



CHEHALIS BASIN PARTNERSHIP

Zoom Call with Screen Share

Friday, January 22, 2021

9:30am - Noon

Meeting Summary

MEMBERS* and ALTERNATES' PRESENT

Lee Napier', *Lewis County*
Tye Menser*, *Thurston County*
Jane Hewitt', *Grays Harbor County*
Dave Windom*, *Mason County*
Alissa Shay', *Port of Grays Harbor*
Kris Koski*, *City of Aberdeen*
Kim Ashmore*, *City of Centralia*
Andy Olen', *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*

Lauren MacFarland', *Quinault Indian Nation*
Jim Hill*, *Lewis County Citizen*
Mike Noone*, *Ecology Water Resources*
Paula Holroyde*, *Citizen, League of Women Voters Thurston County*
Megan Tuttle*, *Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife*
Bob Johnson*, *Washington Department of Natural Resources*
Chris Lunde*, *Port Blakely*
Brian Thompson*, *Lewis County Farm Bureau*
Jason Walter*, *Weyerhaeuser*
Jan Robinson*, *Chehalis River Basin Land Trust*

GUESTS

Jill Van Hulle, Jon Turk, Aspect Consulting, *contractor to Grays Harbor County*; Joel Massmann, Keta Waters, *contractor to Quinault Indian Nation*, Mark Mobbs, *Quinault Indian Nation*, John Bryson, *Quinault Indian Nation* Elena Fernandez, *Thurston County*; Tom Culhane, *Ecology*

STAFF

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

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, Introductions

The Chair convened the meeting and participants introduced themselves.

2. Approval of November Meeting Summary

The meeting summary was accepted with no edits.

3. Watershed Plan Addendum Ecology Adoption Status

Mr. Noone gave an update on Ecology's review of the WRIA 22/23 Watershed Plan Addendum. He has gotten very positive feedback from Ecology management on the Partnership's plan. Ecology will make an announcement next week on plan adoption.

4. Implementation Planning for Streamflow Projects

Ms. Harma and the Projects Work Group have begun work on advancing offset projects from the Plan Addendum. She provided an overview presentation on what they are doing, and several projects were highlighted.

The near-term goal is to develop a few projects for high quality 2021 grant funding request(s). Objectives for the Projects Work Group over the next five months include:

- Identify and confirm projects with committed leads; support leads in championing the project
- Increase confidence in technical feasibility and estimated streamflow benefit
- Assess realistic implementation timeline, constraints, and cost estimate

The Projects Work Group selected a group of projects based on estimated water benefit, certainty around water benefit, and working to improve certainty of implementation. Ms. Harma listed several projects that the group is currently focusing on:

- TransAlta Water Right Acquisition
- City of Chehalis Alternate Water Supply Intake
- Scatter Creek Water Right & Streamflow Augmentation
- Cooke Aquaculture Water Right – Black River Reach
- Trust Water Rights Acquisitions
- Sampson Wetland Restoration and Managed Aquifer Recharge (MAR)
- Upper Scatter Creek MAR
- Managed Aquifer Recharge Opportunity Assessment
- Newaukum MAR Concepts
- USGS Groundwater Discharge Zone Delineation
- Grays Harbor County Forest Practices and Flow Assessment
- Satsop / Wynoochee Tributary Assessment /Pilot Implementation

Many of the projects with highest implementation certainty are habitat projects because those are the projects that sponsors in the basin have the most experience with. Ms. Harma emphasized the need to focus on the water piece. Some of the projects have low implementation certainty because they don't have project leads yet; this is critical and the project lead at this point does not need to also be the sponsor. Ms. Harma invited Partnership members to contact her if they want other projects added to the list that the Projects Work Group is currently focusing on.

Profiles and status for each of the projects listed above were then provided:

TransAlta Water Right Acquisition - The Quinault Indian Nation (QIN) currently has a streamflow restoration grant to conduct a feasibility assessment and preliminary dialogue with TransAlta on acquiring a portion of their water right for instream flow. If results are favorable, funds will be sought for the acquisition. Ms. MacFarland reported that QIN has been in discussion with Ecology on the grant agreement and with TransAlta on status of the water right. Mr. Shay asked who would own the water right once it has been transferred into trust. Mr. Noone answered that essentially people of the State of Washington own the water right once it is placed in trust permanently for instream flow. Chair Willis thanked the Quinault team.

City of Chehalis Alternate Water Supply Intake – No one from the City was present so Cynthia described the project. This project would allow the City to divert more water from the Chehalis River instead of using its current diversion from the North Fork Newaukum during the summer months. The Newaukum River needs additional flow during the summer when salmon needs, especially spring Chinook salmon, are greatest for cool water and refuge areas.

The City has trouble getting all of its water from the Newaukum in the summer because of low flows, so the project would be beneficial to the City in water supply certainty. The challenge is that the project really needs to result in additional flow in the North Fork Newuakum, and it is not presently clear that the flow benefit is certain.

Scatter Creek Water Right & Flow Augmentation – A subgroup of the Projects Work Group is currently working on this project. The Cooke Aquaculture hatchery facility has historically discharged flow to Scatter Creek after using groundwater for fish propagation. It is not doing this anymore so the augmentation to Scatter Creek is no longer happening.

The project could be configured in several ways – simply re-starting the “pump and dump” into the creek again (pumping costs for this are significant) or using part of the water right to serve municipal/domestic/commercial needs in the Grand Mound area. Thurston County and Thurston PUD both already have water systems in the region. The project team is currently researching whether there is interest from water purveyors.

Mr. Mobbs asked how deep the wells are, and Ms. Van Hulle responded that the wells are approximately 350 feet deep. Mr. Mobbs asked how deep the current water system wells are that this might replace, and Ms. Carlstad answered that the team has not investigated that yet.

Ms. Van Hulle also offered that Thurston County has a water right and obligation to do some flow augmentation in Prairie Creek and that could be related to their potential interest there. Mr. Mobbs commented that he recalled some wells in the area drawing from approximately 60 feet, which he believes would be in hydraulic connectivity with the streams.

Ms. Van Hulle reported from her conversation with Cooke Aquaculture that they have several big wells that can pump 3500 gpm. Their pumping costs are \$10-12,000 per month. Ms. Van Hulle also commented that Cooke will be ramping up some operations again and will be discharging approximately 100-200 gpm to the creek.

Cooke Aquaculture Water Right – Black River Reach – Ms. Van Hulle gave a short overview. The hatchery facility is currently mothballed and Cooke Aquaculture may be interested in selling the facility and water right to someone who would raise fish there. Ms. Carlstad said that it is not conclusive that adding flow at this location on the Black River would have high value. Mr. Mobbs asked about depth of wells. Ms. Van Hulle said she thinks they are approximately 200 feet. Mr. Mobbs said that cold water in the Black River could be beneficial. He noted that lowered groundwater levels have been problematic for Oregon Spotted Frog in some areas upstream. The Chehalis Tribe is doing work at the mouth of the Black River, an area that spring Chinook hold over the summer. Mr. Stearns said that the cold water source at the mouth of the Black river is from groundwater upwelling.

Sampson Wetland Restoration and Potential Managed Aquifer Restoration – This project has wetland restoration, surface water storage, and potential aquifer recharge benefits. There are several interested parties, with Karin Strelieff from Thurston Conservation District leading the effort. Much of the land is owned by the Creekside Conservancy. The team will be assessing what type of project will have the most benefit for streamflow. It could be an example of a wet meadow restoration high in the watershed.

Managed Aquifer Recharge Opportunity Assessment – The Watershed Plan Addendum has two conceptual projects for managed aquifer opportunity assessments. These projects focuses on maximizing the MAR function, and would not necessarily have an associated habitat benefit beyond the streamflow addition. The additional work will look to identify 3-5 candidate sites that look suitable, and provide pros and cons and next steps. Based on requests from the Partnership as the Addendum was being approved, we are focusing efforts on identifying water projects in areas that currently do not have projects – Cloquallum,

Wildcat Creek, McCleary. An outcome of the assessment work will be greater confidence that identified candidate sites will actually create streamflow benefit.

Mr. Stearns made the connection between current emphasis on removing fish passage barriers statewide and the need for attention to groundwater recharge – greater flow through culverts will result in passing flow quickly and lower opportunity for water storage.

Ms. Tuttle volunteered some information on opportunities in the Cloquallum, McCleary and Wildcat Creek areas. She recommended connecting with Noel Stinewig (WDFW) who is working in the Newaukum and is familiar with opportunities there.

Ms. Harma highlighted that the facilities can be constructed as buried infiltration and the overlying land can be used for parks or other uses. Ms. August described how that can be done.

Mr. Noone reminded the group that feasibility studies are required for MAR projects that are funded by streamflow grants. He asked if we have any idea about facility costs at this point, and Ms. August said we are not at that point yet. The assessment work will address a few feasibility study requirements, but not all.

Ms. Carlstad alerted the Partnership that GeoEngineers' assessment work will include public and private land and they should speak up if they see that as a problem. Mr. Hill commented that he believes public/private partnerships could work really well.

USGS Groundwater Discharge Zone Delineation – This project would aid the Partnership in targeting areas where groundwater feeds streams the most. Land upgradient from these areas would be most impactful to streamflow and therefore areas to be most careful about proliferation of permit-exempt wells. These areas in the streams are also critical for fish who need cold water refuge areas. The study plan was developed by USGS and could be adapted for use in the Chehalis. A number of partners are involved. Mr. Noone commented that it is an interesting project but would not likely be eligible for streamflow grant funding. He encouraged use of remaining planning grant funds to implement it. Ms. Harma responded that the group is actively developing a funding strategy for implementation along with developing a solid study design.

Grays Harbor County Forest Practices and Flow Assessment – Ms. Van Hulle explained that the concept is to target land already in public ownership and also address projects in tributary areas where we don't have other projects. Flow benefits can be estimated through VELMA modeling. Aspect needs information on stand age and species to do the modeling. The efforts would provide estimates that the Partnership could use as it carries forward in deciding whether the projects are a priority.

Trust Water Rights Acquisitions – These would center on other water rights that may be available for acquisition for streamflow benefit. Ms. Van Hulle explained that the concept is to review water rights in the temporary trust program and make preliminary inquiries about acquisition for permanent trust. A current effort is working with Washington State Parks who is purchasing land at the old Marwood Farms property, and Ms. Van Hulle is helping with the water right element. The water right may be up to 260 acre-feet.

Satsop/Wynoochee Tributary Assessment / Pilot Implementation – Ms. Carlstad described this effort, which is implementing small-scale in-channel and floodplain restoration to recharge the alluvial aquifer. These are relatively new project types and would likely have small benefits for streamflow and also habitat benefits. Planning grant funds could be used to extend the current work to new areas. Mr. Stearns commented that vegetation growth promoted by these projects would likely be a good thing.

Ms. Harma closed by encouraging Partnership members to contact her if they want to see other projects in the Addendum being added to what the Projects Work Group is focusing on now. Mr. Shay asked if projects can be added; he has a project on the Hoquiam River that could be a good fit. A short discussion followed about whether the project could be covered by one of the basinwide projects or could simply be supported by the Partnership outside the Watershed Plan Addendum. Mr. Shay will follow up with project details.

5. Letters of Support for Projects

Ms. Harma proposed that the Partnership develop a policy that will guide when to officially provide a letter of support. As a draft idea, she suggested that project sponsors who would like to obtain a support letter for projects (inside and outside the Watershed Plan Addendum) from the Partnership should provide materials two weeks in advance of a Partnership meeting, and then present the project to the Partnership. Chair Harris suggested that following the sponsor presentation, Ms. Harma could distribute a support letter for review with a 72-hour deadline, after which the support letter would be provided to the project sponsor. Chair Harris and Ms. Harma are seeking clarity for when sponsors come to the Partnership seeking letters of support.

Partnership members did not volunteer feedback on the policy. Chair Harris suggested a test drive at the February meeting. Ms. Carlstad suggested circulating the policy described above before the February Partnership meeting so members could review and think about it. Mr. Hill supported putting the suggested policy in writing so the Partnership could consider it.

6. For the Good of the Order / Public Comment

Ms. Carlstad thanked the Partnership for the thank-you card they sent her following approval of the Watershed Plan Addendum.

Chair Harris asked for a participant list of the Projects Work Group for the next meeting as he would like to acknowledge them.

Chair Harris opened public comment and partner updates.

Ms. Tuttle commented that a response to an informational discussion earlier in the meeting had been a bit abrasive and she wants to remind the group to keep their tone respectful. She stated how important the Partnership is to her, she appreciates the inclusive environment, and does not want to see that change. Chair Harris acknowledged her request.

ADJOURNMENT

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

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

4. October 29, 2020 – First approval of Watershed Plan Addendum by full consensus.
Abstaining members: Boistfort Water District, City of Montesano; Absent members: City of Napavine, Town of Pe Ell, Terry Willis (Grays Harbor Citizen Representative),
5. November 17, 2020 – Final approval of Watershed Plan Addendum by full consensus.
Abstaining members: Boistfort Water District, City of Montesano; Absent members: City of Napavine, Town of Pe Ell, Terry Willis (Grays Harbor Citizen Representative)

NEXT MEETING: February 26, 2021