



CHEHALIS BASIN PARTNERSHIP

**Chehalis Tribe Lucky Eagle Casino, Eagles Landing Hotel Conference Room
Rochester, Washington**

August 28, 2015

9:30 am – 12:00

Meeting Summary

MEMBERS* and ALTERNATES' PRESENT

Amy Spoon', *WA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife*
Ann Weckback', *Lewis County*
Bonnie Canaday*, *City of Centralia*
Bud Blake*, *Thurston County*
Brian Thompson*, *Lewis Co. Farm Bureau*
Chuck Caldwell*, *Port of Grays Harbor*

Dustin Bilhimer*, *Dept. of Ecology*
Frank Gordon*, *Grays Harbor Commissioner*
Glen Connelly', *Chehalis Tribe*
Heather Saunders Benson, *Thurston County*
Kathy Jacobson*, *ESD 113*
Terry Harris*, *City of Chehalis*

GUESTS

Amanda Cronin, *Washington Water Trust*
Mark Mobbs, *Quinault Indian Nation*
Bob Amrine, *Lewis Co. Conservation District*

STAFF

Kirsten Harma, *Chehalis Basin Partnership*

SUMMARY OF KEY FOLLOW-UP ITEMS

- The Power Point **presentation** from this meeting will be available on the Chehalis Basin Partnership website. The website is currently being updated and will be available for viewing within the next two weeks. In the meantime, please contact Kirsten if you would like a copy of the presentation.
- Amanda Cronin from the Washington Water Trust is open to questions from anyone in the Chehalis Basin: (206).675.1585 x100 / amanda@washingtonwatertrust.org
- Bob Amrine will inform the Partnership if he sets up a meeting with basin irrigators to talk about options for water banking and streamflow restoration.

MEETING

1. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Bonnie Canaday welcomed everyone to the meeting. Members and guests provided self-introductions.

2. Discussion of July 24th meeting Summary

No one in attendance had any comments or corrections.

Water Quantity -

3. Update from Members -- How is the drought affecting your community?

City of Chehalis: Chehalis currently uses surface water. It is looking into a groundwater source for future years.

Agriculture: The Lewis County Farm Bureau representatives reported that forage crops are down due to the drought, and farmers are running out of feed for their animals. Members of the agriculture community are concerned about what the “new normal” is going to be, so that they can plan and adapt accordingly. The Conservation District reported that farmers are helping each other out to make it through the drought.

Chehalis Tribe: The Tribe is still drawing from groundwater. They expect that their wells are still being recharged from the river.

Fish Use: Amy from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife reported that fish are “all stacked up” at the mouths of rivers which still have cold groundwater inputs. They are competing for space in those few rivers that are keeping cool during this warm, dry summer.

Another problem reported to be occurring throughout the whole basin is people illegally pumping water out of area creeks. The Department of Ecology can respond to complaints, but only has one enforcement person for the whole region. A concern expressed was that the only way to draw attention to violations is for neighbors to report on each other, but if everyone in an area is doing it, they’re not going to report on a neighbor.

4. Presentation –Washington Water Trust: “What is a water bank, how does it work, and how can landowners in the Chehalis Basin work with the trust water right program?”

Key Points:

- The Washington Water Trust is an NGO that supports stream flows and water quality by using innovative, market-based transactions and building cooperative partnerships. They work with irrigators, cities, tribes, etc.
- The Washington Water Trust and the state Trust Water program are different. The Washington Water Trust is a non-profit organization that acts as an independent entity and helps people meet their water supply needs. The state’s Trust Water Right program is the legal tool for “moving” water around between users.
- Some of the innovative methods the Washington Water Trusts helps set up are: “split-season leasing; source substitution; reverse auctions, water banking and mitigation, and land conservation,” among others.
- Before you can set up a Water Bank you need supply and demand. You also need a water rights with a history of beneficial use. *Supply*, is usually an agricultural water right holders that no longer wants to put their water to “beneficial use.” *Demand* is usually a legal requirement for mitigation for a new water use, or a requirement for flow restoration.
- To make a water bank worthwhile, a lot of transactions are needed in the same stream.
- In a scoping study in the Nisqually Basin, Washington Water Trust found that there were not enough “transactions” to make setting up a bank worthwhile.

- “Reverse auctions” function by allowing the water right holder to set the price at which they are willing to lease their water. In eastern Washington, they have led to increased instream flows, and compensated landowners for loss of production late in the season.
- In Walla Walla and the Dungeness, their water exchanges were set up because of a new Instream Flow rules (set by the Department of Ecology). Those rules require increasing the flow in rivers. The exchange helps meet that goal by purchasing water rights from irrigators (so that the irrigator forgo use of the water, and the water can be returned to the stream). New homeowners are required to pay into the “bank”, which provides funding for the water right purchases. The Chehalis River doesn’t have a new rule. If it did, the requirements might provide incentive for setting up a similar bank.

Question Period:

Q) Does a water right transfer with the sale of a property?

A) Generally, yes. Water rights stay connected to land unless they are explicitly removed from a specific parcel during a land sale. This means that people are “trading” water informally.

Q) Is it possible to “move” water between the upper and the lower watershed?

A) Generally, no. Transactions are usually approved in the same basin and from upstream to downstream- not the other way around.

Q) Will the Department of Ecology be developing an Instream Flow rule for the Chehalis River?

A) There are no plans to do this in the next year or two. Maybe they would accelerate that schedule if there was feedback from the CBP that this is desirable.

Q) Is a new Instream Flow rule needed in order to set up a water bank?

A) No.

Q) Does setting up a water bank encourage, or detract from, water conservation?

A) Once the rule is in place, conservation looks more attractive to people. This is because there are limits on obtaining new water rights and it becomes more expensive to get water rights and conservation may become a preferred option.

Q) How does mitigation money actually help get more water in a stream?

A) It pays for a project that actually offsets water use for example purchasing a previously used water right and transferring it instream.

Q) Is a groundwater model needed before setting up a water bank?

A) Yes and no. The Skagit watershed has a very provisional groundwater model, but is moving towards development of a bank. In the Dungeness, there is a very detailed model showing surfacewater-groundwater interactions. A understanding of the interaction between surface water and ground water is necessary but not a detailed groundwater model.

Q) Does the Washington Water Trust have funding to look into setting up a water bank in the Chehalis?

A) No. They have funding to help with streamflow restoration, but not to set up a bank. This does mean that the Washington Water Trust has funding to work with individual irrigators.

Action Item: Next steps for setting up a water bank in the Chehalis Basin

- Find funding to support initial steps
- Invite the Washington Water Trust to do a preliminary investigation. This would include meeting with key water managers and looking for information such as:
 - What are the basin's water needs?
 - What kinds of transactions are taking place currently?
 - Where are there low-flow issues?
 - Are there needs for *new* water rights by the cities, agricultural producers, etc.?
- Develop a "feasibility" assessment. The assessment could be completed in less than a year.

Action Item: Bob Amrine of the Lewis Conservation District will invite the Washington Water Trust to do a presentation to irrigators. By getting the right people in the room together, they will see who might potentially benefit from what the WWT has to offer. Bob will let the CBP know when and where that meeting will be.

Action Item: The Partnership will need to decide if following up on the feasibility assessment for a water bank is a priority or not.

Q) How is funding for the water bank work flowing into the Dungeness?

A) Ecology "seed" funding and payments from individual mitigation buyers.

The Washington Water Trust would be willing to do a joint grant proposal with the CBP.

If you have more questions, you can get in touch with Amanda Cronin: 206.914.9282 / amanda@washingtonwatertrust.org

General Partnership Business and Committee Reports

5. Outreach: Review of options

Kirsten presented the Partnership with a range of outreach materials she had developed. She asked the Partnership members present if they would like to see any these types of materials produced and distributed in the future. No feedback was provided at the meeting.

6. Water Quality Committee update

The next Water Quality Committee meeting will be September 10th
Everyone is welcome to participate!

7. Steering Technical Committee Update

Glen Connelly reminded the group of CBP's funding situation. There used to be funding from Ecology for developing each phase of the Detailed Implementation Plan (DIP), with the expectation that more funding would come in to implement the Plan. That funding has not been made available. Thus, this leaves the Partnership without a sustainable funding source, and other options need to be pursued.

Terry mentioned that sometimes an NGO can channel money to an unincorporated organization to fulfill tasks related to that NGO's own mission. This "fiscal sponsorship" idea might be an option for the CBP.

Kirsten shared the idea of doing a membership survey to learn what member interests are, in preparation for planning the group's next steps. Knowing *what* the Partnership wants to do will be a necessary prerequisite for looking for funding, as Kirsten can't apply for funding to do projects unless there are specific projects the Partnership members can all agree are a priority.

8. Other Updates from Partnership members

Kathy Jacobson informed the group that she will be leaving her position at the ESD and will be starting work with the Chehalis Land Trust on a part time basis.

ADJOURNMENT

With there being no further business, Chair Bonnie Canaday adjourned the meeting.

NEXT MEETING

**October 23rd 2015.