



"2007 Chehalis Basin Flood – Ten Years Later"



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Ten years ago, in December 2007, we experienced a flood of epic proportions. We were not prepared for the scale nor magnitude of this event (*nor were we prepared for the January 2009 event that followed a short thirteen months later*).

The December 2007 flood severely impacted our communities and businesses. We lost a lot. Water, sewer, and road infrastructure had to be rebuilt. Our livestock, including cows and sheep, suffered greatly with a high loss of life. Businesses were shuttered. Some never reopened. Emergency transport was substantially hampered. While December 3-7, 2007 damaged our homes, schools, businesses, and critical infrastructure -- it did not damage our resolve.

As Chair and Vice-Chair of the Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority, we've taken a moment to ask ourselves if our communities are better prepared today for an event like December 2007? The answer is "Yes!" We are much better prepared. Through the efforts of homeowners, businesses, Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority, Governors Gregoire and Insee, the Washington State Legislature, and many other local, state, and federal leaders, we have a lot to show.

- Now there is a state-of-the-art, real-time Chehalis Basin flood warning system which enables early action by citizens and emergency responders. Since 2014, we've seen a 158% increase in sign-ups for the system's email alert capability. See www.chehalisriverflood.com.
- Over 30 local projects have been completed, or are near completion, since 2012. These local projects protect people, property, and infrastructure, in addition to improving readiness, response, and resiliency. Our communities are safer now through local actions to:
 - Protect essential drinking water supplies in Boistfort and Bucoda and wastewater treatment infrastructure in Montesano and Pe Ell.
 - Ensure emergency response facilities remain open and functional across the three counties and at the Chehalis-Centralia Airport.
 - Provide community-based flood protection in Aberdeen, Adna, Bucoda, Centralia, Chehalis, Cosmopolis, Elma, Grays Harbor County, Lewis County, Montesano, Napavine, Oakville, and Thurston County.
 - Invest in flood warning infrastructure, field instrumentation, and river models across the Chehalis Basin to ensure early and accurate flood warning and action.
 - Obtain the National Weather Service doppler radar in North Beach, Grays Harbor County, September 2011.

- We've constructed 25 farm pads and farm evacuation routes across the Chehalis Basin to protect the assets and livelihoods of farmers so severely impacted in December 2007.
- A long-term strategy is being developed for the Chehalis Basin to provide both comprehensive fish habitat restoration and investment in large-scale flood hazard reduction.
- Substantial investments in habitat restoration were made across the Chehalis Basin in 2016-17 resulting in:
 - 27 fish 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.
- We continue to embrace a spirit of transparency and shared contribution, knowing both provide better buy-in and end-results. Since 2007, local communities across the Chehalis Basin have regularly invested three local dollars for every ten state dollars to ensure local communities are safer and more flood ready.

While we are positive on our progress since 2007, we know more is needed to significantly reduce damage from major floods. We also know as the December 2007 event fades to memory -- the energy to sustain our preparedness for future catastrophic flood events could also fade. It rains in Washington and rains a lot. We know we will have an epic flood again. The science and historic record tells us this is true. We must continue to maintain our resolve.

To remind us of the magnitude of the December 2007 event, we have set-up the following website to catalogue recent news, events, and information lest we forget: www.ezview.wa.gov/Chehalis-Basin-Flood-Ten-Years-Later. Please visit the site, reacquaint yourself with the magnitude of the 2007 event, and continue to follow our progress. We will periodically post to the site to remind us of that unimaginable time in December 2007.

Thank you.

Vickie Raines



Commissioner, Grays Harbor County
 Chair, Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority
 Chair, Office of Chehalis Basin Board

Edna J. Fund



Commissioner, Lewis County
 Vice-Chair, Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority
 Chair, Lewis County Flood Control Zone District