

# CHEHALIS BASIN BOARD SUMMARIZED MEETING AGENDA AND ACTIONS

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**Date:** December 7, 2023  
**Time:** 9:00 AM to 2:45 PM  
**Location:** Hybrid meeting – Fairfield Inn and Suites by Marriott Grand Mound  
 Centralia: 6223 197th Way SW, Rochester, WA 98579

ITEM	FORMAL ACTION	FOLLOW-UP ACTION
1. Approval of current Agenda and November 2 <sup>nd</sup> Meeting Summary	Decision: Current Agenda approved; November 2 <sup>nd</sup> summary approved	No follow-up action.
2. Director's Report and Welcome	Discussion	No follow-up action.
3. Aquatic Species Restoration Plan (ASRP)	Discussion / Direction	<p>The ASRP Steering Committee will revise their previous \$3 million request in ASRP funding for the Lower Satsop River Mile 0-2 Phase 2 Restoration Project, then bring back to the Board for direction and project approval.</p> <p>Staff will investigate whether spending ASRP funds now precludes future match opportunities.</p> <p>Staff will seek Board approval at the January Board meeting for the South Fork Chehalis RM 0-2 Restoration project: Design and Construction.</p>
4. Skookumchuck Dam Analyses Next Steps	Direction	No follow-up action.
5. Chehalis Basin Strategy Development	Discussion / Direction	<p>OCB will finalize the scope of work for a comparative analysis consultant with Board input and issue an RFQ in Q1 2024 with the goal to begin work late Q1/early Q2 2024.</p> <p>OCB will select a comparative analysis consultant via a competitive process with Board or Board subgroup engagement.</p>
6. Request for approval of 2024 Board Meeting Dates and Locations	Decision: 2024 Board meeting dates and locations approved. Meetings will be held at the Fairfield Inn and Suites in Rochester on the first Thursday of the month except January and July on	No follow-up action.

ITEM	FORMAL ACTION	FOLLOW-UP ACTION
	the second Thursday of the month.	
7. Annual Board Handbook Updates	Direction	Board members are encouraged to update their emails and phone numbers and review Handbook track-changes uploaded on the <a href="#">EZ View website</a> .  Staff will schedule a time to meet with the Ecology AG and will come back to the Board to readdress email questions with clear guidance.
8. Community Flood Assistance & Resilience (CFAR) Program	Discussion	No Follow-up action.
9. Skookumchuck Dam Reservoir Gage Upgrade	Decision: Approval to move forward with the request to use other project funding on the gage.	Scott Boetcher (Flood Authority) and Cody Duncan (TransAlta) will further discuss the need for and logistics of the Skookumchuck Dam Reservoir Gage.
10. Public Comment, Next Steps, and Closing	Discussion	No Follow-up action.

## Attendees

### *Chehalis Basin Board Members*

NAME	APPOINTING AUTHORITY	ATTENDANCE
Vickie Raines	Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority	Present
Edna Fund	Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority	Present
Jay Gordon	Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority	Present
Tyson Johnston	Quinault Indian Nation	Excused
Glen Connelly	Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation	Present
J. Vander Stoep	Office of the Governor	Present
Steve Malloch	Office of the Governor	Present

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

NAME	AGENCY	ATTENDANCE
Michael Garrity	Department of Fish and Wildlife	Present
Katie Allen	Department of Natural Resources	Present
Mark Gaines	Department of Transportation	Present
Josh Giuntoli	Washington State Conservation Commission	Present
Rich Doenges	Department of Ecology	Present

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

- See Attachment A

## Welcome, Introductions

Board Chair Vickie Raines called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. and welcomed the Board, staff, and audience. She welcomed Jeff Zenk, the new OCB Director, as well as Carrie Sessions, attending virtually from the Governor's Office.

## Agenda and Meeting Summary Review

Ken Ghaleb (Ross Strategic) provided an overview of the meeting's agenda. The Board did not have additions or revisions to the [December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023 meeting agenda](#).

**BOARD DECISION:** Agenda approved by consensus.

The Board did not have additions or revisions to the November 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting summary.

**BOARD DECISION:** November 2<sup>nd</sup> Board meeting summary approved by consensus.

Below is a link to the meeting materials:

- [November 2, 2023 meeting summary](#)

## Director's Report

Jeff Zenk provided his first OCB Director's report. He looks forward to working with the Board, partners, and Tribes, and encouraged Board members to reach out to Stevie Colson (OCB) to schedule time to talk with him. He provided the following updates:

- Flood warnings have been extended above Grand Mound. OCB can assist in facilitating emergency funding or flood assistance as needed.
- The National Marine Fisheries Service made an initial finding that an Endangered Species Act (ESA) protection for Washington Coast spring-run Chinook salmon may be warranted, and further studies will be conducted.
- OCB received proposals from three consultant teams for the Local Actions Non-Dam (LAND) Alternatives Analysis project, and based on a competitive evaluation is moving forward to negotiate a contract and finalize a scope of work with Moffett & Nichols.
- A federal funding workshop has been scheduled on January 30<sup>th</sup> in partnership with the Chehalis Basin Lead Entity and the Grays Harbor Conservation District.
- In upcoming weeks, Erosion Management Program reach-scale grant proposals will be evaluated, and contracting will be initiated. All proposals were from the Grays Harbor Conservation District.
- Washington State Parks is closing on a purchase of Marwood Farms in the upper Chehalis River. OCB will send a letter of intent and is working out easement and property restrictions.

- Pyramid Communications is working on end-of-the-year reports for the Chehalis Basin Strategy and for the Aquatic Species Restoration Plan (ASRP).

## Aquatic Species Restoration Plan (ASRP)

### *Lower Satsop River Mile 0-2 Phase 2 Restoration: Construction*

Drew Meador (WDFW) provided updates on the Lower Satsop River Mile 0-2 Phase 2 Restoration Project since the November Board meeting. The project applied for, but did not receive, a requested \$6,276,083 from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation National Coastal Resilience Fund, so the project must look for alternative funding sources. The reasons why the grant application was not successful are currently unclear but will be investigated and shared with the Board. The project had previously requested \$3 million from ASRP that is awaiting Board action and could be used to get through an initial year of construction while further funding is sought. The project hopes to continue and will be ready for construction in summer 2024. Grays Harbor CD will re-structure their proposal and return to request Board action and funding at a later date. Board members commented:

- It is important to look at multiple sources of potential project proposal funding.
- A concern is if ASRP funds are spent now, it may preclude match opportunities in the future. Grants go about matches in multiple ways.

**FOLLOW UP:** The project team will seek initial Board direction and project approval after the ASRP Steering Committee revises the previous proposal for \$3 million in ASRP funding. The project team will investigate whether spending ASRP funds now precludes future match opportunities.

### *South Fork Chehalis RM 0-2 Restoration: Design and Construction*

Drew Meador (WDFW) and Nikki Atkins (Lewis Conservation District) presented the South Fork Chehalis River Mile 0-2 Restoration project to seek ASRP Design and Construction funding. Mr. Meador summarized the project approval process and ASRP budget status. The project seeks \$4,491,000 from the ASRP project implementation budget in the 2023-2025 biennium, and a total of \$7,060,755. Mr. Meador provided a high-level review of the project, including its scope, expected outcomes, budget, timeline, and how the project fits into ASRP basin-wide priorities. The project sponsor received an initial round of ASRP funding to develop concept-level design, and the hope is to retain project momentum. Key comments from the Board's discussion included:

- Mr. Meador and Ms. Atkins clarified that ASRP is not seeking the full project budget for the 2023-2025 biennium because the current budget proposal would allow more of the 2023-2025 biennium's funding to be used for other projects, and because the South Fork Chehalis RM 0-2 project would not spend the full \$7 million until after the end of the 2023-2025 biennium. The project will seek out other funding opportunities as well.

- Ms. Atkins and a Board member discussed how the project team will investigate the impact of log jams on the hydrology of Curtis, where the project is located.
- A Board member shared flood history of the property, noting how an elevated barn still ended up flooding due to a collapsed bridge. This cause of flooding highlights that the Curtis pinch point is not the only contributor to localized flooding. A concern is that this project will create a new upstream flood impact.
- A Board member expressed appreciation of the scope and scale of the project.

**FOLLOW UP:** Staff will seek Board approval at the January Board meeting.

### *Black River and Willapa Hills – Water Use Outreach Share Out*

Drew Meador (WDFW) provided an overview of the Black River and Willapa Hills project. The project budget is smaller than needed for Board review/approval but was flagged to bring to the Board because of the Board's high interest in the topic of water use and to increase coordinated outreach. Mr. Meador presented an overview of the project, its budget, and the context of water use assessment in the Chehalis Basin. Jason Hatch (Washington Water Trust [WWT]) presented on the Water Use Outreach Strategy for the Black River and Willapa Hills Ecological Regions. He reviewed the assessment location, species of concern and limiting factors within the assessment regions, strategies and actions to address species concerns, a water rights assessment methodology including Stillman Creek and Teanaway River Upper Yakima Basin project examples, and a project timeline. The ASRP project proposal for \$89,914 of Project Development funding is to develop a Water User Outreach Plan with a goal of obtaining 3-5 letters of interest from willing water users.

Mr. Meador responded to Board members' clarifying questions and there was no additional Board feedback. Board members are encouraged to reach out to Drew Meador with any further questions.

Below is a link to the meeting material:

- [SF Chehalis RM 0-2 design and construction](#)

### **Skookumchuck Dam Analysis Phase 3 Proposed Updates to the Scope**

Merri Martz (Anchor QEA) and Nat Kale (OCB) presented an update on potential studies and analyses for the Skookumchuck Dam Phase 3 evaluation to support the Board's long-term Strategy development process. To better meet the Board's needs and fit within available time and resource constraints, staff proposed the following changes for the 2023-25 biennium analyses:

- Dropping the water rights analysis, geotechnical analysis, and the upper watershed habitat assessment, which are either more appropriate for a design/permitting phase or difficult to complete now due to access issues

- Adding a juvenile salmon survival study, predator evaluation, and turbidity monitoring to further explore issues of interest to the Board
- Including additional optional, deferred tasks related to conceptual low level outlet design, modeling, and geotechnical field investigation

This proposal would be helpful for the Board in understanding pieces for the long-term Strategy development work.

- Michael Garrity noted that OCB could coordinate with FERC and those involved in the TransAlta dam relicensing agreement to better understand past studies related to turbidity and other issues/TransAlta agreement.
- A Board member commented that these changes will be helpful for understanding fish passage. Stephen Bernath, a past ex-officio Board member, commented that turbidity analysis on its own will not provide a cause and effect.

Below is a link to the meeting material:

- [Proposed Updates to the Skookumchuck Scope Phase 3](#)

## Chehalis Basin Board Strategy Development Process

Ken Ghalambor (Ross Strategic) discussed a preliminary evaluation framework for the comparative analysis and a scope of work for a future comparative analysis consultant. Mr. Ghalambor explained how goals and metrics can be identified based on a set of evaluation factors (categories), and how those metrics can be used to evaluate whether the packages are doing a better or worse job at achieving those goals.

Next, Mr. Ghalambor provided a high-level review of the tasks and products envisioned in the scope of work for the comparative analysis consultant. Key tasks include the development of the methodology and plan for the comparative analysis, a benefit-cost evaluation, a comparative analysis report, and coordination with the Board and a potential Board subgroup.

Finally, Mr. Ghalambor provided an updated timeline for Strategy development activities, which shortened the end date for deciding on the long-term Strategy from Q4 to Q1 of 2026. OCB is working on a detailed process map to frontload as much work as possible without sacrificing information quality. Key Board comments and discussion topics included:

- A two-year timeline is better than a three-year timeline.
- All the presented evaluation categories identified need to be considered.
- It is important to narrow the Comparative Analysis consultant's scope, so they produce a more specific report.
- The evaluation categories and factors should be presented within the overarching goals of the Strategy (flood damage reduction and habitat restoration). All categories

presented are important, but some are more central to the overarching goals and need to be indicated as such. Future materials should be reframed to more clearly show this.

- The connection between Task 2 (benefit-cost evaluation) and Task 3 (comparative analysis report) in the comparative analysis scope should be made more explicit.
- Mr. Ghaleb discussed a proposal for the Board to develop an interim status report that can be shared with the Legislature to document areas of agreement and progress toward a long-term Strategy, coupled with the Board's 2025-2027 budget recommendations.

**FOLLOW UP:** OCB will finalize the comparative analysis scope of work with Board input. OCB plans to issue an RFQ in Q1 2024 with the goal to begin work late Q1/early Q2 2024. A comparative analysis consultant will be selected via a competitive process with Board engagement.

Below is a link to the meeting material:

- [Chehalis Basin Strategy Development Memo](#)

## 2024 Board Meeting Dates and Locations

Stevie Colson (OCB) revisited the proposed 2024 Board meeting dates and locations presented at the November Board meeting with updated information, including costs of meeting venues. She requested Board approval for the proposed venues and dates. Chair Vickie Raines provided an alternative proposal of holding all meetings at the Fairfield Inn and Suites by Marriott Grand Mound Centralia (the location of this meeting) due to its central location. Meeting locations could still change as needed, provided there was at least two –weeks of advance notice. The room can be configured for additional public attendance.

**DECISION:** Board members approved 2024 Board meetings to be held at the Fairfield Inn and Suites in Chehalis, on the first Thursday of the month except January and July on the second Thursday of the month. (Tyson Johnson, absent from the meeting, was consulted and approved of the meeting date and location proposal.)

Below is a link to the meeting material:

- [2024 Meeting Date and Location Memo](#)

## Board Handbook Updates

Stevie Colson (OCB) reviewed general updates made to the Board Handbook and reminded the Board that the Department of Ecology (Ecology) recommends that Board members use their Ecology email addresses rather than personal email addresses so that it is easier to respond to any potential public records requests. Other updates included:

- Board members should ensure their phone numbers and email addresses are correct on the website.

- The Department of Ecology (Ecology) is pushing for the use of Ecology emails to ensure email accessibility and transparency so that potential public records requests can be completed easily. Ecology may have to temporarily take Board member's personal devices to scan personal emails for a public records request.
- Board members will not be able to take home OCB iPads.
- OCB has a request to the Ecology AG to provide a refresher on information of public records requirements.

Board members commented:

- A Board member noted they were previously informed that they could delete transitory emails, such as scheduling messages. Ms. Colson confirmed that this was correct, but that any message originating from a Board member that involves a discussion or decision needed to be retained.
- Board members expressed interest in forwarding Ecology emails to other email addresses for local access. OCB will check on the ability of the Board's Ecology emails to do this.
- Board members would be more willing to use the Ecology email addresses if they were easier to access from any browser. OCB will check on the ability to improve the accessibility of Ecology email addresses from any browser.

**FOLLOW UP:** Board members are encouraged to update their emails and phone numbers and review the Handbook uploaded on the [EZ View website](#). Stevie Colson will coordinate with Ecology's AG Office to provide a presentation to the Board that offers clear guidance and responds to the Board's questions about emails.

Below is a link to the meeting material:

- [2024 Board Handbook Draft Updates](#)

### *Flood Damage Reduction Voluntary Acquisition*

Kat Dickey (OCB) presented an overview of two Newaukum voluntary property acquisitions that the Community Flood Assistance and Resilience (CFAR) program worked to acquire due to flood damage. She presented project backgrounds, status, successes, challenges, and lessons learned, timeline, costs, and connections to overall Chehalis Basin Strategy voluntary acquisitions. She highlighted that a main challenge was outdated and inaccurate flood maps, which created financial hardships for landowners who did not have flood insurance and experienced significant flood damage. Ms. Dickey noted a key consideration is who will own the property after the acquisitions and highlighted the importance of building relationships with landowners and collaboration between agencies and partners. An OCB-led acquisition workgroup is developing guidance for how voluntary acquisitions are conducted across



Chehalis Basin Strategy activities, including procedures for long-term maintenance, monitoring, and enforcement.

Board members commented:

- Board members noted their appreciation for learning about the accomplishments and challenges of these voluntary acquisitions, and said that previous efforts like the Local Actions Non-Dam (LAND) Alternative had not fully explored the difficulty of acquisition work.
- A Board member commented that these are the type of acquisitions the Board has talked about doing since before the concept of the Chehalis Basin Strategy. People are at risk in areas that will not be protected by the proposed dam (FRE) or a levee/bypass system, and not all structures are suitable for elevation. It is important to identify places that have residual risk and develop strategies to protect them. A programmatic, not siloed, approach would be beneficial. Each acquisition will be different with its own challenges. A systems-level approach should be taken for voluntary acquisitions in the Strategy. OCB and the Board should identify target areas for voluntary acquisitions and figure out how to work within the existing systems to make more of this work happen where appropriate.
- Often a portion of conservation easement funding is set aside for acquisition stewardship; perhaps this could be included as part of the negotiations for the title transfer.
- Board members encouraged OCB to consider how deed restrictions for land not suitable to live on due to flood damage could be used for agriculture or forestry.
- Economically, it would make sense to be able to put a deed restriction on good agricultural land that is not ideal to live on, saving money from being lost by the state.

Kat Dickey presented next steps for other upcoming CFAR activities, including an invitation to bid for home elevation projects on January 8th. OCB has been working on additional outreach to contractors and has a notice of opportunity to share with relevant parties. OCB has also started a contract with Perteet, which will soon begin working with local communities on floodplain management improvements.

Below is a link to the meeting material:

- [Flood Reduction Voluntary Acquisition Presentation](#)

### *Skookumchuck Dam Reservoir Gage Upgrade*

Scott Boetcher (Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority) presented an update for the Flood Warning System. The Skookumchuck Reservoir is an area that has an unreliable gage, which did not function for 23 days in the 2022-2023 flood season. The National Weather Service could not do forecasts for the Skookumchuck River because of the unreliable data and inquired about it.

The Flood Authority would like to buy a new gage to provide more reliable data. This gage was previously not on the 2023-2025 project list, but funds are available since Aberdeen temporarily stepped back from funding their pump project. The Flood Authority requests Board direction to use available money from the pump project on the gage, and will install it this December.

Cody Duncan (TransAlta) commented that there may have been a miscommunication of information regarding the gage and noted that TransAlta may be able to provide what the Flood Authority needs to make the gage reliable.

**FOLLOW-UP:** Scott Boetcher and Cody Duncan will further discuss the need for and logistics of the Skookumchuck Dam Reservoir Gage.

**DECISION:** The Board agreed to move forward with the request to use available funding to support improvements to the Skookumchuck Dam reservoir gage.

Below is a link to the meeting material:

- [Flood Authority Memo NWS and Skookumchuck Gage](#)

### *Public Comment*

Members of the public provided the following verbal paraphrased comments:

- Lee First: Flooding is on my mind, and minds of my neighbors as we watch the current flooding on the Chehalis River, including watching it on the Chehalis Flood Warning website. It is a reminder that the proposed dam would not reduce damage from the regular but significant flooding as seen now. The dam only holds back water when the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) predicts the river will reach 38,800 CFS with the Grand Mound Gauge, while the current flood crested at 24,000 CFS on December 6<sup>th</sup>. As the Board considers the Dam and the Local Actions Non-Dam Alternative (LAND), I and many residents hope that the Board will seriously look at a high level of investment in what the LAND calls safe structures, which includes raising, flood-proofing, and/or relocating the most at-risk structures and what these approaches could do to reduce flood damage. These approaches could rival the flood damage reduction level of the dam, and are a better match than the dam for State and Federal funding opportunities. There is nothing stopping the Strategy from pursuing these funding opportunities, many of which may be gone by the time the Board completes its work on the long-term Strategy recommendation. Separately, it is disingenuous to discourage the public from attending these meetings in person as most state, city, and county agencies conduct open public meetings.
  - Chair Vickie Raines clarified that Board meetings are open to the public and people are welcome to attend in person.

- Teri Wright: I am a concerned citizen who volunteers with organizations that are concerned about salmon, forests, and southern resident orcas. I echo and agree with Lee First's comments. Moving forward with the LAND proposals would be beneficial as they seem like the best non-dam alternative. NOAA has accepted the ninety-day process to review the state of west coast salmon. Adam put on the Chehalis River will pretty much cause the salmon to go extinct, which will not be good for the southern resident orcas who feed off salmon coming out of Grays Harbor from the Chehalis River. As an aside, I strongly recommend this Board asks the Board of Natural Resources to quit clearcutting mature and dense forests and instead keep them intact to prevent flooding and provide cold water habitat for salmon.
- David Ortman: Why have there been no presentations regarding what has been occurring with Department of Natural Resources (DNR) regarding forest practices? Weyerhaeuser, the private timber company that impacted the Willapa Hills, Grays Harbor, Satsop, and Wynoochee Basins has been mentioned once. A 1979 report determined why the Chehalis River Basin and Grays Harbor Canal was filling up rapidly with sediment and discovered the Wynoochee and Satsop subbasins were eroding ten times higher than what occurred from the famous Tillamook forest fire. Sediment came from logging roads and poor logging practices in the Satsop and Wynoochee subbasins. It is surprising that no one from the private forest industry is talking about the impact of their clearcutting and abuse of the land in the general region that has occurred.
  - Nat Kale (OCB) responded OCB has been working with the DNR Ex-Officio member on this issue, and there will be an upcoming Board meeting presentation regarding forest practices.

## Next Steps and Closing

Ken Ghaleb (Ross Strategic) thanked Board members for their participation and adjourned the meeting. The Board will next meet on January 11<sup>th</sup> at the Fairfield Inn and Suites in Chehalis WA.

## Attachment A

### Board Staff/Board Guests:

*Those that participated virtually are noted with an asterisk.*

- Anthony Waldrop, Grays Harbor Conservation District
- Brian Shay, City of Hoquiam \*
- Casey Hart, Ross Strategic\*
- Carry Sessions, Governor's Office \*
- Celina Abercrombie, WDFW
- Chris Conklin, WDFW\*
- Chris Willard \*
- Cindy Malay, OCB
- Cody Duncan, TransAlta \*
- Col. Ronald Averill, Flood Authority\*
- Colleen Granberg, DNR\*
- Darrin Raines, City of Cosmopolis \*
- Dave Bingaman, Quinault Indian Nation
- David Ortman \*
- Drew Mealor, WDFW
- Erika Britney, ICF\*
- Erin Masterson, Rep. Gluesenkamp Perez's Office \*
- Jason Hatch, Washington Water Trust
- Jeff Zenk, OCB
- Jenn Tice, Ross Strategic\*
- Jenny Lewis, OCB
- Jim Weber, CELP\*
- Kat Dickey, OCB
- Ken Ghalambor, Ross Strategic
- Kylin Brown, Pyramid Communications\*
- Larry Lestelle\*
- Larry Karpack, Watershed Science & Engineering\*
- Lee First, Twin Harbors Waterkeeper\*
- Mark Gaines, WSDOT\*
- Mark Glyde, Quinault Indian Nation \*
- Merri Martz, Anchor QEA\*
- Nat Kale, OCB
- Nikki Atkins, Lewis Conservation District

- Renelle Smith, DNR\*
- Scott Boetcher, Chehalis Basin Flood Authority
- Stevie Colson, OCB
- Teri Wright, Wild Orca\*
- Victoria Knorr, WDFW