

**CHEHALIS BASIN PARTNERSHIP
STEERING TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY
Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife
600 Capitol Way
Olympia, WA
November 4, 2010
9:30 AM**

Meeting Summary

MEMBERS, ALTERNATES, AND GUESTS PRESENT

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| Janel Spaulding, Chehalis Basin Partnership | Bob Amrine, Lewis County Conservation District |
| Kahle Jennings, City of Centralia | Julie Balmelli-Powe, Lewis County Farm Bureau |
| Glen Connelly, Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation | Chanele Holbrook Shaw, Citizen, Thurston County |
| Mark Swartout, Thurston County | Dave Rountry, DOE |
| Christine Hempleman, Department of Ecology (DOE) | Jim Hill, Citizen, Lewis County |
| Teri Franklin, Citizen, Grays Harbor County | Patrick Wiltzius, City of Chehalis |
| Ann Wick, Department of Agriculture | Ron Schillinger, City of Montesano |
| J. Roach, Citizen, Thurston County | Lisa Dilley, Grays Harbor County Citizen |
| Scott Collyard, DOE | Kelly Verd, Lewis County Conservation District |
| | Cheri Lindgren, Puget Sound Meeting Services |

Welcome & Introductions

Co-chair Glen Connelly called the November 4, 2010 meeting of the Chehalis Basin Partnership (CBP) Steering Technical Committee (STC) to order at 9:38 a.m. Everyone present provided self-introductions.

Special Presentation: Water Quality Monitoring Effectiveness for the Chehalis Basin

Dave Rountry provided a historical perspective of the water quality monitoring project initiated several years ago. The CBP Water Quality Committee (WQC) was involved in guiding the development and implementation of a water quality sampling program. The information supplements data outlined in previous State of the River Reports completed by Grays Harbor County.

Kahle Jennings and Lisa Dilley arrived at the meeting.

The State of the River Reports contains water quality conditions throughout the Chehalis basin. Approximately 95 sampling sites were active during a three-year period. The Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) clean-up plan and elements of the Partnership's Watershed and Detailed Implementation Plans (DIP) pursued a more in-depth review to correlate water quality results with implementation actions. The overarching goal was improving where success had occurred in restoration work and how that has positively influenced water quality. Data reflects significant improvements to water quality in the Chehalis basin. To continue progress, it's important to know where efforts have made a difference and where to focus future resources. Mr. Rountry said there has been a tremendous amount of implementation information collected from a variety of reports and other sources.

Scott Collyard agreed that there is a great deal of information and data available concerning the watershed. There are also a great number of water quality standards including temperature standards. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has been working the DOE over the last several years to implement supplementary temperature standards, which occur at different times of the year. He displayed a map outlining where and when the temperature standards apply. The map contains three different core areas based on designated fishery uses of orange for Char spawning (lowest temperature criteria and

highest dissolved oxygen [DO] criteria), green for core summer salmonid habitat, and yellow for salmonid spawning and rearing. Within the core areas are supplementary temperature standards:

- Red 13 degrees C from September 15 – July 1
- Purple 13 degrees C February 15 – July 1
- Brown 13 degrees C October 1 – May 15

Next steps included determining whether data demonstrated that water quality standards were being achieved, and examining the watershed as a whole. Approximately 17 different data collection efforts have occurred over the last 20 to 30 years. DOE has had a number of long-term ambient monitoring stations collecting information since the 1950s providing the ability to track trends.

Mr. Collyard reviewed a spreadsheet of fecal coliform concentrations at CBP monitoring stations and corresponding TMDL concentrations for the upper Chehalis River basin. One challenge was synthesizing each TMDL target limits and collection stations. He clarified that existing TMDLs examined fecal coliform, DO, temperature, and turbidity or sediment. It was determined that there were critical periods when fecal was a definite problem. The fecal TMDL laid out a dozen or so target stations and target limits during certain periods. For the most part, many of the stations sampled by the Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation were the same as outlined in the TMDL. No data were collected for a handful of sites for various reasons. Five stations reflected critical results, which should entail more data collection. Eleven stations were identified in the TMDL where more data still needs to be collected. He provided additional information on the geometric mean (GM) and 90th percentile fecal standards. All fecal data collected within the Chehalis basin during the latest data collection effort met fecal coliform GM and 90th percentile standards.

A list of monitoring station locations that should be the focus of the next data collection effort was examined. Five samples should be taken from each of the five locations with a critical month identified so that calculations can be performed for GM and 90th percentile standards and compared to target limits. Critical month locations were not sampled sufficiently. Water quality standards require a minimum number of samples (five) to calculate the GM during the critical months established within the TMDL. The sampling must occur over the critical month period and must meet target limits outlined in the TMDL. "NS" means the stations were not sampled during the last data collection project.

J. Roach asked whether the original data was in error. Mr. Collyard responded that the data is not in error but that something occurred within the watershed to reduce fecal coliform.

Mr. Jennings commented that he discovered a direct septic discharge to the south fork of the Chehalis River. Cleaning up those types of situations, construction of new treatment plans, and properly managed dairy waste makes a huge difference.

Mr. Collyard advised that this is the first time he's encountered such a reduction in any parameter for a watershed of this size.

Mr. Amrine said seven waste storage ponds were built in 1997 and another seven in 1998 on dairies that didn't have them in the basin. The nutrients can be retained and used during the growing season.

Members discussed ways to publicize the successes, which will be published in the report, including informing the Legislature and publishing an article in the *Drops of Water* publication.

Julie Balmelli-Powe commented that agriculture often is blamed for contaminating water. There should be more publicity on the positive efforts by farmers.

Mr. Roach urged the committee to publicize successes. The public needs to know how the accomplishments impact their lives on a day-to-day basis. The information should be readily available to the public in a format that's easy to understand.

Chris Hempleman and Ann Wick volunteered to work with Ms. Spaulding to draft a press release on the report when it's released and highlight the agriculture element. Ms. Balmelli-Powe suggested adding bar charts of comparisons.

Mr. Collyard suggested delaying a press release until the remaining monitoring stations are sampled.

Mr. Collyard reviewed DO data. Some DO monitors are finicky, which is discussed in the Grays Harbor report. Consequently, some data were manipulated, which produced some low values to determine results, which should be considered. The Tribe's sampling stations were separated into two categories involving one with a DO standard of 8.0 (core summer habitat) and the other with a DO standard of 9.5 (spawning, rearing, and migration). The area around the main stem of the Chehalis has the lower standard while the tributaries have the higher standard. Any measurement less than 8 is a standard violation.

Discussion followed on whether any of the data are available through the Geographic Information System (GIS). Ms. Spaulding and Mr. Rountry commented that data through June 2009 are available in the GIS system. Additional temperature data collected during the most critical months (late summer/early fall) are needed.

Mr. Rountry said another objective is translating the 75-page report into an easy-to-read two-page publication. Mr. Collyard offered that another option is turning the points into segments. Ideally, water quality standards are for protection of aquatic life and are why there are different temperature standards in the watershed. The issue is whether the standards are providing sufficient protection. The Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) could have ideas about other things that should be protected.

Discussion ensued on DOE and WDFW's individual roles with respect to fish needs, fish population, and water quality.

Committee members and guests provided additional comments:

- Data may be meaningless to the average person.
- Interpreting data shouldn't require an expert.
- Create a map-based report highlighting improvements in the basin.
- This is a visible, tangible product.

Mr. Rountry referred to a recent presentation by Don Loft that included a summary of the GIS-based maps with an overlay of water quality data. Another issue is how data relates to the selection of Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) projects and priorities. Other culvert and/or riparian data layers could be advantageous.

The committee discussed how GIS is an incredible tool for implementation that can be strengthened by adding other data layers. Members acknowledged the financial challenge to local governments to market documents/products for the benefit of the public.

Lisa Dilley commented that it's a relatively new phenomenon that the public is interested in this type of information. Implementation at all levels is occurring beyond regulatory requirements. The ideas conveyed are important and valuable.

Mark Swartout arrived at the meeting.

Co-chair Connelly suggested discussing the marketing piece at a future date.

Janel Spaulding commented on the possibility of reconvening the WQC. A new focus could be the report. Mr. Collyard advised that some of the recommendations would fit in well with that type of effort.

Ms. Balmelli-Powe pointed out that the public is often frustrated when state agencies conduct separate studies. The report demonstrates state agencies are working together and efficiencies are being achieved.

Mr. Roach commented on the number of significant studies that end up on the shelf. It would be a shame to see these efforts also winding up on a shelf.

Mr. Schillinger referred to efforts to reach out to grade schools throughout the Chehalis River basin and educating youths on issues.

Mr. Collyard reported the DO standard requires continuous monitoring for a listing to be removed. The numbers in bold text illustrate stations not meeting DO standards based on a single sample collection. DOE will not use the data to list any additional sites. The tables generally mirror those developed by Grays Harbor County. Grays Harbor County used the most protective standards for its analysis. For example, one of 23 samples from the Skookumchuck River at Tono was in violation of DO standards where 11 of 23 samples from Bunker Creek at Ingalls Road violated standards. The TMDL suggests DO could be naturally low at some stations. It's difficult to prove whether the condition is natural.

The TMDL study used surrogate measures for DO, which included ammonia and biological oxygen demand (BOD). Mr. Collyard presented graphs on 10 years of ammonia data at the Dryad and Porter ambient monitoring stations. Ammonia data dates back to the 1950s; however, there were numerous method changes and the information reflected in the two graphs over the last 10 years may not be consistent. The Dryad and Porter stations achieved nitrogen loading limits, which is beneficial. Some other factor is contributing to DO levels. Nitrogen loading at those two stations has decreased over the last 10 years and beyond.

Mr. Jennings commented that one violation is consistent at both stations, which could be caused by a violation occurring above the monitoring stations. Mr. Collyard advised that the violation can be correlated to flow events. The report mentions that Dryad data can be somewhat deceiving because most of the values fell below detection limits.

Mr. Collyard reviewed temperature values, which were based on single sample measurements once a month for a specific period. A table highlighted core summer and supplemental temperature criteria. Stations in bolded text illustrate those exceeding temperature criteria primarily for core summer

standards. The data largely concurs with Grays Harbor County's results. The TMDL identified shade targets at several stations along the main stem. However, there was no shade data available at the stations.

Ms. Spaulding commented that the Tribe has nine long-term monitoring probes throughout the basin. Mr. Connelly added that data are retrieved from the data loggers annually.

For headwater stations, Mr. Collyard said data could be useful to track long-term trends or determine whether an area could meet temperature standards.

Jim Hill arrived at the meeting.

Mr. Collyard reviewed temperature standards for spawning, rearing, and migration. Many of the violations occurred outside the supplemental temperature criteria during the summer months.

Mr. Jennings said when the temperature TMDL study was completed, the criterion for surface water temperature was established at 18 degrees. The criterion has since changed but not the regulations. Mr. Rounry said he doesn't foresee DOE amending the TMDL. It's doubtful new shade targets will be calculated based on new supplemental spawning criteria temperature needs. Unless and until the parties agree to dissolve the Consent Decree, those are the prevailing conditions. It will be more difficult for areas of the Chehalis to meet the more protected temperature standards.

Discussion ensued on temperature standards for some areas, such as the Skookumchuck and part of the Newaukum during and outside the summer months, the role of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) on the CBP, and mitigation strategies related to the proposed Twin Cities levee project.

Ms. Spaulding shared that Erick Wish is the new contact at DNR. Mr. Wisch is attending the Partnership meeting on November 19.

Mr. Rounry referred to a nonprofit group looking for temperature trading or offset mitigation opportunities. Working towards a more protective temperature standard offers prospects for trading scenarios. Mr. Jennings described the distinction between mitigation and trading.

Mr. Collyard reviewed trends in fecal coliform GM for pooled data Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) 23 from 1971 to 2010. He described how the results were verified. The trends are based on approximately 6,000 data points over the last 60 years. The majority of data are from ambient monitoring stations and through the Tribes' collection efforts. The data suggests decreased temperature trends in fecal values. He presented a similar graph format for DOE's ambient monitoring stations at Porter and Dryad. There were significant decreases at those stations. The decreases are more substantial for Porter. There is good evidence fecal coliform is decreasing.

The committee discussed factors contributing to the obvious decline and actions taken over the period, such as regulatory changes, public outreach, and farmers employing new techniques. Mr. Collyard commented that some reductions occurred prior to the release of the TMDLs. Restoration activities have also had a positive impact. Education and outreach plays an important role.

Mr. Collyard reviewed trends in DO concentrations over time from DOE's ambient monitoring stations at Porter and Dryad from 1960 to 2009. There has been no significant change. There may be some correlations with the ammonia data at the Porter station.

Mr. Collyard presented results for maximum daily temperature measurements from monitoring stations at Dryad and Porter from 2000 to 2009. A non-significant increase occurred at both stations.

Mr. Collyard reviewed monthly seasonal plots of surface water turbidity over time for pooled data from WRIA 23 from 1961 to 2010. It's difficult to analyze trends because turbidity is usually associated with an event. Data showed no significant change over time. The turbidity standard is more of a standard for point source. The standard can be used to measure or detect turbidity from a tributary. A recommendation is to look at other ways to address sedimentation in the Chehalis. The best way to evaluate sedimentation is using biology.

Mr. Roach asked whether sedimentation includes gravel. Mr. Collyard replied that the sedimentation is generally associated with fine soils/silt.

Mr. Collyard presented a number of recommendations in priority order:

- Begin inventorying implementation of best management practices (BMPs) throughout the upper Chehalis River basin (WRIA 23) comprehensively.
- Monitor fecal coliform at TMDL target stations not sampled by the CBP and compare results to TMDL target limits.
- Consider monitoring temperature using continuous temperature loggers at stations with the highest number of temperature violations.
- If the CBP is interested in tracking long-term compliance with fecal, an option is employing a randomized approach to track status and trends of fecal coliform in the watershed.

Mr. Collyard advised that Lewis County has identified areas needing improvement. Mr. Amrine added that Lewis County is using the temperature and DO TMDLs to submit a Centennial Grant application. Lewis County is also using BMP maps to prioritize areas in the upper watershed for riparian plantings.

Mr. Collyard reported DOE is moving from TMDLs to implementation. GIS and mapping are good tools. Tracking results is helpful and just as important as collecting data. The water quality monitoring report in its completed form should be available on the web by the end of November.

Mr. Jennings offered that Sandy Howard at DOE could help translate the report into an easily understood document for the average person.

Ms. Spaulding said she'll follow up regarding a future WQC meeting on Thursday, December 9 in Montesano.

The committee discussed whether data collection and water quality monitoring activities correspond with the Flood Authority's work and other studies underway. Mr. Jennings said the Flood Authority is a separate entity and not related to the CBP. However, members overlap between the two entities and there is coordination between the Flood Authority and the Partnership.

Mr. Collyard commented that the ecology of a stream or the importance of the fisheries aspect doesn't correspond well with an engineering model.

Ms. Balmelli-Powe reported a list of fisheries studies completed by the Partnership and other agencies has been provided to the Flood Authority. The Flood Authority was asked to use as much available information as possible.

Bob Amrine and Scott Collyard left the meeting.

CBP Membership Letter Update

Mr. Jennings distributed copies of a draft membership/recruiting letter encouraging agencies to increase their participation on the Partnership.

Ms. Spaulding said the letter could be modified to reach out to other stakeholders, such as Mason County in addition to local governments.

Members agreed with the concept and timeliness of the letter. Mr. Jennings said some members have never actively participated or have stopped participating. Initially, representatives from Ocean Shores, Westport, Aberdeen, Hoquiam, and Elma participated. Given the current state of the economy and many municipalities reducing staff and reprioritizing programs, encouraging participation at this time may be problematic. He offered to continue refining the letter. Members suggested moving forward and providing the draft letter to Bonnie Canaday for review prior to the CBP's next meeting.

Ms. Dilley suggested the letter should also emphasize that decisions are occurring and implementation activities are underway.

Members offered several suggestions and feedback, such as whether to include language about unknown impacts to climate change. Mr. Jennings said the idea is introduced within the fish habitat section. Another suggestion included replacing "ramping up" with alternate wording such as continuing to participate and keep in touch. It was noted that the CBP was initially authorized to provide a forum for stakeholders to discuss water resource issues, which has changed over time. The University of Washington has completed a modeling exercise on the change in frequency of the 100-year flood event for the Chehalis. One option is asking a representative to provide the Partnership with a presentation on the issue. The value of the Partnership is through the education the organization provides. Another suggestion included contacting the author of the Floodplain Management Book to speak at a future CBP meeting.

Discussion ensued on the overlap and focus of the CBP and the Flood Authority on water issues. Mr. Swartout commented that funding from the Legislature for the Flood Authority may end in June 2011. However, funding for the Partnership remains the same. Mr. Schillinger commented that funding is an issue. Stakeholders want to see progress on the ground. Mr. Swartout said the Flood Authority is focused on one issue and implementation while the CBP's focus is outreach and education. Governor Locke and the Legislature's vision was that "top down" management of water resources doesn't work as well as "bottom up" grassroots efforts.

Mr. Schillinger referred to comments submitted as part of a water forum survey. Responses were split between those who believe water is a local and/or regional issue and not a state issue. Water issues are

vast and complex. A concern is that the momentum initially behind the Partnership has dwindled. He emphasized that funding to support the Partnership is an issue.

CBP Non-profit Update

Mr. Jennings reported he is waiting for a response from Hugh Spencer concerning non-profit options for the Partnership. He will follow up with the STC after he's had an opportunity to speak with Mr. Spencer.

Watershed Coordinator Position Evaluation and Study Discussion

Ms. Spaulding reported she followed up with Grays Harbor College on the process to provide salary increases. The conversation with Human Resources (HR) was awkward. She distributed several informational documents. The Watershed Coordinator is currently classified as a Watershed Facilitator, which is an exempt position. A reclassification is required for a pay increase.

Members suggested the possibility of reclassifying the position as Watershed Coordinator. Ms. Spaulding referred to the current job description for a Watershed Facilitator, which should be updated. The reclassification process includes updating the job description and reviewing the information and the position description with her immediate supervisor followed by forwarding the revised job description to the HR Director for a final decision. Other coordinator position descriptions do match with her current work duties. Ms. Spaulding commented that she is comfortable with her current salary. An increase in pay could cut the length of support.

Members encouraged Ms. Spaulding to consider how duties may change in the future, which could assist in a decision.

Grant funding indicates the position is funded through September 2011. Ms. Spaulding said she reviewed the funding (DOE and the legislative appropriation) sources recently. It's likely funding could be extended an additional six to twelve months beyond the September 2011 date.

Discussion ensued on the option of approaching the Legislature for bridging money until sustainable funding sources can be identified for non-profit status and current overhead costs for supporting the CBP.

Ms. Spaulding reported the information will be shared with the Partnership for review and input. Benefits are not captured in the salary rate information. Some of the Phase 4 grant will help fund the position in light of changes to Lee Napier's job with Grays Harbor County.

Mr. Jennings suggested revising the salary rate list to include only the Coordinator and Facilitator positions.

The STC generally supported the concept of moving forward with reclassifying Ms. Spaulding's position from Facilitator to Coordinator.

Ms. Spaulding asked that someone from the Partnership contact her supervisor concerning a potential recommendation on the position.

December STC Agenda

- A presentation from Nadine Romero, Thurston County, on ground water modeling for Scatter Creek
- Non-profit update
- Follow up on the Watershed Facilitator/Coordinator position

- Discuss creating a concise report on results from the water quality monitoring project

November CBP Agenda

- CBP membership letter update
- Special presentation by USGS regarding ground water/surface water interactions within the Chehalis Basin
- GI update – discussion of recommendations
- Special presentation by One Voice regarding storage facilities
- Non-profit update
- Input and approval of next steps for Watershed Facilitator position description and salary
- Report on Drops of Water

Ms. Spaulding reported funding for the *Drops of Water* publication was not cut, which is good news. A computer error inadvertently generated the letter indicating funding would be discontinued.

Discussion ensued on the potential to seek additional funding for the Partnership during the 2012 legislative session. Mr. Jennings suggested that a concise report on the positive outcomes from the water quality monitoring program could be forwarded to the Legislature during the 2011 session. Ms. Spaulding advised that the WQC could be tasked with developing a report to inform a variety of audiences.

Other Comments

Mr. Roach commented that the Partnership should be considered a model for other communities.

Mr. Rountry commented that all Partnership members have a vested interest in the plan and in implementation activities. DOE is in the business of documenting success stories.

Adjournment

With there being no further business, Co-chair Connelly adjourned the meeting at 12:10 p.m.

Prepared by Cheri Lindgren, Recording Secretary
Puget Sound Meeting Services