

Letter of Interest for Appointment to the Office of Chehalis Basin

From Dan Wood, Montesano City Council and Washington State Dairy Federation

March 14, 2017

Please consider my application for appointment by the Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority to the Board of the new Office of Chehalis Basin.

In a nutshell, I would bring the following experience and insight to this position:

- Experience as an elected official
 - o County Commissioner, School Board, City Council
 - o Understanding of laws and regulations affecting public bodies and public officials
 - o Understanding of budgeting, expenditures, oversight, and policy accountability
- 34 years around the legislative process
 - o Understanding of passing and killing legislation
 - o Coalition building
- Association Management
 - o 15 years with state Farm Bureau (Field Work; Govt. Relations Director)
 - o 5 years with state Dairy Federation (Govt. Relations Director; Executive Director)
 - o Budget Mgmt; Project Mgmt; Fundraising; Policy/Advocacy Work
- Agricultural Understanding & Connection
 - o More than 20 years representing farmers
 - o Helped raise more than \$1,000,000 in relief after the Dec. 2007 flood and storm damage
 - o Worked with other organizations on relief efforts
 - o Arranged for videography and tour for officials immediately after 12/07 storm & flood

More than \$1,000,000 in cash and in-kind relief was provided by Dairy Federation and Farm Bureau in the form of herd replacements, feed and cash grants.

It was not enough to save all of the affected farms.

· I'VE LIVED THROUGH THE FLOODS

- o For 10 years, I lived through flooding in Brady
- o I know what it is like to evacuate your family as the waters rise
- o I understand trying to save personal property in the midst of unexpected flooding
- o I've been up all night, in a house with a 4'8" foundation, measuring water levels that rise to more than 4' around the house, unable to leave, and moving things in the house to higher levels.
- I've been knee-high in my barn, in the dark, throwing tools, chemicals, and other things up stairs and hauling up to a loft.
- Dual Boards. I currently serve on the Flood Authority and the Chehalis Basin Partnership, giving me direct observation and conversation about what role each of those boards would play after the Office of Chehalis Basin is fully functional.



While my own experiences with floods in Brady are unforgettable, the aftermath of the December 2007 flood is the most emotional for me.

In that storm event, I experienced both the winds that ripped roofing off my outbuildings and flooding of my property. In January of 2009, I had to evacuate my family and had a raging river around my house.

I've waded into waist-high water on the county road near my house, while my wife had our van lights shining out on a stranded car. We could only imagine who was in that car in the dip, while the water was rising and the car headlight went dark.

But the most dramatic experience for me was AFTER the December 2007 flood, when I arranged for state and local officials to tour the devastated area and see the devastation and grief that resulted from the flooding in Lewis County.

The video footage and still photos still are gripping. The PowerPoint presentation has been played more than 100 times to officials, civic organizations, and others who might listen and have an influence on decisions and actions.

Each time it is shown, the presentation is accompanied with the message that **"it will happen again."** I have spent years imploring officials to think big and take bold steps to prevent the widespread damage that results from these events.

I remember as we interviewed John Brunoff (shown gripping his cap). "When did you know it was too late," he was asked. "When the cows stopped bawling," he said, then turned away because he was unable to speak.



Even after 100 times through the presentation, I still steel myself in anticipation of Dini Kesting nearly breaking down as she talks about the "soup lady" coming by and some stranger handing her husband John \$100.

After telling us of the generosity of that stranger, Dini said "With it staying this way, I don't have nothing. I don't have an income. We're gonna start

again...and hopefully we don't have another flood like this."



The Kestings lost a lot of their dairy herd, and their son "Little John" had to swim for his life after trying to rescue some of their stock. During his interview, John had a small bandage on his forehead where he was struck by wood debris in the raging river.

Meanwhile, the Schilters lost their feed on their organic dairy. Pete Dykstra lost nearly his entire herd of dairy cows. He and his wife were rescued rescued from the second floor of their home.

Nurseries and Christmas tree farms were wiped out.

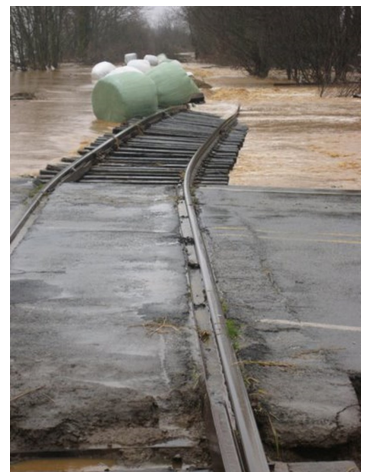
Some fields were covered with massive root wads and rocks that left their fields unproductive for years.





While we were raising money for relief, we continued to advocate for big ideas and big solutions, along with whatever else could be done in smaller efforts on the local level.

The Chehalis Basin Partnership was not the place to get it done. The Flood Authority was created, followed by strategies, identifying



projects, securing funding and implementing those projects.

It wasn't just a few farms affected by the floods. It was a major area. Interstate 5. Homes in our cities. Rail lines. Entire neighborhoods were under water. It looked like the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

I am passionate about reminding people what happened in our basin. Not only in 2007, but 2009, 1996, and many other times when the flooding has been devastating.

We mustn't let people forget and we mustn't let people ignore that happened and what will happen again.

My approach to this board will be exactly what is called for in the legislation: "to aggressively pursue implementation of an integrated strategy and administer funding for long-term flood damage reduction and aquatic species restoration in the Chehalis river basin."

The primary purpose of the office is to aggressively pursue implementation of an integrated strategy and administer funding for long-term flood damage reduction and aquatic species restoration in the Chehalis river basin. RCW 43.21A.730 (1)

2017 is the 34th legislative session I have been through. I have helped lead non-profit organizations and been involved in major and minor projects as staff, volunteer leader, and responsible public official. My leadership and oversight roles give me preparation for the role on the board of the Office of Chehalis Basin.

The board is responsible for oversight of a long-term strategy resulting from the department's programmatic environmental impact statement for the Chehalis river basin to reduce flood damages and restore aquatic species habitat. RCW 43.21A.731 (5)

That same experience in government and the not-for-profit world has involved a great deal of budgeting, goal-setting, implementation and adaptation of plans.

The board is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the strategy and developing biennial and supplemental budget recommendations to the governor. RCW 43.21A.731 (6)

I am accustomed to reviewing data, asking high-level and detailed questions, ensuring that correct information is applied to situations, and pursuing public policy that meets a variety of interests.

The Chehalis basin strategy must include a detailed set of actions to reduce flood damage and improve aquatic species habitat. The strategy must be amended by the Chehalis board as necessary to include new scientific information and needed changes to the actions to achieve the overall purpose of the strategy. The strategy must include an implementation schedule and quantified measures for evaluating the success of implementation. RCW 43.21A.732

I hope you are able to see the passion I have for resolving flooding threats to our communities in the Chehalis River Basin. I'll take that passion to the board of the Office of Chehalis Basin and I'll make sure all of our interests are protected in the process.

Thank you for considering my letter of interest for one of the board seats to be appointed by the Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority.

Sincerely,



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