

**CHEHALIS BASIN PARTNERSHIP**  
**Chehalis Tribe "Lucky Eagle" Casino**  
**Rochester, Washington**  
**October 22 2010**  
**9:30 a.m.**  
**Meeting Summary**

**MEMBERS, ALTERNATES, & GUESTS**

**PRESENT**

Bonnie Canaday, Chair, City of Centralia  
Lee Napier, Grays Harbor County  
Bob Burkle, Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW)  
Julie Balmelli-Powe, Lewis County Farm Bureau  
Janel Spaulding, Chehalis Basin Partnership  
Mark Swartout, Thurston County  
Karen Valenzuela, Thurston County  
Bill Schulte, Lewis County  
Lisa Dilley, Citizen, Grays Harbor County  
Jim Hill, Citizen, Lewis County  
Kahle Jennings, City of Centralia  
J. Roach, Citizen, Thurston County  
Bob Thomas, Citizen  
Don E. Secena, Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation  
Glen Connelly, Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation

Lyle Hojem, Citizen, Lewis County  
Tom Gow, Puget Sound Meeting Services  
Gary Waltenburg, Citizen, Grays Harbor County  
Patrick Wiltzius, City of Chehalis  
Spencer Easton, ESA Adolfson  
David Rountry, Department of Ecology (DOE)  
Paul Massart, US Army Corps of Engineers  
Scott Long, US Army Corps of Engineers  
Bruce Treichler, Northwest Steelhead & Salmon Conservation Society  
Bob Amrine, Lewis Conservation District  
Susan Troyanel, Centralia  
Charlotte Danforth, Centralia Stream Team  
Loren Hiner, City of Montesano  
Janet Strong, Chehalis River Basin Land Trust  
Jim Wilcox, NWSSCS  
Chris Stearns, Thurston Public Utilities District

**SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS:**

**Approval of Meeting Summary**

Approved CBP September 24, 2010 minutes

**Chehalis Basin GI Update**

The Partnership agreed to include the discussion on the Partnership rendering a decision on whether to support the addition of a second without projects conditions report to the PMP at its November meeting.

The Partnership approved the sending the letter under the Chair's signature after review and approval by the Chair.

The Partnership approved sending the letter to DOE under the Chair's signature.

The Partnership approved the Watershed Coordinator's work plan at 170 hours a month.

**Letter of Support for Quinault Indian Nation Marine Debris Removal Project**

The Partnership agreed to include the discussion on the Partnership rendering a decision on whether to support the addition of a second without projects conditions report to the PMP at its November meeting.

**Department of Ecology Letter on Removal of Stream Gages**  
**Watershed Coordinator Work Plan**

The Partnership approved the sending the letter under the Chair's signature after review and approval by the Chair.

The Partnership approved sending the letter to DOE under the Chair's signature.

The Partnership approved the Watershed Coordinator's work plan at 170 hours a month.

The Partnership agreed to defer the matter of a salary increase and desk/position audit of the Watershed Coordinator's position to the STC to develop a recommendation.

## GENERAL PARTNERSHIP BUSINESS

### **Welcome, Introductions and Roundtable Comments**

Bonnie Canaday called the October 22, 2010 meeting of the Chehalis Basin Partnership (CBP) to order at 9:33 a.m. Everyone present provided self-introductions.

### **Chehalis Basin GI Update**

Lee Napier referred to the October 7 joint meeting of the CBP and the Flood Authority to discuss the General Investigation (GI) Study. The discussion was to inform a policy recommendation. One of the three issues included the General Investigation (GI) Study and whether it would include a component of flood reduction and impacts. The second issue was whether a without project conditions report would be included. When the US Army Corps of Engineers is involved in a GI study, there are several steps in the process to include a feasibility study. The feasibility study includes a without conditions report. There was a recommendation to consider more than one without project conditions report. The third issue involves project sponsorship. Grays Harbor County is currently the local sponsor. Grays Harbor County at this time is unable to fulfill that role for the project.

*Bill Schulte arrived at the meeting.*

The GI Study began in early 2000 with only one purpose. In 2007, an additional purpose was added to address flooding in the basin. Both entities indicated that it was reasonable to have two purposes, as many people didn't believe there were many other options to address large flood projects unless there was an ability to leverage federal funds. Working with the Corps of Engineers appeared to be a good option. Members attending the joint meeting agreed that it was reasonable to include two purposes within the GI Study.

The without conditions report speaks to what the basin area is prior to implementation of any project. The May version of the Project Management Plan (PMP), which is the last version circulated, speaks to the without project conditions report and describes the conditions to include the levee project. The conditions that the basin-wide study will examine include the levee project. There was some feedback with some people expressing concerns that it doesn't appear to be logical pursuing something that doesn't exist. Instead, they asked for flexibility and consideration to have two without project conditions reports. The Corps considered the request and is willing to complete two project conditions reports.

*Julie Balmelli-Powe arrived at the meeting.*

During the joint meeting, concerns were raised about the length of time and the costs associated with the project. By adding another without project conditions report more time and cost were added to the process. That fact was not acceptable to some but most still concluded that the effort needed to move forward with two without project conditions report.

The third issue involves local project sponsorship. Grays Harbor County is the current local sponsor. Ms. Napier said that with her change in position at the county, she can no longer fulfill the role of project manager. The county does not have a replacement. That issue was also discussed. One option is to request the state to become the local sponsor as the state is also the local sponsor for the Twin Cities project and some individuals believed it might be feasible for the GI Study. The Governor's Office was asked to become the local sponsor. However, the Governor's Office is delaying a decision and a representative from the Governor's Office will address the Flood Authority to discuss the issue.

Chehalis Basin Partnership  
Meeting Summary  
October 22, 2010 Page 3

Bill Schulte commented that there are some problems, as the CBP never approved adding flood retention to the Ecosystem Restoration GI Study. Secondly, the discussions just occurred, which will take some time to work through the process.

Ms. Napier said the discussion enabled the two groups to discuss the issues and perhaps develop a recommendation. The direction included presenting the discussion from the joint meeting to each group individually with the recommendations and conclusions to obtain feedback on a decision. Several individuals believed there was a need to advance the PMP to demonstrate progress. Subsequently, an assignment was delegated to the workgroup to complete the PMP. She referred to copies of the PMP provided earlier to each member and reviewed major changes in the PMP:

1. Local sponsorship was revised to read, “Grays Harbor County is the non-federal sponsor for the project. Other stakeholders include Lewis County, Thurston County, Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation, incorporated cities in the basin, and the State of Washington. Local stakeholders have requested the state to become the non-federal sponsor. The state is considering the request. Grays Harbor County will fulfill the obligations under the feasibility cost sharing agreement until the potential relinquishment as non-federal sponsor to the state; as such time the state offers to be the non-federal sponsor and assumes the obligations through signing an amended feasibility cost sharing agreement.” *Ms. Napier added that at the recent Flood Authority meeting (October 21) most of the members accepted the language as presented. However, the discussion led to comments on the inability for some to review the document thoroughly and the state was still considering the next steps. There wasn’t a strong inclination to advance the PMP as there may be a decision from the Governor’s Office soon and perhaps it’s not necessary to take action on the PMP.*
2. On page 14, language was modified by the US Army Corps of Engineers regarding without project conditions to describe that the Corps will complete two without project conditions report with one on the levee and one without the levee. Several paragraphs were added to address that change.
3. Language was added changing the Executive Committee to include Commissioners from Thurston and Lewis Counties.
4. Language on page 28 was modified to address the project without conditions reports.
5. The final issue concerns the timeline and the budget.

The Flood Authority rendered no decisions at its October 21 meeting and wanted more time to review the PMP.

Chris Stearns asked why PUDs are not mentioned in the PMP. There are proposals for dams in Lewis County and there is a dam in Thurston County that impacts the basin that may change ownership status in the future. He asked for inclusion of PUDs within the document. Ms. Napier said she is unsure how such inclusion would occur at this point, as the PMP and the feasibility did not include a role for PUDs. There is a point during the feasibility study that the PUD could be identified as project sponsor. Mr. Stearns said that while it’s true in dealing with levee projects, Thurston County is an element because what occurs with the dam in the Skookumchuck matters in terms of how floods are prevented in the Centralia/Chehalis basin where the levees are located to protect the public. If the current owner of the dam doesn’t want to upgrade the dam, the public could certainly become involved. The state had a public ballot two years ago on an option to remove dams from the private sector in Skagit County. Despite the current ownership status, the Corps needs to check with other entities that may be owners of facilities that may have impacts.

Kahle Jennings asked about the Thurston PUD’s interest in flood control. Mr. Stearns said one of the factors pertain to the filling of channels within the basin with projects that are raised above the floodplain that tend

Chehalis Basin Partnership  
Meeting Summary  
October 22, 2010 Page 4

to restrict the channeling of flood water raising the level of the river that can affect Grays Harbor County, which is of concern to Thurston County as well as the Chehalis Tribe. He would like to see better use of existing storage in the basin because of the difficulty of approving new dams in western Washington. Rather than arguing over fish, members should consider where storage can occur in areas of existing dams rather than trying to contend with the problem in another manner. That area of the basin is at the highest elevation, has the most snowpack, and should be considered for its ability to maintain flows during times of low and high water events.

Ms. Napier offered that PUD representatives could attend the committee meetings to discuss elements of the feasibility and the project and possibly become a partner in the feasibility cost-sharing agreement. There are possible roles for the PUD. Mr. Stearns said having those options available to the PUD is important.

Mr. Jennings stressed the importance of being clear of each group's authority to avoid overburdening the process with multiple layers of people who have an interest. There are hierarchies in terms of representation and interest, which is why he asked the question.

Mr. Schulte said the CBP has obtained an approved GI Study for Ecosystem Restoration. The CBP has never agreed to add flood retention and now the PMP is being changed to reflect that addition. The last meeting in early 2008, the CBP discussed whether to become involved in flood retention, and the consensus was against because it's not the CBP's mission. The issue was discussed during a meeting of the Partnership when a quorum was not attained. The CBP has never consented to adding flood mitigation to the Ecosystem Restoration project. Ms. Napier said it was one of the three points she wanted to establish with the Flood Authority that would be discussed at the joint meeting. There are three points that need a recommendation, as both groups are advisory to the process.

Ms. Napier clarified the role of the county as the sponsor of the GI and the entity that approves the PMP as well as the Corps. Ms. Jennings asked whether the CBP's role is as an advisory to Grays Harbor County. Ms. Napier affirmed that's the Partnership's role.

Karen Valenzuela commented that in addition there was a joint CBP/Flood Authority meeting that included a discussion on the question of one or two purposes and the group reached consensus on two purposes. Mr. Schulte said there was no consensus, but there was a decision to pursue that direction as an outcome of the joint meeting. That direction still must be determined by the CBP. Ms. Napier said there was an assumption that the outcome of the meeting would include a recommendation. However, as the discussion occurred, some groups had a quorum and some did not have, so no recommendation was pursued at that meeting. Consequently, it was a discussion between the two groups with some recommendations.

Mr. Jennings noted that it is possible that the CBP today or at a future meeting could reach consensus on a recommendation to the Grays Harbor County to include flood risk management in the PMP for Ecosystem Restoration.

Julie Balmelli-Powe expressed concerns with combining the projects because the Corps has had the Twin Cities project on its list of projects for the last 15 years and has been unable to meet a deadline. Adding two different focuses to the GI Study will only complicate the issue and create more delay.

Ms. Napier acknowledged the concern but pointed out that the lack of progress on the Ecosystem Restoration project is primarily because the CBP pursued other priorities as well as working on obtaining the required match. The CBP was able to document a match through its efforts in developing the Watershed Management Plan, water quality, and other things that benefitted the Partnership. The strategy was to acquire match early

Chehalis Basin Partnership  
Meeting Summary  
October 22, 2010 Page 5

and then increase efforts on Ecosystem Restoration. The pool of resources also has other projects with pending deadlines. It was a matter of priorities and choices. Meetings were held with many individuals not attending because of other project deadlines. The efforts up to now involved working on projects related to the match for the Ecosystem Restoration GI Study. The Partnership discontinued financial reporting to the Corps in 2006 because the project was not progressing. Now that the project is making some momentum, more financial information is under development.

Bob Burkle pointed out that when the Corps is involved in a project, it is subject to the change in federal priorities. A perfect example of the Ecosystem Restoration GI is what occurred to WDFW when a project was identified early in the process and funded partly through Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) and Section 206 funding from the Corps for the Satsop Restoration project that included a combination of restoration of floodplain, reducing of flood risk, and restoring habitat on land owned by WDFW. That project was derailed because of 911. The funding was pulled and diverted to Homeland Security. Those things happen and are not necessarily the fault of the Corps.

Mr. Stearns commented on the requirements for projects to be construction ready to receive stimulus funding, which has changed the environment in terms of how projects are planned and funded.

Ms. Napier reviewed the comments she received after her presentation to the Flood Authority. More than one individual indicated they needed more time to review the PMP. Some individuals want to wait for a response from the Governor's Office on the sponsorship question, which led to a discussion on options for PMP assignment in the interim or who could work on behalf of Grays Harbor County to advance the project. Feedback supported delaying any effort until a decision is received by the Governor's Office. Additionally, a representative from the Governor's Office is scheduled to present information to the Flood Authority in November.

Chair Canaday asked about the next step the Partnership needs to consider. Ms. Napier replied the next step entails updating the PMP regardless of whether the second without project conditions report is added. Mr. Jennings asked whether there is time for the Partnership to discuss adding flood risk management to the Ecosystem Restoration GI Study. Ms. Napier referred to the meeting agenda and scheduled presentations, which doesn't entail any additional time for a prolonged discussion. Mr. Schulte suggested tabling the discussion and adding it as an agenda item for the Partnership's November meeting. Ms. Balmelli-Powe recommended addressing some of the misconceptions concerning development in Lewis County as well as within other counties.

*The Partnership agreed to include the discussion on the November's meeting agenda.*

**Discuss Letter of Support for Quinault Indian Nation Marine Debris Removal Project**

Janel Spaulding requested the Partnership's support of a letter from the Chair to the NOAA Restoration Center supporting Grays Harbor County's Derelict Gear Removal and Piling Inventory Project on behalf of Quinault Indian Nation. Others supporting the project include the Marine Resources Committee to include providing matching funds and the Grays Harbor County Board of Commissioners.

Mr. Stearns asked whether the new owners of a nearby mill have been notified about the project. Ms. Napier said the person assisting with the start-up is Randy Cox who was also involved in the TMDL process and is aware of environmental issues concerning the former operation. She said she's initiated discussion to keep the owners aware. Mr. Stearns said Mason PUD is negotiating with the owners of the mill to provide power to the plant. It might be beneficial for the owners to become more involved in the community.

Chehalis Basin Partnership  
Meeting Summary  
October 22, 2010 Page 6

Several members offered some changes to the letter including correcting the reference that the Chehalis River Basin is one of the largest river basins in the state rather than the third largest basin. Mr. Jennings offered to review the letter for any typographical errors prior to mailing the letter.

***The Partnership approved the sending the letter under the Chair's signature after review and approval by the Chair.***

**Review Department of Ecology Draft Letter Regarding Stream Gage Removal**

Janel Spaulding referred to a draft letter to DOE regarding 11 stream gages removed in the Chehalis River basin and concerns regarding the notification of that removal.

Mr. Schulte asked whether DOE removed the gages without notification to its partners. Ms. Spaulding indicated that technically, DOE notified members through the Steering Technical Committee (STC) last May. However, that information was not conveyed to the Partnership. The letter is in response to the removal of the gages.

***The Partnership approved sending the letter to DOE under the Chair's signature.***

**Review Watershed Coordinator Work Plan – Suggested Prioritization from STC**

Ms. Spaulding referred to a revised work plan that was reviewed and prioritized by the STC to include some reduction in hours.

The STC assisted in reducing monthly hours to 170. Changes include transferring some Stream Team responsibilities to Kim Ashmore with the City of Centralia, reducing hours associated with coordinating the Watershed Festival, and reducing hours associated with the *Drops of Water*.

Ms. Spaulding advised that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) notified Margaret Rader, editor of the *Drops of Water*, that the agency will no longer provide funding for the publication. Ms. Spaulding said she is meeting with Ms. Rader to discuss the issue. Currently, a survey is underway for the publication. Depending on feedback, it may be possible to publish the *Drops of Water* online.

Janet Strong said the majority of the expense associated with the publication is through local newspapers. The expense for an online publication would be significantly less.

Mark Swartout suggested establishing a large email database to send out the newsletter. Ms. Strong suggested including the publication on the Chehalis River Council website as well. Ms. Rader was surprised to learn of the decision by USFWS not to continue funding.

Ms. Valenzuela recommended providing an update at the November meeting on the outcome of the conversation with the Chehalis River Council as well as the survey results. Ms. Spaulding said the survey concludes in November and survey results will be available in December.

***The Partnership approved the Watershed Coordinator's work plan at 170 hours a month.***

Mr. Schulte recommended increasing the Coordinator's salary because of the increase in responsibilities and work hours. Members discussed conducting an evaluation as well as a desktop audit. Mr. Schulte volunteered to assist in the evaluation process. Ms. Napier added that when the position was created a job description was created and a salary range was established. Timing is appropriate because the county is negotiating a new contract with Grays Harbor College to be effective January 1, 2011.

Jim Hill suggested deferring the matter to the STC for a recommendation to the CBP. *The Partnership agreed to defer the issue to the STC to develop a recommendation.*

The meeting was recessed from 10:29 a.m. to 10:32 a.m. for a break.

**Special Presentation by Northwest Steelhead and Salmon Conservation Society (NWSSCS) Regarding Chehalis River Basin Flood Risk Management**

Bruce Treichler, Vice President NWSSCS, introduced Jim Wilcox, Secretary & Treasurer, NWSSCS. Mr. Treichler said he wanted to correct a misunderstanding he heard earlier in the meeting and while he is not speaking for One Voice and its focus, the focus for NWSSCS is about fish.

Some slides in the presentation were provided to NWSSCS by:

- Natural Settings Digital Imaging and Design
- LightHawk: conservation-minded pilots

Mr. Wilcox provided the following presentation on Chehalis River Basin Flood Risk Management:

**Northwest Steelhead and Salmon Conservation Society:**

- Members from Vancouver, BC to Pe Ell, WA and From Spokane, WA to the Pacific Ocean
- Focus is on community-based conservation projects
- Cost-effective, basin wide solutions
- Current project: Chehalis River basin flood damage mitigation and a Skokomish project. A picture of the devastation from the 2007 flood was displayed of the cause and effect: Extreme floodplain development and catastrophic damage

**Chehalis River Basin includes these counties:**

- Grays Harbor
- Lewis
- Thurston
- Mason
- Pacific
- Wahkiakum
- Cowlitz
- Jefferson

**A partial listing of the 350+ tributaries in the Chehalis River basin includes:**

**Lower Basin:**

- Wishkah
- Hoquiam
- Humptulips
- Elk
- John
- Satsop
- Wynoochee

**Upper Basin:**

- Newaukum
- Dillenbaugh Creek
- Salzer Creek
- Coal Creek
- China Creek
- South Fork Chehalis
- Skookumchuck

Mr. Wilcox displayed a map of the Chehalis basin and the locations proposed for the Twin Cities levee and additional water retention as well as proposed hydro-powered dams in the Chehalis in the headwaters.

**Some causes of flooding:**

- Heavy precipitation
- Channeling or straightening of rivers
- Levee or dam failure
- Filling floodplains
- Steep-slope logging
- Loss of wetlands
- Tidal Surges

**Flooding: Positives and Negatives**

- Positives include:
  - Replenish top soil in agricultural areas
  - Rebuild delta areas
  - Recharging ground water
  - Maintaining ecosystems and biodiversity
- Negatives include:
  - Harm to those who live in the flooded areas
  - Destruction of homes and businesses
  - Reduce the economic well-being of the Community

**Chehalis River Basin: Flood Risk management:**

Solutions to seasonal flood damage must be:

- Cost-effective
- Durable
- Basin-wide
- Community-developed

A picture taken in April 2010 of the Willapa Hills revealed current logging practices. Each logging cycle is harmful to topsoil. Many logging areas have failed slopes washing to the rivers below. Current forest practices in the Chehalis basin include clear-cuts on steep slopes and inconsistent planting. Some questions that must be considered in developing solutions include:

- What are the risks of any strategy in protecting or enhancing our values?
- How well does each strategy reduce the risk or enhance resources?
- What other risks or benefits does each strategy introduce?

- Are some strategies simply too costly and take too much time?

**Proposed built flood risk management projects include:**

- Twin Cities Project (Centralia/Chehalis) to help I-5 and the cities. The same project includes increased stormwater retention capacity behind Skookumchuck Dam, which hasn't been determined at this point. The project has been approved for funding from Congress. A series of public presentations by the US Army Corps of Engineers revealed that 35% design is not completed because not all the levees meet the 100-year certification, and there are cost issues.
- Water retention facilities in the headwaters of the Chehalis River to include the main stem of the Chehalis River near Pe Ell of 226,700 acre feet and the South Fork Chehalis River near Vader of 40,000 acre feet. Each dam is scoped with two turbines.

**Issues with built flood risk management projects include:**

- Armors the riverbed
- Removes sediment
- Changes river temperatures
- "Starves" the river, such as reducing the amount of woody debris
- Slows or stops fish migration/spawning
- Erosion  
Likely "show stoppers:"
- Not cost effective
- Local, state, and federal opposition
- Tribal opposition
- Non-governmental organization opposition
- Fatal flaws identified in revised scoping document
- Rejection of Flood Control Districts to fund and oversee projects
- Threat of litigation
- Loss of federal and state funding.

It's been estimated that together the two proposed dams will capture a maximum of 5% of the stormwater runoff in the basin. Building those structures could take as long as 30 years, if they are built at all. Proposed dams will be of no value when storms are not stalled over Willapa Hills. Conservative range in cost is between \$590 million and \$713 million with some estimates approaching \$1 billion.

Mr. Wilcox shared a photograph of a failed hillside due to steep slope logging. Nobody was injured and the river was not blocked.

There are threats to wildlife that live in the basin. Some of the wildlife that could be impacted by proposed flood risk management structures include Chinook Salmon, American Bald Eagle, Rainbow Trout, Steelhead Trout, Chum Salmon, Cutthroat Trout, Elk, Cougar, Orca, and Coho Salmon. Endangered species further threatened include Bull Trout, Green Sturgeon, and Eulachon.

As proposed dams and levees are being studied and debated, citizens of the Chehalis River basin will experience increasing seasonal floods in both frequency and intensity, and threats to human life, safety, health, and economic well-being.

Additional and comprehensive, science-based information is necessary prior to built flood risk management structures to include geology, hydrology, biology, including endangered/threatened species, such as Bull

Chehalis Basin Partnership  
Meeting Summary  
October 22, 2010 Page 10

Trout, Green Sturgeon, and Eulachon, soils, and cost-benefit comparisons between built structures and restoring natural processes.

NWSSCS is not about putting people out of work and it recognizes that forestry in the basin is very important. There are areas that can be logged better. However, continued logging on steep slopes is not the answer. Some people believe there is a single solution, but NWSSCS believes there are multiple tools to consider instead of relying on a single, multiple use tool.

To date there have been approximately 126 projects identified for ecosystem restoration, which would also include within some of the projects, flood risk management components. Those projects are ready and some may require funding, but they would employ people and begin offering solutions. Some examples of those projects include:

- Floodplain conservation easement program
- Tax incentives for removing structures from floodplain basin-wide
- Wynoochee River bank stabilization Montesano
- Twin culverts under Main Street at 11<sup>th</sup> in Bucoda
- Relief culvert for north side runoff Oakville
- Salzer Creek backwater control in Lewis County
- Berwick Creek Drainage Plan Chehalis and Lewis County
- China Creek Drainage Plan Lew County and Chehalis
- Rochester Stormwater Plan

Mr. Wilcox reported that Ms. Valenzuela has suggested including some information from a recent study on the benefits of a healthy ecosystem:

**A healthy Chehalis River basin provides many valuable ecosystem services free:**

Fresh water	Food	Fuel wood
Fiber	Medicine	Gas regulation
Erosion control	Water quality	Biology
Soil formation	Nutrient cycling	Pollination
Biodiversity	Habitat	Aesthetic
Tourism	Recreation	Science
Education	Spiritual	Religious

Annual ecosystem services per year: \$1.3 to \$11.6 billion.

(Source: Flood Protection and Ecosystem Services in the Chehalis River Basin, Earth Economics, May 2010)

Mr. Wilcox reported in May, NWSSCS recommended the following:

- Moratorium on floodplain development
- Moratorium on steep slope, clear-cut logging
- Restore natural processes in floodplains
- Restore natural processes in forestlands
- Restore natural processes in wetlands
- Create off-channel water retention capacity

Chehalis Basin Partnership  
Meeting Summary  
October 22, 2010 Page 11

Our collective responsibility is to assure the web of life unique to the Pacific Northwest remains healthy and abundant, for surely our stewardship is the greatest gift we can leave as a legacy for future generations.

The NWSSCS Executive Board includes the following and a new director from the Spokane area:

President and CEO: Ric Abbott

Vice President: Bruce Treichler

Secretary / Treasurer: Jim Wilcox

Conservation Director: Joe Durham

Conservation Director: Don Schluter

Conservation Director: Terry Turner

E. Wash. Conservation Director: Bill Abrahamse

International Conservation Director: Alan Steeves

Scientific Advisor: Dr. Robert Vadas, Jr.

Mr. Treichler commented that at various times, Lewis PUD has discussed different types of dams that might be constructed. Ms. Balmelli-Powe replied that when One Voice was first established the initial proposal was hydro-electrical dams while acknowledging that the amount of electricity produced would be minimal and not necessarily important hence the type of dam could be different. As options were analyzed, the proposal is a dam that causes the minimum amount of impact to the environment. There are three styles of dams that could be considered that involve a hydro dam, water retention structure, and a flood control dam that opens and closes at the locations proposed.

Mr. Stearns asked whether the culvert replacements are included on a list for funding either by the county or through Thurston Regional Planning Council. Bruce Easton commented that the project list included in the flood plan is different from the "ripe and ready" project, which was a set of projects the Flood Authority approved in 2009, some of which are already completed or are in the second phase. The list in the presentation is not "ripe and ready" projects, but rather is a brainstormed "start list." The Bucoda culverts are from Bucoda's Flood Plan developed in 1998. None of the projects identified in the presentation are developed sufficiently even to prioritize, and one of the goals for Flood Authority wants the Flood District to complete is taking the list and developing some of the project for implementation immediately. Most of the projects are not engineered nor have cost estimates been developed. They are not construction ready projects.

Mr. Schulte said he disagrees with the comment about excessive development in Lewis County. The county is large with a population of only 75,000 people, which is considered low density. Additionally, as people travel along I-5 and view the 70-acre airport, they do see some development, but most of the area is open runway area. One of the problems in Lewis County is little development and because of state, federal, and private forests, channel migration zones, and floodways, there is only 1% available to develop in Lewis County. The cost for removing people and infrastructure within the floodplain will cost an estimated \$3 billion. Additionally, if logging is shut down, the project will run in the billions of dollars. There is only one project in the basin at this time and that's the Corps Twin Cities project, which has severe problems. The Corps has created problems but no answers. The request to the Corps has always been a study to look at other options other than protecting I-5. Until that study is completed, there is no way to determine if dams are good or bad. Technology has advanced in the last 100 years. There has to be a way to construct flood control structures that don't interfere with fish runs. He shared that he lives along the Chehalis River and understands the concerns. If there is no way of regulating the flow and there are problems with citizens, counties, and businesses withdrawing water causing low flows in the summer, there should be a way to resolve the issue that will enable less damage to people and more improvements to the ecosystem. Now, there is only a seriously-flawed project approved by Congress. At this point, there is no dam or flood

Chehalis Basin Partnership  
Meeting Summary  
October 22, 2010 Page 12

retention project. He challenged NWSSCS to work with the county to complete a study to determine the best solution.

Mr. Treichler said there is nothing in the presentation that calls for the cessation of logging in the region. Logging is an important economic activity in this region. Secondly, NWSSCS does not advocate for moving Chehalis and Centralia from the floodplain, but it does speak to not developing in the floodplain. Development in the floodplain not only pertains to Lewis County but to Grays Harbor County as well. NWSSCS would be happy to work with the county on studies that involve using the best science available.

Ms. Valenzuela thanked Mr. Treichler and Mr. Wilcox for the presentation as it provided some good suggestions for consideration by the CBP and the Flood Authority. Since joining the Flood Authority over a year ago, the majority of the discussions have pertained to the dam proposal. The Authority is making progress on the requisite studies necessary to make any decisions on dams, but there other things that could be accomplished now to relieve some of the flood damage. She said she would like both entities to do more with the study that was commissioned with Earth Economic on ecosystem services that are already available in the Chehalis basin and how they could be exploited to reduce flood damage. She said she is also looking forward to the presentation from One Voice.

Lyle Hojem said the Willapa Hills is the best area for growing Douglas fir in the world. Blaming the logger for clear cutting will not address the issues. Slides occurred in old growth forests. There needs to be emphasis on the value that would be lost through logging. He advocated for loggers.

It was noted that current state forest practice laws recognize the concerns and have restricted steep slope logging. Foresters are aware of the laws. Mr. Wilcox noted the photos were taken in April 2010. Mr. Treichler said it's well known that there is an informal relationship between DNR and Weyerhaeuser in managing forest regulations. Weyerhaeuser self-manages in the Willapa basin.

Mr. Burkle referred to the DNR wasting study and the conclusions that some of the slides were occurring on areas not considered steep slopes and that shallow slope slides were occurring. That is one of the considerations in adapting management practices as part of the science review behind the forests and fish agreement. Forest practices will eventually address the issues, but more work is needed.

Mr. Stearns commented on the difference in the geology and topography between the Chehalis and Willapa basins from northern western Washington basins because of the lack of bedrock.

Ms. Balmelli-Powe requested deferral of the presentation by One Voice. One Voice is a group of citizens who are working on attempts to solve flooding. The reason for organizing as a group is ensuring efforts remain on track and that all solutions are considered including water retention. One Voice believes water retention could possibly be that solution. There have been several attempts in the past to develop a solution but those efforts have failed as no one can agree on a solution. One Voice was established to ensure that people in charge of finding a solution stay on track, overcome misconceptions, and develop one solution that everyone can agree with. The goal of One Voice is to ensure that complete, accurate studies are completed demonstrating that it may be possible to consider a dam that wouldn't harm the environment. It is possible for flood retention under any dam scenario and not just hydro. Currently, there are good logging practices and One Voice supports good practices. Faults in practices should be addressed. However, there are struggles with the EPA, which protects the marbled murrelet by preventing logging of large trees. That impacts loggers because trees logged cannot be too big or too little and its forced Weyerhaeuser to go from a 50-year cycle to a 30-year cycle. The company prefers larger trees, but if they are too large they can't be logged. There are many areas of agreement between One Voice and NWSSCS but some differences of

Chehalis Basin Partnership  
Meeting Summary  
October 22, 2010 Page 13

opinion regarding logging. She recounted how flooding occurred before Kmart and Wal-Mart were built. There has always been flooding. She described infrastructure improvements occurring over the last 50 years that have contributed to flooding. The Corps of Engineers has studied the area since 1933 and determined that the solution cannot be solved non-structurally. Earth Economics has many great ideas but the conclusion also indicated that there is no non-structural solution that will solve flooding in Lewis County. Efforts need to move forward to find the best solution in the shortest time possible. One Voice is asking everyone to approach a solution with an open mind.

Discussion followed on the storm events occurring over the basin and the volume of flooding. While it's difficult to project where precipitation will be concentrated, historical events suggest that the single largest source of water to the Chehalis is generated from the Willapa Hills.

Mr. Connelly questioned the estimate of moving people and businesses from the floodway cited previously by Mr. Schulte. Mr. Schulte said the estimate was based on his research on the cost of infrastructure and figures from the Assessor's Office and pertains to the floodways of Lewis, Thurston, and Grays Harbor Counties. It is roughly \$3 billion.

Mr. Connelly questioned when One Voice asked Lewis County to enact a building moratorium in the floodplain. Mr. Schulte replied representatives from One Voice asked the county to enact a moratorium in the floodplain throughout Lewis County. The county's regulations are very restrictive as well as the City of Centralia's. However, the City of Chehalis is questioning the definition of a floodplain inside a levee and is reserving the right to build within a levee. Lewis County and the cities have agreed outside a floodplain to have restrictive rules on development. It is nearly a total moratorium. One Voice has requested a total moratorium and the county is considering the request. However, the county needs to address the concerns by the City of Chehalis.

Discussion followed on the presentation pointing out the cause and effect of extreme floodplain development and catastrophic damage. Mr. Schulte emphasized that excessive development is not occurring in the Lewis County floodplain. Ms. Valenzuela suggested there is disagreement on that point. Mr. Schulte was asked to define excessive development. Mr. Schulte said a county with a population base of 75,000 has no excessive development occurring. Currently, no development is occurring in Lewis County.

Ms. Balmelli-Powe referred to issues paper for the Watershed Management Plan that includes land uses within the watersheds. She noted that according to that documentation, there isn't excessive developed land use density in Lewis County.

Mr. Hill asked about the definition of a floodplain. Mr. Schulte said the floodplain as currently defined is the current FEMA floodplain as designated on the flood maps. New flood maps are under revision and should be released by January 2011.

Mr. Burkle commented that marbled murrelets are regulated by the US Fish and Wildlife Service and not EPA. Additionally, Weyerhaeuser as a timber company must have a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) that among other things protects the company from any management operations that they deem to change from any ESA listed issues as long as the company follows its HCP. Marbled murrelets require old growth trees over 100 years to nest. Trees that are 50 years or less have no implications to marbled murrelet nesting. It's unlikely the company would be prohibited from harvesting those older trees. Going to a 50-year harvesting rotation from a 30-year harvesting rotation would not affect marbled murrelets.

Chehalis Basin Partnership  
Meeting Summary  
October 22, 2010 Page 14

Ms. Balmelli-Powe responded that one of her previous positions was as office manager for a logging and farming company. Her responsibility was applying for forest practices permits for timber sales. It's accurate that the companies are not prohibited from logging 50 year old trees; however, the costs and paperwork that the companies must contend with to wait to log that long are prohibitive. Many cut now when they can. Fifty years offers the most valued timber for logging, but the paperwork is prohibitive, which is why they log 30-year trees.

Ms. Valenzuela said she appreciates the clarification because it's very important not to mischaracterize as Ms. Balmalli-Powe's clarification was different than her previous comments. The One Voice presentation will be important. One of the difficulties that many people have with One Voice is that there isn't one voice as she's spoken with other members who have been strong proponents of only the dam option. Some members believe dams are the silver bullet while others don't believe that. It will help to receive a presentation from One Voice to hear the different voices and to participate in a frank conversation. She stressed the importance of those conversations occurring.

Ms. Balmelli-Powe said her original statement was not meant to mislead anyone about logging 50 year-old trees but to avoid commenting on the details of the Forest Practice Rules. The entire board of One Voice is and has advocated for a comprehensive plan basin-wide solution. Dams were the primary preference, but not the sole option.

Chair Canaday clarified that the Skookumchuck dam is located in Thurston County and not in Lewis County. Additionally, the City of Centralia is participating in the flood elevation program and when completed with this phase, 144 homes will be elevated and will not be impacted by future floods. The City's first elevation program began in 1996.

Mr. Swartout reported the City of Centralia as part of the National Flood Insurance Program is classified as Class 5 as part of the Community Rating System, which contributes to a reduction in flood insurance premiums.

Mr. Schulte said Lewis County is rated as CRS 7.

Members thanked Mr. Treichler and Mr. Wilcox for the presentation.

Mr. Stearns commented on dams that enable opening and closing to allow fish passage while protecting homes and businesses. There are examples of dams recently built that allow for fish passage.

**Agenda Items for November 19, 2010 Meeting**

- Presentation from USGS on Groundwater Surface Water Characterization Study
- Discussion on Partnership membership to reengage members
- Recommendation on the GI Ecosystem Restoration GI Study
- Presentation by One Voice
- Update on forming Non-profit foundation
- Update on discussion regarding *Drops of Water* status
- Watershed Festival recap

Ms. Spaulding reported on the opportunity to participate in a tree planting on October 30 at Preacher's Slough. She will forward more information electronically to members.

**ADJOURNMENT**

With there being no further business, Chair Canaday adjourned the meeting at 11:45 a.m.

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