CHEHALIS BASIN PARTNERSHIP

August 25, 2023
9:30 am – 12:00 pm
Centralia Train Depot ~ 210 Railroad Ave ~ Suite 204
Centralia, WA ~ 98531

MEETING SUMMARY

MEMBERS* and ALTERNATES' PRESENT

Alissa Shay*, *Port of Grays Harbor*
Andrea Dahl*, *City of McCleary*
Andy Olen*, *City of Centralia*
Brian Shay*, *City of Hoquiam*
Chris Stearns*, *Thurston County*
Dave Windom*, *Mason County*
Jan Robinson*, *Chehalis River Basin Land Trust*
Kevin Eldridge*, *Aberdeen*
Megan Tuttle*, WDFW
Paula Holroyde*, *Thurston Co. Citizen*
Terry Harris*, *City of Chehalis*
Terry Willis*, *Grays Harbor County Citizen*
Tye Menser*, *Thurston County*

GUESTS

Mark Mobbs, *Quinault Indian Nation;* Maria Daugherty, *McCleary*; Bob Amrine, *Lewis Conservation District;* Bonnie Blessing, *Thurston County Resident*; Burt Clothier, *Matt-Macdonald Consulting*; Chanele Holbrook, *Department of Ecology;* Glenn Mutti-Driscoll, *Matt-Macdonald Consulting;* Jacquie Miller, *DOH;* Jason Walter, *Weyerhaeuser Company;* Jill Van Hulle, *Aspect Consulting;* Kathy Tennyson, *Citizen;* Kianna Sinner, *Thurston Conservation District;* Lacey Wright, *AmeriCorps;* Mike Gallagher, *Ecology Water Resources;* Osa Odum, *Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission;* Terry Franklin

STAFF

Kirsten Harma, *Watershed Coordinator*
Florencia Gonzalez-Martinez, *University of Washington Intern*
Lauren Church, *University of Washington Intern*

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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

MEETING

A. Partnership Business

1. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Terry Harris welcomed everyone to the meeting. Members and guests provided self-introductions, both in person and online.

2. Approval of July Meeting Summary

A quorum was present. All meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

B. Presentations & Discussions

3. UW Intern Research – Scatter Creek Citizen Science and Community Perceptions of Beavers – Florencia Gonzalez-Martinez, *UW Intern*

Florencia Gonzalez-Martinez introduced herself and her senior project capstone presentation she will be presenting on Scatter Creek Citizen Science. Florencia introduced Scatter Creek as an important historic habitat for salmon and other aquatic species. She discussed what is happening to Scatter Creek regarding low water flows and warm temperatures too high to support salmon populations. Following this, showed the contrast between creek water levels from June to July this year through pictures provided by residents.

Ms. Gonzalez-Martinez presented a web map she produced of Scatter Creek that shows areas of flow presence-absence in 2021 and 2023. The map provides points with information from volunteers including water presence and date. Following the discussion on problems regarding Scatter Creek, Ms. Gonzalez-Martinez introduced possible solutions from her research. She provided both solutions and challenges from presence of beavers in ecosystems.

Ms. Gonzalez-Martinez's project was understanding people in Scatter Creek's attitudes towards beavers and if it's possible to introduce beavers into the ecosystem to address the low flows in Scatter Creek. She then moved on to discuss the results of her survey regarding citizen preferences and provided information regarding the data collected. Ms. Gonzalez-Martinez discussed the cognitive hierarchy theory related to her research, then concluded her presentation and thanked everyone for listening.

Q) Ms. Franklin asked if there are currently natural beavers present in Scatter Creek and what human-made beaver dams are and how they can be helpful.
A) Ms. Gonzalez-Martinez responded that volunteers have said they have beavers on their property. She answered that human-made beaver dams (BDAs) can show beavers that the environment is habitable. BDAs help humans understand that the dams do help water flow and availability.
Q) Mr. Stearns commented that Scatter Creek has always been an intermittent stream and an old aquaculture facility has been a cause of more summer flow. He explained that beaver dams require trees and there are not many trees in this area. He asked Florencia how she thinks this could be resolved and where would the tree be sourced from.
A) Ms. Gonzalez-Martinez responded that this is a good question, however, there are areas surrounding Scatter Creek with tree abundance that could be possible for this.

4. CBP Project Proposal for Scatter Creek, Discussion & Decision – Kirsten Harma, *Coordinator*

Kirsten Harma introduced the Scatter Creek CBP project proposal. Ms. Harma shared that the CBP put in an application for a grant with the Department of Ecology, however, they did not get this so they've been looking for other opportunities and options. The opportunity that was discussed at this meeting is for the Aquatic Species Restoration Plan (ASRP). She explained that Mark Mobbs, Bob Amrine, and Kianna Sinner are great resources to talk to about this. The

opportunity is to apply for funding through this program. The CBP has been approved as a sponsor. Ms. Harma demonstrated the current and future direction of the partnership's operations through a diagram representing the change from a learning network to a coordinating partnership approach. She explained that the request was distributed to members before this meeting.

An important component of the proposed project would be a centralized place for all studies and data on Scatter Creek to support future restoration planning. Ms. Harma explained other tasks within the grant which include doing outreach. Ideas were presented regarding using volunteers from Florencia Gonzalez-Martinez's research who are connections with local insight and information. There are also opportunities for habitat and streamflow enhancement. Data gathering and creating a plan would be part of this project. Ms. Harma explained that this would combine streamflow restoration planning, looking at water quality and quantity, withdrawals and recharge, and what restoration opportunities are available. She further explained the goals of the ASRP and opened the floor for questions.

Q) Mr. Menser asked how much we are asking for this project.
A) Ms. Harma responded with a question asking how much the CBP should ask for the grant, and explained she is currently thinking about $60,000 for program funding. The work would be completed in 1-1.5 years through a consulting contract.
Q) Ms. Franklin asked if there is any administration funding for the CBP included.
A) Ms. Harma explained that we could build in about ten percent. She explained that Grays Harbor County would be the recipient, to keep it simple for the county, one contractor would do this work.
Q) Ms. Van Hulle asked what the source of the funding for this grant program is.
A) Ms. Harma responded that it is the Chehalis Strategy.
Q) Ms. Tuttle asked if this proposal would be put forward to other folks for further funding or just through the RCO grant process.
A) Ms. Harma responded that there is $15,000 in a flow-through grant from the Washington Water Trust to support the work.
Q) Mr. Menser asked about the bylaws: Are there three different teams, and if so, which one would we be on?
A) Ms. Harma answered that there are 3 regions and if a member is familiar with only one region, they would just vote on projects in that region. The CBP's scope is basinwide so would vote on all.

Kirsten introduced the timeline for this project. She explained that we have been approved to be a sponsor and if efficient, the partnership could have the funds by December. She introduced the Regional Implementation Team bylaws and conflict of interest form that all project sponsors are required to verbally approve.

Bob Amrine provided an overview of other details. The Regional Implementation Team has three parts including the lower, middle, and upper basins. The teams meet monthly as a single group, and sponsors discuss projects and funding. He explained how presenting high-priority projects in high-priority areas can provide rapid funding. Projects are looked at differently in different ways in terms of technical review. He explained how approval for projects works.

Mr. Harris convened a discussion to see if there was consensus approval on the CBP submitting this project. No one had any objections or further questions. Consensus was gained and CBP approved the project.

Mr. Harris noted the challenge of having a single person represent this broad partnership of many interests. Ms. Harma added that she can be a temporary representative to the Regional Implementation Teams to move the proposal along as a temporary solution until another contractor can be hired. Mr. Harris said he will accept Kirsten as she's been doing the groundwork for this project. A vote was taken and there were no objections. Consensus was gained for Kirsten to be the temporary representative for the CBP on the Regional Implementation Team.

5. UW Intern Research Update – Water Conservation Perceptions and Policy – Lauren Church, *UW Intern*

Lauren Church introduced herself and provided an overview of current work on her capstone project through UW and the CBP. She explained that this research has been understanding how recommendations for water conservation in the City of Chehalis should be implemented in-line with the needs of the city and its residents. She then described the four main means of research in her internship.

The first method is surveying City of Chehalis water customers and perceptions and preferences related to water conservation. The second mode of research is the experiential data from attending city festivals which have included the McCleary Bear Festival and ChehalisFest and conducting public outreach with citizens about water conservation. Following this, expert interviews with people involved in water conservation and water utilities in different municipalities, which she was currently conducting and is looking for more individuals to interview.

The final portion of Ms. Church's research is academic research through reviewing academic articles regarding public outreach and water conservation policy such as tiered water pricing. She explained that the final portions of the internship include providing outdoor water-saving kits for Chehalis residents and creating a demonstration garden of native, water-saving plants in Chehalis. Ms. Church concluded her research update and announced that her final internship presentation on findings will be next month on September 22.

Q) Ms. Franklin asked if Ms. Church had looked into the City of McCleary's current work looking into tiered water pricing that was discussed in a recent McCleary City Council meeting.
A) Ms. Church responded that she has not and would be interested in looking into this further
A) Ms. Harma responded that Andrea Dahl would be a good resource to reach out to about this and to contact someone in McCleary for an expert interview about this.

Mr. Stearns commented and provided information on Thurston County's current water price tiers. This involves inverted rates that penalize greater water use. Mr. Harris commented on how changing water prices for big water purchasers can impact the city's relationship with the companies. Ms. Harma concluded the wrap-up said there will be a special meeting to present these research findings on September 22.

6. TransAlta Water Right Purchase – Centralia and Chehalis – Glenn Mutti-Driscoll, Matt-Macdonald Consulting & Kim Ashmore, *City of Centralia Public Works*

Mr. Mutti-Driscoll introduced himself and his presentation on the proposed water rights mitigation approach and the hydrogeologic framework for the City of Centralia. He provided a summary of the Centralia-Chehalis water rights application. The cities of Chehalis and Centralia have applied for new water rights with a combined annual quantity of 8 MGD. Water rights applications are intended to accommodate 50-year demand projections. He explained that the two cities have entered a regional water supply agreement and that their proposed withdrawal points are existing and future production wells located in Centralia. Mr. Mutti-Driscoll provided a high-level summary of the cities' water rights application and explained that the two cities plan to mitigate pumping surface water by doing a 1:1 purchase from TransAlta's water bank.

He provided a map illustrating the TransAlta water bank "green zone" which is the area of hydrologic connectivity to the Skookumchuck River. Mr. Mutti-Driscoll then provided an overview of potential points of future withdrawal from Centralia and Chehalis using the map as well as more detail on future well locations. The map also displays the Centralia Outwash Gravel Aquifer (COGA) and its connection to the river. He explained that the cities are trying to mitigate impacts from pumping water through the COGA purchase. He displayed a regional geologic map displaying the COGA and Alluvium and Glacio-Lacustrine deposits. The area they would be pumping from is the Borst Park Area Cross Section. He then moved on to discussing the multiple lines of evidence that document surface water connection in the COGA.

The next part of the presentation explained the approximate change in streamflow estimated for three hypothetical time periods. He displayed a figure that analyzes three different time periods with different amounts of pumping and mitigation rates. Finally, he explained the summary of findings for the presentation which includes the hydrogeologic assessment and the proposed mitigation plan effects. The wellfield production aquifer (COGA) is in tight hydraulic connection with the Skookumchuck/Chehalis River system. Proposed pumping withdrawals would impact rivers within the TransAlta water bank green zone. The presentation was then concluded, and the meeting opened up for questions.

Q) Chris Stearns asked about the local impacts due to greater use of the wells discussed in the presentation and if the aquifer would influence local wells.
A) Mr. Mutti-Driscoll explained that within the different areas such as Borst Park, the city's wells that would be impacted, so neighboring wells would not be impacted. The pumping impacts would mainly impact the other city wells.
Q) Kathy Tennyson asked if the impacts of climate change have been factored into the plans for this work. She asked about a proposal for a hydrogen plant on the Skookumchuck and if this has been discussed in terms of changes and mitigation.
A) Mr. Mutti-Driscoll explained that climate change has not been looked at specifically with existing data. But future demand projections for cities likely did incorporate climate analysis. He explained they have not looked directly into the hydrogen facility, but this plant would need to look into its own impact.
Q) Tye Menser asked if this proposal is granted, what proportion of that water bank is now used by the proposal, and then what would be left for other things.
A) Mr. Mutti-Driscoll responded that the total quantity of the water bank is about 28,000-acre ft. so a little less than a third of what is available through the water bank.
Q) Terry Franklin asked how close Centralia is to going over their water right.
A) Andy Olen responded that the water right limit is about 9,000-acre ft.
Q) Bob Amrine asks a question about the timeline for this project.
A) Burt Clothier responds that they still need to apply for a water right, and mitigation planning should take through the end of 2023.

Terry Harris thanked Mr. Mutti-Driscoll and concluded this presentation.

7. McCleary Aquifer Study – Maria Daugherty **–** *City of McCleary's Wildcat Creek Aquifer Sustainability Plan Project.*

Maria Daugherty introduced her presentation on the City of McCleary's Wildcat Creek Aquifer Sustainability Plan Project. This was a study funded by the City of McCleary to understand if the aquifer could be used sustainably over a period of 20 years. Ms. Daugherty shared a timeline of

the history of the Wildcat Creek Aquifer. Important dates including events and studies that have impacted the aquifer were presented.

She explained that the study "Hydrogeologic characterization for protection of the Wildcat Creek aquifer" was important to this study. What was produced from this report was the city wells and capture size which is extended to the recharge area. This study recommended that people in the area should know that they are in the recharge area to be mindful of contamination and public outreach was recommended as well as a more detailed analysis. The study "City of McCleary public water supply wells (2008)" suggested in the recharge area that 385 new homes could be built in this area which could impact water quality and nitrogen, concerns about septic system developments with homes.

Ms. Daugherty explained that it was unknown how much could be pulled out of the aquifer that would be tolerable to city and private wells. Wildcat Creek Aquifer hydrology, regulatory alternative, and recommendations report showed that the aquifer is not an unconfined aquifer and has a compact layer of till which protects the lower aquifer from water quality issues, and there also might be some issues with recharge. Moved on to display remote sensing data that highlighted precipitation and water stress. Found that temperature plays the biggest role in the basin and plays the biggest role on clear surfaces such as where clear-cutting has occurred. 2018 and 2021 show the greatest years of water stress. Displays current and worst-case scenarios regarding precipitation due to the impacts of climate change.

The presentation then displayed a geologic map of the Wildcat Creek Aquifer and surrounding formations. This displayed the hydrogeology of the aquifer thickness, and till thickness. Discussed field measurements to see changes in water levels however most of the time it was hard to access the water levels in wells. Ms. Daugherty then shared suggested projects such as groundwater monitoring where till is not present, vertical hydraulic gradient testing: near city wells, northeast upland monitoring, and vertical hydraulic gradient testing: southwest area. Asked the city to do five projects including monitoring fill data gaps in groundwater conditions, 2. Water quality testing and land use evaluation, 3. Evaluate ordinances, and 4. Improving reliability of water supply for basin users.

Terry Harris thanked Ms. Daugherty for her presentation.

C. Other Business and Closing

8. For the Good of the Order / Public Comment.

The meeting was then opened up for public comments.

Terry Franklin expressed interest in the ASRP group and her hopes that McCleary monitoring wells might be funded through that program. Mark Mobbs stated that there is abundant information on the Chehalis Strategy website which includes the projects they are working on.

Ms. Harma adds that she will be out of office during September and the first half of October, but Lauren Church's final Capstone presentation will take place on September 22. This presentation will be a short, 30-minute, Zoom-only presentation, but if the Partnership wishes they can extend the meeting for additional agenda content.

Next CBP Meeting: **Special 30 min meeting, September 22**

Next Regular CBP Meeting: **October 27**

ADJOURNMENT

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