

CHEHALIS BASIN PARTNERSHIP

April 28, 2023

9:30 am - 12:00

MEETING SUMMARY

MEMBERS* and ALTERNATES' PRESENT

Alissa Shay*, Port of Grays Harbor	Jan Robinson*, Chehalis River Basin L.Trust
Andrea Dahl*, City of McCleary	Jill Anderson, City of Chehalis
Andy (no other information in recording)	Kevin Eldred, City of Aberdeen
Brian Shay, City of Hoquiam	Kim Ashmore*, Centralia
Celeste Wilder, City of Chehalis	Paula Holroyde*, Thurston Co. Citizen
Chanele Holbrook, Citizen	Suresh Bhagavan', Grays Harbor County
Chris Stearns, Thurston PUD	Terry Harris*, City of Chehalis
Colleen Parrott, Chehalis Tribe	

GUESTS

Angela Johnson, Ecology Water Resources; Kianna Sinner, Thurston Conservation District; Lauren MacFarland, Quinault Indian Nation; Mark Mobbs, Quinault Indian Nation; Sofia Dreesson, University of WA Intern

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. Approval of March Meeting Summary - N/A

3. Other Partnership Business:

a. Kirsten Harma led a discussion on future meeting dates and locations. In summary: May, no meeting; June 23rd in person, location TBD (Chehalis Tribe?); July, no meeting; August 25 in person at Centralia Library; September, no meeting; October 27th in person at Montesano.

b. Kirsten presented 2022-2023 funding for the group as of April 24th.

Member donations from community counties and municipalities, the Chehalis Generation Facility, and WA Ecology will total \$45k in 2022 and \$25k for 2023.

Kirsten discussed potential expense plans for these funds. While funds are primarily kept as a general fund, there are some developing possibilities. The CBP is looking to use the WA Water Trust funding to increase capacity by hiring a consultant to run the Scatter Creek Bundle Projects. An RFP for this contract has been drafted to send out through Grays Harbor County when this funding is a certainty. Other considerations for funding are to hire a CBP intern, and to carry out a project in the Chehalis Generation area.

Kirsten also shared that the budget simply reflects the current CBP funding pot; CBP funding is not drawn up in the form of an annual budget.

c. Presentation at Washington Water Law Conference on June 7

Kirsten will be giving a presentation on the CBP Streamflow Restoration Plan Implementation for the upcoming zoom-only conference, put on by the WA Ecology.

4. Presentations & Discussions

a. Presentation: WaterSmart Report: City of Chehalis - Sofia Dreesson, University of Washington

Sofia Dreesson is an intern with University of Washington, who has been working with the CBP to develop a report providing suggestions on how to spend Chehalis Generation Facility (GCF) Grant funding. She shared a simplified version of this report as a powerpoint presentation for the group; anyone who would like a PDF of the full report can reach out to her. A basic summary of her presentation follows:

As a UW student in environmental studies who is also interested in public policy, Sofia has completed this report as her capstone project with the CBP. Her goals have been to gain experience in sustainability consulting and local environmental policy. She performed individual research and prepared a report for the city of Chehalis for presentation. Her main question for the report was to understand how cities can most reduce water-use at the municipal level through “WaterSmart” programs. Through work with both the Cities of Chehalis and Tumwater, she worked to understand Chehalis’s water infrastructure and water sources. She sought to understand the goals and conservation options that are possible and preferred by the city, also studying relevant existing work, and understanding measures taken by other watersheds.

Sofia found several successful conservation strategies that she put forward as suggestions for the City of Chehalis. These include: reducing outdoor water use through programs like city-funded rebates on water-efficient irrigation systems, encouraging and implementing native water-efficient landscaping, and providing free water-saving kits to residents; reducing indoor water use through city-funded rebates for efficient appliances and faucets, providing rebates on water-use monitoring devices, and providing indoor water-saving kits; and implementing public outreach around water saving strategies and resources.

Further options she suggested to the city itself was to look at utility pricing options. For the interest of conservation, water should be priced at its actual cost. If it’s priced under its true cost, it will be overused. Frequently assessing water price is important in meeting this end. However, a challenge is presented in that water is a necessity and affordability of water to the public is crucial. One

solution Sofia offered is tiered pricing, which targets higher water users with higher costs. A small survey she performed with local municipality employees, however, shows little support for these kinds of programs, however, and so she would recommend implementing it with care if at all. Also at the city level, Sofia suggested some long-term initiatives. She pointed out that replacement of aging, leaky infrastructure is hugely beneficial, though she also recognized that this is usually prohibitively expensive. She also offered implementing reclaimed water use and storage of wintertime water as good possibilities for the future. Sofia provided cost estimates for a draft GCF funding budget as follows: Outdoor kits and city-funded rebates, \$10,340; indoor kits and city-funded rebates, \$6,480; public landscaping, \$5,000; outreach, \$1000 for a total of \$22,820.

DISCUSSION:

Q: Costs don't include staff time costs. As a smaller community, we struggle to have the staff to carry out measures that other cities are able to do. How do you figure those in?

A: Yes, this budget is just a recommendation, but smaller cities certainly have a different reality to work in. The city would have to decide what to prioritize with the funding and staffing they have available.

Q: You mentioned that income plays a factor in who participates in the city-funded rebate programs. Is it low- or high-income individuals who are less likely to participate?

A: Low-income individuals: it is often a challenge for them to afford the major part of the cost of a new high-efficiency appliance.

Q: What are some specific next steps you'd recommend?

A: An environmental communication/campaign is a good place to start. Also, presenting water as a public good is more effective than communicating in terms that quantify and criticize individual use. Quantifying areas and industries with high water use and then honing in on those areas is also a helpful start.

Q: (coordinator to audience) What of the presented options sound good?

A: Starting with communication, discussion, and free giveaways to grow awareness. Landscaping as well: maybe through a demonstration on prominent, underused, unlandscaped public land.

Q: (coordinator to audience) We will likely have an intern this summer. Are there events they could participate in?

A: Yes, Chehalisfest is coming up in the summer. This would be a good outdoor water savings event for the summer, and we could do an indoor focus during the winter.

b. Presentation: Salmon Recovery Conference: "Recycled Water - A Secure Water Source for All"

Kirsten shared a video presentation given at the previous week's Salmon Recovery Conference. The video is accessible online, but is described briefly here:

Erica Marbet, hydrologist for the Squaxin Island Tribe presented and described an Ecology-funded plan the Tribe has developed in partnership with the City of Shelton and the area State Corrections Center to reroute and expand infrastructure for redirection of wastewater for use as reclaimed water. Such infrastructure ("purple pipe") will allow significantly less use of well water by Shelton-area facilities, increase the supply of wastewater to the city's reclaimed water sprayfield, and develop storage facilities for this reclaimed water. A significant benefit of this work is also that this rerouting of treated wastewater will reduce disposal of wastewater into the Puget Sound, where it causes pollutant issues that currently prevent shellfish harvest on tribal harvest lands.

DISCUSSION:

Comment: With regard to spray-field and reclaimed water contamination concerns, a related presentation from the conference gave evidence that the pollutant level from reclaimed water disposal is less significant than the levels that already occur in the ambient environment.

Comment: The State Capitol campus and golf course in Tumwater are also using reclaimed water for irrigation.

Comment: Any municipalities considering the incorporation of purple pipe into their utility projects need to include them from the beginning of the project. There are a lot of logistical considerations that make it challenging to add purple pipe to plans late in a project's development.

Comment: For any other entities that might have interest in taking on large projects like this, the new OCB Federal Funding Committee is well positioned to assist with expensive, multi-stakeholder projects like those presented here.

6. Partner Updates

Angela Johnson shared that WA Ecology sent out an announcement that the fourth Streamflow Restoration Grant Program will open its grant window from January 2nd through February 29th of 2024. 40 million dollars will be available for statewide projects, but priority is given to watersheds in 'Watershed Planning' basins and basins with adopted plans under RCW 90.94. Updated grant guidance will likely be published in October, and a series of informational workshops across the state will be announced. Preapplication meetings will be available by request, prior to the opening of the grant round. Anyone who is not already on the Streamflow Restoration mailing list and would like to be should reach out to Angela.

For the Good of the Order/Public Comment

Kirsten shared that Wednesday, May 24th, in lieu of a meeting, CBP is going to have a field trip to visit the Hoquiam Dam Removal project.

ADJOURNMENT

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