



CHEHALIS BASIN PARTNERSHIP

January 27, 2023

9:30 am – 12:00

Montesano – Commissioners Hearing Room

MEETING SUMMARY

MEMBERS* and ALTERNATES' PRESENT

Alissa Shay*, *Port of Grays Harbor*

Andrea Dahl*, *City of McCleary*

Andy Oien', *City of Centralia*

Brad Murphy', *Thurston County*

Brian Shay*, *City of Hoquiam*

Brian Thompson*, *Lewis County Farm Bureau*

Bob Johnson*, *DNR*

Colleen Parrott*, *Chehalis Tribe*

Dave Windom*, *Mason County*

Jan Robinson*, *Chehalis River Basin L.Trust*

Jason Walter*, *Weyerhaeuser*

Jill Warne*, *Grays Harbor County*

Jud Riddle', *City of Chehalis*

Kevin Eldred*, *Aberdeen*

Kim Ashmore*, *Centralia*

Sean Swope*, *Lewis County*

Marshall Reed*, *Ocean Shores*

Megan Tuttle*, *WDFW*

Paula Holroyde*, *Thurston Co. Citizen*

Suresh Bhagavan', *Grays Harbor County*

Terry Harris*, *City of Chehalis*

Tye Menser*, *Thurston County*

GUESTS

Nat Kale, *Department of Ecology*; Mark Mobbs, *Quinault Indian Nation*; John Bryson, *Quinault Indian Nation*; Lauren MacFarland, *Quinault Indian Nation*; Laura Garza, *Washington Water Trust*; Kathy Jacobson; Lacey Wright, *Americorps*; Chris , *Ocean Shores*; Jamie Glasgow, *Wild Fish Conservancy*; Bob Amrine, *Lewis Conservation District*; Travis Casey, *Ecology, Water Quality*; Lauren Tevelow, *Citizen*; Kathy Tennyson, *Citizen*; Scott Evans, *Grays Harbor County*; Jeff Nelson, *Grays Harbor County Public Health*.

STAFF

Kirsten Harma, *Watershed Coordinator*

Sofia Dreesson, *UW 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, both in person and online.

2. Review of October Meeting Minutes

A quorum was present. All minutes were approved unanimously.

3. CBP Business

Ms. Harma introduces Sofia Dreessen, CBP intern working on a WaterSmart report, then presents the Partnership's 2022 Accomplishments:

Revenue Generation Goal Met – \$50,000 goal accomplished.

Citizen Science Project Completed in Scatter Creek—Project analyzed streamflow in the area. It is an important foundation for restoration opportunities in Scatter Creek.

Staff Engagement in Scatter Creek Planning and McCleary Aquifer Study –Involvement in important local issues.

Groundwater Model Purchased—Will serve as an important tool to teach about groundwater, since it is more difficult to understand.

UW Intern Secured—Will create water conservation plan with the City of Chehalis. Establishes relationship with the University of Washington's Program of the Environment.

Formation of "Check-in Committee"—Group to discuss the direction of the program and evaluate policy issues. Helpful for decision making.

Streamflow Restoration grants received funding—Four of seven restoration project applications received funding and will be implemented.

Ms. Harma highlights the key focus areas for CBP in 2022 and 2023 including:

1. Upper Chehalis Basin—Chehalis Generation Facility has provided a grant to look at water conservation in the area
2. Skookumchuck River—Gaining some of the TransAlta water right for instream flows. Complicated process.
3. Scatter Creek—Continuing focus on restoration projects and citizen science. This is an area of high sensitivity and growth.
4. Cloquallum Watershed—More projected growth than offset projects. City sponsored investigation into its sole-source aquifer.
5. Hoquiam Dam/Groundwater—Project to help the community better understand their groundwater as a potential municipal source. Potential dam removal.

Plans for 2023 are described.

- Continuation of Scatter Creek citizen science projects
- Facilitation contract for Scatter Creek projects for communication, education, and project development.
- McCleary aquifer study and development.
- WaterSmart plan for Chehalis.
- Citizen tour of Hoquiam dam.
- Tour of completed projects for elected officials, agency staff, members.
- Streamflow project tracking.

2022-2023 Budget Is Presented by Ms. Harma. The budget was sent out in the meeting material packet. Total revenue adds to \$70,000, with a 2023 expense adding up to \$54,340.

Chair Harris, asks partners for budget approval. Budget is approved unanimously.

Aquatic Species Restoration Plan (ASRP) is explained by Ms. Harma:

- It is part of the Chehalis Strategy's dual objective plan.
 - Focuses on flood damage reduction and aquatic species support.
- There are two main focus locations for the ASRP that are also focus locations for CBP.
- This presents an opportunity to focus on habitat projects that align with the goals of ASRP.
- The Partnership should work on identifying these a project opportunity together

Q) Mr. Thompson asks if there are any specific projects in mind.

A) Ms. Harma states there are no specific projects yet, but there are many project concepts laid out in the CBP's Streamflow Restoration Plan that the group should look through.

Mark Mobbs states that the group should familiarize themselves with ASRP priorities and look for areas of overlap with their interests.

Ms. Tuttle begins a discussion on a potential Master's student thesis to support the CBP in implementing its Streamflow Restoration Plan, with four main ideas.

1. One potential project would track number of permit exempt wells added since 2018. Could use a mapping process to evaluate where permit exempt wells are most common and determine their proximity to streams. Add a literature review to supplement this research, but the specific goal of the review is TBD.
2. Analyze the impact of forestry on instream flow. Analyze potential for longer stand rotations to improve instream flow, potentially employing the VELMA model. This work would be with Gray's Harbor forestry.
3. Study of stormwater recharge. Include fish exclusions and groundwater recharge. Industrial vs. natural recharge models.
4. Look at County stream water usage. Can it be mapped? Look at seasonal differences.

Ms. Tuttle asked the Partnership to prioritize these projects. Which would be most interesting? Feasible?

Mr. Mobbs makes a comment highlighting the work of Mark Fox, who studied the impacts of how forestry impacts instream flows.

Q) Ms. Harma asked County staff present how permit exempt wells are tracked, and their current quantity.

A) Lee Napier answers that there is no database, and she does not have the number of wells handy.

A) David Windom comments that, since 2018, a fee is collected for permit exempt wells and given back to the Department of Ecology. There could be a project to put these wells into GIS to analyze by watershed. This is made difficult by discrepancies in Ecology's website. They have this information in their GIS software for building permitting.

Mr. Menser advised that we would need a project that fits with the expertise of a specific professor. Mr. Thompson recommended looking for professors at Western Washington University, as well.

A. Presentations & Discussions

4. Presentation: Beaver Dam Analog (BDA) Projects. Jamie Glasgow, Director of Science, *Wild Fish Conservancy*.

The first phase of this project was funded by ASRP. The goal was constructing beaver dam analog (or BDAs) that mimic the ecosystem functions of beaver dams. WFC used a colored model that evaluated beaver dam potential, overlapped with ASRP near-term priority areas (also looked at habitat and fish related factors). This process identified a few dozen sites. After site visits and meetings with willing landowners, eight sites were selected. Five BDA structures were constructed in 2 locations (Satsop and Stearns) working with engineers.

Overview of project installed summer of 2022, located near Satsop, in a former beaver meadow. Worked with a group to construct dams, and all work was done by hand. Untreated posts were put into the ground, but this can be difficult in some locations. In this case, the project could be moved up or downstream for convenience of construction. The goal is for nearby beavers to come to sites, occupy, build, and maintain them. These built structures are not being occupied yet, but they will be monitored.

There are four new BDA sites for the project this summer, baseline monitoring data has been collected at these sites for the last two years. Monitoring process is detailed, it includes: temperature, surface water, trail cameras, groundwater monitoring, fish species abundance and condition, and more. The process includes measuring and weighing fish that are collected, allowing interesting data about distribution, condition and abundance. Trail cameras document beavers on site, as well as bears and cougar predation of beavers.

This project has been given a new streamflow restoration grant (2022 grant round). Jamie asks the group to keep their ear to the ground to find willing landowners for BDAs.

Q) Brian Thompson mentions the tendency for beavers to use up their food supply and move on. He asks how they intend to keep beavers on site and prevent this move.

A) Mr. Glasgow answers that they are testing the role of forage in BDA use, proposing to plant cottonwoods and dogwoods on some sites, but BDAs are meant to function for a number of years, even if they are unmaintained.

Q) Mr. Thompson asks if there will potentially be damage to infrastructure if the BDAs are displaced.

A) Mr. Glasgow answers that proximity to infrastructure and the possibility of damage is factored into site selection to prevent this. Streams are also small and will not likely cause damage.

5. Presentation: Port of Grays Harbor Terminal 4 Expansion and Redevelopment Project Update– Kris Koski and Kayla Dunlap, *Port of Grays Harbor*

Kayla Dunlap presents the T4 Expansion Project Overview. For background, Terminal 2 has been occupied by Ag Processing, Inc (or AGP) since 2003. They also added a storage component in 2012. AGP is a large Co-Op of farmers in the Midwest, that is in the \$50 million process of adding new facilities to the port. Their soymeal comes to Gray's Harbor for export. Soybean industry is booming because of the demand for renewable fuel. This process also produces protein, and there is a large market in SE Asia, including the Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand, and Indonesia. The Port of Gray's Harbor is currently the largest exporter on the west coast, they are looking at doubling that capacity with this project.

Kris Koski, port engineer, discusses the infrastructure that will be added to terminal 4 to accommodate AGP's expansion. There are four main components to the T4 expansion. 1) Private investment from AGP located at Terminal 4b, the downstream portion of the terminal. This includes a new ship loader, conveyor system, and rail receiving building, which will be a \$123 million investment by AGP. The other components are public investment such as 2) a new on-site railway. It will have a loop route through the site and connect to new storage tracks. 3) There will be improvements to the dock. The dock is aged and will be upgraded to accommodate new traffic from AGP's expansion. They will upgrade the fender system to prevent damage from ships against the dock and will collect storm water runoff to have it treated before being put in the harbor. 4) Further, they will transform a former casting basin at Terminal 4a into a cargo yard.

Kris presents an example ship loader, from Longview, that is similar to the one that AGP will have in Gray's Harbor. It is three new foundations and tower structures, with a system of swinging and telescoping arms. This allows them to reach all the holds on the ship. This is important because there is currently only 1 loader, making loading of soymeal efficient. Therefore, there will be no storage in T4, more efficient and different than T2.

Kayla Dunlap presents the project impacts and past growth. In 2014 there were 33,000 rail cars to the port. In 2020, there was 30,000, but there will be an estimated 60,000 in 2025. This will increase rail traffic and congestion. Because of growth, there will be up to 116 vessels a year in 2025. There will be some positive economic impacts, like 80 long term jobs for longshoreman. New private investment is important, AGP is a valued long-term partner.

The project's funding is reviewed. This is their largest capital project yet. USDOT Port Development improvement 20.5 million dollars PIDP was granted to them, and they are seeking money from the state as well. Using a new tool called Tax Increment Financing, Gray's harbor County .09 fund, and \$1.3 million from Soy Transportation Coalition to fund the project. Will leverage public and private investment to create jobs.

Kris finishes up the presentation with the project lookahead. Will address environmental compliance, environmental permits. Construction will start in 2024, aggressive schedule to be completed in 2025. They want to receive soymeal these as soon as possible. There is a public open house on February 15th to discuss the project. AGP will attend.

Q) Mr. Thompson asks if there is a way to help local farmers, since there is no place for them to sell grain in the region.

A) Ms. Dunlap answers that AGP essentially "rents" the area on the Port. There could be an opportunity to work with the AGP, but the Port itself cannot address this issue.

Mr. Harris comments that Tax Increment Financing (TIF) may be able to help with this issue. Kayla answers that TIF cannot be used, but a new bill may fix this.

Q) Ms. Dreessen asks if the Port is considering infrastructure that will help reduce carbon emissions in their new construction, like the Northwest Seaport Alliance.

A) Ms. Dunlap answers that they are not implementing this infrastructure at the time, but it will be considered in the future.

Q) Ms. Harma asks, with AGP in charge of the use of the port, can the quality of stormwater treatment be enforced by you, since you own the land?

A) Mr. Koski answers that they will comply with Western Washington stormwater standards, must comply with state law through Aberdeen. Operations require industrial stormwater permits.

Q) Ms. Tuttle asks about the re-loop over Fry creek, what is the design proposal for this?

A) Mr. Koski answers that there is a culvert at the location. They would build a third rail route track; culvert cannot support it. They would remove the culvert and replace it with a bridge. Single span over the creek, which is better from an environmental standpoint.

Q) Ms. Tuttle asks: Is there is an opportunity to catch European Green Crabs out of the ship's bilge water? Is there an opportunity to start thinking about deploying traps off the port, since the crabs impact local wildlife?

A) Mr. Koski answers that they have not been informed on this issue, and they can't speak on it yet. Will discuss this with environmental compliance team.

6. Presentation: WRIA 14 Project – David Windom, *Mason County Public Health*

Mr. Windom discusses a local mobile home park, Evergreen Park, that is one of the most impoverished areas in Mason County. They have surfacing sewage, high nitrates, and the lowest water quality in the area. It is very close to John's Creek drainage; it is the same aquifer leading into John's Creek. Nitrates from septic systems move into John's Creek. It is near Turtle Lake as well. Project area drains to the North and the NE. Tractor supply and treatment plant are also near the area.

The project is made of very old homes. There are high populations, high use, with a history of problems with septic systems. Secondary tanks were used, implementation of a large onsite one has been considered. All owned by single property owner (until recently), who just wants to rent them out. There are approx. 40 residences. Public health issues arise from water quality problem, like blue baby syndrome. Windom shows septic sewage leaks, that occur mostly in the spring and winter. Nitrate level background is explained. It is by far the worst in Mason County. Currently, all the people in the park own their homes, and they use the ability to go after grants to address this issue. There is not enough land for a large septic system, and open land is too close to wells. Some tanks have been replaced, but this is a temporary fix. This is all managed by the Department of Health, which takes it out of county hands. Disinfection at the site occurs but does not change the nitrate issue.

Suggestions to address this issue are presented. PUD 1 could takeover water systems, but this was not chosen. They decided on a connection to city services. City water is available. Pros: good drinking water, retire the wells, can connect to sewer, not going to have nitrates in John's Creek. This solution would require MOU and engineering. There is also a senior park, but they do not have the same problem, since there is usually only one person per home, unlike at Evergreen. The city water line in nearby, sewer line is also close (but not as close).

How to connect, and how to get intergovernmental agreements? New infrastructure would be expensive for the sewer line, since it requires bringing sewage line under highway 1. They can use some treated water to go back into the aquifer and for irrigation etc. They have received a block grant, but it requires other funding (up to \$400,000 in funding needed for the line). Phase 2 of the project would connect the residents' homes to the line. Decommissioning of the well provides offsets for the water line. Use of treated water can help the local creek and John's prairie. Community goal of the RIA 14 plans were voted down. This project addressed public health, returns water back to creek, beneficial to the aquifer. Therefore, it is good to get the "purple pipe up." Told that there was no problem getting the funding connect with individual homes. Currently considering how to put in the lines, like where the sewer should be connected.

Q) Brian Thompson asks if this project can access funding that has been provided by the governor to address homelessness.

A) Mr. Windom answers that this project does address homelessness. People do not like to see mobile home parks nearby, but they do not have the zoning.

Q) Jeff Nelson asks about the temporary septic repairs.

A) Mr. Windom answers that they reduced the connection to each septic system, but this is certainly temporary.

Mark Mobbs Congratulates David Windom

7. In Person Presentation of the New Groundwater Model- Kathy Jacobson

Ms. Jacobson demonstrated the groundwater model to members present in person.

ADJOURNMENT

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