

# CHEHALIS BASIN BOARD SUMMARIZED MEETING AGENDA AND ACTIONS

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**Date:** February 8, 2018  
**Time:** 9:00 am – 4:00 pm  
**Location:** Borst Park Kitchen #1 - 2020 Borst Avenue Centralia, Washington 98531

ITEM	FORMAL ACTION	FOLLOW-UP ACTION
1. Consent February 8, 2018 Agenda Approval of December 7, 2017 Meeting Summary	Decision: Agenda approved. December 7, 2017 meeting summary approved.	No follow-up action.
2. 2017-2019 Road Map and Budget	Discussion	OCB staff will schedule briefings between Board members and key legislators during legislative session. Board members requested OCB staff develop draft talking points for future legislative briefings.
3. Potential Funding Sources for Chehalis Basin Strategy	Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Board members requested OCB staff reach out to NRCS staff about funding opportunities for aquatic species restoration in the Chehalis Basin.</li> <li>Board members requested OCB staff develop a sub-group of interested Board members and staff to help advance identification of federal funding opportunities that could be applicable to aquatic species restoration.</li> <li>Board members supported submitting a pre-application to the NOAA Coastal Resilience Grants Program for the early action reach restoration projects.</li> </ul>

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>FORMAL ACTION</b>	<b>FOLLOW-UP ACTION</b>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board members requested OCB staff address securing federal funding for habitat restoration and SB 6203 in the draft talking points being developed for future legislative briefings.</li> </ul>
4. Aquatic Species Restoration Plan (ASRP)	Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board members requested OCB staff provide a summary at the next (March 15) Board meeting of how the ASRP Steering Committee plans to address Board comments on the Initial ASRP document in the full ASRP document.</li> <li>• Board members supported Ecology and the Steering Committee allocating up to \$4.3 million from Chehalis Basin Strategy funds to fish barrier correction projects.</li> </ul>
5. Restorative Flood Protection	Discussion	No follow-up action.
6. Future Land Use in the Chehalis Basin	Discussion	Board members requested OCB staff summarize the land use presentation to make information more digestible and to highlight key takeaways. When the information is ready, Board members requested staff share it with local planners.
7. “Hirst Fix” Briefing	Discussion	Board members requested OCB staff include points regarding the “Hirst Fix” in the draft talking points being developed for future legislative briefings, related to how it could impact the Chehalis Basin Strategy.
8. Next Steps and Closing	Decision: The March 1, 2018 Board meeting is rescheduled for March 15, 2018. Location is to be determined.	No follow-up action.

## **Attendees**

### **Chehalis Basin Board Members Present:**

- Edna Fund, Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority
- J. Vander Stoep, Office of the Governor
- Jay Gordon, Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority
- Steve Malloch, Office of the Governor
- Tyson Johnston, Quinault Indian Nation

### **Chehalis Basin Board Ex-Officio Members Present:**

- Gordon White, Department of Ecology, Office of Chehalis Basin (OCB)
- Justin Allegro, Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Stephen Bernath, Department of Natural Resources
- Stu Trefry, Washington State Conservation Commission

### **Board Staff/Board Guests Present:**

- Alice Rubin, Recreation and Conservation Office
- Andrea Petzel, Broadview Planning
- Bob Amrine, Lewis County Conservation District
- Bob Thomas, US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
- Brian Thompson, Lewis County Farm Bureau
- Chad Wiseman, HDR
- Chrissy Bailey, Department of Ecology, Office of Chehalis Basin
- Cindy Wilson, Thurston County
- Colleen Granberg, Department of Natural Resources
- Cynthia Carlstad, Carlstad Consulting
- Dale Lewis, Office of Congresswoman Herrera-Butler
- Dave Bingaman, Quinault Indian Nation (ASRP Steering Committee)
- Erik Martin, Lewis County Flood Control Zone District
- Evan Carnes, US Army Corps of Engineers
- Heather Page, Anchor QEA
- Jess Helsey, Washington Coast Sustainable Salmon Partnership
- Jim Kramer, Ruckelshaus Center (Facilitator)
- Julie Balmelli-Powe, Citizen
- Ken Ghalambor, Ruckelshaus Center
- Kirsten Harma, Chehalis Basin Lead Entity

- Mark McCaskill, Department of Commerce
- Michelle Kramer, Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Pierre Augare, Quinault Indian Nation
- Scott Boettcher, Flood Authority Staff
- Tara Galuska, Recreation and Conservation Office
- Tim Kramer, Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Tom Kollasch, Grays Harbor Conservation District
- Trent Loughheed, City of Chehalis
- Vince Panesko, Citizen

## **Welcome, Introductions**

Board member Edna Fund (sitting in for Chair Vickie Raines) called the special meeting to order at 9:09 a.m., and welcomed the Board, staff, and audience. Attendees provided brief introductions.

## **Consent Agenda**

The Board did not have additions or revisions to the February 8, 2018 agenda.

**BOARD DECISION:** Agenda approved by consensus with all voting member's thumbs up.

## **Approval of December 7, 2017 Meeting Summary**

The Board did not have additions or revisions to the December 7, 2017 Meeting Summary.

**BOARD DECISION:** December 7, 2017 Meeting Summary approved by consensus with all voting member's thumbs up.

## **2017-2019 Road Map and Budget**

Ken Ghalambor (Ruckelshaus Center) provided a summary of updates to the Board's 2017-2019 Road Map, and associated budget, schedule, and work plan adjustments due to the delay in passage of a 2017-2019 capital budget. In summary, the major work plan elements and tasks outlined in the Governor's 2017-2019 budget recommendations are being pursued, including the division of funds between advancing the long-term strategy (~\$30.4 million) and design/construction of local flood damage reduction and habitat restoration projects (~\$29.6 million). However, the timing for delivery or completion of most of the major work elements is delayed due to the delay in passing a capital budget. Additional funds to complete work required for the Board to develop its recommendations on a long-term strategy will need to be requested for the 2019-2021 biennium.

The draft project-level EIS for the dam and airport levee was originally anticipated to be available in January 2019. Currently, it is assumed that the Draft EIS will be released in January 2020; the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has not committed to this schedule and cannot until a Water Resources

Reform and Development Act (WRRDA) 214 agreement is in place and they have hired a dedicated project manager. Bob Thomas (USACE) noted that the USACE recently completed its Determination of Significance, which concluded that the project's potential impacts are significant enough to entail moving straight into a NEPA EIS, in contrast to going through a public review process to determine if the impacts would be significant. USACE staff is also working on establishing a WRRDA 214 agreement, and working with Ecology staff to determine whether a joint SEPA/NEPA document can be pursued. Bob underscored the USACE's intention to be timely and meet the EIS schedule ultimately determined between the Corps and Ecology. Board members expressed their appreciation for the USACE's engagement in the Chehalis Basin Strategy effort. Board members also noted that the process of establishing a WRRDA 214 agreement for the NEPA EIS will be helpful in laying the foundation for establishing a WRRDA 214 agreement for habitat restoration projects.

Regarding hiring and staffing delays for Ecology's Office of Chehalis Basin (OCB), Gordon White (OCB) noted that interviews for the OCB Director are likely to occur in April, with a decision in May. The position will remain open until filled, and the first screening of potential candidates will occur on February 16. Gordon will provide regular updates to the Board during the recruitment process. Once an OCB Director is hired, additional OCB staff positions will be filled.

Jim Kramer (Ruckelshaus Center, Facilitator) highlighted the need for the Board to communicate to the State Legislature how the capital budget delay impacted the Chehalis Basin Strategy work plan and budget. The Board agreed that communication should occur with key legislators before the legislative session is over. Gordon committed to scheduling briefings with key legislators and requested Board members let him know if they want to attend. Gordon also suggested a briefing for Chehalis Basin legislators in the March/April timeframe. The Board then discussed key messages to convey when speaking with legislators, including:

- Highlighting the successes achieved through construction of local flood damage reduction and habitat restoration projects over the past three biennia.
- Highlighting the work plan and budget implications resulting from the capital budget delay, and that there will be a need to request additional funds for the 2019-2021 biennium to complete work required for the Board to develop its recommendations on a long-term strategy.
- Efforts to secure federal funding for habitat restoration, overlap of the "Hirst Fix" with the ability to implement an effective Strategy, and how a future carbon tax might provide funding opportunities for the Chehalis Basin Strategy.

Other comments included:

- Tyson Johnston (Quinault Indian Nation) noted that QIN officials will be in Olympia on February 19-20 to speak with legislators, including about the Chehalis Basin Strategy.

- Edna Fund noted that she and Vickie Raines are members of the Washington Association of Counties, and the Board could potentially provide the Association a future briefing on the Chehalis Basin Strategy.
- Vince Panesko (Citizen) provided public comment expressing concern that there was a rush to complete the Programmatic EIS and suggested that the site characterization work for a potential dam be completed before completing the project-level EIS.

**FOLLOW-UP ACTION:** Board members requested OCB staff develop draft talking points for future legislative briefings. OCB staff will arrange for Board members to brief key legislators during legislative session.

### **Potential Funding Sources for Chehalis Basin Strategy**

Jim Kramer (Ruckelshaus Center) discussed potential sources of Federal funding for habitat restoration projects in the Chehalis Basin. After scanning different federal programs, three potential funding sources seem to be the best fit for the Chehalis Basin Strategy:

- **US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Chehalis Fisheries Restoration Program.** The Chehalis Fisheries Restoration Program (CFRP) makes funding and technical assistance available for on-the-ground restoration of salmon habitat, watershed assessments, outreach and education in the Chehalis River and Grays Harbor Basins. The program has historically provided roughly \$100,000/year for restoration projects in the Chehalis Basin. Though there is not a current plan by USFWS to expand the program, it is an existing authority and appropriation that could potentially be increased through lobbying efforts.
- **United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).** No specific NRCS grant programs have been identified, but there is a sense that funding sources through the Farm Bill could provide opportunities for the Chehalis Basin Strategy.
- **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Coastal Resilience Grants Program.** This competitive grant program funds projects that are helping coastal communities and ecosystems prepare for and recover from extreme weather events, climate hazards, and changing ocean conditions. Conversations with NOAA staff suggest there could be a strong link for early action reach projects in the Chehalis Basin. A Request for Proposals (RFP) was recently issued that is highly competitive, and pre-application submittals are due by March 7, 2018. The Aquatic Species Restoration Plan (ASRP) Steering Committee discussed the grant program and did not make a formal decision on whether to submit a pre-application.

Key comments and discussion topics included:

- Board members were supportive of the idea to continue looking into funding opportunities through NRCS, and suggested OCB staff reach out to local NRCS staff to learn more.

- Board members were supportive of the idea to complete a pre-application submittal for the NOAA Coastal Resilience Grant. They also noted that if the submittal is accepted the full application ultimately needs the support of the Governor's office.
- Board members discussed the value of creating a sub-group of interested Board members and staff that could help advance the Board's work to identify potential federal funding opportunities applicable to aquatic species restoration undertaken as part of the Chehalis Basin Strategy.

Justin Allegro (Department of Fish and Wildlife) provided an overview of SB 6203 (regarding a carbon pollution tax), and how it might be a potential source of long-term funding for the Chehalis Basin Strategy. Justin noted that the Governor's original carbon tax proposal would have directed approximately \$60 million/year for the first five years towards water-related projects, while the current legislation would result in smaller allocations and capped. Key comments and discussion topics included:

- Board members identified two issues regarding the water-related portion of the bill that they would like to bring up in future legislative briefings:
  - In the section on WATER-RELATED PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES, the bill discusses how Ecology may provide grants and loans for water-related projects and activities. In section (b) the language states "Reducing the risk of flooding by restoring natural floodplain ecological functions, protecting against damage caused by floods, and protecting or restoring naturally functioning areas where floods occur." Does this mean eligible projects must meet all criteria or just one them?
  - Having the legislature approve a list of projects is a common approach for environmental grant programs but it means projects do not get funded for two to three years after they have been identified.
- Board members agreed the Board was not making a formal statement in support of the legislation, but acknowledged it could be a potential future source of funding.

**FOLLOW-UP ACTION:** Board members requested OCB staff:

- Reach out to NRCS staff about funding opportunities for aquatic species restoration in the Chehalis Basin.
- Develop a sub-group of interested Board members and staff that could help advance identification of federal funding opportunities potentially applicable to aquatic species restoration.
- Submit a NOAA Coastal Resilience Grants Program pre-application for the ASRP early action reach restoration projects.

- Include points in the draft talking points being developed for future legislative briefings regarding securing federal funding for habitat restoration and SB 6203, and how they could overlap with the Chehalis Basin Strategy.

## **Aquatic Species Restoration Plan (ASRP)**

### **Barrier Correction Request for Proposals**

Jim Kramer (Ruckelshaus Center) and Justin Allegro (Department of Fish and Wildlife) noted that the ASRP Steering Committee, with the support of the Chehalis Lead Entity, recently conducted a request for proposals (RFP) to design and construct projects that remove barriers to fish passage. The Lead Entity has ranked the projects based on criteria approved by the Steering Committee. The cost to implement the highest ranked 8 projects totaled approximately \$4.3 million, excluding match funds provided by sponsors. The projects are mostly on private lands and county roads, and correcting the barriers would provide access to an estimated 25 miles of upstream habitat. The Steering Committee supported Ecology allocating up to \$4.3 million from the Chehalis Basin Strategy funds for these barrier removal projects. The total number of projects and funds will be determined by Ecology in consultation with the Steering Committee.

OCB staff briefed the Board about the RFP process and the intention to dedicate up to \$4.3 million to barrier correction projects, to determine if the Board had any concerns. Key comments and discussion topics included:

- Board members were supportive of the process outlined, but requested more detailed information on the projects at a future Board meeting, including information on the anticipated outcomes/results.
- Board members supported use of an optimization strategy for future barrier removal and habitat restoration projects, to ensure we are getting the most “bang for the buck.”

RCO confirmed that it is better to start the process for contracting with project sponsors to implement the highest-ranking projects sooner than later, because as spring approaches contractor resources and availability will diminish.

### **Initial ASRP Document Feedback**

Jim Kramer (Ruckelshaus Center) provided a summary of comments received on the Initial ASRP document. Commenters included the Chehalis Lead Entity, Lewis Conservation District, American Rivers, Lewis County Public Works, Washington Coast Salmon Foundation, and Jay Gordon. Below are the questions that were posed to the Board for their review of the Initial ASRP document:

- What do you like about the estimated outcomes for aquatic species? What questions/concerns do you have about the outcomes? What recommendations do you have for the outcomes?
- What questions/concerns do you have regarding the costs and magnitude of actions needed to achieve the outcomes? What recommendations do you have for the investment needed?
- What questions/recommendations do you have for increasing the likelihood of implementation?
- Are there additional issues that should be addressed in the next phase for development of the full ASRP beyond those identified in this initial document?

Board members discussed their respective review and feedback on the Initial ASRP document. Key comments and discussion topics included:

- Board members generally agreed with comments received regarding what there is to like about the document, such as a multi-species approach, including both moderate and high results, restoration of a wide range of ecosystems, identifying the necessity of monitoring throughout all phases of implementation, and results that are significant and address degradation from climate change.
- Board members stressed the need for continued dialogue between science and policy staff, tribes, stakeholders, and others doing outreach in the Chehalis Basin. Inter-coordination among actors involved in all aspects of restoration is important.
- Board members noted the costs for the High scenario were very large. Staff noted the biggest cost driver is acquiring land for protection, and that the Full ASRP document may be able to realize cost efficiencies through reducing the total amount of land that would need to be acquired.
- Board members stressed that the ASRP is dependent on willing landowners; outreach and engagement of landowners early and consistently will be vital to the success of the effort, and to understanding the feasibility of what is being proposed.
- Board members expressed some concern about how the level of restoration described in the Initial ASRP document would impact rural land uses, especially agriculture, in the Chehalis Basin, and the need for a balanced approach.
- Board members expressed the need for more effective communications, including developing a more engaging, compelling, and easier to digest document than the Initial ASRP document.
- Board members suggested the Full ASRP should better address how the plan could affect potential endangered species listings.
- Board members suggested that the Full ASRP should consider impacts from ocean trends, like acidification.
- Board members suggested that the Full ASRP should more clearly define institutional structures for implementation.

- Tyson Johnston (QIN) noted that the QIN will provide a more in-depth comment letter later this month.
- Staff and ASRP Steering Committee members noted that the Initial ASRP document was focused on science and only included generalized costs. The Full ASRP document will include more detail on where restoration should occur, revised cost estimates, an acquisition/protection strategy, and more information on landowner education and outreach.
- Board members suggested that rather than including a Moderate and High scenario, the Full ASRP should provide a much more nuanced view of what is needed to have an impact. For example, what actions are required to benefit different species, at what level of investment, and over what periods of time.

**FOLLOW-UP ACTION:** Board members requested staff provide a summary at the next Board meeting regarding how the ASRP Steering Committee plans to address the Board's comments on the Initial ASRP document in the full ASRP document. Board members supported Ecology and the Steering Committee allocating up to \$4.3 million from Chehalis Basin Strategy funds to fish barrier correction projects.

## **Restorative Flood Protection**

Cynthia Carlstad (Carlstad Consulting) and Andrea Petzel (Broadview Planning) provided an overview of the community engagement and structured interview plan for landowners in the Newaukum sub-basin regarding the restorative flood protection (RFP) concept. The purpose of the interviews is to provide information to landowners about the RFP approach and gather community stakeholder perspectives. This effort does not relate to the technical feasibility of the RFP concept. Using information learned from this outreach and the results of technical analyses, the Board will make a decision in the fall 2018 timeframe on whether development of the RFP concept should proceed from a conceptual to preliminary level in the Newaukum sub-basin over the remainder of the biennium.

Cynthia and Andrea hope to complete 100 interviews over the next two months, and to identify landowner interviewees through referrals rather than cold calls. Interviewees will receive questions in advance. If scheduling interviews goes as planned, Cynthia and Andrea plan to report back to the Board at its May 2018 meeting. They will produce a presentation that documents themes from the interviews and summarize the process and their findings in a memo.

Key comments and discussion topics included:

- Board members requested, to the degree possible, that the summary of interviews provide demographic details, e.g., age of resident, land use type.
- Cynthia noted there are approximately 400 parcels in the Newaukum sub-basin, with approximately 300 landowners. She and Andrea will do their best to ensure interview representativeness regarding topics like geography, parcel size, parcel use, and tenure.

- Board members requested that Cynthia and Andrea also report back to the Board any comments learned through the interviews regarding the history of the fishery in the Chehalis basin.

## **Potential Future Land Use in the Chehalis Basin**

Chrissy Bailey (OCB) provided an overview of potential future land use changes in the Chehalis Basin. The topics covered included:

- Modeled/predicted changes to the extent of the existing 100-year floodplain from a potential dam and under future climate conditions.
- Results of the Build-Out Analysis completed for the Programmatic EIS, which documented existing conditions and total development potential in the Basin, and estimated potential floodplain population growth and development over a 100-year planning horizon.
- Summary of current Lewis County Comprehensive Plan and Zoning designations in the floodplain.

This information was provided to the Board in response to its request to understand potential future floodplain development scenarios, as well as to help them determine the future land use scenario(s) that should be evaluated as part of development of the Chehalis Basin Strategy. The ASRP Science Review Team and Steering Committee will need to provide guidance on the potential future levels of habitat degradation that should be used in the EDT and NOAA models.

Key comments and discussion topics included:

- Board members noted that the 100-year floodplain expands significantly in portions of the upper basin (above Centralia) under predicted future climate conditions, and local governments in the Basin are likely not considering this as local land use plans are developed. Board members requested OCB staff share the information with local planners.
- Based on the assumptions used for the Build Out Analysis, a significant amount of future development in unincorporated areas of the mainstem Chehalis River floodplain is not anticipated. If the Board requests other assumptions be utilized to assess the potential for future floodplain development, it needs to provide additional direction.

**FOLLOW-UP ACTION:** Board members requested OCB staff summarize the land use presentation to make the information more digestible and to highlight key takeaways. When the updated information is ready, Board members requested OCB staff share it with local planners.

## **“Hirst Fix” Briefing**

Gordon White discussed the “Hirst Fix” (ESSB 6091), a new state law intended to address the impacts of domestic, permit-exempt water withdrawals (wells) on instream flows. The new regulations will require

that the Chehalis Watershed Plan be updated by February 2021 to address accommodations for future rural residential wells while protecting instream resources. The specific roles of local organizations in supporting the Chehalis Watershed Plan development and implementation will evolve and be clarified over the coming months and years, including whether the Office of Chehalis Basin will have any role in updating the Chehalis Watershed Plan. Opportunities for protecting and enhancing instream flow should be considered by all organizations that are conducting studies and developing project proposals in the Chehalis Basin.

**FOLLOW-UP ACTION:** Board members requested OCB staff include talking points regarding the “Hirst Fix” and how it could overlap with the Chehalis Basin Strategy in the draft talking points being developed for future legislative briefings.

### **Next Steps and Closing**

The next Board meeting was scheduled for March 1, 2018, but a number of Board members and OCB staff are not able to attend. Board members agreed to reschedule the March 1, 2018 Board meeting for March 15, 2018. A meeting location has not yet been identified. Meeting was adjourned at 3:22 pm.

**BOARD DECISION:** The March 1, 2018 Board meeting is rescheduled for March 15, 2018.