

CHEHALIS BASIN STRATEGY

Reducing flood damage and restoring aquatic species habitat

**Winter
2017**

The Chehalis Basin fishery is in decline and major floods have been getting bigger. For the first time – in more than a century of failed attempts to address both of these problems – progress is being made. Take a look at the information that follows to learn the latest.

Fortunately, there is broad agreement in the basin that more can and will be done to reduce damages from large floods and protect and restore aquatic species habitat.

What Is the Chehalis Basin Strategy?

No single action alone will address the challenges in the Chehalis Basin – a combination of actions is needed. A lot has been accomplished already but an ambitious collection of potential actions is also being evaluated for the Chehalis Basin Strategy. The State of Washington, tribal, and local leaders are working to develop and implement a basin-wide strategy with near-term and long-term actions, including small and large scale projects. All projects will require environmental review. The goal is to make the basin a safer place for families and communities impacted by flooding, and to improve and restore aquatic species habitat now and for future generations.



Why do we need the Chehalis Basin Strategy?

- Five of the largest floods in the basin's history have occurred in the last 30 years. Summers are becoming drier as well.
- Not taking action could cost \$3.5 billion in damage to families and communities over the next 100 years – more with climate change.
- Salmon habitat has been degraded. The survival of Spring-run Chinook populations is severely threatened.
- The Chehalis Basin today has no ESA listed salmon but if the decline continues listings will occur with serious consequences.

FOR MORE
INFORMATION

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Aquatic Species Restoration Plan

Tribal and state officials are developing an unprecedented, basin-wide Aquatic Species Restoration Plan (ASRP) to protect and restore potentially several hundred miles of riverside habitat. The ASRP will:

- Protect and preserve important habitats
- Restore degraded ecosystems
- Create self-maintaining environments
- Create flood and climate resilient systems

Comprehensive data collection in the basin on salmon and other species began four years ago. Continued data collection, research, and analyses for salmonids and other aquatic species in 2017-2019 will develop a more robust and science-based understanding of the habitat and aquatic species here, and support development of the basin-wide ASRP.

In 2015-2017, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and the Chehalis Basin Lead Entity's Habitat Work Group are identifying restoration projects to provide direct benefits to fish and other species, and value to local communities that can be implemented quickly and cost-effectively. Projects are selected for funding by biologists, engineers, and habitat restoration professionals from WDFW, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Quinault Indian Nation, and a representative of the Lead Entity's citizen advisory committee.

The Governor's Chehalis Basin Work Group 2017-2019 budget recommendations include \$20,000,000 in funding for construction of priority aquatic species habitat restoration projects, including barrier removal, early action reach restoration projects (such as floodplain and channel restoration and side channel reconnections), and acquisition of critical habitats.

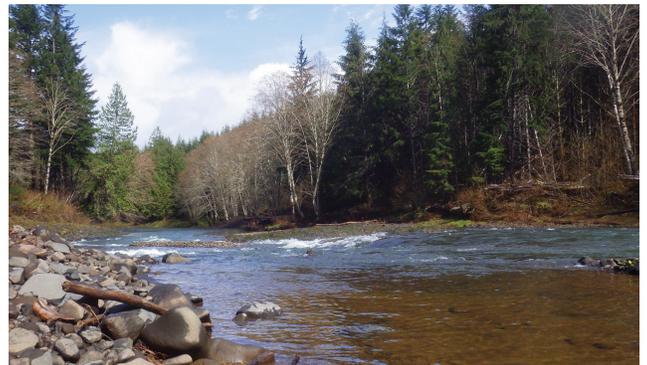


Photo courtesy *The Daily World*

Habitat Projects Underway Now

\$6.9 million investment resulted in:

- 27 fish passage barriers corrected or removed
- 135 miles of stream habitat opened
- 13 barrier correction/removal designs
- 30 miles of stream surveyed
- 33 acres of wetlands restored
- 50 local construction jobs

Local Flood Damage Reduction Projects

Many local projects have been completed and others are underway in communities across the basin to protect key infrastructure like roads and wastewater treatment plants from flood damage and others to restore individual floodplain areas. These local projects are: (a) capable of being completed within the funding cycle, (b) supported by the jurisdiction effected and (c) vetted and advanced through the Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority's Chehalis Basin Projects Committee. The State Capital Budget has been the primary funding source for local projects, averaging \$6.3M/year since 2012. See current local projects at www.ezview.wa.gov/chehalisbasinlocalfloodreliefprojects.

Aberdeen -- Fry Creek Restoration
 Aberdeen -- North Shore Levee
 Aberdeen -- Southside Levee
 Bucoda -- Flood Openings (CleanSpace)
 Bucoda -- Main Street Regrade
 Centralia -- China Creek
 Chehalis -- Dillenbaugh Creek Study
 Chehalis-Centralia Airport Pump
 Cosmopolis -- Mill Creek
 Elma -- WWTP Outfall Stabilization
 GHC -- Wishkah Road Flood Levee
 GHC -- Wishkah Road Flood Study
 Lewis County CD -- Boistfort Valley Water
 Montesano -- WWTP Protection Study
 Napavine -- Kirkland Road Study
 Oakville -- Flood Relief Study
 WCC -- Farm Pads & Evacuation Routes
 WDFW -- Lower Satsop Relic Channel

2015-17 Underway Local Capital Construction Projects
www.ezview.wa.gov/chehalisfloodauthority

CHEHALIS RIVER BASIN FLOOD AUTHORITY
 8/02/2016

The Governor's Chehalis Basin Work Group 2017-2019 budget recommendations include \$9.2M in funding for the next group of local flood damage reduction projects developed by the Flood Authority.

Local Community Contributions

Local governments have also contributed to flood reduction efforts using their own funds, with over \$4M contributed annually since 2007.

Chehalis Basin Flood Protection Project
Dillenbaugh Creek Culvert Assessment Project

Schedule → May 2016 to July 2017
 Budget → \$110,000
 Benefit → Identifying and prioritizing future flood relief improvements

www.ezview.wa.gov/chehalisfloodrelief

Local Projects Snapshot

- 27 local projects actively underway
- 19 local projects completed
- Benefits include:
 - » Substantially lower flood insurance premiums (for individuals and communities alike).
 - » Preservation of critical infrastructure essential for post-event flood recovery – roads, water supplies, sewer and wastewater treatment, etc.
 - » Early-warning, real-time access to rising flood waters (via handhelds, tablets, laptops and desktops)
 - » Protection of residential, business and community assets.
 - » Protection of farms, farm stock, equipment and agricultural livelihoods.

Continued Progress and a Path Moving Forward

We can see progress for the people, communities, and natural resources in the Chehalis Basin. But big decisions are still ahead of us.

Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement

In September 2016, the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) released a draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement at the request of the Governor's Chehalis Basin Work Group. The PEIS looked at different options for reducing flood damage and restoring aquatic species habitat. It also evaluated their potential effects on people and the environment, both positive and negative. The PEIS will support decision-making on short and long-term actions in the Basin and a final PEIS will be out in mid-2017.

Office of Chehalis Basin

In 2016, House Bill 2856 was passed to establish the Office of Chehalis Basin in Ecology. The office is to "aggressively pursue...long-term flood damage reduction and aquatic species restoration" in the Chehalis River Basin. The Office will officially launch in July 2017.

Local Community Engagement

Work continues with local governments to ensure that new floodplain development does not impact floodplain ecological function or cause additional harm for residents and structures that are located in the floodplain. The City of Centralia and Thurston County have also developed community-wide floodproofing plans to protect homes and businesses from flood damage through elevation, acquisition, and other structure retrofit projects.



Governor's Work Group 2017-2019 Budget Recommendations

The Chehalis Basin Work Group recommended a \$60 million budget appropriation to Governor Inslee, which the Governor included in his budget proposal and is currently under consideration by the State Legislature. The recommendations include:

- Completion of the Aquatic Species Restoration plan.
- Project-level environmental review for the dams being considered on the mainstem Chehalis River to address questions raised during public review of the draft PEIS and determine the feasibility to mitigate the impacts of the proposed dam. This budget recommendation is opposed by the Chehalis Tribe.
- Detailed modeling and pre-permit design for one priority sub-basin for restorative flood protection.
- Design and initial permit applications to evaluate the environmental impacts and determine the feasibility for the Aberdeen/Hoquiam North Shore Levee project.
- Implementing a public involvement and outreach strategy for all the actions and activities within the Chehalis Basin Strategy.