



CHEHALIS BASIN PARTNERSHIP

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

October 28, 2016

9:30 am – 12:00

Meeting Summary

MEMBERS* and ALTERNATES' PRESENT

Brian Thompson*, *Lewis County Farm Bureau*

Chuck Caldwell*, *Port of Grays Harbor*

Chris Streans*, *Thurston PUD*

Chuck Turley*, *WA DNR*

Frank Gordon*, *Grays Harbor County*

Glen Connelly', *Chehalis Tribe*

Kahle Jennings*, *City of Centralia*

Kris Koski', *City of Aberdeen*

Mark White*, *Chehalis Tribe*

Patrick Wiltzius*, *City of Chehalis*

Terry Harris*, *City of Chehalis*

GUESTS

Kim Smith, *Grays Harbor Conservation District*; Garrett Dalan, *The Nature Conservancy*; Kylea Johnson, *Chehalis River Basin Land Trust*; Alice Martin, *Chehalis River Basin Land Trust*, Julie Sackett, *Department of Natural Resources*; Elaine Oneil, *Washington Farm Forestry Association*; Dave Houk, *Grays Harbor Conservation District*; Fred Evander, *Lewis County*; Mark Mobbs *Quinault Indian Nation*

STAFF

None

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Meeting summaries are available on the Chehalis Basin Partnership website: www.chehalisbasinpartnership.org
- PowerPoint presentations from this meeting are available on the Chehalis Basin Partnership website: www.chehalisbasinpartnership.org/presentations (see "Land Use Presentations" in the accordion menu)
- Forest Stewardship Master Plan work: Contact Dave Houk: ghcdforestry@gmail.com / (360) 249-8532
- Chehalis Basin Strategy – PEIS Documents: <http://chehalisbasinstrategy.com/eis-library/>

MEETING

1. Welcome and Introductions

Vice Chair Mark White welcomed everyone to the meeting. Members and guests provided self-introductions. Coordinator Kirsten Harma was ill and not able to facilitate the meeting. Glen Connelly took on the facilitation role.

2. Approval of July Minutes

A quorum was not present, thus the minutes could not be approved.

3. Member Updates

None.

4. Other Partnership Business

The group discussed the Chehalis Strategy “Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement” and its connection with the Chehalis Basin Watershed Management Plan. The proposed action to take was to decide whether or not the Partnership wanted to submit comments, and if so, which comments would be appropriate.

Kahle summarized the proposed comment letter, which had been sent out to the whole group in advance, and which was also passed around at the meeting. Kahle expressed his concern that groundwater was not adequately addressed in the PEIS. There is inadequate data to determine potential impacts to groundwater from the various options.

A quorum of voting CBP members was not present to make a consensus decision. Members discussed how the CBP doesn’t usually submit comment letters as a group. The state agency members would have a hard time supporting a letter as part of a partnership, since each agency has its own stance. Members present encouraged individual members to submit their own letters and use the comments provided.

B. Presentations

Landscape scale Forest Stewardship Master Plan for small forest landowners in the Chehalis Basin – Julie Sackett, Washington Department of Natural Resources, and Dave Houk, Grays Harbor Conservation District

Julie and Dave co-led this presentation. They stated that they both do the same work: helping small forest landowners in the Chehalis Basin. Both are also foresters themselves.

The Department of Natural Resources has recently received a three year grant for the “Master Forest Stewardship Landscape Planning Initiative.” Part of the grant application’s success came because the Chehalis has priority landscapes for forest stewardship. The grant will help bring more resources to the Chehalis Basin for outreach and technical assistance for small forest landowners.

The initiative goals are to 1) conserve working forest landscapes, 2) protect forests from harm, and 3) enhance public benefits from trees and forests, all by helping landowners actively manage their forests. It will meet these goals by creating an overarching forest plan that will help guide individual Forest Stewardship Plans.

This work is significant in part because of the amount of land it impacts. In the Upper Chehalis, 21% of the forest lands are owned by small forest landowners.

“Small forestry” is a determination based harvest not acreage. To count as small, the landowner may harvest up to 2 million board feet per year.

A forestry plan can look at things such as forest health, invasive species, wildfire preparedness, soils, timber, roads and wildlife, unique sites, aesthetics, carbon sequestration, special forest products, agro-forestry and silvipasture. Individual Forest Stewardship Plans are designed to preserve and enhance forest health while meeting the individual landowner’s objectives.

The “landscape master plan” will be completed by Dave Houk. The Plan’s first objective will be to engage with small landowners and stakeholders in its development. The plan will be used for education as well as a template for individual plans. The third objective will be to benefit fish populations and water quality.

Q/A

Q) Is the goal to maximize fiber production? Is there more depth than that?

A) The main goal is keeping working forests as forests. Maximizing fiber production doesn’t necessarily mean maximizing timber harvest. Fiber can be maximized for reasons other than revenue, such as wildlife habitat.

Q) Have you worked closely with the Assessor’s Office?

A) Yes, we also work with RTI.

Q) Have you looked at opportunities for landowners at harvest time to support restoration?

A) No, but actually we’ve come here today to listen. We’re interested in hearing ideas like this. We do recommend certification for contractors to do restoration work. We would like to show landowners opportunities like the FFFPP which bring funding.

-Garrett Dalan suggested that the Nature Conservancy also may be able to provide assistance to the forest project and support in project development. They have done work with foresters in Pacific County that could have lessons for the Chehalis.

-Another CBP member suggested developing a video for outreach.

Q) Is there a difference between “letting nature go” (allowing for natural processes) and active management?

A) Yes. But we need to discuss liability for restoration projects more broadly. The DNR State and Aquatic lands program receives a lot of proposals, and sees a lot of concerns about liability. In the PEIS, liability is going to be a huge decision.

Challenges and opportunities for small forest landowners in the Chehalis Basin -

Elaine Oneil, Farm Forestry Association

There are 23 million acres of small forest landownership in Washington. Small forest land owners own ½ of the private land in the state. There is a close association between small forest landowners and river systems. Thus, in order to protect water quality, we need to engage small forest landowners.

The average size of a “small” holding is 9.5 acres.

Challenges:

Farm forestry members tend to be the older generation, ready to transition land to their children or sell. There are concerns that the excise tax is high for forest land owners relative to other states. There are concerns that regulation is burdensome. The Farm Forestry Association is working with the State to address regulations related to small forest land owners.

Opportunities: The forestry association offers technical and financial landowner assistance. Another opportunity is the FREP and FFFPP programs.

Q) What is “farm forestry”?

A) Tree farms grow crops of trees sustainably. Forests aren’t farms in the traditional sense, however, since trees are harvested with a 40 to 80 year rotation instead of annually as typically done by agricultural farmers.

Ms. Oneil then showed a video: the 75th Anniversary of the American Tree Farm System (ATFS).

Q) What is the process for becoming certified?

A) The landowner asks to be certified. They have to develop a management plan and the property will be inspected by a forester. They have to recertify every 5 years.

Q) Are you familiar with the Open Space Act and Designated Forest Land in terms of taxation?

A) The minimum number of acres to qualify for designated forestland was recently changed to 5 acres. To classify as forest land you have to hold the forestry status and have an intent to harvest. Open space doesn’t require harvest intent.

Q) What is the current trend in land ownership?

A) Small forest land owners typically want a 50-year rotation. They are not seeking the 35-year rotation typical of industrial production.

Other Business:

None.

ADJOURNMENT

With there being no further business, Mark White adjourned the meeting at 12:02.

NEXT MEETING

TBD