



CHEHALIS BASIN PARTNERSHIP

Zoom
April 22, 2022
9:30 am – 12:00

Meeting Summary

MEMBERS* and ALTERNATES' PRESENT

Alissa Shay*, *Port of Grays Harbor*

Angela Johnson, *Department of Ecology*

Bob Amrine* *Lewis Conservation District*

Bob Johnson*, *WA DNR*

Brian Shay, *City of Hoquiam*

Chris Stearns*, *Thurston PUD*

David Windom*, *Mason County*

Kim Ashmore*, *City of Centralia*

Paula Holroyde*, *League of Women Voters*

Sean Swope*, *Lewis County.*

Suresh Bhagavan', *Grays Harbor County*

Terry Harris*, *City of Chehalis*

Terry Willis*, *Grays Harbor Citizen*

Tye Menser*, *Thurston County*

GUESTS

Elena Fernandez, *Thurston County*; Kevin Eldred, *City of Aberdeen*; Nat Kale, *Department of Ecology*; Stacy LaClair, *Chehalis Generation Facility*; Jessica Fish, *Contractor*; Scott Boettcher, *Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority*; Anthony Waldrop, *Grays Harbor Conservation District*; John Bryson, *Quinault Indian Nation*; Jerilyn Walley, *Grays Harbor Conservation District*; Rick Eaton, *City of Centralia*;

STAFF

Kirsten Harma, *Watershed Coordinator*

Amy Booth, *Intern*

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Meeting summaries are available on the Chehalis Basin Partnership website: www.chehalisbasinpartnership.org

MEETING

1. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Terry Harris welcomed everyone to the meeting. Members and guests provided self-introductions.

2. Review of March Meeting Minutes

A quorum was present. All minutes were approved.

A. Presentations & Discussions

Partnership Update- Funding *Kirsten Harma*

Ms. Harma updated the group on a donation of \$10,000 from the City of Chehalis. The Council approved the donation to support the Partnership and Mr. Harris will continue working in

the background to finish the process. Ms. Harma hopes this is the seed funding and encouraged members to continue looking for funding from their own organizations. Mr. Menser stated he has brought this to his board a couple times and placed it in the agenda for their budget meeting. He added that they might need a neutral party to give a history of the Partnership and explain what funding they have provided in the past. Mr. Swope mentioned if he could get information on what Lewis County had done, he can bring a request to the board as well. Mr. Harris recommended he get in touch with Lee Napier.

Ms. Harma stated she is happy to provide a letter or give a presentation if anyone's board would like to have more information. Mr. Bryson also requested information to bring to his council to support funding requests. Ms. Holyrode requested talking points for getting funding through Thurston County and Ms. Harma added that the push for funding from Ecology will continue in order to push forward with streamflow restoration planning. All of it is still up in the air until we hear back from Ecology on grants. Ms. Harma heard from someone working in RCO that the last legislative session was busy, and our funding request was likely not brought up as it came in late. The funding from Chehalis Generation Facility is still available but the subcommittee working on this no new updates on how it plans to use the funding. There is another subcommittee meeting happening May 6th if anyone would like to join and discuss possible uses. Mr. Stearns added that the culvert replacements are happening and discussed how federal funding left our area out of the picture.

Mr. Stearns brought up that he's not sure how fast Ecology is going through Nooksack adjudication and the one on the Columbia, but Chehalis might be next on the list for adjudication. Ms. Johnson stated she is not up to speed on that topic but can follow up with colleagues regarding timing for the Chehalis.

Action: Ms. Harma will write a letter providing background about the CBP and its funding request and provide it to Mr. Swope, Mr. Menser, Mr. Bryson, and anyone else who is interested.

Partners Update- *Kim Ashmore*

Mr. Ashmore updated the group on China Creek Phase II. They're hoping to have it done by next Friday. Once finished, the weir will be connected with a platform and railing to complete the walking trail loop. They also installed removable stop logs that can be removed/installed as needed with flow. The structure was not designed to treat 100-year floods, but they're hoping it will help with heavy rains. Mr. Ashmore added there have been more signs of birds and wildlife and there have been volunteers picking up garbage around the site. This also might be a site for flow monitoring in the future. He also stated they're planning an event for completion and inviting all the people that made this project possible.

Mr. Stearns stated he saw a program about Telluride Colorado that preserved a wetland outside of the town and it became the gem of the town. The community identified with it and had a lot of positive feedback. The hope is that this also happens with this project in Centralia. Mr. Ashmore added they want to provide signage and are researching some of the historical use.

Presentation- A broad view of impacts downstream stemming from heightened erosion along the Satsop River *Jessica Fish & Scott Boettcher*

Mr. Boettcher stated he is with the Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority, and they have been putting a lot of focus into the lower Satsop River. Their focus is a two mile stretch from the highway bridges to the confluence with the Chehalis River. One of the significant issues in that

reach is excess erosion. During a project last flood season, they became interested in what resources were impacted by excess erosion, especially beyond the reach. Ms. Fish presented an overview of erosion concerns due to migrating channels and high rates of erosion. The river has had changing erosion rates in the past, but the recent pattern changes are concerning. It's estimated that in Point C to Point F, the river is migrating 115 feet per year. Without action, there could be 4.4 acres of farmland taken each year. Predictions made in 2017 for river migration have been pretty accurate for each year. Revenue losses for farmers can range from \$1,000-\$12,000 annually. The Satsop sub-basin has also lost 55% of historical beaver bond habitat and 20% marsh habitat. The increased flow resulting from woody debris being lost can affect areas where salmon redds are present. Mr. Menser asked if the loss of beaver habitat loss is caused by erosion or other factors. Ms. Bird responded that it's due to numerous factors such as changing lands, highways, and levies. Another concern is a growing sand bar due to roads and utilities in the area leading to the Satsop Business Park. Farther down the river, there is dredging happening in the Port of Grays Harbor. It's likely the sediment can move to areas outside of the designated dumping sites. There are also concerns in the shellfish industry about sediment, however there are no specific scientific reports stating sediment is causing shellfish death.

Discussion

Mr. Bryson added that the QIN has been constructing log jams in the river due to sediment flowing into Lake Quinault, especially during storms. The park service had installed riprap to preserve the roads, but it increased river flow that caused more sediment. Mr. Kale expressed his concerns that the presentation is telling a story about erosion that they aren't sure about yet; USGS reports have shown that sediment discharge has always been high in the Satsop. Mr. Waldrop suggested that the presentation could focus on what is known about erosion on the Satsop and then create a separate section based on what is not known yet. Ms. Willis added that this project is right behind her house and appreciates all the hard work being done. She stated it would be helpful to add in information on how the Satsop got to this point and what impacts have happened. The silt they deal with out of the Satsop has been a year-round problem. Ms. Harma asked what the purpose behind the story map was. Ms. Fish responded that it's designed to be a thought-provoking presentation to start having the erosion conversation in the community. Ms. Harma also asked about economic value of fishing and how the values were calculated. Ms. Fish responded that the values include salmon, and it was pulled from Washington Sport Catch fishing reports 2021 along the Satsop and compared to the economic values of individual fish. Mr. Stearns asked if tidal impacts happen that far up the river. Ms. Fish replied that she has not reviewed that part but has looked at dredging and its role in currents pushing sediment up the river.

ASRP Symposium

Mr. Waldrop stated his takeaway was that it can be difficult to get people who don't work in natural resources to attend these events, but he was encouraged to see some landowners and citizens attending. There are still a lot of people not hearing the messages, but it was recorded for easier sharing with people not able to attend. He also suggested setting up presentations around meals and make it easier to talk constructively. Ms. Harma added that there were two keynotes: the Yakima Integrated Plan and a speech by David Trout, an advocate for the Nisqually River. Ms. Walley added that it was nice to hear about recent science in the area and how all species are being considered. Mr. Kale stated he gravitated towards the science aspects and the breakout rooms were very different.

Emerging Watershed Topics

Ms. Harma stated the connection between water and growth has been a hot topic and would like the Partnership to continue with discussions, keeping each other informed and providing comments. First, the City of Chehalis's wastewater manager is interested in the connection between their poplar farm irrigation facility and recharge to the ground water. Mr. Harris added the facility is a recharge resource but at low flow times, it's difficult to use as a resource. Second, a group of citizens in McCleary are concerned about growth and use of the Wildcat Creek aquifer. The Partnership could learn more about the area and help identify some offset projects. Mr. Stearns added that his organization has been trying to negotiate with the city to sell water to them because that would help reduce the need for permit-exempt wells. Ms. Harma also mentioned a citizen is concerned about a subdivision going above China Creek and how it would affect the new flood structure; Kim Ashmore will be a good resource for this. Also, the Port of Chehalis is making funding decisions regarding water capacity infrastructure improvements, but not looking at where the water is coming from. Mr. Harris will discuss this with Jill and bring information back to the Partnership. Ms. Harma sent out a poll to see what topics the Partnership is interested in and will gather information on topics for the next meeting.

Other Partnership Updates

Mr. Kale stated there is not too much to update on the Skookumchuck dam study. OCB consultants are doing technical analysis and creating models. They are in the early stages of planning how to better manage flow for spring and fall chinook salmon. The Chehalis Basin office also has been working on a LAND group and they set a date for Values Planning (May 16,17,18th). If interested in this meeting, reach out to Mr. Kale and he will discuss with his manager.

Mr. Windom added that they have a mobile home park with high nitrate levels, almost high enough for mandatory action. They are writing grants to bring city sewer and water to the mobile home park and alleviate the nitrate problem; the wells are right along John's Creek, and it would retire those out of use. Ms. Harma asked what the consequences of not having an approved Streamflow Restoration plan was. Mr. Windom responded that they're having to look elsewhere for funding, and it makes the process more difficult.

Mr. Waldrop updated the group on their alluvial water storage project and presented a timelapse video. As the water comes up and sediment moves through, the sediment has been collecting on the structures and increasing potential for habitat and ground water storage. The amount of sediment being stored, and habitat diversity has been notable as well. Mr. Stearns asked if they're able to accept charitable donations and stated he would donate to the project. Ms. Willis asked if the projects have VSP as part of improving wetlands. Mr. Waldrop stated if there was a creek running through agricultural land, it might be possible.

Ms. Booth updated the group on looking for volunteers to monitor Scatter Creek water levels, either landowners or people willing to visit sites.

The group discussed meeting options for future meetings. Both in-person and virtual meetings are desired by the Partnership. The group discussed in-person meetings could happen quarterly, possibly with a hybrid option. Meetings will continue as planned until a solid place is found.

ADJOURNMENT

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

NEXT MEETING: June 24th, 2022