

**CHEHALIS BASIN PARTNERSHIP
STEERING TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY
Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife
600 Capitol Way
Olympia, WA
February 5, 2009
9:30 AM**

Meeting Summary

PRESENT

Lee Napier, Grays Harbor County

Christine Hempleman, Department of Ecology (DOE)

Bob Burkle, Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)

Kahle Jennings, City of Centralia

Lonnie Crumley, Stream Works Consulting

William Gow, Puget Sound Meeting Services

Phil Rupp, Lewis County

Jim Hill, Citizen, Lewis County

Janel Spaulding, Chehalis Basin Partnership/Grays Harbor College

Welcome & Introductions

Lee Napier called the February 5, 2009 meeting of Chehalis Basin Partnership (CBP) Steering Technical Committee (STC) to order at 9:37 a.m. Everyone present provided self-introductions.

Agenda

Ms. Napier reviewed the meeting agenda.

2009 Watershed Festival

Janel Spaulding reported the 2009 Watershed Festival is scheduled for Saturday, September 19, 2009 at Morrison Riverfront Park, Aberdeen, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. An e-mail was forwarded to previous members of the planning committee to determine the best day and time for committee meetings. She invited members and guests to attend committee planning meetings. The committee will meet once a month in Montesano.

Bob Burkle arrived at the meeting.

Lonnie Crumley said he might be able to recruit some members from the task force. Chris Hempleman indicated a willingness to attend planning meetings dependent on the meeting date and time. She noted she will not be able to attend the festival because of vacation conflicts.

Ms. Napier and Ms. Spaulding offered several names of individuals who might be interested in participating. Bob Burkle suggested inviting representatives from the Washington Coast Sustainable Salmon Partnership to assist in planning activities.

Proposed Workshop to Further Refine and Implement DIP Strategy 4

Ms. Napier reported one of the most popular workshops from the Detailed Implementation Plan (DIP) was developing approaches to maintain forestry and agriculture (Ag) uses. The workshop was held in Montesano with many attendees representing both forestry and Ag. During the end of the development of the Watershed Plan, the discussion geared toward the value of forestry and Ag and how it complements water quality. At that point, there were suggestions to consider that element. As members ranked objectives and actions, the topic was considered of sufficient priority that it should be included within the first round of the DIP. Subsequently, the workshop was conducted. After some additional development

of interim milestones many people indicated they were interested in becoming participants. The issue was more or less tabled for some time. With recent issues surfacing surrounding flooding and municipal water rights, there is interest once again in bringing the issue forward. A suggestion was offered to bring that element of the DIP forward. Another component of the contract is updating the work plan. It was suggested to pull that element and begin developing another workshop series.

Kahle Jennings arrived.

After the last Partnership meeting, several members met and brainstormed moving forward. Members agreed workshops are helpful because they provide an opportunity for people to share and interact. Previously, informational packets were developed to include conservation issue papers and a TMDL issue paper pertaining to Ag and water management. With DOE's recent water banking workshop and proposed legislation on water banking, that information could be another tool that may play into Ag and forestry. Another suggestion is inviting field personnel who could serve as a foundation to help members understand the topics. Information developed to date for the workshops is titling the workshops, "Innovative Approaches to Agriculture, Water Rights, Conservation, and Timber." A series of workshops could be conducted with the first focused on sharing information on innovative approaches to water rights with a particular focus on Ag water rights. Experts would be invited.

Members discussed individuals to invite. Ms. Napier suggested inviting Jill Wall. Mr. Burkle suggested inviting forestry certification professionals. During this era of mill closures, more local marketing is necessary. An article was recently published about one of the longest running mills in the state that was in danger of closing. However, efforts were undertaken with a forestry certification organization to become a market for certified forestry products locally to enable the mill to remain in business. Conveying that message would be valuable. Ag is facing the same issue. There is a need to inform and involve local Ag about safe salmon certification organizations. Representatives of those organizations are willing to attend meetings to market its message. Adding salmon safe certification to product labels can open up many markets, particularly local markets. Other possible invitees are local marketing experts for both timber and agriculture. He cited the Nisqually watershed as an example of an area that is out front in sustainability issues that is incorporated within the Nisqually River Council's mission. It also ties into the watershed's implementation plan and includes sustainable forestry and Ag, such as Wilcox Farms. The Nisqually Land Trust is purchasing and managing forestland in a sustainable and certified manner as well as considering the viewshed by operating timberland for protection of the viewshed, such as in the Ashford area. The issue is timely and should be pursued. Keeping foresters and Ag on the land and remaining viable is important.

Ms. Napier noted a planning meeting is scheduled for the next day in Montesano at 9:00 a.m. at the county administration building.

Mr. Burkle suggested contacting personnel at Department of Natural Resources (DNR) at the Family Forest Fish Passage Program (FFFPP) as a potential presenter.

Jim Hill referred to Mr. Mael's comments during the last Partnership meeting about the loss of dairies in Lewis County during the last flood. He might be of consideration as a presenter as well. Mr. Mael is from the Lewis County Farm Bureau. Kahle Jennings suggested also contacting farmers. Terry Willis was mentioned as a possible contact. Phil Rupp suggested contacting Mike Mahoney, a former dairy owner on the Planning Commission who was trying to resolve the conflict between Ag, forest, and the Growth Management Act (GMA). Mr. Jennings suggested contacting a representative from National

Frozen Foods. With last year's fuel prices, the company was seeking local areas for growing corn. Some of the company's competitors were shipping corn in from eastern Washington. The freight cost alone must have been extremely expensive. He offered to assist in contacting the company. He also suggested contacting farmers through the Extension.

Members shared information on other possible contacts. Mr. Rupp offered the name of Susie Kyle as an active participant in organic farming. Ms. Hempleman said she can provide contact information through the Co-op as well, as she worked on the farm committee of the Co-op. Mr. Hill suggested contacting Future Farmers of America (FFA) at local high schools.

Ms. Napier described the format of the workshop to include sharing of information, engaging people in learning as well as becoming willing participants to help in implementation activities involving either planning or on-the-ground projects. Representatives would be invited from Ag, water districts, state agencies, and watershed planning groups. The 4-hour workshops would first focus on experts sharing information followed by several brainstorming workshops to develop several high priority projects. The Partnership's role is to serve as a forum for discussion with implementation activities conducted by members and other organizations and agencies.

Ms. Napier referred to the overall strategy and interim milestones comprised of inventory and analysis, promoting local Ag and forestry education and outreach, promoting local Ag and forestry sustainability, providing a sustainable business, and innovative approaches to water rights. Each milestone includes respective tasks. There may be more added after the workshop.

Mr. Hill pointed out that business owners are missing from the list representing farm support businesses, such as Del's Farm Supply as well as a representative from the Economic Development Council to provide marketing advice. Mr. Crumley offered the suggestion of the Small Forestland Owner Association of Grays Harbor County, as well as, organic farmers in Independence Valley.

Mr. Burkle commented on a disturbing trend occurring in Snohomish County with farmer opposition to farmland converted to fish projects. The local watershed steward has been dealing with the issue. There is much land located within the intertidal area and a fair amount has been purchased by land trusts or through the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) around the mouth of the Snohomish River. The farming community perceives that as a negative action. The land is marginal as it floods often and is not suitable for any development. There are many farmers holding on to their land with the goal that big box retailers will purchase the land at a premium price. The local farm lobby is not opposed to subdividing land into one-acre lots for homes or for other forms of the development. However, there is opposition for land converted for conservation.

Discussion followed on the value of wetlands and that many people do not attribute value to wetlands. Education is beginning to occur through DOE's wetland banking program.

Ms. Napier reported on the importance of developing the workshops to take advantage of remaining funds of the Phase 4 grant. It will be important to develop a good product that can be implemented because of future funding forecasts. Funding has been reduced for the next scope of the work of the Partnership. She invited members to share names of possible experts to invite.

Members discussed the timing of the workshops, day of week involving a weekday or weekend, and whether the topics are timely. Mr. Jennings offering to reach out to the Ag and forestry community to find out what's important for keeping them in business.

Ms. Spaulding referred to her work plan and a task to create a Partnership newsletter. She asked for input from members for creating a separate newsletter as it may conflict with *Drops of Water* published by the Chehalis River Council. However, a Partnership publication could aid in informing the community about the organization and ways of becoming involved.

Suggestions and input regarding a publication and ways to outreach included:

- Periodically sponsor an edition of the *Drops of Water* newsletter exclusively for CBP articles.
- Consider an insert as an option.
- An article could focus on the workshops
- Include articles on the work of the Partnership.
- Consider other options for reaching out to the communities, such as local access TV stations.
- Consider FFA for a volunteer project of a video of some element of implementing the Watershed Plan.
- Prefer written publications, but have difficulty finding time to read.
- A CBP newsletter could focus on the activities of the Partnership, such as calling out the work of the Partnership.
- Funding is available for mailing a CBP newsletter as a possible test run to ascertain response.
- Elma High School and the Thurston Conservation District both have video production capabilities.
- Consider goals to be attained through outreach.
- Is there a shift in the way society communicates? Is it shifting to visual formats?
- Consider adding Partnership page to Facebook, similar to Puget Sound Partnership's page, to reach another demographic.
- Tap into volunteer resources through outreach.
- Consider competing interests and ways to diversify messages.

The *Drops of Water* newsletter is published five times a year with a focus on water issues. The publication is distributed throughout the Chehalis basin.

Ms. Napier commented on funding challenges facing all agencies and offered a suggestion of Ms. Spaulding contacting Margaret Rader, Chehalis River Council, to consider partnering or ways of working together in publishing the *Drops of Water* publication featuring joint articles.

Discussion on CBP's Role for Commenting on Government Policies

Ms. Napier provided some background information on the topic involving the Water Quality Committee's (WQC) comment letter to Grays Harbor County on the Critical Areas Ordinance and the CBP's subsequent decision that it's not the Partnership's role to comment on other governmental policies. Members of the WQC were somewhat surprised by the decision. Since then, there has been discussion by the STC and the WQC about the role of the Partnership in responding to local government policies affecting water quality.

Ms. Napier reviewed Mark Swartout's suggested language addressing the question of the Partnership's role:

"One of the primary responsibilities of the Chehalis Basin Partnership is to oversee the implementation of the Chehalis Watershed Plan. There are times when local and state governments develop and adopt local policies and programs that may impact actions identified in the Chehalis Watershed Plan. It is the policy of the Chehalis Basin Partnership that it will provide constructive comments within the context of the Plan to local and state governments on policies when there is an opportunity to do so."

Mr. Hill said he believes the Partnership should review an action by a governmental agency and how it aligns with or opposes the watershed plan, and then submit comments.

Mr. Burkle suggested a more generic response of responding to governmental agencies and reminding them to review the watershed plan and incorporate elements supporting the goals of the basin.

Ms. Napier said her goal is for agencies to review the Partnership's plan to ascertain whether it aligns with the watershed plan rather than having the Partnership independently review numerous policies from different agencies. It's more effective to raise attention, which could be considered another level of outreach to a different audience. Mr. Hill agreed and said with the development of the watershed plan, it's incumbent upon jurisdictions to ensure policies balance and support the watershed plan.

Mr. Burkle commented on one of his responsibilities of providing comments on updates to the Shoreline Master Programs. Prior to 2011, he must review and comment on 30 different plans. The comments are very descriptive and include links to WDFW information. He suggested developing a scripted comment letter that links to the watershed plan and the DIP with the responsibility on the jurisdiction to ensure compatibility and alignment with plan goals.

Members agreed for Ms. Spaulding to draft a comment letter template with feedback provided by each committee of the Partnership on the components of the watershed plan that should be highlighted within the letter. The letter should include introductory comments about the purpose of the letter and the connection between watershed planning and the jurisdiction's respective policy.

Members discussed the disconnect between jurisdictions and the watershed plan or habitat goals.

Ms. Spaulding provided an update on the work of the stream team in Centralia involving a project on China Creek. The team applied for a Hussman grant from DOE. The next stream team meeting is scheduled on February 16, at 6:00 p.m. at Centralia City Light.

Ms. Napier commented on stream restoration work at the Straddleline ORV Park. Ms. Spaulding assisted in organizing planting teams. She is also designing some of the restoration signage.

Mr. Hill commented on Lewis County Public Utilities District's (PUD) advancement of some earthen dams for storage. Mr. Jennings said the PUD is examining the feasibility of generating power and offsetting the maintenance costs of power. That involves two dams in the upper Chehalis River. Mr. Jennings offered to e-mail the PUD's PowerPoint presentation to members. The two earthen dams would be located above Pe Ell and at South Fork with the primary purpose for flood control and secondarily for power generation of 10 megawatts. The proposal should be discussed as part of the watershed plan as

storage was proven in 2007 to help reduce flooding downstream. The Partnership has been discussing groundwater storage as well.

Mr. Jennings said PUD is promoting the proposal from several aspects – flood control, power, and augmenting stream flows in summer months. Representative DeBolt and Senator Swecker are supportive of the proposal. He noted the political climate is beginning to align regarding the concept. Mr. Hill added that Lewis County has contributed GIS support and modeling.

Mr. Hill said he believes the issue will be addressed at the Flood Authority workshop scheduled February 11, 2009 at the Veterans Museum. Ms. Napier said members of the Flood Authority are aware of the concept but most members do not know many of the details. Other than acknowledging that the concept exists, Flood Authority members haven't formally discussed the issue.

Members discussed problems associated with various proposals involving the basin that could be considered moving targets with limited discussion or lack of review and input by the various planning groups and local entities. Ms. Napier added that there have been several requests for the Flood Authority to provide an update to the Partnership on its activities. Lewis County Commissioner Averill is scheduled to update the CBP at the February meeting. He may address the PUD issue at that time. She asked members to provide guidance on what Commissioner Averill should address during the Partnership meeting. Mr. Hill suggested including the PUD issue as well as Lewis County's resolution for the new commissioner to replace Richard Graham as the county's representative on the Partnership.

Ms. Napier said the dam proposal is interesting as there have been some newspaper articles on the issue. She indicated she's been labeled as in opposition to the proposal but noted she hasn't expressed an opinion about the proposal other than receiving information on the proposal. Members discussed how easily issues can become distorted and how impressions are formed. Ms. Hempleman commented on how people can make up their minds when so little is known.

Ms. Napier commented on her efforts to seek funding sources for the Groundwater Characterization Study. She asked whether the project should be proposed to the Flood Authority for some funding assistance. Mr. Jennings supported the suggestion, as April 1 is the deadline for US Geological Survey's (USGS) participation. Ms. Napier said the challenge of so many funding sources is managing the budget/contracting processes.

Mr. Jennings reported on a presentation following a Centralia City Council meeting in March or April by TransAlta on the reservoir on the Skookumchuck. An overview of the City's modeling of the Skookumchuck reservoir will also be shared on how the reservoir can be used to provide fish flows, instream flows, and water, as well as water to TransAlta for steam generation. Mr. Hill suggested presenting the same information to the Partnership as well because it impacts the basin as a whole. Mr. Jennings offered to provide a video of the Council's presentation during a CBP meeting.

Review Draft Letterhead

Ms. Spaulding distributed a copy of the most recent version of the CBP letterhead, refined by Bonnie Canaday based on comments during the last Partnership meeting. The fish only represents a temporary logo until the final draft logo is produced. A graphic arts student at Grays Harbor College is working on the logo. Members commented on the improved format. Mr. Hill questioned whether shading and framing the information is necessary. He suggested italicizing the mission statement at the bottom of the page. Several other members commented positively on framing the information.

Ms. Hempleman referred to the fish logo and suggested the logo should be more reflective of preserving water for the future, which involves fish, but not necessarily only fish. Ms. Spaulding said the final draft of the logo will reflect a river basin with water and a fish.

Mr. Jennings acknowledged all the committee and CBP's previous discussions on whether to include a list of members on the letterhead. He suggested there is a benefit to include, "cities, counties, tribal, agencies, interest groups, and volunteers working together" to give the reader some idea about the organization. Members discussed possible placement of the information. Mr. Jennings suggested refining the addition to state, "Community, tribal, and governmental interests working together."

CBP Agenda

The February 27, 2009 meeting of the CBP includes:

- Flood Authority Update by Commissioner Averill to include the Lewis County PUD project
- Slides of the Flood – Mark White
- US Fish and Wildlife presentation on recently ranked projects
- Role of CBP on governmental policies
- Review of Letterhead/Logo
- Information on Student Congress

STC Agenda for March Meeting

Members discussed the agenda for the March meeting. Possible agenda items include:

- Work Plan Update
- Assignments from CBP Meeting
- Planning for Forestry/Ag Workshop
- Outreach Activities Update

Members discussed the Student Congress to be held on March 27, the same day of the Partnership's meeting.

Adjournment

With there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:52 a.m.