***CHEHALIS BASIN PARTNERSHIP***

**Chehalis Tribe Lucky Eagle Casino, Chehalis Meeting Rooms**

**Rochester, Washington**

**June 22, 2018**

**9:30 am – 12:00**

**Meeting Summary**

**MEMBERS\* and ALTERNATES’ PRESENT**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Alissa Shay’, *Port of Grays Harbor*Amy Spoon\*, *WA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife*Bob Johnson\*, *WA Dept. of Natural Resources*Chuck Caldwell\*, *Port of Grays Harbor*Chris Stearns\*, *Thurston PUD*Ed Mock’*, City of Aberdeen*  | Glen Connelly\*, *Chehalis Tribe*Jan Robinson\*, *Chehalis River Basin Land Trust*Lee Napier’, *Lewis County*Terry Harris\*, *City of Chehalis*Wes Cormier\*, *Grays Harbor County*  |

 **GUESTS**

Garrett Dalan, *Nature Conservancy;* Shannon Shula, *Thurston County*; Mike Gallagher, *Ecology, Water Resources*; Tye Menser, *Thurston County Commissioner Candidate*; Chad Wiseman, *HDR*; Dave Nazy; *EA*; Devon Rostofer, *Ecology* *TMDL Lead*.

**STAFF**

Kirsten Harma, *Watershed Coordinator*

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

* Meeting summaries are available on the Chehalis Basin Partnership website: [www.chehalisbasinpartnership.org](http://www.chehalisbasinpartnership.org)
* PowerPoint presentations from this meeting are available on the Chehalis Basin Partnership website: [www.chehalisbasinpartnership.org/presentations](http://www.chehalisbasinpartnership.org/presentations)

**MEETING**

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

Chair Terry Harris welcomed everyone to the meeting. Members and guests provided self-introductions.

**2. Review of April Meeting Minutes**

There were no concerns with the minutes.

**3. Member Updates**

Members provided updates.

- Chehalis Tribe: Natural Resources hired a GIS specialist and conducted a 20-acre riparian planting project.

- Chehalis Lead Entity: The annual Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) grant round is underway. The Local Review Team has visited all project sites and will be ranking projects in July.

- Ecology: Devan Rostofer is the new Ecology TMDL lead for Southwest Washington. The geographic scope of her work is much broader than the Chehalis. Among her first tasks is to work with Ecology’s non-point pollution team addressing issues in the Newaukum.

- Port of Grays Harbor: Chuck Caldwell is retiring from the Port. Chair Terry Harris noted that he has been integral to the work of the Chehalis Basin Partnership and will be missed. Alissa Shay will be taking over Mr. Caldwell’s seat on the CBP.

- The Nature Conservancy: The Washington Coast Restoration and Resiliency Initiative (WCRRI) is taking applications for the next grant round. 27 proposals have been received so far with $17.5 million in ask– and 10 are in the Chehalis. One of the criteria for the projects is that they create jobs. This is an economic package as much as a restoration one. Applications are also being solicited for the Washington Coast Works program.

- Chehalis River Basin Land Trust: The Board is losing a Board member due to health issues. They are looking for new board members to commit to meeting once per month.

- WDFW Region 6: Is hiring more people to work on Chehalis Strategy related projects

- Thurston PUD: Doubled in size. Is consolidating systems.

**B. Presentations & Discussions**

**Streamflow Restoration Act** **(aka “Hirst Fix”)** – Mike Gallagher, Ecology

The first water resource news is that curtailments of “junior water rights” in the Chehalis are now in effect.

Mr. Gallagher provided new information from Ecology on determining “Net Ecological Benefit” and the near-term funding available for streamflow restoration projects.

The first step in initiating watershed plan updates will be to quantify the potential impacts of consumptive water use from exempt wells on instream resources over the next 20 years. The next step will be to develop individual off-set projects that ideally provide water for water in time and in place. The next step will be to describe how planned actions are linked with or coordinated with existing plans and actions. The final step will be for Ecology to evaluate the net ecological benefit of the plan.

Ecology will be sending out a call for proposals in September 2018 for projects that help offset the effects of exempt wells. In 6091/”Hirst Fix”/Streamflow Restoration Act, $20 million was allocated statewide to offset exempt wells in the current fiscal biennium. The Nooksack Basin can be used as an example because they already have project ideas developed.

The priorities for projects will be as follows:

1. Water for water in time in place mitigation
2. Projects occurring in the same WRIA but different subwatershed that replace water during critical flow periods (summer); or projects that replace water in the same subwatershed but at a different time of year
3. Projects that improve other in-stream conditions (water quality, habitat, etc.)

*Q) Are research project eligible? For example, a study of surface-water-groundwater connectivity?*

A) No, research projects are not eligible.

*Q) Can the funding be used to scope out the best locations to do projects?*

A) I (Mr. Gallagher) don’t know, but do know the priority for use of funds is shovel-ready projects.

*Q) Can the funding be used for an Ecological Benefit accounting system?*

A) The priority is projects that are shovel-ready

*Q) How will the new Streamflow Restoration plan benefit agriculture?*

A) It will help current water rights holders because it will help keep more water in the streams longer. We estimate that if we don’t do these projects, there will be about 2-10% less water in creeks, earlier junior water rights curtailments, etc.

*Q) How will the application process take place?*
A) Eligible sponsors submit applications in EAGL. Ecology and WDFW staff will be on the scoring team.

**Watershed Planning/Streamflow Restoration/ESSB 6091, aka, “Hirst Fix” and the Chehalis Basin Partnership --** Discussion

Ms. Harma informed the group that a few more “group governance” steps need to take place before the CBP is ready to begin the tasks being requested of us by Ecology.

As a first step, Ms. Harma sent out a “re-engagement letter” inviting the original signatories, both active and inactive, to come back to the CBP as it takes on these new tasks. She had a positive response from many of the currently active member, and a positive response from the City of Hoquiam. The Lewis County Farm Bureau requested a presentation.

Next, we need to learn if Grays Harbor County is willing to be the sponsor of the facilitation grant. Next, we need to find and hire a facilitator. Mr. Dalan noted that it will be best if we hire someone to both facilitate the effort and actually draft the plan. Subsequently, we will need to make sure everyone who is interested and eligible to participate is at the table and that operating proceedures and ground rules are all set. Ms. Harma asked the group if they thought an update of the current Operating Proceedures is in order. Ms Napier, who in her previous role helped establish those proceedures, cautioned that an update would not be possible given the short timeframe for the plan update. Mr. Cormier noted that he and the other Commissioners would like to see the group who works on this be smaller. Ms. Harma noted that the current signatories are a large group, and the current operating procedures call for concensus, but a small sub-committee could be convened to do the major work of the plan update. A member noted that we can do more with more people in the room. A lot of people will be affected and a lot of people will be able to contribute to the solution. Mr. Cormier expressed concern that a large group of stakeholders could make a plan that obligates a county to take measures it is not comfortable with, such as metering. Others responded that since the plan is voluntary, no one can be obligated to do anything, and if concensus is used, the County can always block a decision that goes against their interest. Mr. Dalan noted that it’s in the County’s interest that the best projects to improve instream flows be developed so that building permits can continue to be issued, and that will take everyone being at the table.

*Q) What would happen if Ecology did this plan update, instead?*

A) Ecology will make rules for the basin if the group doesn’t approve a plan

*Q) Can individual jurisdictions submit their own applications for funding?*

A) They might not be looked as favorably if they are not approved by the planning group.

Mr. Cormier committed to talking to the other Grays Harbor County Commissioners about sponsoring the Ecology grant. Chair Harris asked the group for permission for the coordinator to start looking for a facilitator for the watershed plan update. All in favor.

**C. Other Business**

**Chehalis Basin Partnership Funds and the Grays Harbor Stream Team**

Ms. Harma mentioned that the Grays Harbor Stream Team has been successfully re-established and taking on community service projects in the Grays Harbor area over the past two years thanks to a grant from the Rose Foundation for Communities and Environment. The grant will expire this fall and there will not be the opportunity to reapply. Ms. Harma, along with other project partners – the Chehalis River Basin Land Trust and Historical Seaport – are looking for other funding opportunities. Ms. Harma asked the group if it might be willing to use some of the unobligated funds in the CBP account towards the Grays Harbor Stream Team Coordinator in the coming year.

The group asked for a more formal presentation with full accounting of the projected benefits and financial request at a future meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT**

With there being no further business, Chair Terry Harris adjourned the meeting.

**NEXT MEETING:** July 27, 2018

**\*Note – next month the meeting will be held in the Sky Room of the Lucky Eagle Hotel, not in the Casino\***