

Chehalis Basin Water Quality Committee
Grays Harbor Forestry Building
Montesano, Washington
April 12, 2007
9:00 a.m.

Meeting Summary

People in Attendance

Terry Willis, Grays Harbor Citizen
Lee Napier, Grays Harbor County
Dave Rountry, Department of Ecology
Teri Franklin, Grays Harbor Citizen
Harry Pickernell, Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation
Ron Schillinger, City of Montesano
Randy Lehr, Grays Harbor College, Natural Resources Program Director
Brady Engvall, Willapa Oyster Growers
Happy Engvall, Willapa Oyster Growers
Valerie Gow, Puget Sound Meeting Services

Call to Order

Ms. Willis called the Chehalis Basin Water Quality Committee meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.

Update on Coordinated Water Quality Monitoring Program

Randy Lehr reported the Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) for establishing a long-term Coordinated Water Quality Monitoring Program in the Chehalis Basin was approved and accepted by the Department of Ecology (DOE). Monitoring is underway at different substations.

The program includes potential goals for a water quality monitoring program, such as, identifying healthy waters and impacted waters, etc. Mr. Lehr presented information about a technique he's previously used to help identify and quantify different opinions of the public concerning water management, water usage, water quality, and other water related issues. Mr. Lehr reported several years ago, he taught an environmental science class. To help determine if the class was beneficial to students, Mr. Lehr reported he worked with a behavioral sociologist to determine a way of whether the class had an impact on the students. A tool in the form of a survey was developed for the students. Since that initial effort, Mr. Lehr said he continued to work with the sociologist as well as working with a group of students last year to modify the survey approach to understand more about the students' perceptions and understanding of natural resources and its management. The students developed a questionnaire as part of a class project to gauge what the students perceived about the value of natural resources and acceptable management approaches.

Mr. Lehr said he is using a similar survey, which has been modified to reflect the issues discussed by stakeholders throughout the Chehalis Basin. The survey is in draft form to stimulate discussion and receive feedback.

The goals of the survey include:

1. Identify source(s) of value for water resources in the Chehalis Basin.
2. Identify level of understanding of water resources in the Chehalis Basin.

Chehalis Basin Water Quality Committee Draft Minutes

April 12, 2007

Page 2 of 10

3. Identify where the majority of citizens in the Chehalis Basin identify on a behavioral change continuum.
4. Identify optimum/preferred mechanism from communication among stakeholders.
5. Identify optimum/preferred management options.
6. Identify level of confidence in management tools.

It's also important to gauge a person's understanding of water resources and general relationships associated with water resource and land use. A behavior change continuum is a mental thought process that a person mentally undertakes to 1) realize that water quality is an issue that they should be concerned about, 2) that water quality is a problem that directly affects them, 3) that water quality needs to be improved, 4) that it is important to take actions to improve environmental quality, 5) that the person is confident that their actions can improve water quality, 6) and that they intend to take action to improve water quality in the Chehalis Basin.

The first page of the survey includes basic demographic information to ascertain whether the survey sampled a broad representation of citizens within the Chehalis Basin. It's important to ensure the people who participate in the survey represent the populace as a whole.

Ms. Willis referred to the survey's first question and asked whether the question relates to the importance of water resources to the individual personally or to the person's community. She said as a farmer, her response to the question may reflect that the importance of water resources is for irrigation. However, in reality, the most important factor is water resources for everyone. Mr. Lehr said the question could be answered based on taking 10 gallons of water and determining the most important use for the majority of the water. Ms. Willis suggested including clarifying information so that the question is clearly articulated and understood by the respondent. Mr. Schillinger suggested the question could ask: "Please rank the following uses of water resources based on importance to you." Additionally, the question could be phrased to read, "Please rank the following uses of water resources based on the importance to the community." There could be two different questions resulting in two different answers. Mr. Lehr acknowledged the suggestion and noted the relationship is further explored in other questions within the survey about the value of water resources to the person and to the Chehalis Basin as a community. Members offered varying opinions about whether the question should be asked twice – the importance of water resources to the person and the importance of water resources to the community. Ms. Napier said it might be helpful to include the questions so a side-by-side comparison is reflected.

Dave Rountry arrived at 9:15 a.m.

Mr. Pickernell suggested duplicating the question based on the importance to the person and importance to the community.

Brady Engvall noted the rating for the question ranges from 1 to 10. He suggested the issue of ascertaining the importance of water resources to the individual or the community could be ascertained by the individual's ranking of the uses under question #1. Members agreed. Mr. Lehr said he will review the issue with the behavior sociologist.

Mr. Lehr referred to survey questions and asked for feedback on presentation, content, and ability to attract respondents willing to participate in the survey.

Ms. Napier asked about the plan for seeking survey participants. Mr. Lehr said as part of his class effort, he pursued different community organizations representing a broad spectrum of the population. Survey

Chehalis Basin Water Quality Committee Draft Minutes

April 12, 2007

Page 3 of 10

presentations were provided during community meetings soliciting participation. Additionally, an electronic survey could be available. Ms. Napier said the survey could also be distributed during the Chehalis Basin Watershed Festival. At the last Steering Technical Committee (STC) meeting, Jim Hill volunteered to develop an informational display about the Chehalis Basin. The survey could be part of that outreach effort.

Mr. Pickernell asked about the timeline for distributing the survey. Mr. Lehr said he plans to continue refining the survey over the next several months and if the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) grant is awarded, he would like to include the survey as a component of the grant project. At this point, there has been no information received about the status of the grant. After review and approval by the Partnership, Mr. Lehr said he would like the survey to be an ongoing tool that could be used to increase participation over time.

Ms. Willis commented positively about the range of the ranking (1-10). Mr. Lehr said the ranking is a product of trial and error as many of the first surveys had a 1-5 ranking, which created problems. Subsequently, the ranking was extended from 1 to 10.

Mr. Lehr asked members to consider missing uses or issues to include within the questions.

Several members commented that the issues listed in question #2 offer important information to the respondent because many people wouldn't think of the issues.

Ms. Willis noted the ranking order is switched in some of the questions and suggested revising the survey to ensure consistency in ranking with 1=Very important, 10=Unimportant.

Mr. Lehr referred to question #21, "What means of communication do you feel are most effective for facilitating water resource management?" Another question in the old survey in a different format included, "What entities should be the one presenting the information?" He said he is unsure if that question is also encapsulated in question #21. Ms. Willis suggested including the watershed plan as one of the entities to ascertain if it is recognized by the community.

Discussion followed about the ranking options for question #22 ranging from individuals to corporations/governments on a scale of 1 to 10. Mr. Lehr said the driver behind the question is that many people believe that their individual action really drives what occurs in the world while there are others that believe the driver is large corporations/government. The question is intended to ascertain where a person's belief is in reference to that continuum. From a management perspective, the desire is that most people believe they are empowered by their own actions. If people feel that control of water resources is not within their control, it will be very difficult to convince them that if they do something differently, it will have an impact on water resources. Mr. Lehr asked whether the question captures that intent. Members conveyed that they do not believe the question captures that intent. The question asks who should be responsible rather than who is responsible. Perhaps another question should ask who has the most impacts – individuals or corporations and governments.

Mr. Engvall pointed out the ranking scale appears to predetermine the importance by how the ranking scale is reflected:

Chehalis Basin Water Quality Committee Draft Minutes

April 12, 2007

Page 4 of 10

#22 – Who should be most responsible for managing water resources, individuals or corporations/governments?

Individuals.....About the same.....Corporations/Governments
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Mr. Schillinger said the average person participating in the survey is likely to believe that state and federal governments are supposed to manage and protect water resources. Unless they are a member of a special interest group, most individuals will likely believe it is someone else’s job. Mr. Lehr said the answer will be useful as many of the management strategies by different agencies is intended to stimulate public participation in the management of the resource.

Mr. Engvall said DOE has taken some strong positions. However, the Legislature has often passed legislation to address issues that DOE was trying to address properly. There are many issues that DOE has attempted to properly address that have subsequently been removed by legislation. Teri Franklin added that she has attended many DOE meetings where there has been conversation about violations of state water quality regulations. However, DOE often indicates they must work with the offenders and that the agency is limited in its response. Often, the belief is that DOE is doing everything possible to protect public resources when in reality the agency is not.

Ms. Willis said the survey will likely solicit different answers from average citizens than from Chehalis Basin Partnership stakeholders, who may not be an appropriate representation of the average citizen. Mr. Lehr said the demographic information will help identify the survey respondent as well as some of the responses to the questions.

Ms. Willis inquired whether local governments in question #22 should be identified, such as, local, state, or federal. Mr. Lehr said questions #25 and #26 address the issue by asking the respondent to identify activities and entities for improving water resource quality.

Dave Rounry referred to the discussion on question #22 and indicated there are two questions of interest that the question addresses - “What level of influence do these different groups have now?” and “What level of influence should they have?” He suggested that if his questions are the appropriate questions, the questions could be addressed more directly by having a different line or ranking for each of the groups as well as adding other groups, such as the Legislature, state agencies, citizens, businesses, landowners, and local agencies. Mr. Lehr said the question most informs the outreach component of what the Partnership is undertaking. Additionally, questions #25 and #26 address what respondents believe will be the most supportive in developing a new plan and what will be the most effective.

Mr. Schillinger offered some recommendations for maintaining consistency of the rankings with each of the survey questions.

Mr. Lehr reviewed the survey questions and the intent of each question.

Members offered the following suggestions:

- Question #1 – add Hydro, Manufacturing, Recreation, and add “wildlife” in the parentheses for item “e.”
- Question #1 – the term, “in-stream” is often not understood by the general public.
- Question # 21 – include Internet as a choice

Chehalis Basin Water Quality Committee Draft Minutes

April 12, 2007

Page 5 of 10

- On the first page (demographic information) ask the respondent if they use the Internet.

Mr. Lehr commented that questions #1 through #3 gauge values and level of understanding while the remaining questions pertain to the behavioral change continuum.

Mr. Engvall suggested having the survey completed by high school students.

Mr. Lehr asked for feedback on the survey as an effective tool, any changes to improve the format, and additional questions to include.

It was noted that the survey should identify how it will be used or the value to be gained by completing the survey to inform the respondent about the importance of completing the survey.

Mr. Engvall said there must be a linkage between clean water and the benefits. If it can be demonstrated that clean water achieves benefits, the importance of the survey will be recognized.

Mr. Lehr offered to include a paragraph reflecting the benefits of the survey and how the data will be used. Ms. Willis suggested including the information in a cover letter.

Ms. Napier said another goal in addition to becoming informed about the status of water quality in the Chehalis Basin is to have the respondent take action(s) to improve water quality.

Ms. Willis suggested including a question between questions #20 and #21 to state, "Do you feel well informed to make decisions about water resources? Would you be interested in more information about individual participation in water resource management?"

Mr. Schillinger supported Mr. Engvall's suggestion concerning student participation. A student's role is to learn and share information. Students are also a reflection of their parents and their respective lifestyle.

Mr. Lehr said there have been some efforts initiated with elementary school students. After participation in the classes, students begin to understand what a watershed is and its importance to water quality. Currently, the focus hasn't been on high school students but focused more on elementary school-age students. Mr. Schillinger suggested intentionally structuring and separating the surveys for different-sized high schools and comparing the results between the schools. Mr. Lehr said the demographic information includes zip code information, which will help identify the distribution of the survey within the watershed.

Mr. Rountry asked whether the survey will suffice for different age groups. Mr. Lehr solicited suggestions for adapting the survey for younger ages.

Discussion ensued about how the survey will be disbursed. Mr. Lehr said the survey will be distributed to local organizations during meetings, posted on the website, and provided to citizens during community events. Ms. Napier said the Partnership's work plan calls for developing an educational outreach work plan for soliciting funding. Some of the tasks include developing materials and talking points for Partnership members to discuss water resources. She suggested developing some talking points for the survey to afford a tool to stakeholders to share with their respective community and citizens.

Mr. Lehr thanked members for their input.

Chehalis Basin Water Quality Committee Draft Minutes

April 12, 2007

Page 6 of 10

Work Plan to Implement DIP – Discussion

Ms. Napier reported in January, the Partnership held a workshop on the work plan. When the Partnership developed the Watershed Plan, there were 56 important actions. Discussions followed about implementing the plan. Several of the most important actions were developed into a work plan to determine where the resources should be allocated. At the workshop in January, during a facilitated discussion, members called for taking several different paths for implementing actions. One path included focusing on five actions described in the work plan. Prior to development of the work plan, there were approximately 13 more work plans that could possibly be developed. However, due to the time and the need for each plan to have a workshop, members discussed limiting the effort to five actions. The Partnership concluded it is most important to implement the strategies, interim milestones, and tasks within the plan and that the STC, Water Quality Committee, and the Habitat Work Group will focus on furthering implementation strategies until September. After September, the effort will be revisited.

The five work plans were divided and assigned leads. The Water Quality Committee, with Ms. Willis as the lead, was assigned to work on developing approaches to keep agriculture and forestry on the land. The STC directed the leads to review the strategy and determine how to implement the strategy.

Ms. Napier suggested using the Plan 2 Fund software program as the database to collect the information and generate the reports to help the committee pursue its work and track progress on the strategy. She said she is still entering information in the database and anticipates making more progress for future discussion on the work plan.

Ms. Willis said she was unable to attend the STC meeting. She said she plans to address the issues that need to be addressed as well as what the committee has previously discussed. She said she will fill in the information for each of the units on what activities will be necessary and why. Both agriculture and timber activities have an impact on water quality.

Ms. Napier identified the other leads for the individual strategies. The intent is to have Plan 2 Fund available on the website so the lead can input information and track progress. Website availability will provide a way for others to review progress.

Bill Jarocki from Boise State University is attending the June Partnership meeting. Mr. Jarocki created the Plan 2 Fund program.

Ms. Napier said the work entailed in the effort has generated discussions and speculation about the future of the Partnership and its structure. The Partnership needs to have a discussion on all expectations to determine an organizational structure to carry forth funding and implementation efforts. Mr. Jarocki will facilitate the discussion.

Other Business

Ms. Napier briefed members on recent meetings with legislators. A brochure for the Chehalis Basin Partnership was developed containing information about the organization and 2006 accomplishments. Several members as well as Ms. Napier met with legislators in the House and Senate. Legislators were provided with a copy of the brochure as well as a list of 2007 legislative funding requests to assist in implementing the Watershed Plan.

The STC was asked to develop a list of ideas for projects during the 2007-2008 biennium. The list included only those items which included a budget, project description, and responsible entity. The legislative funding list includes:

Chehalis Basin Water Quality Committee Draft Minutes

April 12, 2007

Page 7 of 10

- GIS Clearinghouse, Grays Harbor College
- Ecosystem Diagnostic and Treatment Habitat Model, which currently exists but is not managed. The requests are to acquire the data and software and funding to administer the database.
- Coordinated Water Quality Monitoring Program – establishing continuous reading monitoring probes throughout the basin.
- Scope of Work for analyzing the connection between river flows and groundwater level.
- Appropriation for supplemental support to support the administration of the planning unit.

The funding request is for \$560,000 in addition to the current Phase 4 grant.

Ms. Napier shared names of legislators who met with members. She acknowledged the efforts of members who met with legislators.

Ms. Napier reported the Governor's budget included funds for DOE as part of its capital and operating funds. The Partnership is a component of that budget as the information submitted by the Partnership for funding needs last year was used by DOE as guidance in the development of DOE's budget. However, DOE will also consider other watershed funding requests in addition to the Chehalis Watershed funding request. The House budget reflects essentially the same as the Governor's budget. The Senate budget includes the DOE budget as well as \$560,000 for the Chehalis Watershed. Members had several follow-up meetings with legislators thanking senators for inclusion of funds in the budget and to House legislators reminding them that when the three budgets are consolidated, the line item for Chehalis Watershed remains intact.

Mr. Engvall referred to implementation activities and the fecal TMDL. He asked if the work plan relates to finding solutions for fecal TMDL. Ms. Napier said it does not directly tie into the issue. However, during water quality monitoring, the issue will naturally evolve and awareness will increase. Locally, as awareness increases, there will be efforts to make a difference likely resulting in some projects. However, funding won't likely be from current funding sources. Ms. Willis added that basically, the effort will be an opportunistic project that has the supporting data as well as identified funding. Ms. Napier said in addition, someone will need to take the lead on the project.

Ms. Willis commented on a conservation district that needs a project but is lacking a technician. She said she would like a technician to begin working but needs a project to pursue as well as assistance to work through the grant process. Septic systems may be the first place to start. Currently, work is underway with RC&D on a coordinated effort to work on Japanese Knotweed across several counties within the watershed. Ms. Napier commented that the conservation districts of Lewis, Mason, Grays Harbor, and Thurston are sharing services. Ms. Willis said the septic system issue continues to be addressed and the conservation district could be of assistance.

Mr. Engvall commented about some funding availability from the Department of Health for shellfish. If septic systems within the shellfish growing areas are impacting shellfish farmers, it is likely some progress could occur. However, the Legislature only views the issue narrowly as protection of shellfish interests rather than protecting the entire watershed.

Teri Franklin reported the City of McCleary, Grays Harbor, and citizens are working together to protect the water supply. An individual from Evergreen Rural Water of Washington reviewed all well logs and is unsure whether three aquifers are layered or the aquifer is connected. A public hearing was held the

Chehalis Basin Water Quality Committee Draft Minutes

April 12, 2007

Page 8 of 10

evening before with over 50 people in attendance as well as an informational meeting in McCleary with an attendance of over 100 people. The combined effort is to ensure there is sufficient water for in-stream flows and for citizens to ascertain development potential.

Ms. Napier said the issue relates to the ground and surface water discussion that cannot be accomplished basin-wide. It will need to occur in smaller areas.

Mr. Pickernell provided an update on the status of water quality monitoring. There are 83 monitoring sites from Pe Ell to Aberdeen. The sites will be monitored depending upon funding availability to obtain a year-long sampling cycle. Mr. Schillinger requested an update on the monitoring program at each meeting. Ms. Napier suggested having Mr. Lehr provide a monthly update on the monitoring program.

Mr. Schillinger asked about the status of the map of the monitoring sites. Mr. Pickernell and Ms. Napier reported Mr. Lehr is working on the development of the map in conjunction with the GIS Clearinghouse project.

Mr. Rountry commented about revisiting the priority of the action items in the DIP. He asked the committee to make a decision about discussing what water quality actions have been implemented throughout the watershed. It was clear last November, that the committee was a good place to convene some discussions with a recommendation from Ms. Napier that it might be valuable to request that someone, such as John Kliem, facilitate or moderate a workshop of various interests – agriculture, cities, manufacturing, health departments, and salmon enhancement councils on what water enhancement/protection actions have been implemented. There are two reasons to revisit the issue. It appears the Partnership has lost focus on the good work it is implementing. He said he was disappointed with the comments by different Partnership members who were speaking as representatives of their constituent groups that the Partnership is a group of planners and not an implementation group. He said he disagrees. As a body, the Partnership convenes monthly and discusses issues, priorities, principles, and philosophies in the interest in planning. However, as representatives of constituent groups, there is much implementation occurring that must be documented. The outcome of that information feeds the plans and the education and outreach plans. Mr. Rountry said DOE has an obligation to document the Detailed Implementation Plan for Water Quality Protection for seven TMDLs. There have been discussions for years about formulating a plan of action for water quality restoration to address specific impairments. Priority areas were identified for action as well as specific actions and funding needs. Individual organizations that participated in those discussions suggested actions that they expected to do.

Mr. Rountry said his obligation as part of his job is to convene a discussion to ascertain if the actions have been completed. Actions have occurred and projects are being implemented that are creating change. The Partnership needs to take credit for its work.

Ms. Willis agreed. Mr. Rountry suggested the effort would likely be better if pursued as a committee. It would have a broader value to the Partnership if the discussion encompasses all members. Ms. Willis replied that to facilitate the discussion, she suggested the option of treating the Water Quality Committee similarly to the STC as the brainstorming body. To begin the discussion, the committee will need to review prior minutes to ascertain what was initially discussed about documenting work completed.

Ms. Napier suggested that during the May meeting, members could take the document as referenced by Mr. Rountry and put it into a working format with information on what is known at this time or potential contacts for obtaining information. The information could be presented to the committee as a whole. Dependent upon the results, the committee will have some basic information and will then know how

Chehalis Basin Water Quality Committee Draft Minutes

April 12, 2007

Page 9 of 10

much is required to fill in the gaps to identify individuals needed to complete implementation activities. She suggested using the next meeting as an opportunity to ascertain the situation and use the table of implementation tasks to ascertain what has or hasn't been completed. The meeting could focus on perhaps planning a workshop, which may or may not be necessary.

Mr. Rountry said there appears to be a tendency to consider actions in a particular plan, such as the TMDL Implementation Plan, as being very exclusive. For example, salmon restoration is not identified in the plan and if a project has been completed to benefit salmon restoration, there is a mindset not to consider and acknowledge it. That is not the way the committee conducts business. There were discussions with the former Water Quality Committee concerning TMDL and there was a revelation that funding for shoreline restoration and planting in the interest of reducing sediment load and habitat restoration for fish recovery actually helped improve oxygen conditions as well. It can reduce transport and deposition of bacteria into the river. Suddenly, people began to see how these issues interrelated.

Mr. Rountry agreed with Mr. Napier's recommendation regarding a potential workshop but cautioned the committee against restricting itself. He suggested for a broader discussion, a variety of projects should be considered that have been completed to show the value of how it impacts the entire system.

Ms. Willis cautioned against taking on too much and extending the work to other areas other than the basics, which can cause the committee to lose track of its initial intent. It will be important in the collection of information that the focus remains on water quality issues recognizing that other issues affect water quality.

Ms. Napier replied that the process can be managed by undertaking an update activity with a guidance document.

Ms. Franklin asked about the status of McCleary's TMDL now that the new wastewater treatment plant is on line. Mr. Rountry indicated he did not currently have the information available. He offered to follow-up with permit managers in DOE.

Mr. Rountry conveyed a compliment received during a recent DOE section staff meeting of the SW Region Water Quality Program. One of the permit managers for city treatment plants observed that there have been significant improvements in water quality within the Chehalis Basin as a result of new wastewater treatment plants and retrofits at city wastewater treatment plants. It's important to show that actions and expenditures are making a difference.

Ms. Willis reminded members the next meeting will include a review of what the committee previously indicated it would do regarding the tracking of completed implementation projects. Ms. Napier offered to work with Mr. Rountry and review implementation plan actions, formulate the information into a table, and identify leads for tasks.

Mr. Rountry provided an update on the Chehalis/Grays Harbor Watershed Dissolved Oxygen, Temperature, Fecal Coliform Bacteria TMDL: Detailed Implementation (Cleanup) Plan. There was discussion many months ago at a Partnership meeting about any suggestions or special needs for water quality research or research studies, such as TMDL water quality studies or other water quality projects. There was one project that was recommended that was led by Mr. Schillinger for Black Creek in the Montesano watershed to address temperature. Several other projects were discussed as well. However, DOE agreed to undertake a limited study about pH listings that would lead to completing a TMDL study. DOE used existing data in the limited study and couldn't justify a new sampling effort to only evaluate

Chehalis Basin Water Quality Committee Draft Minutes

April 12, 2007

Page 10 of 10

pH conditions. Mr. Rountry said he is developing a three-page summary of his observations and current conditions, which will be reviewed by DOE's Environmental Assessment Program. After review a recommendation will be rendered on potential next steps. He noted three of the areas appear to have recovered while several others are experiencing acidic conditions. There may be more focused field evaluation or technical assistance visits with landowners as opposed to more water quality sampling. He said he will keep the committee apprised on the status of the project.

Next Meeting – May 10, 2007

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:47 a.m.

Prepared by: Valerie Gow, Recording Secretary
Puget Sound Meeting Services