

**Chehalis Basin Partnership Water Quality Committee
Grays Harbor Forestry Building
Montesano, Washington
November 13, 2008
9:30 a.m.**

Meeting Summary

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Janel Spaulding, Grays Harbor College/Chehalis Basin Partnership
Lee Napier, Grays Harbor County
Patrick Wiltzius, City of Chehalis
Dave Rountry, Department of Ecology (DOE)
Chris Hempleman, DOE
David Jarzynka, Briggs Nursery
Joel Green, Grays Harbor College
Brady Engvall, Citizen, Grays Harbor
Don Loft, The Evergreen State College/Grays Harbor College
Cindy Burton, US Department of Agriculture
Valerie Gow, Puget Sound Meeting Services

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 9:33 a.m. Everyone present provided self-introductions.

Changes to the Agenda and Selection of Chair

Presentation of the Long-Term Water Quality Monitoring Probes was deferred to a future meeting.

Ms. Spaulding reported Terry Willis was elected as a Grays Harbor County Commissioner. A new chair needs to be assigned. Ms. Spaulding asked for a volunteer to serve as Chair of the Water Quality Committee. Patrick Wiltzius volunteered to serve as Chair.

Approve the Addition to the Comprehensive Water Quality Monitoring Plan

Dave Rountry said there appears to be some confusion on where the additional two monitoring sites should be placed. At last month's meeting, there was a good approach to close the discussion by restating the agreement. There was agreement to place one of the two additional sites at Beardsley Slough and one at Grayland Ditch. Mr. Rountry said that at the previous meeting prior to October, he understood that the two additional sites would be located on Winter Creek and one on Grayland Ditch or two on Grayland Ditch. There's likely not much value in adding a sampling site at Beardsley Slough. He said he hopes there is room for additional discussion on the issue. At this point, the tribe has not added any new sites. The tribe is agreeable to placing the probes but needs a decision on the location. The tribe does not believe there was agreement on the selection of the sites.

Chair Wiltzius said he believed there was an agreement on the selection of the sites at the last meeting, but would consider changes. There was some discussion about access to the site. Mr. Rountry said there shouldn't be concerns about access to the Grayland Ditch sites. Ms. Spaulding said the concern was more about where the site was located within the Grayland Ditch. Mr. Rountry said the discussion appeared to convey some need for some thought, if not caution, for site location with respect to placing the sites as close to potential human sources as possible, and if it's not possible, to identify and sample a reference site keeping

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sites away from the greatest wildlife areas. The sites proposed for Grayland Ditch would capture human related sources while acknowledging it not's possible to completely rule out wildlife.

Joel Green said the discussion pertaining to Grayland Ditch centered on whether it would be a reference site. It appeared it wouldn't be a good reference site because it was impacted by cranberry growers and possible sewage from on-site septic systems.

Brady Engvall asked about the definition of a reference site. Dr. Green said a reference site is an unimpacted site that is not affected by human activities that can be compared against other impacted sites. Mr. Engvall said the Grayland Ditch is part of the TMDL Study. It's part of the study because of continued problems that were identified. He questioned the purpose of having a site that is not specific to the problems that are being addressed. It's a sensitive issue as many people think they are not contributing to the problems. The shellfish industry would like to know as well as whether the TMDL is going to work. Avoiding the problem areas will never fix the issue. Dr. Green agreed and said it's a valid point and an argument for having a monitoring site at the Grayland Ditch, but not as a reference site, but as a site to monitor local impacts.

Discussion followed on confusion between the seven long-term probes and the water quality monitoring sites. Ms. Spaulding displayed a map of the seven probe locations. Chair Wiltzius said half of the monitoring sites were placed on the main stem and half were placed on tributaries of concern. The monthly monitoring sites are areas for monitoring water quality parameters on a monthly basis.

Don Loft said there appears to be an issue with the location of the two monitoring sites. There was a previous discussion about switching over some of the sites on the main channel and reestablishing them elsewhere in a more desirable location. Mr. Rounry said he didn't recall the conversation. Mr. Loft said the conversation could have involved Harry Pickernell at that point. Mr. Rounry suggested deferring that topic for a future discussion because it involves restructuring the existing sites. The question now is determining the location of the two additional sites beyond the current 93 sites.

Mr. Loft said he has a personal investment for wanting the monitoring sites located within the Grayland Ditch because it's a good place to begin monitoring and working to clean up the area. He said he has some thoughts on ways to improve water conditions and a monitoring site would be helpful in that effort.

Mr. Rounry agreed with the suggestion, as it's consistent with what he believed was a consensus several months ago. However, he said he has been considering the value of a monitoring site in Beardsley Slough, but given the new information questions the value of that. He asked Mr. Engvall about the Beardsley Slough site and the potential for human sources within the area. Mr. Engvall shared information on some shoreline survey work he completed to identify potential human activity. There are two areas of access to home sites near Beardsley Slough. The area is very remote and there is no flowing water access to the home sites to Beardsley Slough for six months out of the year. He shared information on a summer cabin he discovered on the north side, which includes no sewer system and a four wheeler site for summertime use with no sewer facilities. He said he's documenting the location of the sites to provide the information to the county.

Chair Wiltzius said several sites are not a major threat to water quality especially if there is another monitoring site that is preferred at this time. He suggested compiling a list of the existing 93 monitoring sites and plotting the locations on a map. Mr. Loft offered to provide a copy of a map of the sites.

Mr. Rounry commented on the two monitoring sites located on the west fork of the Satsop River to help rule out or confirm presence of a problem. The situation on the Grayland Ditch is parallel as there is a history of bacteria pollution from the TMDL. There has been sampling as recently as 2003 showing ongoing problems

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beyond the mouth of Grayland Ditch and in other tributaries in the area that were also included in the TMDL. The State Department of Health's Shellfish Program has identified the south harbor area south of the 105 Bridge as a threatened area at risk for a downgrade of shellfish harvesting. The objective of the site selection pertains more to source identification. He said he believes this is the value in the approach of selecting two sites at the Grayland Ditch because it's in line with the objectives of the monitoring plan. The goal is to take the next step and continue work upstream to either rule out or confirm a problem in the location.

Chair Wiltzius questioned whether the monitoring plan for the 95 sites was established to conduct source identification or whether it was established as a screening tool. He said he believes it was more of a screening tool. If used as source identification, the issue is who determines the priorities. He questioned the purpose of the 95 monitoring sites – source identification or just screening, or both.

David Jarzynka said there was also the intent to have some control sites to monitor different tributaries that may be contributing to water quality issues.

Dr. Green recommended retaining the existing sites to continue long-term monitoring efforts. There appears to be some interest in placing a site in the Grayland Ditch. He questioned the motivation for placing two sites in Grayland Ditch. Mr. Loft said the Grayland Ditch appears to empty into a stream, which flows into the bay. He suggested placing one site in the ditch above the area emptying into the stream. Mr. Engvall said that within the community, it's known as Big Mallard Slough. There are many tributaries from the hillside that feed into the slough below the dike.

Discussion followed on the location of the Grayland Ditch area and surrounding streams and possible locations for placing monitoring sites. Mr. Rountry said he recently toured the area with the caretaker from the local hunting club. The drainage area that Grayland Ditch empties into was described as Little Andrews Creek. He said the two sites he is considering are located downstream of any residences but still within the ditch. The other site would be in the heart of the residential area where homes immediately join the Grayland Ditch. The purpose is to sample in the area where there may be potential pollution and downstream at a point that would rule out as much wildlife influence as possible.

Chair Wiltzius said it appears there would be some merit in the suggested sites if DOE has previously sampled the sites and has established a baseline.

Ms. Napier suggested involving the members from the hunting club in the discussion on the placement of the monitoring sites to avoid any perceptions that the club may be a target.

Mr. Engvall commented on the difficulty associated with monitoring the conditions of on-site septic systems because many of the properties have been transferred within families for decades.

Mr. Rountry said there is a load reduction identified as part of the TMDL Study of the Grayland Ditch.

Members reviewed the Grayland Ditch and surrounding areas on a map.

Chair Wiltzius confirmed the consensus of the committee to place monitoring sites at the two locations discussed. He suggested scouting the site to confirm the locations for final review by the committee. Mr. Rountry recommended having Mr. Pickernell scout the locations along with him and Mr. Loft.

Discuss Survey Created by Randy Lehr to Measure Citizen's Understanding of Watershed Management

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Ms. Spaulding referred to a survey developed by Randy Lehr, which was previously reviewed by the committee. The Steering Technical Committee (STC) and the Partnership have indicated interest in moving forward in distributing the survey. She invited feedback on the distribution method. To obtain a margin of error of 3%, 1,000 responses are necessary. Mailing the survey would entail a substantial cost. Some funds are available for mailing the survey at approximately \$1 for each survey to include the return postage.

Chair Wiltzius offered the suggestion of printing the survey in *The Drops of Water* newsletter. Ms. Napier said she also offered a suggestion of sponsoring an edition of the newsletter. However, there are concerns with that approach as it might only target people already concerned about watershed resources. The goal is to achieve a representative sampling of the Chehalis basin. Another option is mailing the survey based on a zip code search.

Chair Wiltzius suggested including the survey in various utility billings through the larger cities and Public Utility Districts.

Ms. Spaulding displayed the 11-page survey consisting of 65 questions. Several members expressed concerns about the length of the survey.

Mr. Rountry commented that another aspect of the survey is to serve as an informational piece and prompt people to think about the resource. However, if the intent is to collect information to guide future communications and outreach, the question is how the information will be used. Ms. Spaulding said Mr. Lehr was hopeful that the survey would help in developing more specific outreach strategies in different areas of the watershed.

Ms. Hempleman expressed caution on the length of the survey and whether people will spend time completing the survey. Chair Wiltzius suggested reformatting the survey to reduce the size.

Members discussed the possibility of combining questions and reducing the survey. Mr. Rountry expressed reluctance in making any changes as Mr. Lehr consulted a statistician and survey experts. The survey was carefully designed. Ms. Napier said the survey could cost as much as \$10,000 to \$15,000 to print and mail.

Members discussed various options for possibly reducing or reformatting the survey to reduce pages or possibly including a link to the survey within utility billings for completion of the survey online. Ms. Spaulding suggested offering incentives for completing the survey. Other suggestions included:

- Include survey in PUD billings
- Include survey in city utility billings
- Target events, fairs, bazaars, etc.
- Consider bulk mailing
- Include information in college registration materials
- Advertise online link on city and county websites
- Consider radio advertising
- Include as a scout project for door-to-door solicitation
- Include as a conservation project
- Consider area of the watershed in distribution methods
- Consider combination of distribution methods to obtain a cross section sampling of the watershed

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Ms. Spaulding said she will electronically mail a copy of the survey to members.

Members discussed the purpose of the survey, such as informing, changing behavior, or targeting outreach methods. Ms. Spaulding offered that there is a variety of outcomes from raising awareness in determining what's important to the population in terms of water resources. The outcome of the survey will help to inform future efforts of the Partnership.

Discuss Potential Topics and Presenters for Workshops to be Held in 2009

Ms. Spaulding reported on the potential for conducting a workshop for maintaining agriculture and forestry uses on the landscape. She asked for feedback on the topic and possible speakers.

Ms. Napier said during the development of the Detailed Implementation Plan (DIP), several issues were selected from the Watershed Plan and a workshop was held to define the topics. The topic of agriculture and forestry generated interest and many volunteers. However, the next step was never initiated. Under the new contract, the STC reviewed the 2009 work plan and agreed to focus on the agriculture/forestry component of the plan. The issue is to pursue the topic and determine whether there is sufficient information in the DIP to pursue work. She suggested scheduling another workshop to define the details for accomplishing the tasks. She added that during the work on the DIP, there were five main topics, with water quality assigned to the Water Quality Committee. Recognizing agriculture and forestry can be uses improving water quality, the topic appeared to be a good fit for the Water Quality Committee to begin pursuing.

Mr. Rountry asked for verification as to whether the request is for conducting a workshop to flush out the action elements to begin pursuing efforts. Ms. Napier confirmed that's the proposal. The Phase 4 grant provides funds to host workshops with a facilitator to help organize the process and help develop and update the DIP related to the task. The STC is working on groundwater characterization and outreach and the Habitat Work Group continues work on other components of the DIP.

Chair Wiltzius suggested providing that portion of the watershed plan to members to assist in defining the tasks. Ms. Napier said the intent is to receive committee input on whether to pursue the suggestion and determine what information the committee needs to continue the work. She recommended bringing the committee up-to-date by providing members with the task(s) identified in the Watershed Plan, consider adding to the list of stakeholders, and reviewing the DIP to become familiar with the task(s) within the Watershed Plan. The schedule would be early spring 2009.

Members concurred with the suggestion action.

Ms. Hempleman said one issue of importance for maintaining agriculture uses is water banking. DOE is conducting an all-day water banking workshop on November 21, 2008 at DOE in Olympia. She invited members to attend the workshop.

Responding to questions on the background on how the topic was included in the top five tasks, Ms. Napier provided some historical information on the development of the Watershed Plan. Moving from the Watershed Plan to the DIP, the STC began merging issues to define tasks and objectives. The list was condensed to approximately 18 topics that were classified as objectives. Working with the Environmental Finance Center, the STC used a modeling tool to rate the objectives against criteria to develop a group of five. The five objectives are the main focus areas. Ms. Napier offered to provide issue papers on the objectives to help bring committee members up-to-date on the issue.

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Next Meeting Date & Potential Agenda

The next meeting is scheduled for December 11, 2008.

Potential agenda items include:

- Presentation of the Long-Term Water Quality Monitoring Probes
- Analysis of Data Collected on Water Quality Monitoring Program

Mr. Rountry recommended including a discussion on how to best organize and conduct an annual discussion on implementation activities accomplished to date, as well as the element pertaining to adaptive management. Mr. Rountry suggested allocating 45 minutes for the discussion.

Mr. Loft suggested discussing possible relocation of water quality monitoring sites as there appears to be some conflict with the location of the sites. Some of the sites in the Chehalis River could be placed in other locations.

- Follow up on the Grayland Ditch sites

Members agreed to defer discussion on the workshop until the January meeting. Ms. Napier will send out the information to members.

Members agreed to the following agenda for the December meeting:

- Discussion on implementation activities/adaptive management – 45 minutes
- Presentation of the Long-Term Water Quality Monitoring Probes
- Follow up on the Grayland Ditch sites
- Analysis of Data Collected on Water Quality Monitoring Program – time permitting

Mr. Rountry requested an update on next steps for implementing a stream team/volunteer process. Ms. Spaulding advised that she will be working with the City of Centralia and exploring possible grants for China Creek. Ms. Hempleman commented on DOE's new policy for managing grant funds. Funding is limited, but is easier to obtain. Ms. Spaulding advised that she is meeting with representatives from the City of Centralia next month on the China Creek project.

Mr. Loft shared information on possible interest by college students for participating in restoration projects to receive college credits.

Adjournment

With there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:20 a.m.

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