



# CHEHALIS BASIN PARTNERSHIP

Conference call with screen share

June 26, 2020

9:30am – Noon

## Meeting Summary

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

Lee Napier', *Lewis County*

Dave Windom\*, *Mason County*

Brad Murphy', *Thurston County*

Tye Menser\*, *Thurston County*

Colleen Suter', *Chehalis Tribe*

Alissa Shay', *Port of Grays Harbor*

Rick Eaton', *City of Centralia*

Andy Oien', *City of Centralia*

Dan Wood\*, *City of Montesano*

Jaron Heller\*, *City of McCleary*

Nick Bird\*, *City of Ocean Shores*

Paula Holroyde\*, Citizen, *League of Women Voters Thurston County*

Mike Noone\*, *Ecology, Water Resources*

Tristan Weiss\*, *WDFW*

Chris Lunde\*, *Port Blakely*

Jason Walter\*, *Weyerhaeuser*

Jan Robinson\*, *Chehalis River Basin Land Trust*

Caprice Fasano', *Quinault Indian Nation*

Lauren MacFarland', *Quinault Indian Nation*

Chris Stearns\*, *Thurston PUD*

### **GUESTS**

Mark Mobbs, *Quinault Indian Nation*, Tom Culhane, *Ecology*; Ned Pitman, *Coast Salmon Partnership*; Joel Massmann, *contractor to Quinault Indian Nation*; Jill Van Hulle, *contractor to Grays Harbor County*; Jon Turk, *contractor to Grays Harbor County*, Sarah Ogier, *Parametrix*; Chanele Holbrook, *Citizen*; Bob Amrine, *Lewis Conservation District*; Sarah Moorehead, *Thurston Conservation District*

### **STAFF**

Kirsten Harma, *Partnership Watershed Coordinator*; Cynthia Carlstad, *Facilitator, NHC*; Patty Dillon, *NHC*; Bridget August, *GeoEngineers*

### **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)

**Note: Meeting recording failed, which prevented documentation of detailed meeting discussion.**

### **MEETING**

#### **1. Welcome, Introductions**

Ms. Carlstad and Ms. Harma convened the meeting and took roll.

Ms. Carlstad instructed members of their participation options in WebEx, and asked participants to mute themselves when not speaking.

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

Meeting summary was approved with no revisions to draft.

### 3. Implementation and Adaptive Management for Watershed Plan Addendum

Ms. Harma and Ms. Carlstad led the Partnership through polling questions to gauge initial thoughts about the next step in the Streamflow Restoration Plan process – implementation and adaptive management:

What is most exciting to you about implementing our Plan? Answer choices included the following, with the option to pick all that apply:

- a. Helping streamflow, abundant clean water is incredibly important!
- b. More support to implement projects I care about.
- c. Having this legal requirement met.
- d. I'm dreading implementation.
- e. Working together with other CBP members.
- f. Tracking our progress and developing new projects for the conceptual/programmatic projects.

Responses centered around (a) and (b), project implementation support and helping streamflow.

Ms. Carlstad then gave a brief presentation on the legal requirements and options around implementation. Chapter 90.94 RCW is silent on implementation obligations and requirements, but it does establish a watershed restoration and enhancement account to fund project implementation and enables the CBP to recommend modifications to the \$500 permit-exempt well fee. Regarding the permit-exempt well fee, the CBP may request the portion of what goes to Ecology changes. Currently \$350 of the \$500 goes to Ecology and \$150 stays with the county. Mr. Noone also stated that Ecology needs “reasonable assurance” that the CBP will implement the plan.

In considering implementation structure options, Ms. Carlstad identified four options:

- CBP, working with project sponsors
- Counties, working with project sponsors
- Lead Entity can continue coordinating habitat projects, but then no one track the water projects
- Other, yet to be identified

She then shared the draft plan implementation and adaptive management elements:

1. CBP continues as lead. First step is to create an implementation work plan.
2. Annual tracking:
  - a. Permit-exempt wells by county and subbasin
  - b. Project implementation
3. Project implementation coordination
  - a. Track and help sponsors
  - b. As possible, support project monitoring and evaluation of impacts and benefits
4. Adaptive management – 5-year intervals
  - a. Review permit-exempt well numbers and locations
  - b. Review project implementation
  - c. Make adjustments as warranted.

Chair Harris stated that the CBP has led watershed planning in the Chehalis since its beginning, and he sees the CBP continuing in that role through implementation.

Ms. Harma conducted another poll for participants on whether the CBP would be their first choice to lead implementation. Overwhelmingly the response was yes (18 yes, 0 no). Mr. Noone said that Ecology can commit his continued time in supporting the CBP during implementation.

The Partnership was then polled regarding financial support for the CBP:

1. Do you like the idea of requesting State funding support at some basic level for implementation phase to enable local tracking/support for implementation? The majority (17) said responded yes; no one responded no.
2. If state funding required local match, what would be preferred local match?
  - a. In-kind – 13 participants preferred this
  - b. Small financial contribution from CBP members – 4 participants preferred this
  - c. Not open to local match support – 0 responded yes to this choice.

Mr. Mobbs stated that flexibility in a local match would be preferred.

#### **4. Net Ecological Benefit Evaluation (NEB) Initial Assessment**

Ms. Dillon (NHC) presented the NEB evaluation initial assessment to the Partnership. Projects are listed in a spreadsheet and classified as “water rights acquisition”, “non-acquisition water”, and/or “habitat and other.” For water projects, the mechanism through which streamflow is improved is classified as: “directly adds streamflow in critical periods”, “shifts flow to critical periods”, “recharges groundwater.” Habitat metrics are quantified for applicable projects:

- Enhances habitat for critical periods/species (reach length improved)
- Provides temperature reduction or refugia (reach length improved)
- Preserves/restores natural land cover (area)
- Increases habitat connectivity (added length)

#### **5. Project Profiles – Irrigation Efficiencies, Managed Aquifer Recharge**

##### Irrigation Efficiencies

Ms. Harma introduced this project type with a few slides and the following talking points:

- Taking less water out of the stream for irrigation leaves more for fish and other aquatic life.
- When fields are over-irrigated, some of the extra water seeps through the ground and returns to the stream later but may not make it there during the lowest flow periods.
- Irrigation efficiency projects can also reduce consumptive use by reducing loss to evaporation and reducing water application to non-crop areas.
- The Partnership heard about water right acquisition projects from Kelsey Collins and WWT at previous meetings. WWT has done an initial screening for water rights project opportunities in the South Fork Chehalis and Scatter Creek watersheds. That work was funded by the Office of Chehalis Basin.
- CBP does not support acquisition of agricultural water rights as a general policy, and we are not proposing that any be included in the Plan.
- The offset projects work group wants to include project opportunities to support the farming community in the Chehalis Basin.
- All the conservation districts in the Chehalis have expressed interest in programs to help them support the ag community with water management. At some sites, this could lead to water rights-related transactions, but that is not the goal of these programs.
- The overall goal of the program is to work with farmers to help them make the best use of their site, including using resources such as water efficiently and wisely. An excerpt from Thurston CD’s conceptual project description was shown on one of the slides:
  - *Providing technical assistance to interested agricultural landowners in Irrigation Management Planning and implementation.*
  - *Aid farmers to upgrade to efficient irrigation infrastructure, improve water use timing, water quantity applications, and identify opportunities to conserve water.*

- *Identifying sources of funding for cost-share incentives will assist landowners with IMP implementation, helping farmers upgrade irrigation infrastructure to limit water waste.*
- We believe this will ultimately contribute to water conservation, better streamflow, and better water quality, all of which support NEB.

Sarah Moorehead (Thurston CD) and Bob Amrine (Lewis CD) spoke about their interest to work with the farming community on irrigation efficiencies. Ms. Moorehead said that after the last drought lots of folks wanted irrigation management planning. They also have opportunities to cost share with conservation commission programs, so there could be synergies there on funding support. She emphasized that developing a positive working relationship with landowners is an essential step before any water right acquisition conversations are appropriate. Mr. Amrine said that Lewis CD has 40 irrigation management plans, and many are having good results with Kpod systems although they are expensive. He is interested in doing a demonstration project. Mr Culhane cautioned against claiming water offset from these projects unless it can be clearly demonstrated. Farmers may choose to simply irrigate more with saved water. Ms. Moorehead responded that simply shifting timing of irrigation can have significant results. Farmers need to see that changing practices won't interfere with their productivity.

Managed Aquifer Recharge

Bridget August (GeoEngineers) gave a presentation on Managed Aquifer Recharge (see presentation file for detail). Significant points included:

- These projects help to re-time streamflow to critical flow periods by increasing groundwater storage that contributes to stream base flows.
- The flow contribution also helps water temperature because groundwater is naturally cooled underground.
- All of these projects would require feasibility study before determining a site is viable.
- Aquifer recharge is achieved by pumping from the river during high flow periods to an infiltration basin or gallery. In the Chehalis you would likely pump between November and May.
- A few of these projects have been implemented around the state, including in the Walla Walla and Dungeness basins.
- GeoEngineers initial screening in the Chehalis shows that much of the floodplain area in the mainstem and tributaries could have feasible sites.
- They will continue with further evaluation and the Addendum will include a few specific areas (not sites) and basinwide opportunities.

Mr. Murphy commented that gopher soils in southern Thurston County would be a constraint in that area.

Ms. Van Hulle stated that the City of Tumwater has done a conceptual MAR project in the City limit.

**Plan Addendum Progress Reports**

Ms. Carlstad reported on the list of public engagements for the Plan Addendum as shown in the table below.

Entity	Date
Lewis County Farm Bureau	8/1

Port of Grays Harbor	7/14
Grays Harbor County	7/14
Quinault Indian Nation	7/6 or 7/20
City of Centralia	7/14
Lewis County Chapter of Master Builders	Tbd
Lewis County Chapter of Realtors	Tbd
City of McCleary	6/24
City of Aberdeen	7/8 or 7/26
City of Ocean Shores	7/13

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

Chair Harris opened public comment and partner updates.

Ms. Holroyde announced her concerns around a Port of Olympia project proposal that will clear 200 acres of old growth. She asked for support from other concerned parties. Ms. Carlstad said they could keep the web meeting going to talk after the CBP meeting adjourned.

Chair Harris requested that Ms. Harma draft a thank-you letter to organizations who have supported the Partnership in the past for Partnership review.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

With there being no further business, Ms. Harma adjourned the meeting at noon.

### **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.
3. April 24, 2020 – Members voted by full consensus to approve the permit-exempt well projection of 4555 new permit-exempt well connections by 2040 with an estimated consumptive use of 504.8 acre-feet per year. Absent members: City of McCleary, City of Napavine, Town of Pe Ell, Terry Willis (Grays Harbor citizen member), WDNR, Brian Thompson (Lewis County Farm Bureau); Abstaining members: Weyerhaeuser, City of Aberdeen

**NEXT MEETING:** July 24, 2020