

CHEHALIS BASIN PARTNERSHIP
Chehalis Tribe Lucky Eagle Casino, Chehalis Rooms
Rochester, Washington
February 24, 2012
9:30 a.m.
Meeting Summary

MEMBERS, ALTERNATES & GUESTS PRESENT

Bonnie Canaday, City of Centralia	Janel Spaulding, Chehalis Basin Partnership
Chanele Holbrook-Shaw, Citizen, Thurston County	Julie Balmelli-Powe, Lewis County Farm Bureau
Chris Stearns, Thurston County PUD	Kahle Jennings, City of Centralia
Chuck Caldwell, Port of Grays Harbor	LaJane Schopfer, Mason County
Chuck Turley, WA Dept. of Natural Resources	Lee Napier, Grays Harbor County
Commissioner Bill Schulte, Lewis County	Mark Swartout, Thurston County
Commissioner Terry Willis, Grays Harbor County	Terry Harris, City of Chehalis
Glen Connelly, Chehalis Tribe	Bob Thode, Lewis County Farm Bureau

SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS:

Approval of Meeting Summary	January 27 th meeting summary approved.
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GENERAL PARTNERSHIP BUSINESS

Discuss January 27th Meeting Summary:

No changes were suggested. Meeting summary approved.

Quorum requirement of 10 met: Quorum met: City of Centralia, Citizen-Thurston County, Thurston PUD, Port of Grays Harbor, WA DNR-State Agency, Lewis County, Grays Harbor County, Chehalis Tribe, Lewis County Farm Bureau, Mason County, Thurston County, City of Chehalis.

MEETING AGENDA

1) Legislative Outreach Letter Follow-Up and Watershed Planning Bill:

Bonnie signed and sent the legislative outreach letter and legislative brochure after our meeting last month to the representatives in the 4 legislative districts that cover the Chehalis Basin, for a total of 12 letters sent (2 reps, 1 senator/district). So far not follow-up questions or comments have been received from any of the representatives.

An update about the proposed watershed planning House Bill 2743:

Janel received an email on Wednesday, February 22nd from the consultant who is taking the lead on working with the state house of reps to pass this bill. She is also working closely with WRIA 16/14b in the Hood Canal who are coming to an end of their phased watershed planning. The new bill would remove the 5 year funding clause in the current watershed planning act to allow for watershed planning groups to apply for funding beyond year 5. The email also stated that the proposed budget by the House of Representatives eliminates watershed planning in future years AND would eliminate any unspent funds for the remainder of this biennium. This means some planning units (not including the Chehalis) could have its funds cut even sooner than June 30th. The watershed planning units that are at risk of having funding cut are those that are still receiving funding from the phased watershed planning process. The CBP finished its funded watershed planning process last June 30th, 2011.

The consultant working on the new bill is urging all watershed planning groups to write to legislators. Janel did send an email to the members of the natural resources committee asking them to move forward the bill using much of the same language that was in the letter we sent to the legislators with the additional language added that we wish to see the 5 year termination clause removed.

2) CBP Work Plan 2012-Water Banking Discussion Follow-Up:

The STC is hosting Peggy Clifford and Vickie Cline from Ecology at their next meeting on March 1st to help answer some of the questions posed by the CBP and STC about developing a “water bank” in the Chehalis Basin. The STC has been working to frame the issue and generate questions for discussion.

Some of the key questions needed to be answered include:

- Who has an interruptible water right, where are they located, how often and when have they been interrupted?
- How does Ecology enforce interruptible water rights?-part of the discussion at STC next Thursday
- Can a groundwater right supplement a surface water right?
- What are some areas that would be “ideal” for sharing water-in terms of protecting fish while also providing a benefit to the water rights holder?
- If a water rights holders is to lose their right because they aren't using it when a drought hits then forced to turn off will they still be at risk of losing their right?
- Ecology gave some advice in the past about sharing water rights with other landowners in Skagit County and Terry Willis posed some questions about the advice being held up in court. Need to follow up on this.
- Where are water banks working in the state and how do they work?
- Is there a mechanism that would allow a potential relinquishment to go into a bank so it is not actually relinquished at all; need a mechanism that can move water upstream and downstream between Ag landowners?
- Is there any way when we are getting questions answered that there could be some regulations that go along with the laws (governing water law)?
- Will any water rights holders be willing to share their water if they are metered/regulated by Ecology?
- Does a surface water right have the same value as a groundwater right?

The end goal is to produce a pilot project with interested parties.

The STC recommends forming a working group to tackle this project, which would likely meet concurrently with the STC. Are there any volunteers who would like serve on this working group or do you all have any ideas of who else should be included in the early discussions?

So far we have thought to include on the working group: Dept. of Ecology, Washington Water Trust, members of STC, interruptible water rights holder in the upper and lower basins, Ag producer, National Frozen Foods, WDFW, ag producer that relies on interruptible water right.

Bill Schulte expressed a concern about finding an ag producer who has an interruptible water right who would be willing to share because they don't want Ecology to step in to regulate their water and monitor their use. Another question that could come out of this is, will anyone be willing to share if they are metered by Ecology?

There is currently no incentive for farmers to conserve water because they fear losing their right.

3) Grays Harbor Stream Team Update:

Janel wanted to update the group on some of the activities of the Grays Harbor Stream Team over the past year. It has been a while since you all heard an update from me on the Grays Harbor Stream Team.

The powerpoint Janel presented on the Grays Harbor Stream Team is available upon request.

The group suggested inviting Jarred Figlar-Barnes, the mastermind behind the McDonald Creek project in Elma to present the post project of the Salmon Recovery Funding Board grant and also invite Centralia Stream Team to update us on the Centralia College/China Creek project.

4) Chehalis Basin Lead Entity Update-Call for Review Team Volunteers:

Lee Napier is issuing her annual call for volunteers to serve on the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) review team to review projects.

She has had a call out for conceptual projects from people all across the basin. Information on conceptual projects is collected and put in Habitat Work Schedule. This compilation effort has resulted in about 30 ideas or possible projects for habitat restoration and preservation. The projects that appear best ready to move forward are being put forward for SRFB funding this round. The other projects will stay on the conceptual project list until more details and questions can be worked out.

Required commitments for SRFB review members: 2 days for site visits-May 10th-11th, project review meeting on July 13th. So Lee anticipates at least three days of committed time plus time to review the project application packets before the July 13th review meeting.

This round there are 12 projects moving forward for funding from SRFB, including barrier corrections, 2 acquisitions, and 1 dam removal-design assessment.

Get in touch with Lee if you are interested in being on the SRFB review team.

5) Monthly Organizational Presentation-Lewis County Farm Bureau:

Bob Thode with the Lewis County Farm Bureau is here today to give us a presentation as part of our monthly organizational presentations. He is going to speak to us about agriculture in Lewis County.

Bob Thode's background: B.S. from WSU, M.S. from Evergreen-thesis on groundwater study in the upper basin. Member of Water Conservancy Board of Lewis County.

Agriculture in Lewis County:

Lifestyle farms are very common (new term for hobby farms). Commercial farms are designated as making more than \$50,000/yr in profits. 2002 Census: 151 farms, none less than 200 acres, approximately 30,000 acres farmed in Lewis County. There are designated 100,000 acres zoned long-term ag in Lewis County.

70% of farmers nation-wide have a significant income source other than farming. Other sources include: production of cattle, timber, grain, hay; manage biosolids; licensed contractors. Ag exists in Lewis and Thurston County because farmers have other income sources.

Soils in Lewis County are not very productive like most people think; not as productive as other areas like Skagit County.

Bob expressed some concerns regarding the Growth Management Act. He said it doesn't allow other sources of income to be generated by farmers, but only if it is subservient to the farm. It also requires 20 acre blocks maximum. This type of planning has not been effective because it doesn't allow farming on the landscape. It's easier to control 1 dairy farm on larger acreage than 15 dairy farms on smaller parcels.

Farmers are having a hard time deciding to invest in their land because of all of the regulations of the GMA.

Water rights: water right is actually what you can document that you've used in the last 5 years. Even though on paper it says 100 acre feet you have to prove that it is actually what you are using.

Hydrologists don't fully understand what is going on in the basin. Some believe we are over-allocated but the only way to figure out is to actually document and see how much farmers are using. Water law is mostly controlled by Eastern Washington and it doesn't work in this region.

Bob suggested the only way to keep Ag on landscape is to share water, transfer water, etc, so we need to develop a mechanism that would allow a potential relinquishment to be shared with others who need it. This would also help with conservation because farmers actually only want to use what they need, they don't want to be wasting it. Also would like it to be easier (regulatory) for an ag producer to divert (store) water from a stream during higher flows. Australia has some good case studies of water management.

Some of the most common Ag crops/production in Lewis County:
-truck farming: commercial truck driving of crops

6) Agenda Items for March 23rd and Future Meetings:

- Water Banking Q&A Update
- Presentation from National Weather Service on new Doppler radar
- Monthly Organizational Presentation: Kim on Centralia Stream Team

**Annual Chehalis Watershed Festival scheduled for September 15th.

ADJOURNMENT

With there being no further business, Chair Bonnie Canaday adjourned the meeting at 11:15am.