



CHEHALIS BASIN PARTNERSHIP

Zoom
June 24, 2022
9:30 am – 12:00

Meeting Summary

MEMBERS* and ALTERNATES' PRESENT

Alissa Shay*, *Port of Grays Harbor*
Andrea Dahl*, *City of McCleary*
Angela Johnson*, *Department of Ecology*
Bob Johnson*, *WA DNR*
Brian Shay*, *City of Hoquiam*
Chris Stearns*, *Thurston PUD*
Chris Lunde*, *Port Blakely*
Jan Robinson*, *Chehalis River Basin Land T.*

Jason Walter *, *Weyerhaeuser*
Kevin Eldred*, *City of Aberdeen;*
Lee Napier', *Lewis County*
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*

GUESTS

Bob Amrine* *Lewis Conservation District;* Maria Daugherty, *EA Consulting;* Jane Hewitt, *Grays Harbor County;* Alex Gustafson, *Trout Unlimited;* Alexa Brown, *Grays Harbor Stream Team;* Elena Fernandez, *Thurston County;* Hannah Coe, *Ecology Water Quality;* Nat Kale, *Department of Ecology;* Stacy LaClair, *Chehalis Generation Facility;* Jerilyn Walley, *Grays Harbor Conservation District;* Jill Van Hulle, *Aspect Consulting;* Kathy Tennyson, *Citizen;* Kiana Sinner, *Thurston Conservation District;* Kitty Weismann, *Capitol Land Trust;* Marina Curtis, *Citizen;* Lauren Tevelow, *Citizen;* Jacqui Brown-Miller, *Washington State Department of Health;* Scott Evans, *Grays Harbor County;* Jeff Nelson, *Grays Harbor County*

STAFF

Kirsten Harma, *Watershed Coordinator*

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 April Meeting Minutes

A quorum was present. All minutes were approved.

A. Presentations & Discussions

Partnership Update- Funding *Kirsten Harma*

Ms. Harma reminded the group of the \$10,000 donation from Chehalis and shared news of a new donation of \$10,000 from Thurston County. Last meeting members from Centralia, QIN and Lewis County offered to speak to their organizations about making a similar contribution. Ms. Harma followed up with letters with more information about the request.

The federal Infrastructure Bill may provide opportunities to support the goals of this group. It is too late to apply this year, but members should think about this opportunity for future years.

CBP 2022 – 2023 Focus Area

Ms. Harma provided an overview of CBP priorities for 2022-2023, given current funding available and grants we have applied for. Focus should be where there is an overlap between priorities identified in our Streamflow Restoration Plan, and current interests/activities.

Ms. Harma asked for volunteers to serve on a CBP steering group. Currently Mr. Harris and Ms. Parrott are serving in that role. Ms MacFarland, Mr. Stearns, Ms. Tuttle and Ms. Willis volunteered to join.

Presentation: McCleary Aquifer

Ms. Curtis provided the first presentation: a citizen's perspective. The issue is a shared aquifer for the City of McCleary – whether accessed by group wells or permit exempt wells. The area is currently experiencing growth in new homes, with rezoning requests to add additional homes to the region. Port Blakely owns small parcels in the area that are being bought for home development. A current development moratorium is set to expire soon. Ms. Curtis noted that the Streamflow Restoration Plan does not have sufficient “water offset” projects in this watershed for the amount of new permit exempt wells projected. More water being taken than projected would mean an even greater need for offset work here. Contamination of groundwater is also a concern.

Discussion: Ms. Weisman offered that she is aware of grants that can fund sole source aquifer protection, and grants to improve and update current management plans. Ms. Curtis expressed concern that current ordinances are not enforced. Mr. Shay offered that the City of McCleary takes its water seriously and is protecting the source. Others contributed that there is an opportunity here for greater collaboration between City and County on long term planning. Mr. Harris summed things up: “there is only one tap for city and county!”

Presentation: Wildcat Creek Aquifer Sustainability Plan

Maria Daugherty, EA Consultant for City of McCleary, presented. EA is undertaking a Wildcat Creek basinwide study. They will build a groundwater/surfacewater model and come up with options for how to sustain use of the aquifer. Mr. Stearns noted that he is on the stakeholder advisory committee. Ms. Daugherty would like to recruit a CBP member. Mr. Harris suggested addition of a committee member representing economic development. Does Grays Harbor County have an economic alliance? The Port of Grays Harbor was recommended. Ms. Warne, Ms. Hewitt and Mr. Bhagavan volunteered or were volunteered to represent Grays Harbor County.

The consultants will produce public notifications and a website to share information. The study aims to answer the question of what the sustainable yield of the aquifer can be. They will

also attempt to understand if streamflow will be affected by groundwater drawdown. Monitoring will be recommended, but is not in the budget for the current year. Members encouraged the team to consider the impacts of climate change. Next steps will be decided by the committee.

Other Partnership Updates

Ms. Johnson provided updates from Ecology's Water Resources department. Last meeting there was a question as to whether or not the Chehalis Basin water rights would be subject to adjudication. Currently, adjudication takes 2 years. There are other watersheds already on the list for adjudication, including the Nooksack and Spokane. [There is a website that shows who is next.](#) Chehalis is recommended for "information gathering." It is unlikely that the Chehalis will be a priority for quite a long while. If there is strong local interest in seeing work in the Chehalis, stakeholders should let Ecology know.

Mr. Kale provided an update on the Office of the Chehalis Basin's work on studying flood retention and fish passage options for the Skookumchuck dam. Ecology did not receive permission from Weyerhaeuser to conduct stream habitat surveys on their land. Thus, Ecology will fly LiDAR instead to determine the benefit of providing increased habitat access. There are still water rights to figure out, and cities are nervous. The final report from the OCB will be available in December. Next steps will be decided by the Chehalis Basin Board.

Mr. Stearns mentioned a potential change in water rights rules for cities. He recommended asking Mary Verner for more details (*Ms. Harma later received details suggesting that interested parties sign up on Ecology's listserv for: Water Resources Advisory Committee (WRAC) Here is the link to the [WRAC committee page](#). This page is the place we put information about future and past meetings. You will find the link to subscribe to the email list there.*)

The Lewis Conservation District is working with WDFW on a large river restoration project on Stillman Creek. It will start July 5th. With in-water work taking place August 1st through September 15th.

Thurston County is completing a culvert correction on Littlerock Road to improve fish passage. At a newly improved crossing on Mima Road, fish have already been observed upstream.

ADJOURNMENT

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

NEXT MEETING: TBD – The committee will decide if there will be an August meeting.