

**Chehalis Basin Partnership Water Quality Committee
Grays Harbor Forestry Building
Montesano, Washington
March 12, 2009
9:30 a.m.**

Meeting Summary

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Patrick Wiltzius, City of Chehalis
Janel Spaulding, Grays Harbor College/Chehalis Basin Partnership
Dave Rountry, Department of Ecology (DOE)
Teri Franklin, Citizen, Grays Harbor County
Lee Napier, Grays Harbor County
Chris Hempleman, DOE
Joel Green, Grays Harbor College
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 9:41 a.m.

There were no changes to the agenda.

Approval of Minutes of February 12, 2009

The minutes of February 12, 2009 was accepted as presented.

Review Map of Water Quality Monitoring Locations and Long-Term Probes

Janel Spaulding displayed a map outlining the location of the water quality monitoring sites and long-term probes. She asked for feedback on the possibility of including additional data layers. Currently, there are 7 long-term probes and 93 water quality sites. There appears to be some discrepancies between the maps and the spreadsheets in terms of site locations.

Lee Napier suggested including major tributaries and their names on the map.

Dave Rountry arrived at the meeting.

Joel Green suggested included information on major roadways to improve the map's orientation.

Chris Hempleman arrived at the meeting.

Dave Rountry suggested including a separate legend identifying location names of monitoring and long-term probe sites. Lee recommended adding boundaries for each county.

Members agreed with the suggested changes.

Ms. Spaulding displayed a school map of the Chehalis basin created by Don Loft. Kathy Jacobson is distributing the maps to local schools. During the water quality progress review next month, attendees will receive a map. The map features hatcheries, agriculture, and forestry uses, etc.

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Dave Rountry shared a copy of a map from the Thurston Conversation District (TCD), which is similar to the same map provided last year by Brian Thompson, TCD. The map reflects activities the district has helped landowners implement.

Ms. Napier asked whether data could be added to the Partnership's GIS Clearinghouse. Mr. Rountry said it will likely take time to compile the information because it will necessitate someone from the conservation district pulling project files and obtaining data and geographic coordinates for each project. Mr. Rountry said he inquired about some of the sites located upstream of Prather Road near the Centralia Treatment Plant. The district is reluctant to expend time on individual files to identify site coordinates because the district has limited funding for Chehalis basin work. There are approximately eight projects upstream of Prather Road where the district has done some work and where DOE is assisting in showcasing as success stories.

Mr. Rountry referred to a summary report from the Lewis County Conservation District on a habitat project inventory assessment completed with a DOE grant in 2007. The information should be included in the GIS Clearinghouse. Good data are generated that should be included in the GIS Clearinghouse and accessible to everyone.

Discuss 2nd Annual Progress Review

Mr. Rountry said the progress review helps citizens living within the watershed understand current conditions in the watershed and protective actions completed to help them understand how individual actions can impact the watershed, as well as helping them understand what actions are needed to improve water quality conditions. Another aspect of the review is accounting for projects completed in the watershed to document dollars and resources expended on those efforts. The ultimate intent is keeping citizens and landowners informed to help promote actions benefitting the watershed.

During the development of the Watershed Plan and completion of the Total Daily Maximum Load (TMDL) Study, the message from the Partnership was a desire for minimal intervention by bureaucrats and regulatory agencies as the Partnership wanted to control and respond to issues before they required regulatory oversight.

Mr. Rountry offered to lead the progress review, similar to the 2007 effort. The intent is scheduling a workshop and inviting project sponsors to share details on projects completed in the watershed. He suggested reviewing the format of the workshop and ways to invite attendees to participate, as well as establishing expectations on what should be achieved at the conclusion of the workshop. He referred to a sample letter that could be adapted for the workshop that was previously used, and a list of invitees from last year. A sample of the letter was previously forwarded to Ms. Spaulding.

Mr. Rountry suggested scheduling April 17, 2009 for the workshop. Members agreed to schedule the workshop from 9:00 a.m. to noon. Members discussed possible meeting locations. Mr. Rountry offered to contact representatives at the TCD for scheduling the workshop at the district office. If the room is not available, Mr. Rountry advised that he'll schedule the meeting at the Department of Ecology.

Members discussed the invitation list and source documents for potential attendees. Mr. Rountry asked about a contact name for Lewis County. Ms. Napier said Lewis County recently appointed County Commissioner Bill Schulte to the Partnership. Lyle Hojem is the Citizen Representative with Jim Hill is the alternate Citizen Representative.

Ms. Spaulding suggested adding Surfrider Foundation to the mailing list and sending an invitation to either Kathy Greer or Jody Kennedy.

Members reviewed names on the previous invitation list and updated contact names.

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Discussion ensued on the scope of the workshop and the number of potential attendees. Mr. Rountry commented that the ultimate goal is learning of all efforts leading to changes or improvement in water quality. However, there are boundaries associated with different groups, committees, and subcommittee associated with those efforts. Those efforts could be pulled together in a single review. Joel Green commented on the potential drawbacks associated with a large meeting and that some efforts associated with fish habitat enhancements may not necessarily improve or change water quality conditions. Chris Hempleman agreed the meeting could involve too many attendees. She agreed there are some habitat projects that don't impact water quality. However, it's still important to determine the goal and outcome of the workshop. Mr. Rountry said part of the reason for structuring the letter in 2007, was to gauge attendance and how much time to plan for each presentation. The last review was a roundtable format with some interaction and conversation. Each participant shared information on their respective project with some questions and answers to the presenters. Mr. Rountry said he provided a list of primary entities/organizations along with the forecasted projects for water quality. As participants presented information, it was noted that more work is occurring than forecasted. That work needs to be compiled and documented as the watershed plan and the TMDL plan speaks to documentation of ongoing efforts for protecting and restoring water quality.

Mr. Wiltzius recommended providing the previous progress report to workshop attendees to help guide the presentations. He commented on assistance he's providing to the City of Tenino in its efforts to build a new wastewater treatment plant. He offered to provide information on the project at the workshop on behalf of the City of Tenino.

Mr. Rountry reiterated the goal of the workshop providing an update to citizens through information provided to local city councils, conservations districts, counties, other groups, members, grange meetings, and publications. Ms. Napier mentioned the *Drops of Water* newsletter as a source of publicizing information on efforts to date. Mr. Wiltzius suggested developing a 4-page color publication that could be distributed during the Watershed Festival.

Mr. Rountry said the end use of the information has been used to document DOE's accountability, which was also included on DOE's TMDL homepage for the Chehalis basin on progress and the work that has occurred. The website is located at <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/tmdl>.

Members discussed the format for the letter of invitation. Mr. Wiltzius offered to sign the letter as the Chair of the committee. He suggested the letter should request attendance rather than extending an invitation to attend to reinforce the importance of people attending and providing updates on projects.

Mr. Rountry shared that some key organizations were invited last year, but did not attend. There were several contacts made for those organizations to send a representative. He asked members to invite representatives from cities within Grays Harbor County to the workshop as he has encountered difficulties of those representatives attending previous meetings.

Discuss Upcoming Outreach and Volunteer Activities

Ms. Spaulding reported on the planning committee's first meeting for the Watershed Festival. The meeting will be held on March 16, 2009 at Montesano City Hall at 1:00 p.m. She encouraged members to attend. New members include 2 citizens from Montesano.

On March 15, 2009 at 6:00 p.m., the Centralia Stream Team will be meeting in Centralia.

Another festival is the Hoquiam Shorebird Festival on April 24-25, 2009 at Hoquiam High School. The Partnership will feature its booth. She asked for volunteers to help staff the booth.

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Ms. Spaulding referred to the committee's previous review of Grays Harbor County's Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO) and the draft response comments presented to the Partnership for review and approval. After review, the Partnership decided against approving and sending the letter. The Steering Technical Committee (STC) addressed the issue and discussed how the Partnership should provide future comments on local government environmental policies/regulations. Ms. Spaulding said she was tasked with drafting a generic letter that could be forwarded to government agencies in response to proposed changes to environmental policies highlighting the Partnership's goals and its watershed plan, which should be used as a reference by those governmental agencies when drafting policies. The committee worked hard on reviewing the draft ordinance and preparing a response. When members of the Partnership indicated they weren't comfortable responding to the draft CAO, it was disheartening to the committee. The generic letter should help address that issue in the future.

Ms. Hempleman said another idea discussed was inviting representatives from the governmental entity to attend a Partnership meeting when the entity begins a process to update environmental policies or regulations. She asked if that information will be included in the letter as well. Ms. Napier said STC members discussed different scenarios. However, more important, is how jurisdictions are mindful of the watershed plan and whether it's used as source and as a tool by the jurisdictions. For example, Grays Harbor County is not using current maps or data. There is the work of the Habitat Work Group (HWG), which jurisdictions could tap. Another example is the funded project by the Salmon Recovery Funding Board's (SRFB) for stream typing throughout the watershed. That's the type of updated information and tools that could be used by jurisdictions when they are updating environmental regulations and policies. Ms. Napier shared information on other projects underway.

Ms. Napier referred to the Habitat Work Schedule. The tool is being used but at varying levels throughout the state through the Lead Entity Program. Contractually, the entities are only required to enter SRFB projects. It is however, available for all projects. The database is sponsored by the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Agenda Topics for Next Meeting

Mr. Rountry commented on the separation between the work of the HWG, GIS Clearinghouse, and water quality data. There has been recognition for the need to include habitat information in the GIS Clearinghouse. He asked if the Habitat Work Schedule is a bridge that could provide that information to the clearinghouse. Ms. Napier replied that Lewis and Mason Conservation Districts have worked on barrier assessments. That information is included in the clearinghouse, but not distributed because of issues associated with releasing landowner information. She said she's uncertain how the information could be utilized as it consists of over 2,000 data points. The other goal is exporting information from the PRISM database, which includes salmon recovery, family forestry, and fish passage program data. The data were exported to the GIS Clearinghouse. However latitude and longitude coordinates do not align for project sites and consequently are displayed incorrectly as points on a map. Randy Lehr was aware of the issue prior to his departure to a new position. Ms. Spaulding offered to follow up on the status of the issue with Narendran Kodandapani at Grays Harbor College, who is managing the clearinghouse. Ms. Napier said she is also looking at exporting data from PRISM to the Habitat Work Schedule.

Mr. Green acknowledged the need to correct the data points. If that issue is corrected, utilization of the clearinghouse could increase by Partnership members and others. He suggested requesting a current map from Mr. Kodandapani to initiate a request to correct the data.

Ms. Franklin shared some of her personal experiences with correcting coordinates in databases and offered her assistance to the college.

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Mr. Rountry commented on the HWG's efforts to document project results. Ms. Napier said it's been difficult to document progress because of the timing difficulty associated with grant funding rounds and contracting requirements. It's been difficult for the group to include progress reports on meeting agendas because of time limitations. Mr. Rountry stressed the importance of reporting requirements as a way to compile the information for inputting to the GIS Clearinghouse for utilization by everyone.

Mr. Green commented on the tools and capabilities of the clearinghouse. He indicated that he hasn't fully explored its capabilities. However, it appears mapping habitat projects should be possible in terms of matching coordinates. Ms. Napier said the Habitat Work Schedule has more features that are already available that wouldn't need to be developed for the clearinghouse. The two databases could likely be linked. She described the features within the Habitat Work Schedule, which features pictures of the project site and project information. It also includes GIS coordinates for each project. The issue is how to populate both systems. However, the Habitat Work Schedule is limited to some degree, because it contains only habitat projects. It doesn't include the inventory of barriers or water quality monitoring information. It relates to the issue of standardization of data between different types of projects. She said she's uncertain as to the level of work necessary to prepare data for exporting or programming.

Mr. Rountry said it appears there are some obstacles for populating the GIS Clearinghouse so that information can be accessed. The issue is defining those obstacles for populating the clearinghouse to enable usage as well as achieving the initial goal for developing the database.

Ms. Napier suggested determining whether the clearinghouse meets the original objectives or whether the expectations have increased since it was envisioned. It's important to define the expectations as well as assessing its capability. It may be time to revisit the issue. She indicated people are not utilizing the clearinghouse as much as she anticipated nor are they referring to it as a resource. Mr. Rountry suggested during project progress reviews, project sponsors should be asked to provide geographic coordinates. The issue is how to obtain the value of the clearinghouse as the CBP envisioned. Ms. Napier commented that it's up to the committee and the Partnership to provide feedback on what the expectations of the resource is. When efforts began on the clearinghouse, Ms. Spaulding, Mr. Green, and Mr. Kodandapani were not involved. It's up to those that have the history to provide feedback on expectations.

Ms. Napier referred to Mr. Green's work on the Ecosystem Diagnosis and Treatment (EDT) Model, which involves habitat restoration projects and impacts on fish distribution. Mr. Green said it's not about water quality and is unsure if water quality can be input to the EDT program, as it pertains more to stream habitat characteristics, such as stream width, depth, substrates, shade, large woody debris, and culverts. There is some overlap with water quality. There are many factors affecting water quality and fish distribution. The EDT model looks at fish habitat characteristics and effects on fish distribution. He indicated he's uncertain about what the expectations were for the GIS Clearinghouse, and that it's unlikely the clearinghouse could include all the data and provide analysis on different parameters.

Mr. Wiltzius suggested obtaining the original goals for the GIS Clearinghouse. Ms. Napier suggested referring to information involving the lobbying effort for the funding and the GIS summit as a source of information. She asked members to consider engaging in a discussion on the expectations and capabilities of the clearinghouse.

Mr. Green said it appears there may be an overlap between the clearinghouse and the EDT, because the clearinghouse includes culvert data. Ms. Napier said the new barrier assessment work of the conservation districts has not been inputted to the EDT. It's included in the clearinghouse.

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Mr. Wiltzius suggested obtaining information on the original expectation of the clearinghouse as well as a status report to develop a future plan.

Ms. Napier said she'll encourage HWG members to attend future WQC meetings.

Mr. Wiltzius recommended providing a public outreach brochure on the capability of the clearinghouse and current accessible information.

Mr. Rounry questioned the status of the citizen education and outreach committee and implementation of its issue paper or action plan, which is a component of the Watershed Plan's Detailed Implementation Plan. He asked how he can assist. Ms. Napier said the DIP includes a strategy for outreach and funding. One of the strategies was the basis for Ms. Spaulding's position, which also includes re-energizing the Citizens Advisory Committee. That effort has stalled to date. Ms. Napier said instead of updating the DIP on Ag and Forestry because of timing and resources, she recommends updating the strategy on public outreach by identifying current outreach efforts and gaps. That effort is underway now until the end of June.

Discussion followed on how citizens on the Citizens Advisory Committee became engaged in other committees resulting in the initial group disbanding. It may not be beneficial to ask citizens to attend separate meetings, when they want to be engaged in other meetings.

Mr. Rounry said the effort appears to be fragmented and not well coordinated strategically. Ms. Spaulding added that is the purpose for updating Strategy #2.

Members agreed to cancel the April 9, 2009 meeting in lieu of the April 17, 2009 workshop.

Ms. Hempleman offered to provide the workshop letters to Mr. Wiltzius for his signature on March 19, 2009.

Adjournment

With there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:43 a.m.

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