

**Chehalis Basin Partnership
Water Quality Committee
Grays Harbor County Administration Building
Montesano, Washington
May 14, 2009
9:30 a.m.**

Meeting Summary

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Janel Spaulding, Grays Harbor College/Chehalis Basin Partnership
Dave Rountry, Department of Ecology (DOE)
Chris Hempleman, DOE
Patrick Wiltzius, City of Chehalis
Dave Jarzynka, Briggs Nursery
Ron Schillinger, City of Montesano
Harry Pickernell, Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation
Cindy Burton, US Department of Agriculture, Columbia Resource Conservation and Economic Development District
Joel Green, Grays Harbor College
Don Loft, The Evergreen State College (TESC)/Grays Harbor College
Eric Schlorff, DOE
Kathy Weed, TESC
Valerie Gow, Puget Sound Meeting Services

Call to Order, Introductions and Changes to the Agenda

Patrick Wiltzius called the Chehalis Basin Partnership (CBP) Water Quality Committee (WQC) meeting to order at 9:46 a.m. Everyone present provided self-introductions.

Future Topics for Future Meetings

Mr. Wiltzius offered the suggestion of a future tour of the Chehalis Wastewater Treatment Plant and the Poplar Tree Farm. He noted that there was also some conversations about discussing the role of the committee as the Steering Technical Committee (STC) appears to be the main work group. Although the committee is successfully pursuing the water quality monitoring program, the committee wasn't as successful when it attempted to submit a letter of comment to Grays Harbor County on its Critical Areas Ordinance. Janel Spaulding said the Partnership will receive a draft comment letter the Partnership will utilize in responding to policy and regulations member organizations are implementing. The STC initiated the draft letter for the Partnership's review and approval.

Don Loft, Kathy Weed, and Eric Schlorff arrived at the meeting.

Dave Jarzynka commented that he views the role of the committee as a way to increase awareness in the community along the Chehalis River basin on the issues of water quality as well as the programs and available data on current conditions. To the extent that the committee can continue those efforts, the committee is serving a purpose.

Don Loft commented that after the meeting, he is traveling to Westport to install some monitoring sites for fecal coliform. He suggested there might be a need to move some monitoring sites as there appears to be some redundancy in the main river channel. He offered to conduct some analysis on the sites.

Chris Hempleman agreed with having a discussion on what the committee's role and purpose is. Mr. Wiltzius added that the committee has no work plan, where many of the other committees have a work plan. Ms.

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Hempleman said she would assume that there would be more focus on the areas that are encountering problems and what the committee can do to resolve those issues. The committee should be more action-oriented. Mr. Wiltzius said he doesn't recollect how the committee was formed. Originally, only the STC was established. At one time, the committee was part of DOE's ranking process for grant loan applications followed by development and implementation of the water quality monitoring program. The committee never has had a work plan. A discussion on the committee's role would be beneficial.

Ron Schillinger said water quality was one of the major issues addressed in the watershed management plan and much like other areas of environmental issues; there is a group of specialists focused on improving water quality. The committee was established for that purpose - to have a group separate from the Partnership to deal with specific kinds of issues and work on ways to identify improvements. It would also be beneficial for the committee to receive briefings or engage in field trips to areas of water quality concern. One example is determining the status of the aquifer in the Wildcat area and pursuing efforts to determine how groundwater influences the quality of the aquifer and how the committee can influence development standards near McCleary and the Wildcat area. Another possible field trip could be to the City of Centralia's stormwater project.

Dave Rountry arrived at the meeting.

Ms. Spaulding noted that Kim Ashmore of the City of Centralia provided several tours of the stormwater retrofit project during the watershed awareness week last year. The tour was very informational.

Mr. Jarzynka said he was interested in joining the committee because of ongoing discussions and finger pointing occurring throughout the community regarding sources of pollution without specific data supporting some of those assertions. Decisions based on emotions rather than data will be flawed and causes havoc. The reason he got involved was to ensure data collection is pursued. The committee's work to date has been effective and is important because a scientific approach is necessary to address water quality issues.

Mr. Loft agreed that as data are collected from the monitoring program, clear pictures on water quality conditions are beginning to emerge.

Mr. Schillinger said the committee should begin identifying ways to resolve problems that are now documented with data. He suggested a future field trip to Westport.

Mr. Loft referred to an issue occurring in the area of Independence Road where erosion is occurring at the bend in the river. Erosion has already destroyed one road resulting in the relocation of the roadway, which is also threatened. At some point, some measures will need to occur to protect the road.

Mr. Wiltzius suggested forwarding topics to Ms. Spaulding to develop a draft list of future agenda topics.

Outcome of the Second Annual Water Quality Progress Review Meeting on April 17, 2009

- a. How to circulate results/information to raise citizen awareness?*
- b. How to get information from partners who did not participate?*
- c. How do the different project tracking formats (Habitat Work Schedule, Ecology EIM, CBP WQ Monitoring Database) interrelate?*
- d. What level of detail do the various tracking formats use and how should we collect it?*

Dave Rountry reported several ideas were generated during the progress review on ways to share the outcome of implementation efforts within the Chehalis basin. One method includes publishing an article in the *Drops of Water* newsletter because it's published in area newspapers and could reach a wider audience. The article

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could focus on a variety of topics as well as including some photos. Joel Green offered to assist in developing an article on the Partnership's water quality monitoring program. Mr. Wiltzius suggested that for the benefit of the average citizen, confining the article to the basics of the program and including information on the program, program goals, project partners, and water quality testing parameters.

Ms. Spaulding said the progress review was to determine what activities are occurring as well as publicizing the information to the public. She suggested considering another article recapping or highlighting some of the work that's been completed throughout the basin involving all groups. Ms. Hempleman suggested including more information on the Partnership's website.

Mr. Rountry said he anticipates receiving some guidance from the workshops Ms. Spaulding is coordinating. Ms. Spaulding said the goal of the workshops is developing a two-year strategic plan that can be used to implement activities throughout the basin.

Mr. Rountry previewed a DVD developed by an employee in DOE's water quality program. The DVD is one approach for disseminating information about water quality activities occurring throughout the basin. It's one tool for outreach. Different entities within the Partnership have their own websites as well. Some of the information overlaps and some is duplicated. He said he's used information from the committee as well as other information obtained through the Partnership for reporting purposes quite frequently. The goal is to ensure the information is reaching citizens for their understanding of the problems as well as the successes, which motivates more support for the work of the committee. At this time, it's not evident that the information is reaching the public, but rather is residing on different websites.

Ms. Spaulding said to her knowledge since she's begun attending committee meetings; the committee hasn't pursued any public outreach. All the information publicized should be framed correctly for the public. Mr. Wiltzius suggested considering another *Drops of Water* article as a first step. The Partnership's website also includes a substantial amount of information. There are hundreds of documents available. The article could inform the public about the website.

Ms. Spaulding reported that she is working with Margaret Rader on preparing a section within the *Drops of Water* newsletter focusing on the Partnership in each edition. Articles on the Water Quality Committee could be included as well.

Members discussed ways to attract citizens to use the Partnership's website.

Harry Pickernell arrived at the meeting.

Mr. Schillinger suggested using press releases as another method of disseminating information. He asked about the process the Partnership uses for releasing press releases. Ms. Hempleman said DOE has an effective public information officer who works well with local partners. DOE can assist in press release efforts. Mr. Loft suggested considering radio public service announcements (PSAs) as well. Mr. Schillinger commented on publicity PSAs for the Watershed Festival last year and the possibility of using that opportunity to share information on efforts to date.

Mr. Rountry commented about the first progress review and how that information was released. One option is circulating the DVD. The committee could consider ways to distribute the DVD and who is the best audience.

Members viewed the DVD. Mr. Rountry reviewed the contents of the DVD program:

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- List of presentations
- Photo and poster gallery including a map of the Chehalis River basin
- List of Partners and contacts
- Invitation letter to the progress review
- A summary of the first progress review
- A list of attendees to the workshop
- Copy of letter from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) inviting submissions of success stories

Mr. Wiltzius said the DVD appears more to be an advanced outreach tool and that it will be important for the committee to prioritize the outreach approach. Members discussed various ways to publicize the information, such as a brochure. Mr. Schillinger suggested a summary paragraph should be provided for each presentation. He advocated for releasing a press release and providing a copy of the release to all partnership members.

Mr. Green asked whether it was possible to post the information on DOE's website to enable the public to access the information.

Mr. Rountry commented on the outcome of the progress review and how pleased he was with the number of attendees. Some attendees suggested holding the progress review several times a year. Participants offered positive comments about the meeting. Some entities have a strong commitment to implementation. He questioned whether the committee should follow up with those entities that did not attend or provide information on progress to date. No information was provided by the counties on septic programs. Thurston County Environmental Health representatives attended and provided information on other things the department is working on in the basin. The representatives shared information about groundwater monitoring and the risk of nitrate pollution, and the connection of agricultural management practices with fecal coliform bacteria. The approach the committee decided to pursue to obtain more participation was through the joint letter the Partnership and DOE sent inviting agencies to attend the progress review and provide information. One of the counties followed through – Thurston County Environmental Health. However, that only represents one out of five agencies that responded. The issue was discussed briefly by the WQC several months ago. At that time, Mr. Schillinger suggested contacting agencies directly. Mr. Schillinger agreed that's the approach the committee should take. Committee members should develop a list and begin contacting organizations to obtain an update on activities.

Ms. Hempleman suggested the summary report might motivate those organizations that didn't submit information to submit an update on implementation activities to date. Prompting those organizations through a guilt approach might be a way to solicit more participation.

Mr. Wiltzius pointed out that an agency's non-response isn't indicative of the agency not pursuing water quality activities. The progress review was only the second meeting, which will likely continue generating more participants as more reviews are held.

Mr. Schillinger said he understood part of the reason for having the review was because of DOE's responsibility to report on progress to date. There are many people undertaking actions and completing good work. He suggested the next review should include a time limit on the presentations to afford time for all participants to present information. Ms. Hempleman said it would also be helpful for people who are invited to know what the expectation of meeting is going to be. As busy as everyone is, it's important to make it worth the time to attend. Mr. Schillinger commented on the importance of providing handouts to participants.

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Mr. Jarzynka suggested that obtaining more feedback requires a more personal approach. He shared how he contacts customers to obtain information or assistance. There are many interests represented on the committee who could contact different agencies and organizations. It likely would improve the reporting results dramatically.

Members discussed obtaining an email list of contacts for committee members. Mr. Wiltzius confirmed that prior to the next meeting, committee members will receive a list of agencies/organizations that didn't provide information or attend the water quality progress review so that members can begin initiating some contacts between now and the next meeting.

Mr. Wiltzius suggested scheduling the next meeting at the Chehalis Treatment Plant with a tour of the Poplar Tree Farm. The committee should also consider a review the Watershed Implementation Plan to determine status and to assist in developing a work plan for the committee.

Mr. Green affirmed his offer to prepare an article on the water quality program for the *Drops of Water* newsletter.

Discussion of Continued Sampling of Sites Meeting or Exceeding Water Quality Standards

Harry Pickernell reported funding for water quality testing ends on June 30, 2009. The DOE provided a grant to Grays Harbor College. The Tribe was subcontracted to perform the water sampling by the college. Mr. Pickernell said he'll continue to look for other sources of funding to continue the program. Mr. Green said it may be possible to reallocate some funds, but it will need to be reviewed in more detail. There are insufficient funds to maintain the program for another year.

Members discussed the status of the grant and overall funding at this point. The sampling program contracted with the Tribe was for \$75,000 a year. Some equipment was also purchased. The City of Chehalis donated some equipment as well. Mr. Wiltzius asked whether the program is eligible to receive salmon recovery funding as water quality is vital to salmon recovery. Ms. Spaulding advised that the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) does not fund monitoring activities. Mr. Green said SRFB funds projects for rehabilitating habitat. Mr. Wiltzius suggested an option of soliciting participation from cities and counties within the basin, and perhaps consider pursuing business sponsorships. Information on financing needs could be included in the *Drops of Water* article as well.

Ms. Spaulding questioned whether the Tribe will continue to share data if the Tribe continues monitoring efforts. Mr. Pickernell said it's dependent on the wishes of the Tribal Council. It likely wouldn't be a problem as the Tribe has been undertaking the sampling and testing for the last three years.

Cindy Burton advised that she works with a nonprofit corporation with access to many private foundations. She offered to work with the college and the Tribe to seek out sources of private funding. Mr. Wiltzius suggested the issue should be discussed at the next Partnership meeting as a component of the funding discussion.

Mr. Rountry commented that it would be beneficial for the Partnership's monthly agenda to include time to receive an update from the WQC.

Members discussed funding needs of the various programs including the water quality monitoring program.

Mr. Pickernell said that within the Humptulips area, several areas of sampling are continually testing at pristine levels. If funding is eliminated it's likely the Tribe will limit the sampling but not eliminate the sampling entirely.

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Mr. Rountry commented about the importance of ensuring there is a 12-month body of data of the sites to enable a DOE reviewer to consider whether the area is a sample of a clean water area, which could be removed from the TMDL list. The west Satsop was added as a site approximately nine months ago based on the first year's set of data involving bacteria issues. He stressed the importance of having data during the critical months between August and September. Mr. Schillinger said temperature was the only issue in the Humptulips. Many people in research management believe it wasn't so much a problem with any kind of water quality issue, but mostly a natural background environment in that particular area. Many research managers didn't believe there was a problem; however the area was still included on the list for a TMDL study. Mr. Green said it likely was an issue because of temperature requirements for salmon.

Next Meeting Agenda

Ms. Spaulding reviewed the June 11 meeting agenda:

- Tour of Chehalis Poplar Tree Farm/Chehalis Wastewater Plant.
- Mr. Rountry will email a list of contacts for those entities that did not provide information during the progress review.
- Review components of the Watershed Plan related to activities and actions for water quality that have not been implemented to assist in developing a work plan.
- Continue discussion on funding.

Mr. Rountry referred to the progress review and discussion about the need to integrate implementation work simultaneously with water quality data to ascertain if there is any correlation between implementation activities and water quality changes. The discussion should occur at some point. However, it also crosses over in the arena of funding and the Water Quality Implementation Plan Phase 4 funding priorities. There are many data sets available utilized by different entities of the Partnership. DOE has a similar GIS tool. It appears everyone is working in a vacuum in terms of GIS programs and tools. It's important for agencies to communicate and prioritize resources and become more strategic. He said he has many questions about GIS, which was included as an agenda item for discussion during the meeting. The issue is how to continue the program, upload information, and how to utilize it. Ms. Spaulding suggested inviting Narendran Kodandapani to the next meeting to provide information on the GIS Clearinghouse at the college.

Mr. Wiltzius suggested providing some cost information to have available when the Partnership begins discussing funding needs. Much of the work of the Partnership will begin to slow if funding isn't secured.

Adjournment

With there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:18 a.m.

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