



CHEHALIS BASIN PARTNERSHIP

Zoom Call with Screen Share

Friday, February 26, 2021

9:30am - Noon

Meeting Summary

MEMBERS* and ALTERNATES' PRESENT

Lee Napier', *Lewis County*
Tye Menser*, *Thurston County*
Dave Windom*, *Mason County*
Colleen Suter', *Chehalis Tribe*
Phil Papac*, *Port of Grays Harbor*
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*
Dan Wood*, *City of Montesano*
Brian Shay*, *City of Hoquiam*
Nick Bird*, *City of Ocean Shores*
Chris Stearns*, *Thurston PUD*

John Bryson*, *Quinault Indian Nation*
Lauren MacFarland', *Quinault Indian Nation*
Terry Willis*, *Citizen, Grays Harbor County*
Jim Hill*, *Lewis County Citizen*
Paula Holroyde*, *Citizen, League of Women Voters Thurston County*
Mike Noone*, *Ecology Water Resources*
Megan Tuttle*, *Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife*
Bob Johnson*, *Washington Department of Natural Resources*
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*, Elena Fernandez, Charrissa Waters, *Thurston County*; Sarah Moorehead, *Thurston Conservation District*; Marina Kuran, *Citizen*

STAFF

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

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, welcomed new Lewis County Commissioner Sean Swope. Participants introduced themselves.

2. Approval of November Meeting Summary

The meeting summary was accepted with no edits.

3. Watershed Plan Addendum Ecology Adoption

Mr. Noone announced that Ecology officially adopted the Partnership's Watershed Plan Addendum on January 28. He shared that Ecology management was very impressed with the Plan Addendum, which made their review straightforward. Ecology management noted that concerns

raised by the Quinault Indian Nation through their letter that accompanied the Plan Addendum were appropriate and constructive.

Because the Partnership was efficient with its planning funds, they have planning funds remaining to continue project development. Mr. Noone encouraged using this to the extent possible before June 30.

4. Implementation Planning for Streamflow Projects

Ms. Carlstad announced that project teams have been very busy advancing project development. Today a few projects will be showcased to help the Partnership think about its priorities for implementation projects.

- TransAlta water right acquisition – Ms. MacFarland gave some background on the project. TransAlta is currently decommissioning some of its facilities and looking to sell some of its water right. Quinault has been working with Ecology to finalize its grant contract for a feasibility study on acquiring 4 cubic feet per second (cfs) of the water right. The feasibility study includes reviewing extent and validity work, evaluating instream flow benefit, and doing a fair market valuation for the water right.

Ms. Willis asked about agricultural property near the dam and if there is a way that the agricultural land water right could be updated. Ms. Van Hulle asked for clarification about which agricultural property Ms. Willis is referring to and described how she is assisting TransAlta in placing some of its water right into trust for a water bank that could supply agricultural uses. Ms. Willis encouraged keeping agricultural water needs on the radar as that is a need in the Skookumchuck. Mr. Noone noted that Quinault has requested 4 cfs from the TransAlta water right, and the total water right is over 50 cfs. Ecology has indicated a priority for making some of the remaining water available for consumptive uses. Ms. Van Hulle added that TransAlta would prefer to conduct fewer large transactions over many small transactions and would like to find an entity to take lead on that.

- Scatter Creek projects – Ms. Carlstad led a spotlight on the Scatter Creek watershed. She described that this watershed is an important and interesting watershed. It is an area where a higher density of permit-exempt wells is projected, and the stream goes dry in its middle reach. She oriented the group to a map of the watershed. Land use is dominantly forestry in the upper watershed and transitioning from agriculture to rural residential in the middle and lower watershed. Scatter Creek is used by coho salmon for spawning and rearing, steelhead, cutthroat trout. There are some reports of chum use too. She pointed out the Cooke Aquaculture hatchery which has supplemented flow to Scatter Creek in the past by approximately 7 cfs but is no longer doing that so the creek is dry more often now.

She then described how the hydrogeology of the Scatter Creek and Black River watersheds makes them great for aquifer recharge opportunities. There are thick permeable gravels that can store water and release it to streams – primarily Scatter Creek and the Chehalis River. This is such an important phenomenon that previous studies have indicated that the Chehalis River gains approximately 16 cubic feet per second of cold groundwater in five miles at the discharge area for this aquifer. Another useful feature in the Scatter Creek watershed is a continuously monitored USGS well in the shallow aquifer that has a monitoring record since 2007. This helps us understand how much storage might be available for managed aquifer recharge. Mr. Stearns pointed out that the Thurston County League of Women Voters did a presentation on this area as part of the Where's the Water series.

In the upper watershed the Partnership has two projects – the Sampson Wetland Restoration and Upper Scatter Creek Managed Aquifer Recharge (MAR). Creekside

Conservancy owns much of this land, which opens great opportunities for projects. Being at the upper end of the watershed makes it a great place to add water for the most benefit to the whole watershed. The Sampson project would be focused on retaining surface water runoff in the meadow area and releasing throughout the year. The Upper Sampson MAR project could receive the released water and store it underground for longer.

Ms. Carlstad then described the Cooke Aquaculture offset project. This project would involve purchasing water rights that are currently in temporary trust and reactivating the “pump and dump” to Scatter Creek. She described that cost is an impediment, with estimated pumping costs estimated at \$10-12,000 per month and added that the two water purveyors that serve portions of this area – Thurston PUD and Thurston County – are not currently at a place to lead this project. The benefit of a purveyor expanding service in this area would be reducing the number of future permit-exempt wells.

The last project in the Scatter Creek watershed is Wiens Farm. It is located at the mouth of Scatter Creek and could be developed to create a robust cold water refuge area as this is the discharge zone for the shallow aquifer.

Chair Harris responded to Ms. Carlstad’s comment on small projects versus larger projects, saying that we need to support all projects no matter the size.

Ms. Willis asked about the current land use in the Sampson Wetland Project area. Ms. Holbrook responded that Creekside Conservancy owns approximately 2/3 of the valley floor and has done quite a bit of restoration work already. Coho use the area now. Creekside would work with the landowner for the private parcel between Creekside’s parcels to either acquire the land or work to ensure no impacts. That landowner has a small cattle operation, but the land is very wet for farming. Ms. Holbrook estimated the land acreage in the whole Cozy Valley non-forested area at approximately 200 acres.

- Hoquiam Water Supply Conversion – Surface to Ground. Mr. Shay described that the City of Hoquiam gets its water supply from water diverted from two dams – one on the West Fork Hoquiam River and one on Davis Creek. They would like to switch to groundwater for their water supply and they have found it feasible through their test well exploration. Removal of the dam would be a benefit to fish passage. Mr. Bryson concurred that removal of the dam would be a big benefit to fish passage. He has direct experience with this while working for the Quinault Nation’s Fisheries Division. Mr. Shay said the estimated cost for the project is \$6 million. Mr. Bryson suggesting partnering with Quinault to add advocacy to the effort. Ms. Harma added that this project provides a good projects in the lower basin, where the Plan Addendum is sparse in projects.

5. Letters of Support for Projects

In January the Partnership discussed having guidelines for how project proponents can get support letters from the Partnership. Ms. Harma distributed draft guidelines with the February meeting packet for the Partnership to discuss and approve today. Ms. Harma reviewed elements of the proposed guidelines, stating that it is her hope that Partnership members are able to represent the mission for the Partnership, including support for healthy water, communities, and fish actions. Projects should connect to those elements. The general proposed process is for project proponent to provide materials two weeks in advance of a Partnership meeting, then present to the Partnership at its meeting. If the Partnership decides to issue a support letter at its meeting, Ms. Harma will draft a letter within a week of the meeting and distribute for Partnership review. After a 72-hour review period, Ms. Harma would issue the letter if no Partnership members respond to the review that they cannot support the letter.

Ms. Carlstad clarified that the Partnership is being asked for two decisions today:

1. Do you support having guidelines for issuing support letters from the Partnership?

2. Do you approve the guidelines provided and discussed at today's meeting?

Mr. Noone offered that he thinks it is a very good idea to have guidelines. Letters of support from bodies such as the Partnership add significant strength to project proposals.

Mr. Stearns commented that well-prepared projects are best positioned to acquire funding.

Mr. Wood said that he likes the guidelines, noting the two-week advance materials requirement. Without that, the Partnership is put in an awkward position it sees the materials for the first time at its meeting. The advance requirement will increase to chances for a full consensus support from the Partnership.

Ms. MacFarland commented that she foresees challenges with getting review from Quinault leadership within the timeline described in the guidelines. This may not always be the case, but it could be an issue for her. Ms. Harma and Chair Harris expressed their hope that members would all have some latitude to represent their organizations without extensive internal review. Ms. MacFarland requested that the language in the guidelines for Partnership responses to the draft support letter be changed to "no response will be interpreted as no concerns at this time." Mr. Wood agreed this would be a good change and recognize that different organizations have different sensitivities and review requirements. Ms. MacFarland thanked the Partnership for understanding her situation as a technical representative for Quinault, she does not speak for Quinault executives without their explicit approval. Mr. Bryson confirmed Ms. MacFarland's statements, saying that the Quinault Business Committee has full confidence in her as their representative, but she does need to work through the Committee before giving approval for specific projects and actions.

Mr. Hill commented that by calling these "guidelines" instead of "policy" means there is more flexibility. Ms. Carlstad noted that this flexibility could mean getting the letter approved could take a little more time.

Ms. Willis noted her concern that the guidelines authorize Ms. Harma to issue a letter "for a project that is within the Plan Addendum and is well vetted." She does not feel all projects in the Plan are well enough vetted to authorize without further Partnership review of specific project details. Ms. Carlstad confirmed that deleting the second bullet in this section of the guidelines addresses Ms. Willis's concern. Ms. Harma will make this change.

Ms. Carlstad recapped the outcome of the discussion related to the two decisions being asked today:

1. The Partnership supports having guidelines for project letters of support.
2. Ms. Harma will make the edits discussed to the guidelines and re-distribute for decision at the March meeting.

6. For the Good of the Order / Public Comment

Chair Harris opened public comment and partner updates.

Ms. Kuran suggested using cover crops as a type of offset project. Cover crops help prevent soil erosion, add nutrients to the soil, and trap moisture in the soil. Ms. Carlstad commented that this concept fits within the Conservation District's irrigation efficiencies project.

Mr. Stearns apologized for comments he made at the February meeting that were abrasive.

Mr. Wood announced that the City of Montesano is done with the bank protection for the wastewater treatment plant. The log jacks are working well to protect the bank and are trapping sediment and debris. The shoreline is building up again. The cost efficiencies for the City were substantial using this approach to protect the wastewater treatment plant.

Mr. Papac complimented the group on its work with the plan and apologized that he has been unable to participate as regularly as normal with Covid, and thanked Ms. Shay for covering in his stead.

Chair Harris thanked those working on projects and the entire team for their great work.

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)
6. February 26, 2021 – Approval to develop guidelines for how project proponents may obtain letters of support from the Partnership.

NEXT MEETING: March 26, 2021