



# **CHEHALIS BASIN PARTNERSHIP**

Conference call with screen share

March 27, 2020

9:30am – 11:30pm

## **Meeting Summary**

### **MEMBERS\* and ALTERNATES' PRESENT**

Jane Hewitt', *Grays Harbor County*  
Bobby Jackson\*, *Lewis County*  
Lee Napier', *Lewis County*  
Tye Menser\*, *Thurston County*  
Brad Murphy', *Thurston County*  
Alissa Shay', *Port of Grays Harbor*  
Colleen Suter', *Chehalis Tribe*  
Kris Koski\*, *City of Aberdeen*  
Kim Ashmore\*, *City of Centralia*  
Andy Oien', *City of Centralia*  
Rick Eaton', *City of Centralia*  
Terry Harris\*, *City of Chehalis*  
Brian Shay\*, *City of Hoquiam*  
Nick Bird\*, *City of Ocean Shores*

Chris Stearns\*, *Thurston PUD*  
Dusty Guenther\*, *Boistfort Valley Water*  
Jim Hill\*, *Lewis County Citizen*  
Mike Noone\*, *Ecology Water Resources*  
Paula Holroyde\*, *Citizen, League of Women Voters Thurston County*  
Chris Lunde\*, *Port Blakely*  
Brian Thompson\*, *Lewis County Farm Bureau*  
Jason Walter\*, *Weyerhaeuser*  
Jan Robinson\*, *Chehalis River Basin Land Trust*  
Lauren MacFarland', *Quinault Indian Nation*

### **GUESTS**

Garrett Dalan, *The Nature Conservancy*; Joel Massman, *Keta Waters/Quinault Indian Nation contractor*; Anthony Waldrop, *Grays Harbor CD*; Tom Culhane, *Ecology*; Mughda Flores, *Ecology*; Bridget August, *GeoEngineers*

### **STAFF**

Kirsten Harma, *Partnership Watershed Coordinator*; Cynthia Carlstad, *Facilitator, NHC*; Rebecca Roberts, *NHC*

### **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, Introductions**

The Chair convened the meeting and participants introduced themselves.

As the first Partnership meeting using Zoom teleconferencing program with screenshare, Ms. Carlstad addressed tips for using the software when members had questions or wanted to vote.

#### **2. Approval of February Meeting Summary**

All were in favor of the meeting summary with no changes needed.

#### **3. Permit-Exempt Well Projections and Consumptive Use Estimate "First Reading" Decision**

Ms. Carlstad introduced today's first topic – updating the group on PE well projection and consumptive use estimates. Ms. Carlstad presented the estimates along with a brief explanation of how the analysis has progressed since the last time the Partnership members were presented with estimates, including an overview of how ground-truthing and the well log spot check modified previous results. She also provided a preliminary total consumptive use estimate based on the results. Ms. Carlstad conveyed the need to create a consumptive use scenario based on PUD data provided by Thurston PUD. Chris Stearns, Thurston PUD, added that it is important to know that the PUD has the first right of refusal to reject any well being drilled within their service area. He also noted that the consumptive use estimates might be conservative because rural exempt wells typically coincide with larger households than suburban household wells.

Ms. Carlstad proposed the group make a first decision for approval of the calculated PE well connection estimates. Lauren MacFarland, Quinault Indian Nation, and Kris Koski, City of Aberdeen, are not ready to vote without getting council consideration and permission to speak on behalf of the Nation and City, respectively. Lee Napier, Lewis County, is not ready to take action because she was unable to catch up on reading the documents and related discussions as a result of the COVID-19 situation. She made it clear that she is not blocking the vote, just needs more time before she votes. Bobby Jackson, Lewis County, and Chris Lunde, Port Blakely, also asserted that they are not prepared to vote on the PE estimates at this meeting. Chris Stearns is concerned that the PE well and consumptive use estimates don't represent true conditions since groundwater in south Thurston County becomes brackish, however he stated he would register his vote as "approve with reservation". As a result of these member comments, the decision is tabled until the next partnership meeting.

#### **4. Habitat Offset Project Presentation**

Ms. August, GeoEngineers, presented an approach for evaluating water offset benefits from habitat projects that could be included in the Plan Addendum to offset streamflow and provide a Net Ecological Benefit (NEB). She gave an overview of NEB guidance project types, categorized as water right acquisition offset projects, non-acquisition water offset projects, or habitat and other related projects. Ms. August's presentation is focused on the latter category. Following a detailed breakdown of what is part of a habitat project, she demonstrated with examples how one would evaluate the impact of a habitat project on the groundwater table. The presentation demonstrated the many components of a floodplain reconnection study and their high cost. Ms. August also presented case studies that were reviewed in an effort to understand what other information on floodplain restoration projects is out there. The results of the literature review and GeoEngineers' project experience demonstrate that generally restoration projects increase groundwater elevations, storage, and baseflow discharge. Terry Harris, City of Chehalis, questioned Ms. August with how far in advance would well drillings need to be done to determine the baseline for groundwater changes to which she answered, at least one wet season but the more information, the better. Colleen Suter, Chehalis Tribe, asked if any water quality work was done in the case studied to evaluate the susceptibility of surface contamination to higher water tables. Ms. August replied that the projects mentioned in the presentation were focused on increased water flow and storage, not water quality and she was not aware of any water quality monitoring done for the example projects.

The presentation continued that GeoEngineers is working on developing a way to estimate offset quantity through a cheaper, less time intensive analytical approach based on Darcy's Law. Ms. August laid out the basis and methodology of the approach with an example from the Lower Tolt River Floodplain Reconnection Project. She stated that the disadvantages of this approach lie in the uncertainty of the assumptions and assumes steady-state conditions, not accounting for seasonality or timing of benefits. The conclusion is that water offsets for habitat projects are difficult to quantify with certainty and offsets are expected to be low for smaller sites; but regardless of the lack of quantifiable offset, these projects are valuable and contribute to NEB.

Tom Culhane, Ecology, provided that Ecology has been working on development of this analytical approach with GeoEngineers and supports its usage.

## **5. Watershed Plan Addendum Progress Reports**

Lauren MacFarland stated that the Quinault Indian Nation sponsor a Streamflow Restoration grant application for a feasibility study on the TransAlta Water Right acquisition project. This is planned to be submitted as a phased project, with the acquisition, if determined feasible, to be done in phase II. Terry Harris thanked Ms. MacFarland and is interested to see how that will benefit the entire Chehalis Basin.

Ms. Carlstad stated the desire to introduce the planning group to the full list of offset projects that are currently being discussed at the next meeting. Nick Bird, City of Ocean Shores, questioned if there was any update on presentation materials for the next meeting and Ms. Carlstad answered that those will be distributed prior to the April committee meeting. She then questioned general availability to meet during the COVID-19 shutdown; none of the members noted any concern about participating because of the pandemic.

### **For the Good of the Order / Public Comment**

Chair Harris opened public comment and partner updates, but nothing further was shared.

## **AJOURNMENT**

With there being no further business, Chair Terry Harris adjourned the meeting at 11:30.

### **RECORD OF DECISIONS:**

1. June 28, 2019 – Members voted by full consensus to review the Charter Addendum as edited at this meeting within their organizations and be prepared for a second reading and approval at the July 26, 2019 meeting.
2. July 26, 2019 – Members voted by full consensus to approve the Charter Addendum to the 2004 Operating Procedures. The Quinault Indian Nation voted “Formal Disagreement, but Willing to Go with Majority” and will provide a written statement to include with the final charter.

**NEXT MEETING:** April 24, 2020