

Chehalis Basin Strategy Communications Update

Chehalis Basin Board meeting, January 2022

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PART ONE

Digital Engagement & Public Input
Q3 & Q4 2021

Digital Outreach & Engagement

Digital Communications Goals

1. **Share the compelling, clear story** of the need and opportunity in the Chehalis Basin.
2. **Inform Basin residents** so they more fully understand the Chehalis Basin Strategy, how it is impacting the land and communities around them, and how they can benefit from and engage with it.
3. **Increase transparency** by creating additional space for community members to provide input.
4. **Proactively address concerns** and correct misinformation about the Strategy.

Total Chehalis Basin Strategy Reach (Q3-4 2021)

Key Finding: Chehalis Basin Strategy digital channels cumulatively reach substantial numbers of Chehalis Basin residents, providing an important information venue as in-person conversations have become more sparse during the pandemic.

Facebook: 11,873 people reached

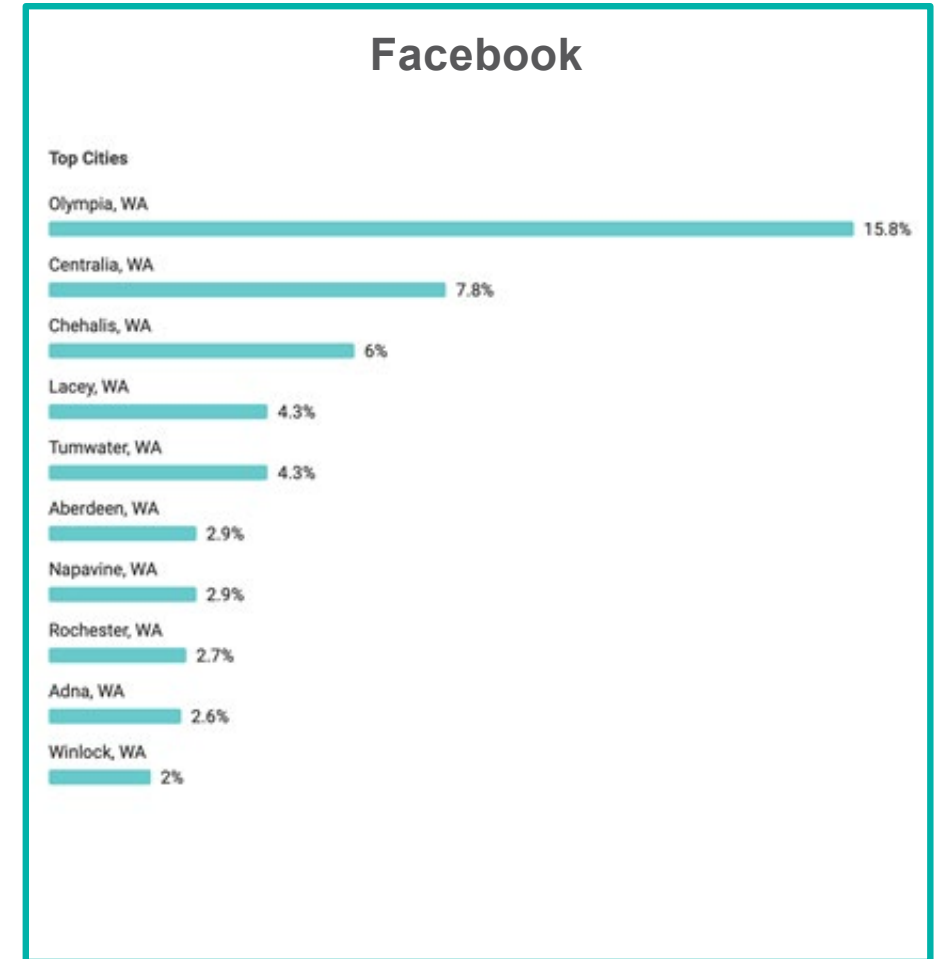
Twitter: 26,689 impressions

ChehalisBasinStrategy.com:
11,012 pageviews

E-Newsletters: 1,001 subscribers

Who's Being Reached? (Q3-4 2021)

Key Finding: Chehalis Basin residents are the primary audience being most served by these social media channels. This reinforces their purpose for providing up-to-date information about the Strategy and how it's showing up across Basin communities.



What Are People Engaging With? (Q3-4 2021)

Key Finding: Residents and other stakeholders consistently engage most with content that show on-the-ground progress through Chehalis Basin Strategy projects and collaborations with partners.

The ASRP Steering Committee is seeking qualified project sponsors to implement restoration and protection projects throughout the [#ChehalisBasin](#). Visit the Request for Qualifications and submit by 11/19! Via [@wdfw](#) & [@WSRCO](#)
chehalisbasinstrategy.com/wp-content/upl...



Twitter | 3,544 impressions

Earlier this fall, crews saw a welcomed surprise while conducting habitat restoration work on the Wynoochee! These chum salmon made their way into newly restored areas during high November river flows.



Facebook | 5,422 people reached

Flood and Fish Projects Making a Difference Today

Already, [more than 100 local projects](#) have been completed or are currently underway—including Wisner Creek restoration, Lower Satsop River erosion control, and a Basin-wide flood warning system.

Wisner Creek channel reconnection

Wisner Creek, which empties into the Chehalis River, was once a home for salmon to spawn—and now, thanks to Lewis Conservation District, the Beaver Glen Homeowners Association, and other Chehalis Basin Strategy partners, it could be again.

Here's a quick glance at what this project has accomplished:

- Planted 950 native plant species to re-establish the upland meadow and riparian buffer along the creek
- Reconnected a 300-foot portion of the streambed to near-natural conditions
- Opened up almost a mile of suitable salmonid rearing and spawning habitat

Read more on [Lewis Talk's new story](#) featuring the restoration project.

E-newsletter | 327 people read

Public Input Summary

[View Full Summary](#)

Overview

Included is a summary of input and public comments about the Chehalis Basin Strategy, received through *email, social media, and comments on local media coverage* between **July - December 2021**.

Public input, alongside scientific research and stakeholder insights, actively informs thinking and approach for the Chehalis Basin Strategy. This roundup is provided to Office of Chehalis Basin staff and Chehalis Basin Board members to increase visibility into public feedback provided outside of Chehalis Basin Board meetings.

Public Input Themes & Comments

Planning for Cascadia Subduction Zone (CSZ) tsunami

- *“Where on your website is there any mention of the expected CSZ tsunami? ... The current Grays Harbor north and south jetties were not designed for the expected six foot subsidence that will occur during the CSZ megaquake ...”*

Concerns about the proposed flood protection dam

- *“I am concerned about the impacts that a flood mitigation dam would have on the salmon of the Chehalis River. Furthermore, the Southern Resident killer whales are critically endangered, and they feed on these salmon. I recognize that flood control is very important, but it must be done so in a salmon-friendly way. Please consider alternatives to a dam.”*

Public Input Themes & Comments

Concerns about structures and new construction in the floodplain

- *“How about no more fill or new structures in the floodplain?”*
- *“How much water was redirected to the outlying residential areas during flood season because of displaced fill?”*

Questions about the freeway-inundating flood and its amplifiers

- *“What role did the South Fork Chehalis have in helping it reach that level?”*
- *What's conditions or other circumstances in the South Fork watershed contributed to those conditions?*
- *What parties were involved in the events leading to the problems coming out of the South Fork?*
- *Multiple organizations, and the University of Washington, showed thru hydrological data that the Pe Ell dam wouldn't have helped in that specific situation in the inundation of I5. Thoughts?”*

PART TWO

Communications Needs Assessment & 2022 Priorities

Overview: Communications Needs Assessment

Purpose: Understand whether current communications materials and approaches are currently supporting the Chehalis Basin Strategy's board members and partners in their efforts to provide direct benefits to residents and respond to residents' questions and concerns.

Methodology

1. Interviews and small group conversations with Chehalis Basin Board members and a number of partners who regularly interact with Chehalis Basin residents and landowners (approx. 30 total people).
2. Survey shared with key partners.
3. Holistic review of current Chehalis Basin Strategy communications materials.

Key Findings: Partner Needs

Key Findings

- **The ChehalisBasinStrategy.com website is not easily navigable** for residents or partners. There is a need for a “one-stop-shop” website that clearly provides information and resources.
- **Partners are overwhelmed by resources and information** spread across multiple places. They request a toolkit that streamlines various resources and materials, as well as a Chehalis Basin Strategy leave-behind for residents.

Key Findings: Board Member Needs

Key Findings

- **Board members are important community touch-points** for residents and other stakeholders to stay up-to-date on and engaged with the Chehalis Basin Strategy. For many residents, conversations with board members are one of the primary ways in which they receive information about the actions being taken in their communities and the ways in which they could be benefitted and impacted.
- **Local buy-in is vital.** Given the Chehalis Basin Strategy's dependence on voluntary participation, board members identified local buy-in as vital, especially from landowners.
- **Connect people to success stories.** Board members emphasized the importance of connecting residents to messages and materials that demonstrate on-the-ground impact and success stories.

Key Findings

- **Conversations happen less frequently because of the pandemic.** Board members reported fewer organic opportunities to talk about the Chehalis Basin Strategy (with electeds, members of the public, agency staff, etc.) in the past two years.
- **Frequently-raised topics have no easy answers.** There are a number of complicated and frequently-raised topics which board members desire additional guidance on how to address, in order to be able to fully respond to questions from community members. It's important that board members are consistent in their messaging.

OCB Comms Priorities for 2022

Overall Communications Objectives

1. Connect residents to up-to-date and transparent information about the Chehalis Basin Strategy, demonstrating it is an example of a government process that works.
2. Foster regional collaboration by positioning the Chehalis Basin Strategy as a climate adaptation and resilience model.
3. Strengthen the Chehalis Basin Board's communication in support of keeping the Strategy moving forward.

Communications Priorities for 2022

- **Update messages and materials**, and identify needed additional materials, to speak directly to resident needs and concerns.
- **Prioritize on-the-ground success stories** that help residents understand how the Chehalis Basin Strategy's investments are benefitting their communities.
- **Support ex-officio board members** in elevating the Chehalis Basin Strategy on meeting agendas, side conversations, etc. so that the most up-to-date information and importance of the Chehalis Basin remains on agencies' radars.

Communications Priorities for 2022

- **Support coordinated communications and public outreach** between the Chehalis Basin Board and LAND Steering Group regarding non-dam options under consideration.
- **Re-structure the ChehalisBasinStrategy.com website**, positioning it as an easy-to-use “one-stop-shop” for both partners and residents seeking information about the Strategy.
- **Develop a partners’ toolkit** to support partners in their work.

Questions/Discussion
