



CHEHALIS BASIN PARTNERSHIP

Chehalis Tribe Lucky Eagle Casino, Chehalis Meeting Rooms

Rochester, Washington

January 26, 2017

9:30 am – 12:00

Meeting Summary

MEMBERS* and ALTERNATES' PRESENT

Chuck Caldwell*, *Port of Grays Harbor*

Ed Moch', *City of Aberdeen*

Glen Connelly*, *Chehalis Tribe*

Jan Robinson*, *Chehalis River Basin Land Trust*

Lee Napier', *Lewis County*

Susan Lound*, *City of Centralia*

Patrick Wilzius', *City of Chehalis*

GUESTS

Garrett Dalan, *Nature Conservancy*; Mark Mobbs, *Quinault Indian Nation*; Trent Lougheed, *City of Chehalis*; Noelle Hart, *WSU Extension*; Cat Gowan, *WSU Extension*; Marguerite Abplanalp, *Lewis County Conservation District*; Bob Amrine, *Lewis County Conservation District*

Hope Rieden, *Chehalis Tribe*; Mike Scharpft, *WDFW Region 6*; Mark Mobbs, *Quinault Indian Nation*;

Jim Hillery, *Citizen*

STAFF

Kirsten Harma, *Watershed Coordinator*

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

MEETING

1. Welcome and Introductions

Glen Connelly welcomed everyone to the meeting. Members and guests provided self-introductions.

2. Review of July, September & October Meeting Minutes

A quorum was not present and thus a vote on the minutes could not take place.

3. Member Updates

- The Chehalis River Basin Land Trust is now a volunteer-only organization, having lost its staff. They will continue to undertake community education activities. In March, they will host a learning event about the City of Centralia's water.

- The City of Aberdeen’s water-related projects are underway now that there is a Capital Budget. Fry Creek design is underway and they are expecting funds for construction in the next budget.
- Lewis County is busy working on building permits now that there is a new ruling related to the Hirst Fix.
- Lewis County Conservation District recently hosted a tour of flood and fish project sites, with a visit to the Bunker Creek barrier correction project site.

B. Presentations & Discussions

Poplar Farms and Bio-Refinery in the Chehalis – Noelle Hart and Patricia Townsend, WSU Extension

Advanced Hardwood Biofuels Northwest is USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture-funded project made up of university and industry partners. The project is led by University of Washington, and Washington State University is the Extension branch of the project. The coalition’s vision is to grow hybrid poplar trees as an agricultural crop, harvested every three years and then use the biomass to make bio-based chemicals and fuels.

Hybrid Poplars are fast growing, adaptable, require low inputs, are a non-food crop, and are relatively easy to convert into bioproducts they also resprout (i.e. coppice). The 100km (60mi) region surrounding Centralia was identified as having potential to support a biorefinery. Researchers at UW are looking at the technical and economic feasibility of a hypothetical biorefinery near the existing Centralia power plant.

Ms. Hart and Ms. Townsend facilitated a discussion about the community impacts of growing 34,000+ acres of poplar. How is the land currently used? What could be the opportunities or challenges of a poplar-based bioindustry in your community? What questions and concerns do you have? They presented three scenarios for discussion: 1) Growing poplars as traditional agriculture, 2) Working with wastewater treatment plants to grow poplars with waste water, 3) Growing poplars in the floodplain.

Discussion:

- Haven’t we tried growing poplars in the basin already? Poplar was grown in the past and the market never developed. How would this be different?
 - A) These poplar trees would be grown on 3-year harvest cycles, rather than 8+ years, making them similar to a perennial agricultural crop. Instead of being used for pulp/paper or for veneer, the wood would be chipped for biomass. The conversion of land to poplar farms would be concurrent with the development of a biorefinery, instead of in anticipation of a market.
- Growing poplars with reclaimed wastewater
 - Participants unsure if poplars grown on a three-year cycle could evaporate enough water to meet the needs of a wastewater treatment facility.
 - Haven’t heard of many wastewater treatment plants that are in need of an alternative method of discharging water.
- Considerations for planting hybrid poplars near rivers

- In lands managed for forestry, harvest has to be set-back from the river. If poplar trees aren't harvested early enough, they go from being an ag crop to a forest – which changes the regulations.
- The current trend is to move even agriculture back from the river.
- Planting non-native trees (like hybrid poplar) is a concern for basin ecology. Since these trees sprout from their rootlets, they might spread aggressively. Agencies likely wouldn't approve using grants to fund using non-natives in riparian restoration.
- Would poplar trees be taking water out of streams when it's dry in the summer? That would conflict with instream flow goals for fish.
- Poplar wood would not last in streams and provide stream habitat the way that Douglas fir and red cedar do.
- Would it be better to plant poplars in the riparian area or other parts of the floodplain?
 - A lot of area is in the floodplain but is not riparian (adjacent to the river). Areas that get wet but are not part of the stream habitat are probably a better fit for hybrid poplar.
- Converting ag to poplar farms
 - Dairies wouldn't do it – lots of money tied up in infrastructure.
 - A poplar farm could be easier to manage than cows – less labor involved.
 - There are lots of older farmers, and few young farmers taking their place, so it's hard to say if farmers will want to keep land in its current agricultural use.
 - Money is the bottomline. If you can show that you could make money, people would convert.
 - Dairies have decreased, from more than 70 in the 1990's to less than 35 now.
 - Pacific County has farms into their fourth and fifth generations that aren't going to change
- Potential benefits of a poplar-based industry (presented by WSU extension)
 - creating a new ag market
 - floodplain benefits
 - economic benefit from the biorefinery / job creation
 - carbon cycling
- Other concerns
 - Impacts on current wildlife
 - Elk damage

Visit the Biofuels website for more information: hardwoodbiofuels.org

Presentation slides are available on our website:
<http://chehalisbasinpartnership.org/presentations/> (see Land Use presentations)

City of Chehalis Flood Mitigation and Water Supply Solutions – Trent Lougheed City of Chehalis

The City of Chehalis is looking for new water supply and treatment options to support economic development and expansion of their Urban Growth Area (UGA). The city can't expand without additional water rights. Existing peak demands exceed water rights on the Newaukum. The

Newaukum River is their current water supply, but they can't extract any more water from the river without drawing down the river too far in the summer, so can't meet their peak demand. Treating water from the Chehalis River is more expensive given the chemical composition of the Chehalis River and distance for pumping. Alternatives staff are investigating include: adding a water impoundment in the Newaukum watershed (dual flood benefits); creating a storage and a pumping station for the reclaimed water facility, including investigating demand; moving their Newaukum water rights to the Chehalis downstream of the confluence; and getting back rescinded water rights. The City is looking at all options equally presently, and would like to find a preferred alternative as soon as possible.

The City is exploring options for a floodplain fill mitigation site at the old waste water treatment plant site, as well as a dedicated fund and a mechanism for providing flood mitigation credits. The proposed project would be a mechanism to implement the city's newly adopted Zero Rise Ordinance. Whenever there is development that would result in fill in the floodplain, there will be a fund where developers pay into a compensatory mitigation "bank". The draft concept is to explore feasibility at the old wastewater treatment plant site and surrounding area. It has the potential to all be excavated out. The concept includes reestablishing the old oxbow and excavating other areas of the site down to the 25-year flood storage level. Eventually, they may do restoration, trails, and interpretive signs at the site. Their consultant's preliminary modeling shows a reduction in river elevation by between 0.03 to 0.1 ft. If fill was removed down by 6 feet, there could be stage reduction by as much as 0.15 feet. Mitigation would serve on a one-to-one basis, with developers paying to excavate the amount of fill they added to the floodplain. Cost for a "mitigation credit" for a large scale project would be about \$8/cubic yard. The City would use grant funding to start the excavation, and then use development mitigation funds, as they are collected, to excavate additional areas.

The City is only limited by funding and intends to apply for funds for preliminary designs, acquisitions, and appraisals from the Chehalis Strategy in the next biennium.

Mr. Lougheed is open to hearing suggestions for improving or altering the proposed project: tlougheed@ci.chehalis.wa.us.

Presentation slides are available on our website:

<http://chehalisbasinpartnership.org/presentations/> (see Water Quantity presentations)

OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Harma told the group that she will be in communication with the Department of Ecology and keeping track of potential impacts of the new "Hirst Fix" on watershed planning and the CBP.

ADJOURNMENT

With there being no further business, Glen Connelly adjourned the meeting.

NEXT MEETING: TBD