



CHEHALIS BASIN PARTNERSHIP

Zoom

October 22nd, 2021

9:30 am – 12:00

Meeting Summary

MEMBERS* and ALTERNATES' PRESENT

Alissa Shay*, *Port of Grays Harbor*
Bob Johnson*, *WA DNR*
Brian Thompson*, *Lewis Co. Farm Bureau*
Chris Stearns*, *Thurston PUD*
Colleen Suter*, *Chehalis Tribe*
Dan Wood*, *Montesano*
David Windom*, *Mason County*
Jan Robinson*, *Chehalis River Basin Land Trust*
Jane Hewitt', *Grays Harbor County*
Kaitlynn Nelson', *Thurston County*

Kim Ashmore*, *City of Centralia*
Lee Napier', *Lewis County*
Megan Tuttle*, *WDFW*
Nick Bird*, *City of Ocean Shores*
Paula Holroyde*, *Thurston Co. Citizen*
Rick Eaton', *City of Centralia*
Sean Swope*, *Lewis County*
Terry Harris*, *City of Chehalis*

GUESTS

Mark Mobbs, *Quinalt Indian Nation*; Caprice Fasano, *Quinalt Indian Nation*; John Bryson, *Quinalt Indian Nation*; Angela Johnson, *Department of Ecology*; Nat Kale, *Department of Ecology*; Elena Fernandez, *Thurston County Public Works*; Alex Gustafson, *Trout Unlimited*; Nick Bond, *NOAA*; Mark Miller, *Pacificorp Chehalis Plant*; Malissa Paulsen, *Mason County*; Jill Van Hulle, *Aspect Consulting*; Mike Gallagher, *Department of Ecology*; Hannah Coe, *Department of Ecology*; Tom Culhane, *Department of Ecology*

STAFF

Kirsten Harma, *Watershed Coordinator*
Amy Booth, *Intern*

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 and Introductions

Chair Terry Harris welcomed everyone to the meeting. Members and guests provided self-introductions and went into breakout rooms for individual updates.

2. Review of July Meeting Minutes

A quorum was present. All minutes were approved.

A. Presentations & Discussions

Presentation- Nick Bond *University of Washington Research Scientist*

Mr. Bond educated the group on what he has been seeing on trends in climate data and he also discussed predictions of how the local climate will be changing and the implications of those changes in the Chehalis Basin. Mr. Bond spoke about this summer in the Chehalis Basin and showed graphs of summer temperatures in Olympia and Centralia. He stated that the high temperatures were an extraordinary event that shouldn't be expected every year, but that was climate change induced. He presented a map of drought across the Pacific Northwest and explained the drought was due to spring/summer weather rather than snowpack of the previous winter. Mr. Bond also showed graphs of streamflow in 2021 across Washington with September having the lowest streamflow. He continued on to state the minimum temperatures in the region are rising faster than the maximums, but yearly precipitation levels haven't varied significantly. Precipitation levels during the last 30 years have decreased in June-August. Mr. Bond showed models from the middle of the 20th century to the end of the 20th century displaying temperature and precipitation in both winter and summer months. He stated the models show wetter winters and drier summers, which means water scarcity in the summer. He stated some of the challenges to water managers are summer demand versus winter floods, infrastructure, legal issues, hydropower, ecosystems, recreation/tourism, and groundwater withdrawals. The projected sea level in Washington models suggest 1-1.5 ft increase, but if an earthquake happens the land can sink and be overwhelmed quicker. In 2022, expect floods, windstorms, cold-air outbreaks, fog/air pollution, and end of season snowpack. In Mr. Bond's final remarks, he stated the 2021 summer heatwave in the northwest is most likely due to climate change - it wasn't likely to have happened without it.

Discussion

Mr. Windom asked Mr. Bond how much of the flooding increases over time are attributable to impermeable surfaces increasing over time. Mr. Bond responded that within some areas, such as Seattle, they are spending lots of money to store water and release it over time. Centralia also has an impervious area near Walmart which might be increasing flooding. Mr. Bird asked if anyone is comparing streamflow data to rainfall to parse out the influence of rainfall on streamflow vs. land use or other factors. Mr. Bond stated not enough research has been done. People are using streamflow as a rain gage with not much consideration for other factors, but it would be good to understand this better. Mr. Stearns asked if we're going to see more Pineapple Express in the area, especially in the fall. Mr. Bond stated while La Ninas are wet, flows from the Northwest aren't as intense as when it's coming from the Southwest, and he's not expecting Pineapple Express of the century. That said, the floods of 2007 and 2009 were in "La Nina" years.

Presentation- Amy Booth *Chehalis Basin Partnership Intern*

Ms. Booth presented a summary of Chehalis Basin Partnership tours from Summer 2021. The tours included Satsop/Wynoochee projects, Harris Creek culvert removal, Big Buffer planting, China Creek restoration site, Rochester beaver site, and a multi-site tour with the League of Women Voters. Kim Ashmore updated the group on the project at China Creek. Hydroseeding and plants are in the ground and in early December they plan on inviting all project members for a

complete project tour. Ms. Harma stated the tour summary will be sent out in a newsletter to all Chehalis Basin Partnership members.

B. Updates

Ms. Harma stated that the Ecology Streamflow Restoration Grant round starts November 2nd and they're accepting applications through February. There is 2 years worth of funding with 40 million dollars on the table. The Projects Committee is looking to advance high benefit and high potential projects. Ms. Harma stated that a previous meetings, guidelines to get letters of endorsement were developed. The next CBP meetings will be November 19th and December 17th. Project sponsors were encouraged to start working on a plan to present their projects during those meetings. Ms. Harma also stated Mike Noone from Ecology, who helped with our water resource plan, has moved to a different position at Ecology and we're waiting for a new rep to be designated. Ms. Johnson stated she is an interm filling in for Mr. Noone until a new rep steps into the spot. She also stated they have two upcoming grant application workshops available online October 27, and November 4.

Ecology Grant Information:

<https://ecology.wa.gov/About-us/Payments-contracts-grants/Grants-loans/Find-a-grant-or-loan/Streamflow-restoration-implementation-grants>

Ms. Harma updated the group that our request for exempt wells funds got a response which said Ecology isn't ready for requests until they have a framework for requests from across the state.

Mr. Miller with Pacificorp Chehalis Generation Plant spoke to the group about purchasing water from the City of Chehalis. He stated if the Chehalis River flow drops below 165 cubic feet per second, they're not allowed to purchase more water. Every year they're unable to purchase water and they store water throughout the year for those periods, but this summer, their reservoirs fell too low and they had to seek water from the City of Chehalis, but with conditions. As part of those conditions, they have committed \$25,000 for the Chehalis Basin Partnership by December 1st. He wants the money to go towards a project that helps to conserve water in the basin, especially as droughts are expected to become longer in the upcoming years. Mr. Gallagher, from Ecology Water Resources, further explained that in early September, additional water was needed for the generation plant, and they were roughly 16 days away from having to shutdown the facility. He stated about 109 thousand gallons a day are needed to stay running. The City of Chehalis has two water right certificates and a claim that equal about 6,000 acre feet a year and the water rights are senior to the Chehalis instream flow rule. Mr. Harris asked what the long term plan is for declining water availability. Mr. Gallagher stated different groups should look at potential solutions and the possibility of having more water storage. Mr. Gallagher also stated that water right holders still have primacy over others, and water can't be taken away without proper compensation. Further, there is likely going to be flow stress long-term and more junior water rights curtailments, and we need to plan for that. Ms. Harma asked for participants for a committee to help determine the best way to use the money and will follow up with an email.

Ms. Harma provided an update for the Projects Committee. The group has been working on the Streamflow Restoration Plan to offset impacts of permit exempt well use. The offset need for permit exempt wells is 504 acre feet per year across the basin. Projects have been identified that would benefit the basin and offset the usage. Ms. Harma stated the projects include a purchase of TransAlta water right which Quinalt is looking into this. Ms. Fasano updated the

group on the feasibility study. They are almost finished with the extent and validity portion of the study. They haven't made a decision yet but definitely are still interested after the study results. Ms. Harma stated the Scatter Creek bundle is a group of projects to understand and address the streamflow there as part of the offset. Thurston Conservation District is working on a proposal for headwater wetland restoration and storing water through a MAR project. Quinalt, WDFW, and USGS are planning to propose doing thermal profiling to determine where ground water inputs are the strongest in the basin. Ms. Harma stated another project in Hoquiam is looking at moving water rights downstream and removing the dam on the tributary, and as a first step are applying for a feasibility grant. Ms. Gustafson provided an update for a possible tour they're planning for the Camp Creek project in December. The road needs to be fixed at the project site before it can happen. Ms. Harma shared a map of project distributions across the basin.

Ms. Harma shared with the group a new federal grant called the Watersmart Program that might be beneficial for projects in the area. The deadline is December 9th so it might be a consideration for next year.

Mr. Kale presented on the Office of the Chehalis Basin's study on Skookumchuck Dam -- Phase 1. The Chehalis Basin Board asked what potential alternatives there might be for the dam to be modified to improve outcomes for fish and flooding. They looked at old studies and data, dam configuration and operations, hydrologic analysis, simple reservation spreadsheet model, possible fish passage and flood storage, water rights, and cost considerations. The dam was initially built to create water rights for a downstream generation facility (now TransAlta). Mr. Kale stated one of the challenges is figuring out how to access upstream habitat data. Currently, the spillway has a sluice to allow for fish to pass. Current takeways are that fish passage and water storage are not currently compatible. Flood storage capability is limited with the current configuration. Steelhead passage is feasible if the dam releases most flows in the spring, and an adjustable sluice would be more effective. Mr. Kale also stated that TransAlta water rights need to be taken into consideration. Removing the dam is a consideration and will be reviewed more in Phase 2. Phase 2 needs a more detailed reservoir model and hydraulic modeling of downstream. He added by the end of 2022 they want to have something in front of the board, and by 2023 have a small menu of options. Ms. Gustafson asked if there is a way for people to stay in the loop without being on the board. Mr. Kale said he can set people up with updates and send out meeting notes if you send him an email expressing interest. Mr. Stearns asked about topography and barriers upstream to the dam. Mr. Kale replied saying there have been 2 studies done, one before the dam was put in and another in the 90s. There has been almost 30 years of growth since the last study was done but they know there are barriers that are impassible to coho and chinook. Mr. Bryson asked if Mr. Mobbs had more information on the area and mentioned that listing Chinook as endangered would affect the status of projects. Mr. Mobbs stated almost all the tributary streams above the dam have been listed as having a permanent natural barrier near the mouth. Nearly all of them have native fish as well with the primary habitat being in the mainstem.

ADJOURNMENT

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

NEXT MEETING: November 19, 2021