



CHEHALIS BASIN PARTNERSHIP

Chehalis Tribe – Computer Lab

September 16, 2022

9:30 am – 12:00

Meeting Summary

MEMBERS* and ALTERNATES' PRESENT

Alissa Shay*, *Port of Grays Harbor*
Andrea Dahl*, *City of McCleary*
Brian Shay*, *City of Hoquiam*
Colleen Suter*, *Chehalis Tribe*
Jill Warne*, *Grays Harbor County*

Lee Napier', *Lewis County*
Suresh Bhagavan', *Grays Harbor County*
Terry Harris*, *City of Chehalis*
Tye Menser*, *Thurston County*

GUESTS

Maria Daugherty, *EA Consulting*; Elena Fernandez, *Thurston County*; Hannah Coe, *Ecology Water Quality*; Nat Kale, *Department of Ecology*; Jill Van Hulle, *Aspect Consulting*; Kathy Tennyson, *Citizen*; Jan Strong, *Citizen*; Bonnie Blessing, *Citizen*; Chanelle Holbrook, *Citizen*; Mark Mobbs, *Quinault Indian Nation*

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 June Meeting Minutes

A quorum was present. All minutes were approved.

3. Vice Chair Appointment

Reminder of the Vice Chair vacancy. Nominations for Chair and Vice Chair to be accepted at the October CBP meeting.

A. Presentations & Discussions

McCleary Aquifer Study – Update on progress made. Maria Daugherty, EA consulting

This is a 20-year plan to look into management needs and environmental needs. The goal for the plan is to operate the aquifer as sustainable as possible. They are currently at the point of describing the basin settings. Maria and Dave Nazy are doing technical work, looking at the hydrological model. They will create a 3D image of the aquifer – that can help determine how it's being used and how it relates to streamflow. Next, they will describe groundwater-surfacewater interactions. They have monitoring wells with the help of citizen volunteers. They have created a website through ArcGIS hub, will have the ability to share data and recordings of board meetings. It will be released next week. The results will allow them to suggest projects that will allow for sustainable groundwater conditions over 20 years. Another product will be a survey and rating system related to land use and water use and current and future use of the area. The City of McCleary has gone beyond the border of their watershed and included the County – it's a good collaborative effort! After technical work, the board will be responsible for decision-making and next steps.

Q) How many connections for private wells are not part of the city's system? Is there adequate water to serve people on the aquifer in city and outside? Is there a risk?

A) Not enough information yet. There is a belief that there is enough water. Questions are arising about future sustainability, and also about connections between increased water use and contamination. These questions will be answered by EA's study.

Q) Water depth?

A) Pretty deep.

Q) What motivated the study?

A) Two studies have been done on the aquifer and recommendations made, but recommendations not pursued. Now that we're seeing more proposals for growth, its an opportunity for the city to be proactive about it's future water availability.

Q) Will the website be available?

A) She's going to run it by the committee, then hopes to make it available. Hopefully next week.

DNR's Forest Carbon Project – Csenka Favorini-Csorba, DNR Senior Policy Advisor

Csenka provided a forest carbon overview. Sequestration is capture from the atmosphere, storage is the bank. Younger trees sequester at higher rates. Older trees are good at storage. Carbon is released by dead and decomposing trees. Healthy forests reach and equilibrium. Most forests are net carbon sinks, meaning they store more carbon than they emit. Where wood is harvested from forests, wood can store carbon, generally for a few months or years as paper or cardboard, or decades as furniture.

Carbon markets are about choices made about forest use. Forest landowners make changes that prevent emissions or increase level of carbon sequestration. Amount of emissions quantified as "credit." Companies seeking to offset their emissions buy credits generated. Therefore they facilitate net carbon emissions reduced.

An important concept is "baseline" – how much harvest if carbon project did not take place. "Additionality" – bonus reductions through a carbon project. These number tell us how confident we can be that the project is reducing or preventing emissions.

DNR has a 10,000-acre project where it will be setting aside forests of high ecological value to store carbon. The project is focused on the west side of Washington, that are carbon rich and store more carbon than anywhere else in the US. One of the most carbon dense ecosystem in the world! DNR will select stands with important ecological and cultural features. All while generating revenue for their beneficiaries. Phase 1 identified 2,500 acres, including 279 “operable” acres in Grays Harbor County.” “Operable” takes out acres that would be protected as a riparian area or in another way. Remaining acres will be determined based on “High Conservation Value” criteria. Watershed protection and erosion control are ecosystem service that count towards this value. A stakeholder engagement process will start in the next few weeks – will identify parcels that meet criteria and can be moved from timber harvest. Mechanism is “commercial leases,” which allows DNR the authority to lease land for a specific purpose of sale of carbon credit. This creates consistent revenue for trust beneficiaries. DNR has high standards, and hopes to set a new standard for the price of carbon.

Q) Forest fires are a huge source of carbon – how will state ensure they will be managed as healthy forests to prevent forest fires? What about the fact that young trees sequester carbon better than older forests?

A) Forests on the west side have a different fire regime than forests on the east side. We don’t manage our west side forests for wildfire prevention. We won’t do thinning to prevent fires like we would on the east side. West side forests don’t need thinning to reduce fire risk. DNR will be able to put out wildfires on these lands, though. They account for fires with a buffer pool – getting more credits than they can sell to account for risks like wildfire – that make up for carbon that is lost.

With forest carbon it’s important to both sequester and store. Younger trees do sequester at faster rates, but older forests store it. If they are harvested, they release a lot more carbon. The DNR project will focus on older forests, but will have some younger ones, too.

Q) Are you looking at areas currently being sued by tribes for gathering, or historically? How are you communicating with tribes about which areas are important?

A) We will engage with all tribes in areas of considerations to understand if there are areas that they would like us to set aside, esp. if it’s incompatible with harvest.

Q) On selection of parcels, will you look at existing comments from the Thurston County Board of Commissioners?

A) We have received the letter and you can expect to hear from us.

Q) The circle of life for the trees you shoed conflicts with everything else. Trees are a crop, they die, then you’re going to be emitting more carbon than what they are saving. Not every logging won’t fix the problem.

A) There are forest products that store carbon – like for furnitures or houses. Unfortunately a lot of what we harvest trees for are short term products that emit a lot in landfills. DNR has a forested carbon inventory on their website. 90% of carbon from harvested wood is emitted within a year or two in landfills. These west side forests are globally significant when it comes to carbon so there are significant benefits.

Q) What’s the relative value vs. value of timber on 40 or 80 year rotations?

A) Price of carbon is currently lower than price of timber. We will generate less revenue through these projects than if we harvested them. Timelines are important. If we harvest now there is a one time payout then uncertainty about when the next revenue comes. With carbon, there is annual benefit paid to trust beneficiaries. There are those who like this consistency for their budgeting process.

Q) I’ve heard \$16,000 for timber and \$6,000 for carbon. What is the annual payout? Is this carbon number over an equivalent time horizon?

A) I haven't heard these numbers. Typically what people compare is acre for acre – a single lump sum for timber vs. lifespan of carbon. You have to do future discounting to get the full comparison. We haven't done that since we have identified the stands yet.

Even if its less, some would prefer annual income (heard this for Jefferson County library)

Q) *Will DNR get credit for carbon stored in soils, stumps and other wood on site?*

A) Stumps are included, soils aren't included as science is undetermined still.

Q) *Details on next steps for stakeholder process – how can people get involved?*

A) We will share our engagement strategy in the next few weeks. We have a website that will be updated. We have specific groups for targeted outreach, and broader public opportunities, as well. <https://www.dnr.wa.gov/CarbonProject>

Q) *What about putting aside forests for instream flow enhancement? What about quantifying multiple benefits for landscapes? Offering mitigating credits for streamflow planning?*

A) In an ideal world we would get paid for all co-benefits. There are lots of benefits when you're able to conserve these forests. Unfortunately there are less studies on valuing other ecosystem services. Also, can't "stack" because most programs want you to document that the change in benefit is happening only because of their project. We wouldn't get additionality for carbon if getting paid for riparian benefits, for example.

Q) *Could that come into selection of sites?*

A) Yes, will look at sites that have multiple benefits.

Ecology Water Quality Grants – Deadline October 12

Leanne Whitesell presented. She will be with the water quality program one more week, after which she will work with the Streamflow Restoration section.

Ecology's water quality combined funding programs will be accepting funding applications until October 12th. This is an annual opportunity, so if you don't make this deadline there will be an opportunity to apply next year. The guideline manual is 300 pages long. Training materials are available online. Eligible projects need to relate to water quality improvement. Water quantity and flood control can be secondary benefits to a water quality project. There are multiple funding opportunities and lot of money available.

Resources:

<https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/SummaryPages/2210016.html>

<https://ecology.wa.gov/About-us/Payments-contracts-grants/Grants-loans/Find-a-grant-or-loan/Water-Quality-grants-and-loans/General-resources>.

For projects related to stormwater facilities, look at section 2.1 of the guidance and contact Dave Dougherty at Ecology. For runoff, stormwater maintenance and education projects, contact Dave Mora and see section 2.4 of the guidance.

Non-point projects must implement a federal, state or local plan addressing water quality. Salmon recovery plans count! \$6.6 million is available statewide for non-point projects. Loan money is also available for non-point, especially thanks to the Infrastructure Act. Project types include agricultural BMPs, with the exception that livestock exclusion fencing requires a specific setback. Groundwater and well planning for protecting public drinking water supply can be funded. Land acquisitions for protecting wetlands, watersheds, drinking water sources, riparian, are eligible! The Nisqually used loan dollars to purchase land on the Machell River. Restoration and planning are eligible project types, too. Hannah Coe is your local resource for more information: Hannah.coe@ecy.wa.gov.

Q) Will infrastructure bill funds apply just to this grant round, or be available in future years?

A) That's supposed to come in over 5 years. Funding levels should stay the same over the next few years. We have time to take advantage.

Q) *What types of projects score well? E.G. projects for a municipality.*

A) Half of scoring criteria is on water quality benefit. They want to see "bang for buck." Link project to priority plans, ie, TMDL. The other half of scoring is the feasibility. Is there capacity at your organization? Are all design and permitting details figured out? Note that projects take multiple months to put together.

Q) *What are examples of types of projects?*

A) All eligible projects have received funding. Can't answer questions about wastewater specifically. Think about tie to water quality benefit.

Water Planning/ Share you Water News

Mr. Harris shared that the CBP should develop a list of water supply planning initiatives that are around the basin. We could then think of ways provide support for water planning programs and help each other. We could make presentations about these at future meetings to start learning. Talk to your staff and bring ideas to next meeting.

Mr. Shay shared an old idea from 20 years ago at the Grays Harbor Council of Governments meeting and a water system plan. They were going to do a county-wide water system plan. Idea being to tie together water systems to make sure they were all protected. Hoquiam is doing a mandated water system plan update and updating their comprehensive waste water plan and general sewer plan. They just applied for grant funding to plan for stormwater between Hoquiam, Cosmopolis and Aberdeen. They are also looking at moving the water supply from the Hoquiam dam to groundwater wells. They have applied for 3 different funding sources to do that project. The CBP has already provided good support letters for that project.

Ms. Blessing shared that there is a ditch district of Salmon Creek. Tumwater City and Thurston County are working together to deal with a flooding issue that occurred in January 2022. An issue occurred when a stormwater system overflowed. She wants folks to be aware that creating stormwater models can be challenging and even inaccurate. This is an interesting area because there is groundwater flooding from an area that we don't have mapped as part of the Chehalis Basin.

Discussion: Often good plans are developed but they sit on shelves. For small municipalities, implementing everything that is in their plans would cost the rate payers too much. But sometimes decision-makers need to fund this work because it's what's right.

Mr. Ashmore noted that their water treatment plan was built brand new in 2004, they got a loan to create it – only borrowing \$2.8 million to do a \$5 million project.

Mr. Harris repeated the request for members to create a list of water related projects they are working on. Through networking, we might find out that some questions and answers are in the same room.

Ms. Tennyson reported on her work to restore Salzer Creek starting at the mouth. Two properties have agreed to have the creek sides planted with support from the Lewis Stream Team. Mr. Harris remembered a proposal to raise Centralia-Alpha Road 8 feet to allow the wetland to hold more water and keep stormwater from flooding the Chehalis. The project didn't pass cost-benefit analysis at that time.

Ms. Harma shared news from Angela Johnson at Ecology. Award announcements will be made in early October. Applicants that aren't successful will be given the opportunity to have a de-brief meeting.

For the Good of the Order/Public Comment

None.

ADJOURNMENT

With there being no further business, Chair Terry Harris adjourned the meeting. Picnic outside to follow.