

Chehalis Basin Partnership Water Quality Committee
Grays Harbor Forestry Building
Montesano, Washington
July 10, 2008
9:30 a.m.

Meeting Summary

MEMBERS PRESENT:

David Jarzynka, Briggs Nursery
Lee Napier, Grays Harbor County
Patrick Wiltzius, City of Chehalis
Ron Schillinger, City of Montesano

Janel Spaulding, Grays Harbor College
Don Loft, The Evergreen State College
Valerie Gow, Puget Sound Meeting Services
Samuel Iwenofu, Quinault Indian Nation

Call to Order, Introductions, and Changes to the Agenda

Janel Spaulding called the Chehalis Basin Partnership (CBP) Water Quality Committee (WQC) meeting to order at 9:37 a.m.

Approval of June 12, 2008 Water Quality Committee Minutes

The minutes of June 12, 2008 were approved by consensus.

Presentation of GIS Map of Water Quality Monitoring Sites

Don Loft displayed a map of the water quality testing sites in the Chehalis River basin. Data is provided by the Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation and Department of Natural Resources, Water Division. The data was inputted into a Microsoft Access database in a series of tables and queries to extract the information in a map format. Randy Lehr originally began working with the data and conveyed a desire to have the results represented on a map. Mr. Loft said he's worked on converting data to a map. He explained how he converted data to the geodatabase within the GIS system to represent the results on a map in an interactive format. The college is working to provide accessibility to the map on the internet.

Samuel Iwenofu arrived at 9:43 a.m.

Mr. Loft reported data from DNR includes dissolved oxygen, fecal coliform, temperature, turbidity, and pH. DNR conducts sampling from designated sites in the basin as well as water samples the department routinely collects.

Mr. Loft said that by using tables and queries, he was able to extract the percent of time the sites of samples were in violation of water quality standards and the range of severity:

- 0% - 5% very seldom in violation
- 5% - 15% some violations occurring
- 15% - 25% more frequent violations
- 25% severe violations

Mr. Loft explained how an icon or target was created within the geodatabase and placed on the map for locating the sample sites with each testing parameter overlaid on the sampling area. Testing is occurring within the subbasins of the Chehalis basin. The samplings for testing parameters are averaged to show the compliance of the site based on the average of five samples. The map can show streams at most risk based on sampling results.

Chehalis Basin Water Quality Committee Meeting Summary

July 10, 2008

Page 2 of 6

Mr. Loft said he first began working in the Skookumchuck basin and used a set of GIS hydrology tools that defines everything flowing to a point. He displayed a map of a data elevation model that includes information in the form of pixels supplying elevation information. From that file, Mr. Loft said he is able to extract flow data. With the hydrology tools he is able to define different sections of land flowing to different points. Most of flow patterns within the Skookumchuck basin were defined to show what is influencing the sampling sites. He noted he undertook a similar exercise in the Black River basin to document what's influencing the sample sites.

Mr. Loft said he identified some degraded sampling sites within the Black River basin and overlaid land use data to ascertain whether land use plays a factor in low water quality. He noted that agriculture may be contributing to high water temperatures and turbidity. He suggested taking additional sampling of sites in the area to ascertain whether they are matching existing samples.

Mr. Loft said the next areas of testing include the Satsop River on the middle and east forks where previous testing has revealed poor water quality. Most of the area surrounding the sampling sites is forested, so it's difficult to ascertain what might be causing water quality problems.

Mr. Schillinger asked whether water temperature was one of the problems. Mr. Loft said temperature is one of the issues. Mr. Schillinger shared information on his experience in forestry management and suggested water quality standards for temperature may be set too low. In some areas, water temperature is expected to be lower than what natural condition can create. There are concerns that the state standard is not attainable. Mr. Loft acknowledged the possibility. In most areas of the Chehalis basin, pH is out of the normal range.

Ms. Napier referred to "hot spot" concerns mentioned during the previous meeting. Monitoring was conducted approximately six years ago by the Grays Harbor Conservation District along the Satsop River. The sampling was analyzed and a report was produced by a consultant, which revealed that fecal coliform didn't appear to be a problem. She suggested it might be helpful for the committee to understand how that information will be used in conjunction with the water quality sampling program.

Mr. Loft advised that by the end of summer he plans to define all flow basins within the Chehalis basin.

Mr. Wiltzius suggested another layer could be a time-based layer, such as dividing data prior to and after 2005. Mr. Loft acknowledged that there are considerable amounts of data and that he is looking into temporal analysis. Data from the Water Quality Monitoring Program is at this point from one source. However, there are data from numerous sources such as schools, local agencies, state agencies, and other organizations. Eventually all data will be included. However, all data will be identified separately as data collections are different and some sampling consistency could be questioned. Ideally, the goal is to standardize data and how samples are collected. Mr. Loft acknowledged his work is just the beginning of the data collection process and will be fine-tuned as work proceeds.

Mr. Schillinger questioned the goals of the program. Mr. Loft replied that his goal is to work to ensure the ecosystem is balanced. The overriding concern is addressing problems. The program is determining water quality issues and whether there are opportunities to pursue restoration projects to improve water quality. The testing program is funded through a legislative appropriation administered through the Department of Ecology. He shared his educational background and his goal to obtain a masters degree.

Mr. Schillinger said one of the things that the Partnership has struggled with is the enormity of the water quality issue. The Partnership agreed to focus work at the subbasin level. He questioned the goal of undertaking work in each of the subbasins when in reality there is limited time and resources.

Chehalis Basin Water Quality Committee Meeting Summary

July 10, 2008

Page 3 of 6

Discussion followed on the importance of consistent sampling to ensure uniformity. Mr. Loft said at this time, the project includes taking data produced from different sources and representing it graphically. It's an issue that needs to be resolved. Mr. Loft cited the probability of obtaining funds to continue water quality sampling to isolate and determine what's contributing to the problems in specific subbasins.

Mr. Loft referred to a map of sampling sites showing different colors representing the average of the five sampling parameters. Currently, there are 80 monitoring sites. Testing has been underway since the fall of 2006. Mr. Loft responded to questions regarding the samplings. He noted the samples are counted that are in violation and then averaged to reflect the percent of time water is in violation of the standard. A temporal analysis will be able to show a month-to-month or year-by-year analysis of water quality. That effort will take more work. Currently, all data are funneled through the database to show the percent of time water samples are in or out of compliance with water quality standards.

Discussion followed on the pros and cons of clear cutting, restoration efforts by timber companies, and tracking water quality results in areas of restoration projects.

Ms. Napier commented on the work by the Habitat Work Group and members working with Mr. Loft on tracking restoration projects. Mr. Loft indicated some of the restoration projects have been identified and are included in the database. At this point, he said he is collecting data and organizing the data to represent the data on an interactive map. Ms. Napier asked about the timing associated with the completion of the habitat project map. She asked for a map of habitat projects that have been completed, are in process, and how proposed projects interact and relate. She suggested meeting with the Habitat Work Group to work on the map.

Mr. Loft offered to provide a quarterly update to the committee.

Mr. Schillinger inquired about the status of replacing Randy Lehr. Ms. Spaulding reported six applicants applied for the position. Interviews are scheduled at the end of July. Mr. Schillinger expressed interest in serving on the interview panel.

Mr. Schillinger inquired about Mr. Loft's availability on July 22, 2008 to provide a similar briefing to the Montesano City Council. Mr. Loft advised he is unavailable on that date but could provide a briefing later in the summer. Mr. Schillinger indicated he will work with Ms. Spaulding to schedule a date. Ms. Napier and Ms. Spaulding were invited to attend.

Discussion of Department of Ecology's Centennial Gran Program and Potential Projects in the Basin

Ms. Spaulding provided a handout of information on water quality grants and loans. Dave Rountry, DOE, electronically e-mailed information to members as well. A preapplication workshop is scheduled on August 5 & 6, 2008 in Lacey. Contact information for the workshop is Tami Riddell at 360-407-6295. The application workshop is September 3 & 4, 2008. The application period is open from September 1, 2008 to October 31, 2008.

Ms. Napier said the Water Quality Committee has not sponsored applications, but has ranked applications. Watershed groups no longer have to rank projects. However, the committee has provided feedback on proposed projects. She suggested the committee could invite Grays Harbor County or Grays Harbor College to sponsor an application on behalf of the committee, such as a project that implements the Watershed Plan or outreach activities by Ms. Spaulding or Mr. Loft's efforts on the Coordinated Water Quality Monitoring Program.

Chehalis Basin Water Quality Committee Meeting Summary

July 10, 2008

Page 4 of 6

Ms. Spaulding offered the suggestion of creating a stream team to work on restoration projects by reviewing Mr. Loft's work to determine a site and involving different groups within the basin.

Mr. Loft suggested it would be useful for the team to visit Paul Simmon's lab to learn some of the techniques he has employed to resolve some of the problems. He also has a system for extracting diesel and oil from soil. He offered to provide additional information on the location of the lab.

Mr. Schillinger referred to a list of suggested projects on ongoing and emerging issues that drive Washington's water quality funding needs. He offered a suggestion of considering stormwater control and treatment in terms of pollution to rivers and streams. Mr. Loft said he is also working on a project involving the management of stormwater runoff. Mr. Schillinger said perhaps the role of the committee supported by the technology and expertise of Mr. Loft is to approach some cities or towns located within a conservation district and invite them to consider an appropriate project.

Mr. Wiltzius suggested that prior to funding a stream team, the committee could submit a funding application to have a consultant analyze the data, such as an engineering company to analyze the project and prepare a report identifying hot spots. During the next funding cycle, the committee could submit a funding application for the stream team to begin initial investigations of those sites.

Ms. Napier questioned whether the funding source will fund data analysis as it appears the funding is directed more to on-the-ground projects. Mr. Wiltzius commented that the Partnership has a good tool that should be analyzed. The report would identify hot spots.

Ms. Spaulding reported Dave Rounry had conveyed that a corrective action element is likely necessary to help the competitiveness of the proposal. She said that's why she suggested a stream team or coordinating with the conservation districts, river councils, and fisheries task force. Ms. Napier suggested reviewing the ideas with Mr. Rounry as well as Mr. Wiltzius' suggestion.

Ms. Spaulding asked Mr. Loft about the possibility of undertaking some hot spot analysis in GIS with existing data to determine hot spot locations. Mr. Loft said his work is headed in that general direction and the next layer of data is parcel data in terms of land use in the areas.

Ms. Spaulding reported on her goal of developing a Chehalis basin stream team at the subbasin level because of the size of the basin. It will take initial community involvement by different cities and towns. Stream teams are comprised of volunteers who conduct water quality monitoring and sampling, restoration projects, and work on storm drains and buffers. Thurston County and Kitsap County both have stream teams. Stream teams are funded through county government. Initial grants generally can launch the teams but permanent funding is required to sustain the team. She said she will focus initial efforts on the maps in determining where some of the water quality problems are located.

Ms. Napier referred to Mr. Rounry's September workshop on the TMDL implementation. She offered that it might be another approach to review the TMDL table implementation and select an area for a restoration project utilizing the notion of a stream team. Mr. Wiltzius agreed that the option might have a better chance of obtaining funds. It's doubtful funding would be approved unless an on-the-ground project is submitted. Submitting another idea that is different for a potential grant would likely not be successful. Ms. Napier suggested working with Mr. Rounry on potential TMDL projects as well as working with Chris Hempleman, who could help flush out the details of the project.

Members supported the suggestions and acknowledged the work involved in submitting a project proposal.

Chehalis Basin Water Quality Committee Meeting Summary

July 10, 2008

Page 5 of 6

Members discussed the difficulty of obtaining funding for projects.

Mr. Iwenofu reported the Quinault Indian Tribe is also interested in applying for the grants.

Water Quality Committee's Role on the Draft Letter to Grays Harbor County on the Critical Areas Ordinance

Mr. Wiltzius said he was somewhat frustrated at the outcome of the discussion at the Partnership meeting on the letter drafted by the Water Quality Committee responding to the draft Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO). He said he spoke with the Chehalis representative about his concerns after the meeting. The Partnership was developed in some aspect to participate in water quantity, quality, and habitat issues within the basin. By participating in the review of the Critical Areas Ordinance, it demonstrated that the Partnership took an interest and the time to review the document. He said he could understand if the letter recommended policy changes but the focus of the letter was on some discrepancies. He questioned the role of the committee. The Partnership has previously sent numerous support letters on different topics within different areas of the basin. However, the Partnership indicated since the CAO pertains to Grays Harbor, the Partnership shouldn't become involved. He expressed frustration about the role of the committee especially when members bring various expertise to the table.

Mr. Schillinger commented that there is still an individual ability of each member representing a city, county or organization to provide comments. Mr. Wiltzius agreed but noted the City of Chehalis likely wouldn't review the CAO outside the venue of the committee.

Ms. Napier said the Partnership's position is that it serves as a forum only. She indicated that the goal of the letter in responding to the draft CAO was raising awareness, reminding the county of the Partnership, and when developing land use rules and regulations, the county needs to include watershed guidance. By not sending the letter, that message was not delivered. She said she will address the issue with the Steering Technical Committee (STC). Additionally, the message the Partnership seemed to convey was that the CAO does not relate to water quality issues. She noted that Terry Willis submitted a letter using the language contained in the letter.

Members discussed other county CAOs under public review and how input is handled and the tone of the draft letter. Mr. Schillinger added that if he had been in attendance he would have spoke in favor of sending the letter. The comment period for the CAO expired on June 30, 2008.

Members discussed the relationship between county and city CAOs and the importance of reviewing CAOs and similar documents for smaller entities that don't have the expertise in-house.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will include discussion on the Centennial grant pending further discussion between Ms. Spaulding and Mr. Rountry.

Mr. Wiltzius offered to provide a presentation on the City of Chehalis' Poplar Tree Plantation.

Mr. Schillinger requested a briefing from the City of Centralia on the benefits to water quality of the new Chehalis/Centralia Treatment Plant.

Adjournment

Chehalis Basin Water Quality Committee Meeting Summary

July 10, 2008

Page 6 of 6

With there being no further business, Ms. Spaulding adjourned the meeting at 11:46 a.m.

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