

**CHEHALIS BASIN PARTNERSHIP
STEERING TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY
Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife
600 Capitol Way
Olympia, WA
September 3, 2009
9:30 AM**

Meeting Summary

PRESENT

Lee Napier, Grays Harbor County

Kahle Jennings, City of Centralia

Bob Burkle, Washington State Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW)

Glen Connelly, Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation

Janel Spaulding, Grays Harbor College

William T. Gow II, Puget Sound Meeting Services

Christine Hempleman, Department of Ecology (DOE)

Welcome & Introductions

Glen Connelly called the September 3, 2009 meeting of the Chehalis Basin Partnership (CBP) Steering Technical Committee (STC) to order at 9:43 a.m. Discussions were added to the agenda on sustainability/planning unit support and Department of Ecology's (DOE) gaging program.

Review Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Document

Mr. Connelly referred to the FAQ document and his efforts in synthesizing submissions of questions and answers. Questions #1 and #3 were combined into one question describing the CBP and its membership.

Lee Napier offered a suggestion of including an introductory paragraph followed by questions to help provide a more informative format to the document. There appears to be too many questions, which could be reduced or combined. For instance, the introductory paragraph could state something similar to, "In 1998, the State Legislature passed Watershed Planning and the CBP was formed of a diverse group of jurisdictions to work together." Chris Hempleman agreed an introductory paragraph might entice people to read the document.

Mr. Connelly referred to a question pertaining to whether the CBP is an arm of the DOE and suggested not retaining the question. Members discussed options for addressing the question and suggested including language about the relationship between CBP and DOE and the funding mechanism because there appears to be some apprehension concerning DOE involvement. Members exchanged possible ideas on rewording the question and answer. Kahle Jennings mentioned that when he visits various FAQ documents on websites he generally reviews the questions rather than the answers. He suggested it might be possible to include more questions because someone seeking information is not going to read the entire document.

Mr. Connelly asked whether the membership should be included as well. It was noted the CBP website has membership information and that including members would increase the size of the document. Ms. Hempleman suggested including the website address at the bottom of the document. Mr. Connelly said the website address is embedded in several of the answers.

Members discussed the inclusion of the question stating, "What does the CBP think about dams/water retention?" Bob Burkle suggested phrasing the answer carefully. The department would support

including the question if the answer indicated, "... that releasing that water later to emulate pre-development habitat conditions for native species in the river." The current answer is problematic because retaining water and releasing it during low flows not only doesn't have benefits for native species that the department has ever been able to identify, but it has impacts to native species because the regime is artificial and doesn't necessarily benefit fish that have adapted to the river system. The system has been impacted through logging of the headwaters and other activities. To that extent, flow management, storage, and release are necessary to bring the river system to some semblance of previous conditions prior to development. The idea of selecting a maximum height that should not be exceeded and a minimum flow that should not be dropped while controlling all other factors does not work for fish and wildlife. It needs to emulate or resemble what occurs naturally.

Ms. Hempleman suggested a generic answer, such as, "Dams and water retention may be one of the options to address high and low flow issues in the basin. Those actions would have to be considered."

Members discussed possible language to replace that specific answer. Mr. Burkle shared some of his specific concerns with the language. Addressing the issue will require many different types of actions. The answer doesn't necessarily need to address specific actions. Members agreed to restate the answer to reflect, "The CBP supports the concept of retaining water during high winter flows and releasing that water later to mimic natural habitat conditions for native species in the river. Water retention projects would have to benefit both the communities and the natural ecology of the basin."

Ms. Napier suggested grouping questions #15, 16, and #20 in order because they pertain to the Flood Authority.

Members discussed the question and answer of #13 pertaining to, "Why are more studies being done? Don't we already have some solutions to the problems?" Member discussed various reasons for studies. It was agreed to reword the answer to state, "To successfully manage the watershed we must have a clear definition of the existing conditions and complete a full analysis of any potential impacts and unintended consequences that any projects may have on our environment before we move forward. These in-depth studies take time to complete."

Mr. Connelly said he was asked to include more information on the "whys" of creating a watershed management plan. The Detailed Implementation Plan (DIP) is a more detailed plan to achieve the goals within the management plan. Mr. Burkle suggested re-ordering and grouping questions in sequence of the particular topic, such as listing the questions about studies after questions about the General Investigation (GI) Studies. The question on getting involved in the CBP should follow the question on the description of the CBP. Members discussed a logical sequence of the questions. Questions pertaining to how to become involved and information on the website could be combined to eliminate a question.

Ms. Spaulding commented that the questions appear to follow two tracks with questions about the Partnership and questions about the difference between the Partnership and the Flood Authority. Questions on the GI Studies should then follow for a more logical sequence. The group discussed combining questions #10 and #14 to state, "How can I get involved in water resources/watershed management?" The group agreed to develop a combined answer and exchanged ideas on how to include the information, such as in a bullet format.

For question #11, the group agreed to revise the answer to state, "Our Watershed Management Plan, the DIP, and technical studies of water resources in the basin can be found on our website: www.chehalisbasinpartnership.org."

Members exchanged ideas and suggested language for the answer addressing, “How do I become involved?”

Members discussed the upcoming public meetings for the Twin Cities project involving the Flood Authority and the US Army Corps of Engineers and ways the meetings are being publicized. Some local grocery stores are distributing flyers and a local pizza company is providing flyers on the meetings.

Members edited the answer to “How to get in involved” and discussed whether to retain question #11, “What resources and information does the Chehalis Basin Partnership provide to the public?” Ms. Hempleman suggested retaining the question because it provides information on technical assessments that are available on the website. Members suggested revising the answer and improving specificity in the type of information available on the website. Members agreed to revise answer #11 to state, “Our Watershed Management Plan, the DIP, technical assessments, and volunteer opportunities can be found on our website: www.chehalisbasinpartnership.org.”

Members discussed question #4 concerning who makes decisions for the Partnership. Members agreed to revise the answer to reflect, “Decisions are made at monthly meetings by a consensus of the members who signed the interlocal agreement, with additional input from the public.”

Mr. Connelly advised that he’ll review the changes, revise the document, and forward to members electronically for an additional review.

Mr. Jennings suggested shortening the answer to question #9 regarding the DIP. He provided the revision to Mr. Connelly.

Review of Display and Handout Materials

Mr. Connelly reported the Partnership has a table at the public meetings with sufficient space for several posters on easels. Members discussed other handout materials to provide and reviewed several different maps. Mr. Connelly said attendees will want to discuss flooding and the GI Studies. It’s important to highlight what the Partnership accomplishes in habitat and wetland restoration to improve natural conditions that helps to prevent flooding. Mr. Jennings suggested providing examples of the Watershed Management Plan. Ms. Napier affirmed the documents will be available.

Mr. Burkle suggested including the port in the list of groups comprising the CBP in the FAQ document.

Ms. Hempleman offered to provide some display boards. Members discussed the space available to the Partnership for display materials and handout materials. Mr. Connelly described the room layout. Mr. Jennings suggested static displays don’t capture attention and recommended including a laptop with a slideshow of different maps projected on a larger screen. Motion is more effective in capturing a person’s attention. Ms. Napier said the watershed and habitat maps will be available as well along with a map of projects.

Members discussed the Twin Cities project public meeting dates, which are scheduled on September 16, at Swede Hall in Rochester, September 23, at the City of Montesano, and on September 30, at Centralia Middle School. Ms. Spaulding commented on another event on September 23 conflicting with the public meeting. Members discussed their respective attendance to the meetings. Mr. Jennings advised that he is attending the September 30 meeting in Centralia.

Discussion followed on the focus of the public meetings for the Twin Cities project. Ms. Napier said she'll work on developing the materials to include several posters and a possible slide show. Mr. Jennings offered to provide a laptop and projector.

Final Preparation for Watershed Festival

Ms. Spaulding reported the tall ships will be moored in the harbor during the Watershed Festival. Another person volunteered to cover the Partnership's table during the event. To date Mr. Jennings, Terry Willis, and several others have volunteered to provide coverage. Mr. Connelly said a representative from the Tribe will also serve some time. Ms. Spaulding said she'd like more CBP members to serve as well since the festival is sponsored by the Partnership. The poster has been finalized and will be electronically sent in a pdf format to Partnership members.

Mr. Connelly shared that he is working with tribal representatives involved in a canoe trip to provide some paddling while performing some songs along the river as well as coordinating the salmon bake. The group has confirmed participation but hasn't provided final details.

Ms. Spaulding reported the "Grays Harbor Banjo Band" will also perform this year. There are over 30 members in the band.

Streamflow Gaging Program

Ms. Hempleman reported the department is evaluating its network of flow monitoring stations. Currently, there are limited resources with many requests for monitoring stations. The Chehalis basin has many gages installed. Ms. Hempleman advised that she needs to submit a questionnaire on each gage in the basin by September 25, 2009 to provide information to evaluate the uses and priorities of existing gages. She distributed a copy of a spreadsheet with the list of questions and the location of each gage. Most of the gages more or less correspond to a control point. Several of the questions pertain to formal agreements with respect to the gages, such agreement with a water bank or a trust. The list represents all DOE gages in the Chehalis basin watershed.

Members discussed forwarding the questionnaire to appropriate individuals to complete. Ms. Hempleman asked whether the gages are used to implement the Watershed Management Plan. Additionally, information is need on Endangered Species Act (ESA) listings. The only ESA listing she is aware of is bull trout in the upper watershed. Mr. Burkle said bull trout are located in the lower watershed in the intertidal areas and surge plain. Currently, bull trout are listed as threatened.

For the question pertaining to gages helping with flood warning, Ms. Hempleman suggested it would be a generic answer at this point because the contract is ready for release for the early warning system and it's unknown what is critical and what needs to be augmented. There have been discussions on existing gages that could be upgraded as part of the warning system. She suggested including information that it's under evaluation and the status will be documented by next year.

Ms. Napier questioned whether the Flood Authority should provide some input. The questionnaire could be sent out to the Partnership and the Flood Authority with a request to submit information.

Mr. Burkle asked whether any of the gages are real-time gages. Ms. Hempleman said two of the gages are telemetry real-time gages. There are other non-DOE gages within the watershed. Mr. Burkle said it might be helpful to determine where there are overlaps. Mr. Burkle said he will share the information with a colleague.

Mr. Jennings questioned whether there are any gages where instream flows need to be maintained. Ms. Hempleman said based on the rule, she could reconcile all but two of the gages, but they are not used to manage, whereas the USGS gages are used to manage. That could change, however. Mr. Jennings referred to his prior employment at DOE. At that time, there were instream flows but no flow data for specific control points. They may not be used for managing. However, data helps to indicate whether instream flows established as rule are achieved or can be achieved. He offered to review the list.

Ms. Hempleman offered to send the information electronically to Ms. Napier.

Ms. Hempleman clarified the second to the last question as, "Whether the planning unit can support O&M if DOE can't." She asked members to consider potential impacts if gages are discontinued. Ms. Napier suggested also asking whether there are other agencies interested in sponsoring a gage if DOE is unable. She offered to send the information to Habitat Work Group members. Ms. Hempleman asked for input by September 18.

Mr. Jennings said it appears from the flyer on the gaging program that the department is seeking to reduce its workload. Ms. Hempleman said the intent is to ensure limited resources are distributed appropriately and to those areas that need some support. The entire gaging program is under review to appropriately allocate resources across all watersheds equitably. Mr. Jennings commented that there's an argument for ensuring monitoring occurs in areas where instream flows have been established. There's no need to have regulations, if not enforced.

Sustainability/Planning Unit Support

Members referred to the sustainability discussion during the last Partnership meeting. Ms. Napier said there seemed to be an interest in redirecting funds to sustain the water quality monitoring program. It's interesting how the Partnership redirects its priorities or whether there's a sense of some of the more productive activities. It's disappointing that the GIS Clearinghouse is no longer functioning. The Partnership must find a site for hosting the server at a lease of \$300 a month during a time when funds are very limited. It's not known how many visitors accessed the site. Some members view the Partnership grants in a big picture scenario rather than as separate grants designated for different purposes. Ms. Hempleman suggested members are beginning to understand the funding issue and that a critical point has been reached. Some members expressed an interest in addressing the funding issue. Mr. Jennings said he advised Bill Schulte on the administration of grants and why they can't be intermingled. He said he spoke with Ron Schillinger about whether its time to ask local governments and agencies to contribute funding. The issue is whether members perceive value and whether the Partnership should be sustained.

Ms. Hempleman said the issue is determining the critical functions and how much funding is necessary to fund those functions. Ms. Napier said for \$62,500 in funding, a minimum amount of support includes minutes support, a portion of her time, an edition of *Drops of Water*, and some outreach or facilitator support. Ms. Spaulding's time a quarter averages approximately \$15,000 to \$17,000 for salary, benefits, and travel. The college provides her office.

Mr. Jennings said Grays Harbor County has gone above and beyond. However, if funds are not available, Ms. Napier's position will return to a county-focused position. Ms. Napier indicated that 20% of her time is spent on Lead Entity activities. The Washington Coast Sustainable Salmon Partnership is consuming more than two days of her time. The Flood Authority also provides some funding for her position.

Mr. Jennings said Ms. Spaulding and Ms. Napier are key in holding the coalition together. Without their support, the group will fracture. Approximately \$150,000 is required to support the two positions.

Discussion followed on the number of Partnership members. Ms. Hempleman questioned whether it's possible for state agencies to contribute \$10,000. Mr. Jennings said DOE at one time contributed to the Hood Canal Coordinating Council through the Southwest Regional Director's budget. Mr. Burkle said his department contributes no funding to any watershed. Ms. Hempleman said it appeared at the last Partnership meeting that members are beginning to understand issues associated with ongoing funding. There appears to be funding for sustaining the organization for approximately one more year.

Mr. Jennings commented that if 10 local groups contributed \$5,000 the Partnership could approach the Legislature and request funding to match \$50,000. The Legislature often allocates funding based on local support. Mr. Jennings shared information on his attempts to assume more of role in the City regarding flooding and in the sustainability of the Partnership.

Members discussed the benefit of continuing the water quality monitoring program in terms of TMDL studies and DOE oversight.

Ms. Napier described remaining funding sources and how funds from the second legislative appropriation will help fund staff support. Instead of funding the annual watershed festival, it may be time for jurisdictions and agencies to help fund or secure sponsors freeing up funds to pay for Ms. Spaulding's position. DOE provided some funding through planning unit support of approximately \$30,000. Ms. Hempleman noted that not all planning units received the funds. However, based on the Partnership's priorities, the watershed was eligible to receive it, which entails a 100% match. The match has been interpreted broadly and anything implementing the watershed plan not currently funded by state funds and not used as a match for another project can be counted as a match.

Ms. Napier commented that a possible match could be the USGS work funded by the Corps of Engineers of \$200,000. Ms. Hempleman said it might be possible. Mr. Jennings suggested the situation provides an opportunity to show that the state is recognizing the work affording an option to ask members to contribute a match to enable the partnership to receive a total of \$60,000 in funds. Ms. Hempleman suggested the Tribe's work could also count as a match. Ms. Hempleman advised that she will work the match internally to ensure a match can be obtained prior to acceptance of the funds.

Members discussed other outreach efforts and various jurisdictional activities that could contribute as a match. Ms. Hempleman said she'll review the information with the department to see if the match can be developed, as it appears the Partnership would like to pursue receiving the funds.

CBP Agenda for September

Members agreed to include the following on the meeting agenda:

- Watershed Festival Debrief
- Project Management Plan Update – Chehalis Basin-wide General Investigation Study
- Partnership Sustainability/STC Briefing
- Twin Cities Project/Review of FAQ

STC Agenda for October

- Continue Sustainability Discussion
- Chehalis Basin-wide General Investigation Study

Adjournment

With there being no further business, Mr. Connelly adjourned the meeting at 12:01 p.m.

Prepared by Valerie Gow, Recording Secretary/President
Puget Sound Meeting Services