



# **CHEHALIS BASIN PARTNERSHIP**

Conference call with screen share

July 24, 2020

9:30am - 12:00pm

## **Meeting Summary**

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

Lee Napier', *Lewis County*  
Bobby Jackson\*, *Lewis County*  
Tye Menser\*, *Thurston County*  
Kaitlynn Nelson', *Thurston County*  
Colleen Suter', *Chehalis Tribe*  
Alissa Shay', *Port of Grays Harbor*  
Kim Ashmore\*, *City of Centralia*  
Rick Eaton', *City of Centralia*  
Dan Wood\*, *City of Montesano*  
Nick Bird\*, *City of Ocean Shores*  
Chris Stearns\*, *Thurston PUD*

Paula Holroyde\*, Citizen, *League of Women Voters Thurston County*  
Bob Johnson\*, *Natural Resources*  
Chris Lunde', *Port Blakely*  
Brian Thompson\*, *Lewis County Farm Bureau*  
Jason Walter\*, *Weyerhaeuser*  
Caprice Fasano', *Quinault Indian Nation*  
Mark Mobbs', *Quinault Indian Nation*  
John Bryson', *Quinault Indian Nation*  
Terry Harris\*, *City of Chehalis*

### **GUESTS**

Wes Cormier, *Grays Harbor County*; Jill Van Hulle, *contractor to Grays Harbor County*; Jon Turk, *contractor to Grays Harbor County*, Tristan Weiss, *WDFW*; Joel Massman, *contractor to Quinault Indian Nation*; Garrett Dalan, *Nature Conservancy*; Rachel Stendahl; *Thurston ECO Network*; Bob Amrine, *Lewis County Conservation District*.

### **STAFF**

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

Mr. Harris started the meeting with a brief introduction and welcomed everyone.

Ms. Harma assembled the meeting and took roll.

Ms. Carlstad instructed members of their participation options and asked that they mute themselves when not speaking during the Zoom call.

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

Members were told that there is not a June meeting summary to approve due to recording failure during the last web meeting. Meeting notes will be put together as a summary for approval at August meeting. Ms. Carlstad apologized to the partnership for the lack of recording during last

month's Webex meeting and explained the mishap. The summary that will be presented will be an overview of what was presented rather than capturing the membership's dialogue.

Ms. Carlstad reviewed the agenda, telling the group that July's meeting is all about pulling the watershed plan together and advising members on what's being included in the plan, how the suite of projects are shaping up, and what kind of feedback we are getting from public engagement.

Ecology and WDFW were not on the call because it was a mandatory furlough day. However, Ms. Carlstad said that Mike Noone wanted to convey that they are feeling confident about where the plan is headed.

### **3. Public Engagement Feedback**

Ms. Carlstad opened the first topic - public engagement feedback. Completed is a briefing to the Quinault Indian National Natural Resources Committee, Lewis County Chapter of Realtors, Ocean Shores, McCleary, Chehalis River Basin Land Trust and Port of Grays Harbor. She then went over the scheduled public engagement opportunities, which included the Thurston County League of Women Voters, Grays Harbor County, Aberdeen, Lewis County Farm Bureau, Centralia, and Thurston PUD.

Ms. Carlstad opened the floor for feedback received so far, and the following feedback was reported:

- Mr. Bird had no feedback because their presentation was postponed; they will be moving forward with it in August.
- Ms. Napier reported on feedback from the Lewis County Chapter of Realtors. People wanted to know what would be different, so Ms. Napier told them more about rural wells and the county's obligation to collect well fees. She described geographically where the Partnership is planning. She told them that she does not have an answer on what would change except to encourage realtors working with buyers or sellers who want to put property into conservation to meet with the project sponsors.
- Ms. Shay had no major feedback, just questions regarding the understanding of the process and are waiting for the final plan.
- Ms. Fasano had a comment from her director recommending distributing the offset and habitat project throughout the watershed and subbasins so they would offset impacts where those impacts occur. She also has a question from her vice president regarding what will happen if actual new well development is different than what is projected, and if adjusting for that would be included in the plan. Ms. Carlstad said that the adaptive management piece of the plan recommends tracking and considering adjustments if needed. She also mentioned the use of the beaver dam analogs (BDAs) and other habitat projects that include instream flow benefits. Last month's polling indicated the CBP will act as the managing body to carry the plan through implementation, so the plan is being drafted with that in mind.

Mr. Stearns discussed rural residences being larger than normal suburban, and therefore more people per household on average. He asked if this was taken into consideration for average water use per household. Ms. Carlstad verified that the variation was taken into consideration in the analysis through use of the average irrigated footprint across the entire basin.

Mr. Harris discussed Ms. Fasano's concerns from the Quinault Indian Nation. He reminded the members that the plan is a malleable product. With things as important as water use exceeding what is anticipated, that could fall back on the Partnership. So, he wants to thank the public for bringing up those concerns and questions.

#### 4. Project Suite and Net Ecological Benefit (NEB) Status

Ms. Carlstad introduced colleague Ms. Dillon to present on the project list and NEB evaluation status.

Ms. Dillon gave the overview that there are 68 unique projects on the list, some of which are basin wide concepts to be applied in multiple subbasins, and the identified water offsets are more than eight times the target. The target has been exceeded in four subbasins: the Newaukum, Scatter Creek, Sookumchuck, and Black River. At least one project is identified in all but three subbasins.

Ms. Dillon discussed the three basic project categories:

- Water Rights Acquisition - The Water Rights Acquisition project category aims to take water out of the current use and leave it for streamflow. This is the most direct streamflow restoration category, yet hard to find water rights that aren't being used.
- Non-Acquisition Water Offset - The Non-Acquisition Water Offset project category does not involve a water right transaction but returns water to streamflow through some other means, such as adjusting reservoir releases, building new storage to feed streamflow, or increasing groundwater for source of summer flows.
- Habitat or Other - The Habitat and Other project are mostly habitat restoration and may have some water offset benefits. This category mainly helps with the NEB in the watershed.

Ms. Dillon stressed the need to meet the target water offset as well as create NEB with projects listed in the plan.

Ms. Dillon said we are most concerned with critical low flow periods. Recharging groundwater or water that has been running off for use to aquifers can be used to increase summer base flows. Project types involving storage in the floodplain where water can be stored in the wet seasons and flooding can be used as controlled outflow back into the stream during low flow periods.

There are three main direct water offset types:

- Converting permit-exempt wells to be on water service
- Acquiring water rights or moving point of diversion – Moving a point of diversion downstream or to a well can benefit streamflow in a specific reach, even though it does not actually add water to the basin. The Chehalis project suite includes a few of these project types.
- Dam releases - Dam releases involve working with dam owners to increase releases in the summer low flow periods or during critical life stages of salmonids.

Indirect water offset project types include beaver dam analogs (BDAs), alluvial storage, managed aquifer recharge (MAR), stormwater infiltration, and floodplain restoration. The use of BDAs can help raise the groundwater table by increasing ponding that seeps into the groundwater, locally raises water tables. Alluvial storage works similarly. Another option is to manage aquifer recharge by diverting streamflow during high flow periods flow into an infiltration gallery. The increased volume of groundwater then contributes to base flow later in the season. Stormwater infiltration is similar, but on a smaller scale. Floodplain restoration projects can incorporate many of these elements and be a potential offset.

Ms. Dillon continued discussing other ecological benefits that the project team has quantified for habitat and fish passage project to help with the Ecology's review and approval process. One of the goals is to enhance habitat during critical areas of year, for critical species. These projects include the following elements: instream restoration, floodplain reconnection, temperature refugia in streams with high summer temperatures, riparian restoration with shading benefits and pool creation, preservation and restoration of natural land cover, protection of forested areas, wetland restoration, and fish barrier removal.

Ms. Dillon invited questions and comments.

- Mr. Stearns commented in response to the temperature reduction or refugia ecological benefit that the Lower Black River is an important area for refugia being utilized by spring chinook salmon before they spawn. Tribal fishers have seen them there jumping to shake eggs loose to prep for spawning during the summer months. It is part of culture and it is an important area to keep in mind during this process.
- Mr. Lunde had a question about water temperature and BDAs because the forest practice sector has an ongoing challenge related to water temperatures. Ms. Dillon responded that water temperature is a factor when more water is being stored on the surface in the warmest part of the year. An advantage of BDAs and other alluvial type storage is that much of the water is being stored below the surface, thus providing less of a negative impact to temperature.
- Mr. Massmann brought up the point of confusion with needing to address the consumptive water impacts by moving water around in the system. Is moving the water truly considered an offset which adds water back to the system? Ms. Dillon responded that the objective of the plan is to restore streamflows. Adding water on an annual basis is not necessary but timing the water during critical low flow periods is needed. Mr. Massmann is not convinced that meets the requirements of the Streamflow Restoration Impacts.

Ms. Carlstad added that it is not our role to interpret the legal requirement but from Ecology guidance, we are looking to meet a streamflow benefit which is not necessarily adding water back into the system. But is up to the local planning unit to decide what is good enough. It may be as simple as adding flow to specific reaches during the summer and taking it out after, as is the case with a City of Chehalis project included in the suite. There are two separate filters to look at those situations: is Ecology accepting those as compliant with the law and does the community agree they are beneficial. The main importance as a Planning Unit is to decide what actions will be beneficial to community or not. Mr. Stearns commented that taking water from the system in the wet winter could be beneficial in the case of a spring drought.

Ms. Dillon presented the draft NEB summary table. She gave an overview of how the project list was created through suggestions from Partnership members, agency representatives, and projects already being implemented in the basin. Looking at the project list in the table, Ms. Dillon discussed that each project is identified by subbasin and there are some basin wide concepts that do not have specific locations identified and can be implemented in several subbasins. Offsets from beaver dam analogs have been estimated from scientific data. Ms. Dillon acknowledged that the Trans Alta water right acquisition in the Skookumchuck basin is a key project, and other projects and concepts throughout the basin can also provide water offsets. The Trans Alta acquisition would meet the required offset but if that doesn't go through, there is enough quantified water benefit from other projects to meet the requirement. She also mentioned that managed aquifer recharge locations in Thurston County are part of a basin wide concept, estimated from typical soil types which will be refined for specific sites and can be a part of the implementation plan.

Ms. Carlstad reviewed the water offset type projects and discussed where the estimated water benefit numbers are coming from to give the Partnership an idea of how solid the presented values are. Ms. Dillon described the modeling that has varied across projects. For example, Thurston County has done surface and ground water modeling. She invited Ms. Van Hulle to discuss the Cooke Aquaculture water right. Ms. Van Hulle explained that the Cooke Aquaculture fish facility has deep wells and water rights placed in trust. The water right could be acquired and directly discharged to the Black River at that site, representing a pump and dump situation. This is water that would otherwise enter the Chehalis River system further downstream near Elma. Ms. Carlstad recognized that this is an example of the situation brought up by Mr. Massman earlier –

water is being transferred from one place (groundwater) to another (the Black River) to benefit streamflow in a specific reach; it is not adding water to the basin overall.

Ms. Dillon presented that the total estimated water offset from the project suite is 4,314 acre-feet per year. Of that total, 1,400 acre-feet per year is from the TransAlta water rights acquisition, which is about one third of the total offsets. The other two thirds of the total are from the combination of other various project types.

Ms. Dillon briefly explained basis for estimated water benefit for different project types:

- Water offsets for stormwater projects was estimated using site specific modeling, when available. There is a more generic category for stormwater recharge opportunities, based on looking at several modeling results in the region and developing an estimated range of likely benefit. The amount of offset or groundwater recharge from a stormwater project depends on the infiltration rate, area available to infiltrate, and the upstream contributing area in acres (where stormwater is coming off from) exclusively using wet season (winter seasons) or impervious surfaces in summer storms that can recharge as well. That water is going into local groundwater systems and eventually into the streams. Aquifer recharge is estimated based on assumption of 1 cfs of discharge for 100 days during the wet season. This could be higher in areas with longer periods.
- Ms. Dillon noted that an additional 1 cfs release from the Skookumchuck Dam could be possible in most years, based on project information notes that were supplied, and this estimate is based on the April 1-September 10 period that a lot of operations rules apply to.
- Most of the alluvial storage and BDA projects are in a conceptual state. No water benefit is being claimed for alluvial storage project although there is research supporting water benefit. For BDA projects, the water benefit is estimated at 2.5 acre-feet per year per BDA based on University of Washington research done by Ben Dittbrenner.
- The China Creek Phase II project in the Hanaford subbasin has been modeled. The amount of storage expected is taken from different sized storm events so there is a more reliable range compared to the stormwater modeling previously described.
- The Galvin area near Centralia is a candidate for going on city water. The estimated offset is based on the number of PE wells which would be retired and the consumptive use per well estimate used to develop the offset targets.
- The City of Chehalis has a project to transfer its North Fork Newaukum diversion to the Chehalis. This would keep 1 million gallons of water per day, which is equivalent to 1.5 cfs during the summer, in the North Fork Newaukum, a severely flow limited. That water would be pulled out downstream from the Chehalis instead. Ms. Carlstad stated that this example would not be adding water to the basin itself, but rather to the 17 mile reach of river that has temperature and flow problems, and is one of few core spawning and holding areas for spring Chinook, a severely depressed stock in the basin. This example provides benefit to aquatic species in a case where there is not added water to system. Ms. Carlstad wants the members to weigh in on their perspective of the value for projects like that.

Mr. Lunde asked if there are any insights to how water rights are monetized. Ms. Van Hulle responded that currently water rights market prices are between the \$2,000-\$2,500 per acre-foot range. These prices have been consistent for a long time. Factors considered in setting these prices are supply and demand, and availability. Mr. Stearns confirmed Ms. Van Hulle's estimation of water right costs.

Mr. Mobbs made a comment about the Newaukum to Chehalis water right transfer. He said it was his understanding the the City of Chehalis water right regularly exceeds the summer flow in the North Fork Newaukum at their current intake site. The City's practice is to not use their entire

water right, leaving some water in the stream. Should the withdrawal be moved downstream, would they extract their full water right, and if so, would there be negative impacts to streamflow from that? Ms. Carlstad couldn't answer the question specifically. She believes there would be a water right transfer and through that process there would be an evaluation which could pose some withdrawal limitations. Mr. Mobbs added that municipal water rights can retain their entire water right and not look at past use unlike non-municipal water rights. The municipal water rights are not as subject to a "use it or lose it" standpoint. Mr. Stearns continued that municipal water law can be complicated. Mr. Harris made the comment that this is a project to help enhance the Newaukum River and that river reach, 16 years ago, was so low and the salmon were so thick someone could basically walk across the river. Around the same time, Centralia stopped using water rights and this is another opportunity to help with that river and vacate the 17-mile pipeline and take water out of the Chehalis rather than the Newaukum.

Ms. Carlstad called for project sponsors to chime in if they would like to highlight their projects. She also said that overall, there is a nice variety of project types and sizes. Smaller projects can be done by different types of sponsors as well. That will help the group going into implementation to diversify the Partnership's portfolio of project work.

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

Ms. Carlstad led into the Addendum progress reports with an update on the Addendum document.

- She will distribute the first four chapters of the working draft plan (introduction, short section of watershed characteristics, permit-exempt well projections, and consumptive use estimates) next week. The goal is to have the Addendum readable by a wide variety of audiences, so NHC has kept the technical details for methods and analysis out of the main body of the plan. They will be included in appendices.
- The permit-exempt well projection and consumptive use estimate methods technical appendices need to be finalized still. For anyone in the early review group, the appendices will be sent out on July 29<sup>th</sup>.
- If anyone else wants to be part of that group, reach out to Ms. Carlstad. Mr. Menser and Ms. Suter would like to be added to that group.
- The full draft Addendum will be distributed on August 26. The August 28 CBP meeting will focus on the draft Addendum with no expectation that anyone would have read the Addendum at that point. CBP members should circulate the Addendum to their internal reviewers, and have comments provided to Ms. Carlstad and Ms. Harma prior to the September meeting. The September meeting will be used to discuss and agree on revisions that arise from member reviews. The goal is to get approval from the CBP to submit the Addendum to Ecology for review after the October CBP meeting.

Mr. Stearns expressed gratitude to the team for staying on scope and on schedule. Ms. Carlstad affirmed that it's been a team effort.

Ms. Carlstad discussed the work moving forward to obtain approval for the Addendum. This covered the plan approval process, and the sample resolution used in the Nisqually planning process previously provided by Ms. Napier. Ms. Napier added that the resolution was a draft accepted by Thurston, Lewis, and Pierce counties used to adopt the WRIA 11 plan.

Ms. Carlstad then moved on to review the work plan sequencing. The plan needs to be approved prior to submitting to Ecology. In August, the county approvals will need to be initiated. In September, the dangling work items will need to be finished for the final submittal in October. The November meeting may need to be rescheduled due to a meeting conflict with the annual Association of Counties meetings, which may be remote this year. The group will need to decide if a December meeting will be needed and/or rescheduled. December and January are the months for Ecology review and adoption process.

Ms. Carlstad again told the group that the draft Addendum will be available on August 26 . All review comments are requested prior to the September meeting so any significant issues can be discussed and resolved at that time.

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

Mr. Harris opened the discussion to the public comment.

Mr. Harris raised his concern about hitting the home stretch, not having some of the state agencies, particularly Mr. Noone from Ecology, to guide them during the meeting because of mandatory state furloughs. He was curious if the meeting should be moved to another day of the week so they can have representation depending what is happening with the furloughs. His wife mentioned in the background that the furloughs will be done as of 7/24. Mr. Johnson mentioned that agencies are dealing differently for each of these. Ecology's furlough dates set for the rest of year and no others conflict with CBP meeting dates.

Ms. Carlstad conveyed a few comments from Mr. Noone in his absence:

- The Streamflow Restoration Project Grant reviews are continuing, and we still anticipate making award announcements in September. (The Trans Alta water right acquisition feasibility study is included in this).
- WRIA 59's plan was formally adopted by Ecology at the end of June. An Ecology news release and a link to the plan can be found here (<https://ecology.wa.gov/About-us/Get-to-know-us/News/2020/June-30-WRIA-59-Colville-Streamflow-Plan>).
- Ecology has announced furlough days through the end of the year, which (fortunately) should not conflict with a CBP meeting again. Those dates are Monday, Aug. 31, and Friday, Sept. 4, Friday, Oct. 30, and Monday, Nov. 30.
- Please pass on that I am confident that the hard work of everyone on the CBP will result in good things.

## **AJOURNMENT**

With there being no further business, Chair Harris adjourned the meeting at 12:00.

**NEXT MEETING:** August 28, 2020