

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

Meeting Summary

PRESENT

Lee Napier, Grays Harbor County
Glen Connelly, Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis
Reservation
Christine Hempleman, Department of Ecology (DOE)
Bob Burkle, Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)
Mark Swartout, Thurston County

Cheri Lindgren, Puget Sound Meeting Services
Janel Spaulding, Chehalis Basin Partnership/Grays
Harbor College
Lonnie Crumley, Stream Works Consulting
Laura Orr, US Army Corps of Engineers
Chanele Holbrook Shaw, Citizen, Thurston County
Barb Kincaid, Senior Planner, Lewis County
John Donahue, Washington State Department of
Transportation (WSDOT)

Welcome & Introductions

Chair Mark Swartout called the November 6, 2008 meeting of Chehalis Basin Partnership (CBP) Steering Technical Committee (STC) to order at 9:40 a.m. Everyone present provided self-introductions.

Agenda

A meeting agenda was reviewed.

Ms. Orr arrived.

Presentation – South Lewis County Subarea Plan

Barb Kincaid, Senior Planner, Lewis County, briefed the STC on the South Lewis County Subarea Plan activities to date. Participating in the plan are representatives from WSDOT, Cowlitz Tribe, Lewis County Economic Development Council, Lewis County, and the cities of Toledo, Winlock, and Vader. Ms. Kincaid outlined the boundaries of the planning area located within the lower Cowlitz watershed. None of the planning area is located within the Chehalis watershed. Work is also underway to develop a detailed implementation plan.

A steering committee flushed out the purpose of the plan, which focuses on economic development. The small stakeholder group discussion led to a legislative earmark to study the transportation corridor in south Lewis County. Lewis County received \$75,000 to proceed with the plan for economic development with a caveat that the municipality partner with WDFW and DOE to complete an economic strategy based on watershed characterization. The method DOE and WDFW used for Birch Bay will serve as the model for south Lewis County. Once the contracts were in place, staff began to evaluate the other elements including the transportation piece. The planning process is using local stakeholders through a steering committee. A number of different entities are preparing reports and data analyses. Members are engaged in a visioning process for the land use concurrently as WDFW and DOE are identifying sub-basins and focal species.

Consultants are conducting transportation modeling using a 20-year planning horizon, population projections adopted by Lewis County, and assuming build out scenarios based on land use options. The economist is looking at the economic profile and assessing how south Lewis County fits into the regional and state economies. The steering committee will be able to make informed decisions based on the science and stakeholder vision on where development is feasible in south Lewis County.

Members discussed floodplain management. Ms. Kincaid said a flood hazard management consistency check is required. However, south Lewis County does not flood. The planning boundaries do not include the Randle area. Ms. Orr commented that the federal government cannot build a project that will induce development.

Mr. Burkle reported the Cowlitz, Puyallup, and Nisqually Rivers are three of the riskiest rivers in the state because of global climate change. Ms. Kincaid stated the City of Toledo is at the most risk. The plan will benefit Toledo. Toledo's sewer treatment plant is not in a good location and any urban development will require sewer utilities.

Discussion ensued on dam management and releasing water when required, flood damage reduction, water flow easements, and in particular the Wynoochee and Tacoma Power Dams. Ms. Orr suggested Lewis County should evaluate land uses below the dam.

Ms. Hempleman asked whether the cities involved are willing to accept restricted growth if it's an outcome of the modeling work. Ms. Kincaid advised that restricted growth is probable. Additional data and a ranking system will help identify areas that should be preserved in a watershed context and mitigation measures to accommodate thoughtful growth.

Ms. Napier arrived.

Chair Swartout asked if it's possible that the urban growth areas (UGAs) are redrawn. Ms. Kincaid responded that the Winlock and Vader UGAs are enormous. Winlock's UGA will likely not change. An industrial park development is planned and a regional equestrian center is still under consideration. WSDOT allocated resources to assess improvements at the Exit 63 interchange, which spurred a State Route (SR) 505 Corridor Study, which has been expanded to include the arterials.

In response to a question from Ms. Orr, Ms. Kincaid said the autonomy of each city is critical. It's not the plan's intent to change a community's vision. One goal is looking at existing visioning statements and planning documents in one context and developing a sub-county vision and plan. The City of Vader indicated interest in remaining a bedroom community. It doesn't make sense for Vader to have a huge UGA.

Discussion followed on creating unincorporated UGAs, which is allowed by the Growth Management Act (GMA) under limited circumstances. The recently federally recognized Cowlitz Tribe is buying property and looking at creating affordable housing.

Ms. Kincaid said the next planning process concerns east Lewis County.

A meeting to continue visioning work for the plan is scheduled for November 17, 2008. Reports from state agencies and the economist are expected. Another meeting is planned for December. Stakeholders will refine the visioning work and include the transportation element.

Ms. Napier asked Ms. Kincaid to include her on the information distribution list.

Legislative Brochure Update & Review

Ms. Spaulding distributed copies of an updated legislative brochure. She asked for feedback.

Members discussed the status of developing a collaborative legislative strategy between the CBP and DOE.

Chair Swartout said the Partnership's budget request to DOE is not highlighted in the brochure. Ms. Napier commented on whether the brochure should focus on accomplishments or legislative requests. Chair Swartout asked that the brochure include a separate column and text outlining the budget request to DOE and the CBP's support of DOE's budget request.

Members and guests provided the following feedback:

- The photo of the culvert is not a good example of a culvert surviving the flood last winter. Better examples are newer culverts in the upper Chehalis and the Williams Creek area. Mr. Crumley indicated he would forward photographs to Ms. Napier and Ms. Spaulding.
- The title on the outside and inside of the brochure is difficult to read. White lettering was suggested.
- Remove the coloring around the columns and expand text margins.
- Combine "Who We Are" and "The Chehalis Basin" text into one column.
- Identify Lewis County.
- Condense accomplishments and list in a bulleted format.
- Simplify the text rather than eliminating photos.
- Showing accomplishments in a bulleted format could free up space to move "The Chehalis Basin" column from the back to the inside of the brochure.
- Incorporate accomplishments achieved with the funds allocated over the past biennium.
- Delete the legend and water quality monitoring sites map and identify the sites with bullet points.

Ms. Hempleman briefed the STC on DOE's budget. The state's General Fund will be significantly impacted and funding for watershed programs will be affected. Base grants, including Phase IV funding, are under scrutiny. DOE was asked to evaluate how cutting base funding by 10%, 15%, or 25% will affect planning units. She said she will advocate for not reducing planning funds as part of the base budget cuts.

Chair Swartout asked whether the department has considered ranking planning units on performance. Ms. Hempleman said there are ongoing discussions on accountability. There will be pressure for planning units to manage resources and spend funds appropriately as outlined in funding applications. Those planning units demonstrating success should be supported. However, at this time, there are many unknowns associated with the grant program.

Ms. Hempleman reported the special appropriation for planning unit support is unlikely for the coming year as well as the expectation for implementation funds. DOE hopes to fund the top priority for each Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA). In the last biennium, the average for each WRIA in the southwest region was \$80,000-\$90,000.

Members discussed the groundwater characterization project. Ms. Hempleman suggested Ms. Napier include a note in the funding application noting the financial request for the groundwater characterization work is negotiable. The best-case scenario is the Partnership could receive \$180,000 for WRIAs 22 and 23. However, that's unlikely.

Ms. Orr said another idea is to present options and outline projects that could be initiated and/or accomplished based on certain funding levels.

Members discussed the ecosystem and groundwater characterization projects, state and federal funding/matching strategies for stand-alone elements, and flood damage reduction. Ms. Orr said a model of the entire basin would be beneficial. The Corps will use data collected by USGS.

Chair Swartout suggested identifying accomplishments in the last biennium and identifying funding needs on the back of the brochure. The groundwater characterization project could be broken down into phases. It's important to demonstrate the Partnership has been accountable and is moving forward.

Review Design of Draft Letterhead

Ms. Spaulding distributed copies of a draft CBP letterhead sample. The STC offered the following comments:

- Move all of the contact information from the header position to the footer. The logo and "Chehalis Basin Partnership" should remain at the top of the document.
- Move the member agencies from the footer position to the left hand side of the document.
- The color combination is difficult to read.
- Replace "Department of Ecology" with "Washington State."
- The "Times Roman" font is easier to read.
- Strike the website address (retain Ms. Napier's email address).
- Create a letterhead using a pdf format or in PowerPoint, print off originals, and print letters directly on the original.

Discussion followed on users having difficulty opening up the current document, problems associated with typing in the "text box" format, and using a watermark for listing member agencies.

Mr. Burkle suggested reviewing Nisqually River Council's letterhead format.

Ms. Spaulding said she'll continue to refine the format.

Update Regarding the Chehalis River Basin Flood Control Authority

Chair Swartout briefed the STC on the last Chehalis River Basin Flood Control Authority ("Authority") project meeting. A diagram was presented at the meeting showing the floodplain filled. He referred to a biological opinion, which is a scientific piece of information that can be used in State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) for any project in the floodplain and not just for the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). Ms. Orr clarified the NFIP is for rating buildings and is an insurance model. The Corps will use the same model for the project area but in a different way. The consultant should have clarified that the diagram was for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) purposes and determining the base flood elevation.

Discussion followed on the “zero rise rule” and FEMA’s “one-foot rule.” FEMA will respond to the biological opinion within the next month. Chair Swartout reported Thurston County received a registered letter from FEMA recommending an immediate moratorium on development in the floodplain. Ms. Orr said FEMA still needs to respond to the opinion.

Chair Swartout said the last meeting was basically a workshop to provide a better understanding on the effects of flooding. Another workshop to finalize a 2009 work plan is planned for December and coincides with the next Authority meeting. An interesting issue of discussion involved not engaging in flood district (tri-county) conversations in a separate forum. Conversations should occur with the at the Authority meetings because cities are involved.

Ms. Orr reported on the results of the flood awareness meeting in Centralia.

Chair Swartout expressed interest in conducting a basin-wide flood awareness week for citizens and their property. It could occur in conjunction with both the Chehalis and Nisqually Watershed Festivals.

Ms. Hempleman commented on the upcoming anniversary of the December 2008 flood. Ms. Napier said Grays Harbor County is hosting a storm recovery resource fair sponsored by Grays Harbor Emergency and Risk Management and other organizations on November 22, 2008 from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Morrison Riverfront Park in Aberdeen.

Ms. Orr described Skagit County’s flood awareness event and activities. Chair Swartout asked Mr. Orr to forward additional information on the Skagit County’s event.

CBP Role Regarding Comments on Government Policies

Chair Swartout volunteered to draft policy statements for review at the next STC meeting. He asked for volunteers to draft statements. Once vetted by the committee, the policy statements could be presented to the Partnership for review and consideration. Comments should be limited around the Detailed Implementation Plan (DIP) and Watershed Plan rather than technical comments. Ms. Napier added that a goal is to encourage government agencies to make a connection between land use decisions and the DIP.

STC Agenda - December Meeting

The Partnership will not meet in November. A number of members are attending a water banking workshop DOE is hosting on November 21, 2008.

The proposed agenda for the December 4, 2008 STC meeting includes:

- Discussion of the Partnership’s role regarding comments on government policies
- Use the DIP to draft a 2009 monthly work program for the CBP
- Discuss whether water banking is an appropriate tool to keep agriculture (AG) and forestry on the ground

In response to questions about an AG representative, Ms. Napier said the Water Quality Committee (WQC) will discuss organizing a workshop to refine the AG and forestry DIP strategy and tasks identified from a previous workshop. Members were asked to identify individuals who could help refine the tasks.

Ms. Holbrook-Shaw asked whether Fred Colvin is interested in representing AG on the STC. Chair Swartout asked Ms. Holbrook-Shaw to follow up with Mr. Colvin on his interest to represent AG on the committee and extend an invitation to attend the next WQC meeting.

Adjournment

With there being no further business, Chair Swartout adjourned the meeting at 12:23 p.m.

Prepared by Cheri Lindgren, Recording Secretary
Puget Sound Meeting Services