheri Lindgren, Puget Sound Meeting Services
Christine Hempleman, Department of Ecology	Jim Hill, Citizen, Lewis County
Kahle Jennings, City of Centralia	Laura Orr, US Army Corps of Engineers
Chad Stussy, Department of Fish & Wildlife	Randy Lehr, Grays Harbor College
Glen Connelly, Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation	Nadine Romero, Thurston County
	Samuel Iwenofu, Quinault Indian Nation
	Dan Sokol, Department of Ecology

**Welcome & Introductions**

Chair Mark Swartout called the March 6, 2008 meeting of Chehalis Basin Partnership (CBP) Steering Technical Committee (STC) to order at 9:35 a.m.

**Discussion – Chehalis Flood Executive Committee**

Chair Swartout briefed members on the background of the Chehalis Flood Executive Committee. The committee was initially established by an interlocal agreement in 1998. The agreement expired December 2003. The Chehalis Flood Executive Committee (CFEC) is meeting on March 7, 2008 at 9:00 a.m. He said he's unsure whether the Partnership is aware of how the CFEC is currently structured. Representative Gary Alexander's bill references a Chehalis River Flood Authority.

Laura Orr, US Army Corps of Engineers, said she understands there are two lead agencies for the Centralia project. They include the Washington Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (CTED) and Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT).

Chair Swartout said a portion of the \$50 million from the state can be used for a basin-wide flood project. However, there is some confusion about where those funds will be allocated. He provided a copy of a recent article published in *The Olympian* on the Corps and ecosystem restoration projects. It's not clear if the funding will go through Lewis County or allocated directly to the CFEC. A concern is the bill refers to a committee (Chehalis River Flood Authority) that does not exist.

Lee Napier said Grays Harbor County has not been consulted regarding a request to change the project management plan for the basin-wide ecosystem restoration project.. She said she is unaware of any new related legislation. The substitute bill sponsored by Senators Fraser, Swecker, Rasmussen, and Sheldon at the request of Governor Gregoire concerns general obligation bonds for flood hazard mitigation projects throughout the river basin.

Chair Swartout said he plans to attend the CFEC meeting.

*Mr. Jennings arrived.*

Discussion followed regarding Lewis County keeping the three counties and the Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation engaged in future meetings.

*Ms. Holbrook-Shaw arrived.*

### **Meeting Agenda**

The meeting agenda was reviewed.

### **Update Regarding the Watershed Coordinator Position**

Randy Lehr, Grays Harbor College, distributed a draft job announcement for the Watershed Facilitator position. He said he used the Partnership's draft position description and translated it to the college's hiring process. Questions involve the role the STC would like to have in the interview and/or hiring process and the reporting relationship of the position. He described the college's advertising, application screening, and hiring process. A hiring committee ranks the job applications and typically invites three candidates to participate in one or two interviews. The three candidates are then invited for an initial interview followed by scheduling the top candidate for a final interview.

Chair Swartout expressed support for the strategy outlined by Mr. Lehr. He said he's comfortable with the college screening applicants and developing a short list.

Ms. Napier asked about the screening process. Mr. Lehr said a hiring committee is assembled. The hiring committee's recommendation is forwarded to the Human Resource Office.

Discussion followed regarding participants for the hiring and/or interview committee. Chair Swartout suggested there should be an opportunity for the Partnership to be involved in the interviewing process. Mr. Lehr suggested that the short list or final candidate could have a final interview with the CBP. Members agreed to the following participants:

- Mr. Lehr and someone from the college's Natural Resource Program
- Ms. Napier
- CBP member (Chair Canaday, Vice Chair Mark White)
- Mark Swartout
- A second tribal member (Mark White, Glen Connelly) or Terry Harris

Mr. Lehr suggested conducting the interviews on campus the same date as a regular STC meeting. STC members could hold a meeting at the college and meet the candidates.

Chair Swartout said it's important for the Partnership to be invested in the decision-making process. He reviewed the proposed hiring process of a hiring committee that will short list the candidates with interviews conducted before the hiring committee and the STC, followed by the CBP interviewing the final candidate. He suggesting asking the Partnership to approve the process as outlined.

*Mr. Sokol arrived.*

Ms. Hempleman said CBP members could be invited to attend the STC meeting at the college and meet the candidates.

Members reviewed terms of employment and primary and secondary responsibilities.

The STC agreed to incorporate the Partnership's mission statement along with the college's mission statement on page 1 of the job announcement.

Discussion followed on promotional opportunities, benefits offered by the college, who the Watershed Facilitator will report to, and where the position will be housed. Ms. Napier said it's important to document where the facilitator's time is spent (job costing) and that emerging work tasks follow a process rather than members contacting the facilitator directly to perform certain duties. An element is identifying resources to enable the employee to perform key competencies of the position. Mr. Lehr said it's also important to clarify who will be working with the facilitator.

Chair Swartout said housing the position at the college gives a sense of permanency. Grays Harbor College could utilize the position in another capacity if for some reason the CBP dissolve the position. It makes sense for the facilitator to report to Mr. Lehr and/or to Mr. Lehr and Ms. Napier.

Mr. Lehr confirmed he will make changes to the job announcement as requested, forward to the Human Resources Office for a final review, and advertise the Watershed Facilitator position.

Chair Swartout thanked Mr. Lehr for his work.

#### **Follow Up Discussion Regarding the Role of the CBP in Basin-Wide Flood Planning**

Everyone present provided self-introductions.

Chair Swartout reported the topic of hydrology hot wash was tentatively scheduled for the CBP's March meeting along with a presentation from the US Army Corps of Engineers. The Corps has evaluated upstream locations for storage. However, the public perception is that there is a "magic answer" that will prevent flooding in the future.

Dan Sokol reported a group of experts from the National Weather Service, Northwest River Forecast Center, US Geological Survey (USGS), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Corps, Department of Ecology (DOE), and locals involved in hydrology and meteorology met on February 20 to discuss the December 2007 flood. Everyone attending the meeting basically agreed that the flood was a 100-year event for the populated areas while western areas of the county experienced a much larger flooding incident.

Ms. Orr said there are two different Corps projects. One focuses on basin-wide ecosystem restoration (Chehalis Basin) and the other flood control (Centralia). The state has mentioned the Chehalis project but the current emphasis is the Centralia project.

Members discussed *The Olympian* article, specifically referencing two separate Corps projects. Chair Swartout suggested focusing on the Centralia project at the next Partnership meeting. Ms. Orr said the Centralia piece is set up for design and construction.

Mr. Jennings said there was a related article published in the *Chronicle*. Ms. Orr said people releasing information without confirming the data with the Corps. The Corps has not been successful in scheduling an editorial board meeting with *The Chronicle*. The Corps presentation before the CBP will focus on the Centralia project.

Chair Swartout asked Ms. Napier to forward copies of *The Olympian* article to STC members.

Ms. Napier agreed people are offering information without checking the validity. Ms. Orr said the Corps does not have all the answers. The project is at 35% design. The agency is following up with incorporating the most recent (2007) event information.

Mr. Stussy asked whether the basin-wide project is a continuation of the ecosystem restoration project. Ms. Orr indicated that it is. The Corps received authorization for a basin-wide project but whether the state or local community will approach the Corps about the proposal is unknown at this time.

Ms. Napier suggested the presentation should focus on the control project with information about the local community approaching the Corps on the basin-wide ecosystem restoration project sponsored by Grays Harbor County.

Mr. Stussy said the ecosystem restoration project addresses the problem while the flood control project addresses a symptom of the problem.

Ms. Orr said it's highly likely the Corps could reach the same conclusion for the entire basin. The agency considered other alternatives including upstream storage and a channel bypass. Federal participation requires analyzing costs and benefits within urbanized areas. The Centralia project demonstrates a cost/benefit ratio of 1:3. There is federal interest for development of the country nationwide but the environmental aspect (habitat units) is not a factor. The Nature Conservancy is working to incorporate habitat units as a monetary value.

Mr. Connelly said that from a tribal perspective the salmon component is an economic consideration.

Ms. Hempleman added that fishermen are fundamental to the nation's economy.

Mr. Sokol reported King County recently published a document identifying the economic value of environmental protection.

Ms. Orr reported nothing has been developed for ecosystem restoration. If the Centralia project moves forward and the Partnership is able to identify mitigation projects within the basin, she asked to be informed because the Corps will have to reformat the entire mitigation. Mitigation is based on habitat units. Mitigation is now required during the first phases of construction. The Corps has two years to design the project.

Ms. Napier reported barrier correction points throughout the watershed have been identified.

Chair Swartout asked that the presentation by the Corps review alternatives that have been evaluated. Ms. Orr said she will also include information about the Corps working with Lewis County.

In response to a question from Mr. Lehr, Ms. Orr said land use was a consideration when designing the levee system.

Discussion followed on the level of congressional engagement at the federal and state levels for the Centralia project. Ms. Orr explained that the Corps is coordinating closely with the Governor's Office. The Corps Public Affairs Office has been proactive and is engaged with stakeholders concerning the

project. Approximately 80% of the project is focused on the community while 20% is specific to I-5 benefits. WSDOT will move forward with the I-5 widening project with or without the Corps project.

Members discussed the format of the presentation for the Partnership meeting. Mr. Sokol recommended having Patricia Olson summarize and characterize flooding aspects to provide a lead in to the Corp's presentation. Mr. Jennings commented that there is only 80 years of data to determine 100- and/or 500-year flood events. It's somewhat pretentious to assume weather or flood patterns can be predicted based on 80 years of data. Chair Swartout suggested it might be useful to refer to the 1% probability per year rather than 100-year floods.

Mr. Jennings said there is evidence that the December 2007 flood event was 16" to 18" higher than the 1996 flood. Ms. Orr said based on current data and a statistical analysis, the 2007 flood was a 100-year event. Mr. Jennings said a true 100-year flood event could be a foot higher because there is a history of 100-year events since the 1970s. The lingo confuses the average person. The 2007 storm might not be unusual. Ms. Romero said the recurrence interval is every 6.7 years. The return time intervals have gone up coupled with a light increase in storm intensity. Ms. Orr emphasized that the levee is not designed for a 500-year flood event. There is a certain percentage of the levee height built in for contingencies. Chair Swartout said the 100-year base flood elevation changes with each flooding event.

Ms. Hempleman reported there was one extreme rain event between 1940 and 1970 compared to 10 in the following second 30-year timeframe. On a separate matter, in some cases antidotal information (related to logjams specifically) accepted by the public is not supported by the data. USGS has suggested taking a closer look at the travel time. She referred to an analysis that might be helpful for the presentation.

Mr. Sokol shared that FEMA is remapping Lewis County using the new data. Jeff Johnson with Northwest Hydraulic Consultants is skilled with conveying the information. It might be better if Mr. Johnson and Ms. Olson worked together to summarize and characterize flooding aspects and present to the Partnership.

*Mr. Hill arrived.*

Mr. Sokol offered to work with Mr. Johnson to discuss the difference between 100- and 500-year flood events.

Chair Swartout commented on an interesting discussion concerning the accuracy between the river forecast and the actual graph. Superimposing the 1996 flood event on the 2007 flood map would be important for the presentation. It was agreed the presentation should span 40 minutes with an opportunity for questions and answers for approximately 20 minutes. The Corps presentation will follow.

Discussion ensued on a separate presentation to be posted on DOE's website.

In response to a question from Chair Swartout, Mr. Sokol said Mr. Johnson could also speak about the logjam discussions.

Discussion followed about what to call the presentation for purposes of the Partnership agenda and promoting attendance at the meeting. Some ideas considered included:

- "Event hot wash" will not work

- The title for the second presentation is simply, “Centralia project description by the Corps”
- Current analysis of the recent flooding in the Chehalis Basin
- Include the terms “facts” and “science”
- Fast facts of flooding
- Current hydrologic analysis of the December storm
- Anatomy of the December storm and flood
- The title should not be too technical and should be direct and to the point

Ms. Napier suggested calling the presentation “Anatomy (science) and Outcomes (Corps project) of the December Storm.” Members agreed with the suggestion.

Chair Swartout asked Ms. Napier to send copies of the Partnership’s meeting agenda to *The Chronicle*, *The Olympian*, and *Daily World*. He suggested discussing state law as it relates to flood districts at the CBP’s April meeting.

Mr. Lehr commented that Washington State’s strategy to manage water resources based on watershed units is progressive as viewed by the rest of the nation. There is no legislative mandate. The creation of a flood district with a different boundary than the watershed does not provide for disincentives for actions occurring outside of the flood district that could potentially affect flooding. It would be prudent to consider how a flood district interfaces with other basin-wide activities such as water quality and fish habitat. Flooding is directly connected to other processes. A concern is creating a flood district operating independently and not tied to other projects. Maintaining continuity among projects is beneficial. The formation of a separate flood district undermines what is viewed as progressive in Washington.

Chair Swartout explained that flood district boundaries can be based on two things. Specific to rates and charges, the boundaries are based on who contributes to the problem. A special assessment is focused on who receives a special benefit and the boundary changes significantly. Once the CFEC is formed and the three commissioners are elected, it’s a separate entity.

Ms. Holbrook Shaw reported she is unable to attend the Partnership’s March 28 meeting.

#### **Groundwater Characterization Follow Up**

Ms. Napier reported USGS has broken out the project into incremental pieces to match funding availability. The two documents look very similar. The *Characterization and Numerical Simulation of the Water Resources of the Chehalis River Basin* draft document encompasses the entire Scope of Work (SOW). The *Compilation and Evaluation of Currently Available Data in Support of the Characterization of the Water Resources of the Chehalis River Basin* relates to the \$90,000 available to continue the groundwater work. USGS is poised to begin work when directed by the Partnership. An October target is probable. The STC has some time to review the proposed SOW and schedule the activities into the current work plan. She asked for feedback from members. There is no time constraint associated with the \$90,000 funding element; however, a constraint concerns expending the money before seeking additional funding from the Legislature.

Ms. Romero asked whether the second document includes numerical simulation. Ms. Romero commented that the numerical model is ultimately important to address key forecasting questions.

Discussion followed on how the SOW ties in with the Centralia project. Ms. Orr noted the Corps project has moved on to design and construction.

Mr. Lehr said a numerical model could potentially inform design of the larger ecosystem project.

Discussion ensued about using a portion (\$2.5 million) of the \$50 million from the Governor to help fund completion of the characterization and numerical simulation project.

Ms. Romero suggested focusing on something other than 3,000 square foot cell grids.

Members discussed a joint ecosystem restoration with flood damage reduction project and how the \$2.5 million might be allocated.

Mr. Jennings said the USGS study is intended to address whether it's possible to shift location or time of use in ways that will not affect surface water flows. The question is whether surface water withdrawals to groundwater withdrawals could be moved to other parts of the Chehalis basin. The study will be used as a tool to predict the effects of additional water withdrawals on surface waters and the location and timing. He said he's not sure how that work fits in with ecosystem restoration.

Ms. Orr suggested the Partnership coordinate its modeling project with the organization that is awarded the \$2.5 million for a basin-wide study.

Chair Swartout said the Partnership needs an additional \$800,000 for USGS to advance the overall project. He added that Lewis County is identified as the fiscal agent in the outdated CFEC interlocal agreement. It appears appropriate that the CBP is responsible for the basin-wide study.

Ms. Napier said the CBP is involved in watershed plan implementation. The STC has been working with USGS over the last year to develop the SOW.

Chair Swartout said it's likely \$2.5 million could be directed to WSDOT or CTED to manage.

Mr. Jennings pointed out that in the SOW for the short-term project; USGS is proposing to complete the work by September 2008. The remainder of the work would occur over federal fiscal years 2009, 2010, 2011, and 2012. Phase 1 would begin on October 1, 2008 with a final product (model) available September 30, 2012 dependent upon funding availability. There is an \$800,000 funding gap. Work associated with the model could be completed in increments and/or with contributing partners. USGS will provide a \$500,000 match. He indicated he is comfortable with the SOW as proposed.

#### **Develop a Draft CBP March 25, 2008 Meeting Agenda**

- Watershed Facilitator hiring process involvement discussion
- Anatomy and outcomes of the December storm

#### **Develop a Draft STC April Meeting Agenda**

- Organizational discussion preceded with training on demand - Bill Jarocki to attend

#### **Adjournment**

With there being no further business, Chair Swartout adjourned the meeting at 12:10 p.m.

Chehalis Basin Partnership Steering Technical Committee  
Meeting Summary  
March 6, 2008 Page 8 of 8

Prepared by Cheri Lindgren, Recording Secretary  
Puget Sound Meeting Services