Chehalis Basin Partnership
-- Agenda --

DATE: **Friday, February 28, 2025**
TIME: 9:30 am – 12:00 pm
LOCATION: Economic Alliance of Lewis County
1209 Borthwick St, Centralia, WA 98531

Members Present: Jan Robinson (CRBLT), Kim Ashmore (Centralia), Daniel Friesz (DNR), Lynda Zeman (Thurston County, alt), Bryan Benjamen (Thurston County, alt), Andy Oien (Centralia), Amy Spoon (WDFW), Rick Hole (Grays Harbor County), Terry Harris (Chair), Terry Willis (Vice Chair), Chris Stearns (Thurston PUD), Alissa Shay (Port of Grays Harbor), Phil Papac (Port of Grays Harbor), Colleen Parrott (Chehalis Tribe), Lief Hansen (Port Blakely), Brian Shay, Jason Walter (Weyerhauser), Dan Friesz (DNR), Todd Turner (Chehalis)

Others present: Kathy Tennyson, Chris Stone, Amelia Schwartz (Thurston County), Kirsten Harma, Amy Spoon, Max Trujillo (Washington Water Trust), Molly Paige (Ecy – Water Quality) , Mark Mobbs (QIN), Victoria Knorr, Philip Adams (Thurston County), Lee First, Holly Fuller (Centralia), Drew Mealor (ASRP), John Haberlin (Thurston County, Water Quality), Sarah Longacre (Ecy – Water Quality), Lara Tukarski (Thurston County, Water Quality)

Partnership Business	**Start Time**
1. **Welcome, Introductions** *Terry Harris, Chair* 2. **Minutes**	9:30 am
Presentations & Discussions	
Thurston County Water Quality Monitoring *Thurston County's Environmental Public Health Water Quality Team (John Haberlin)* Objective. Learn about Thurston County's Water Quality monitoring program, with specifics on the work they are doing in the Chehalis Basin -Thurston County conducts two kinds of monitoring – ambient and Pollution Identification and Correction (PIC). John provided an overview of the county's new website with water quality monitoring data. Some examples of what the map can show us: Blooms Ditch has e-coli spikes, Black River is low on Dissolved Oxygen, Chehalis at Independence has e-coli spikes, and Prairie Creek has e-coli spikes. The County plans to conduct PIC to find the source of e-coli on Prairie Creek. -Q: What are community members interested in learning about water quality? -A: Lake Management, Cyanobacteria, Swim Safety -Q: What's going on in Black Lake?	9:45 am

-A: Have found 47 septic issues here so far – has issues -Q: Do you have protocols to address hotspots? -A: It depends on the situation. They need to find the source first. They will try education first, then compliance. -Q: Don't wildlife cause e-coli issues? How much is natural vs. human-based? -A: The county takes 5 weeks of salmons for bacteria, during dry and wet season. They try to see if the whole watershed is generating the bacteria, or just one point. They test nutrients, as well. Occasionally they can use DNA as an indicator of a human source. They do account for flushes from storms. Try to see if pollution is persistent.	
Department of Ecology – Non-Point Program *Molly Paige, Upper Chehalis Non-Point Program Specialist (Lewis County), and Sarah Longacre (Grays Harbor County)* Objective: Learn the latest from Ecology's non-point water quality program, current violations and compliance, and what you can do if you see a violation. -The non-point program focusses on agriculture as a potential source of non-point pollution. They look at anything not under permit. They will also address point sources such as abandoned cars leaking toxics near waterways. Services they offer include getting animals under confinement. Hobby Farms are the customers they work with the most. They also do proactive work to find pollution, such as driving around in public right of ways. They don't usually do water quality sampling to find pollution. For enforcement, they will send a letter to the landowner and pursue solutions through voluntary actions to the extent possible. Compliance enforcement takes several years and a lot of work. -Q: How often do you do enforcement? -A: Recently had one wrap up near Chehalis Areas of interest include spots in the Newaukum (land application of manure), and the Willapa Bay is a focal area because of shellfish resources. -Q: What is enforcement like? Is Ecology fining? -A: Ecology rarely fines. -Comment: In Grays Harbor County, parties are paying out 3rd party lawsuits, because Ecology is not fining. Interestingly, this can ultimately costs the polluter more than if Ecology were just to fine. -Comment: It seems like a solution would be to get more boots on the ground- more inspectors. A: Non-point has more inspectors now (2 instead of 1!) Comment: Centralia has a stormwater permit and trains people in reporting spills. 60 have been trained! They are taught to report through ERTS.	10:15 am
Break	10:30 am
Open Discussion and Learning from Peers *Discussion - All* Objective: To learn from each other about water quality in our communities. Discussion	10:45 am

prompts will include: --Which municipalities do their own monitoring? --Who has water quality data and where is it stored? Can it be shared? --Which municipalities get water from surface water? Do any experience turbidity issues? --Who is monitoring point sources? Who is monitoring wastewater effluent? Centralia: -Does own monitoring – Groundwater only. This is their drinking water source. There is some influence of groundwater on surface water. Their wastewater department tests effluent. They have found that their treatment is effective, even in heavy rain events. Chehalis: -Test wastewater. If there is an overflow from combined storm and sewer, tell Ecology. There are able to handle a lot of gallons per day. If they are not compliant, they are open to lawsuits. At the water input side, they know they have low turbidity in Newaukum. Port of Grays Harbor: -Are upgrading their stormwater system. Do their own water quality monitoring. Thurston County: -Monitor waste water in Grand Mound. Weyerhaeuser: -Does own environmental monitoring. Monitors temperature and turbidity in surface water. Submit data upon an acquisition request. The applicant needs a justification to make this request – it's not broadly published. Lewis County & Grays Harbor County: -No one available to answer. Needs follow-up	
Stream Bugs as Water Quality Indicators! New findings! *Chad Larson, Department of Ecology- Environmental Assessment Program* Objective: Learn about the work of how macroinvertebrates are indicating the overall quality of the water of the streams the reside in, and what it means for you. Ecology has been conducting statewide watershed health monitoring from 2009 to present. Results: Coastwide, about half of the rivers are "good." -A new assessment method: MacroInvertebrate Temperature Tolerance Testing (MTTT). They have tested out this method in 93 sites in the Chehalis. It uses macroinvertebrates as indicators of the degree of temperature stress in the system (because they are in the stream all the time, they are a better indicator than a single measurement in time! Also, they "integrate many parameters" which means they are responding to a range of environmental conditions, not just temp) -Biological conditions are streams are categorized. A stream with a value of 4-6 is considered "stressed." In Capitol Forest, stream are good. -This method can help identify streams to protect, to prioritize for thermal improvement, or to identify as impaired (most streams are in this category!) Take-Aways: Temperature in the Chehalis is high – the bug data say so! Macros can be used	11:05 am

as a way to evaluate changes in thermal stress over time. Next, they want to compare the results to fish data. Anyone with data on macroinvertebrates can upload it to their website. Q: Have you compared forested streams to agricultural streams? A: They do have a land use model, which they can use to make comparisons like this.	
Streamflow Restoration Grant Round – 2025 – Suggestions for Guidance *Discussion on recommendations to Ecology for changes to criteria to be used in the next grant round.* Objective: The group will come up with initial recommendations on content for letter regarding recommendations for the Streamflow Restoration grant program. Letter to be finalized at the next CBP meeting. Thurston County is preparing comments on how Ecology's Streamflow Restoration grant program can be improved relative to previous years. Their specific interest is in prioritizing system naturalization (rather than engineered solutions) and addressing the root causes of streamflow reduction. The current criteria put too much emphasis on accounting. Discussion: The criteria give lots of points for "Project in Plan" – without adaptive management, the project listed in the original Streamflow Restoration Plan quickly are out of date – either funded by other programs, or deemed infeasible. This far into program implementation, the way these projects are weighted needs to be reconsidered. Comment: Better definitions are needed. Kirsten requested volunteers to work on drafting a letter for the CBP outside of regular meetings. Colleen, Terry Harris and Terry Willis, Brian Shay and Alissa Shay were all flagged as potential volunteers. Action: Committee will convene outside of regular meeting.	11:30 am
Other Business	
Other Business *Partners share anything else they would like to discuss* Twin Harbors Waterkeeper: Requested a letter of support from the Chehalis Basin Partnership for their grant application – Muddy Booths – Middle & High School program -From the last grant-funded project, 1000 students were reached! This new proposal is to add more schools and more filed trips. THW plans to added Aberdeen, Hoquiam, Pe Ell, and Oakville. The education will include a watershed overview, water quality concerns, pollution, fish, and an opportunity for the students to actually try water quality testing and macroinvertebrate monitoring. Action: This letter was approved	11:45 am
Public Comment *Public comments are welcome at this time.*	11:55 am

Adjourn	12:00 pm

**Current funding guidelines are provided as an attachment

Background for discussion on Ecology Streamflow Restoration Grant:

During the 2024 grant cycle, Department of Ecology staff indicated that it planned to allow changes on funding criteria and priorities for future streamflow restoration competitive grant rounds. The prospective reprioritization of funding criteria will likely be responsive (in part) to SRFB Science Panel comments on other watersheds' streamflow restoration plans going through the rulemaking process, which offered guidance on what is wrong, indicating what they would like to see changed:

- Projects overly "…rely on hydrologic manipulations of natural resources and natural processes that have questionable feasibility and benefits."
- Projects do not "…integrate natural stream processes into quantitative offset solutions."
- Plans do not "…sufficiently promote projects that specifically raise streambed and water table elevations."
- Plans should "consider solutions that address and enhance natural processes."
- Plans should …"develop and evaluate projects that reduce alterations of natural stream hydrology and avoid further manipulation of natural stream processes."

While the WRIA 22/23 plan is not implicated in SRFB's Science Panel comments, the Chehalis Basin Partnership has an opportunity to develop recommendations for Ecology that support competitiveness and prioritization of projects aligned with the Panel's recommendations in future streamflow restoration competitive grant rounds.