

May 8th, 2023

From: Jay Gordon, Chehalis Valley Farmer; Policy Director, Washington State Dairy Federation

To: Members of the Chehalis Basin Flood Authority

Re: Letter of Interest for Appointment to the Office of Chehalis Basin

It has been my pleasure to serve for the past six years as one of the three Flood Authority appointees on the Board of the Office of Chehalis Basin (OCB). I would be humbled and grateful to serve an additional 4 years as one of your representatives to the OCB. I thank you for your consideration of this application for appointment. Much has been done these past six years. We have much more work to accomplish.

The current OCB board and staff work well as a team and thru team work and keeping to a shared vision, the budget has grown to support the work of Basin-wide solutions, small or large, but all important to the citizens of our valley. It has been my pleasure to work with the team at the Flood Authority and the Office of Chehalis Basin Staff.

The next steps for the Office of the Chehalis Basin (OCB) include:

- Transitioning to implementation from past planning and studies on Flood Damage reduction and on the Aquatic Species recovery plan. To do that there is still work on the two large flood reduction pathways (flood retention facility above PeEll and the Local action Non-Dam (LAND) alternative.) The next two years will be critical to finish the evaluations of these options before decisions can be made on different major pathways.
- The Flood Authority has successfully implemented countless local projects over the last few budget cycles. The success of getting local projects on the ground and solving local problems comes from an excellent model of collaboration and project prioritization by the Flood Authority. I cannot say how fantastic this model is working to identify and solve problems. The local knowledge and leadership of the Flood authority members is the key to identifying a broad range of important projects. The recently passed budget is no exception, for example the work on the North Shore levy now has funding support and is progressing because everyone from the Flood authority to the OCB team to the Governor's team and legislators saw the importance of this infrastructure upgrade.
- The aquatic species habitat plan is complete, and implementation of habitat work has been instigated with private landowners along the 5-10 early action reaches targeted for restoration this biennium. We have started to have conversations but need more information and then consider action steps on the other aspects of salmon recovery that are limiting recovery (those

other limiting factors include predation by bass and pinnipeds, the role of hatcheries, harvest policies, etc.)

- Lastly and likely some of the most audacious and challenging work, is reaching an agreeable conclusion, such as how to reduce the impacts of extreme flooding and recover salmon in our basin. Our citizens and communities have experienced 5 of the largest recorded floods in the past 27 years. The trend up and down the west coast is clear, we are seeing more extreme rain events. The challenge will be both in seeing if a technical solution such as a flood retention structure or the Land process actually reduces flood damage AND if we can find consensus in the public policy arena for supporting that solution (and then finding the funding to implement it!!). Deciding a major course of actions - together - will be tough.

I believe both flood damage reduction **and** long-term improvements to our fisheries are compatible. It will not be easy to do both and will require careful, thorough steps to assure we achieve both important actions. I have been part of the effort to navigate that course and know we can and must achieve both. We know more floods are coming and we know if we do nothing, the fisheries will continue to flounder or decline.

Since science and history tell us inaction is an option but a poor one. To achieve the best interests of our valley, our actions must be taken carefully, collaboratively and wisely. I hope the following summary gives you a glimpse of the skills, experience and perspectives I have developed over many years and that come with my offer of service on this Office of Chehalis Basin oversight board.

I bring the following experiences and perspectives to this position:

- **Office of the Chehalis Basin**- For the past six years I have served as one of the three Flood Authority Representatives to the OCB. It has been a pleasure to not only serve and work with the cities and counties that make up the Flood Authority membership but to also serve to represent our rural “unincorporated” areas. I am the only farmer on the board and the only member other than the Chehalis Tribe with land and homes that are flooded.
- **Chehalis Basin Governor’s Workgroup** - I served as one of the original appointed advisors for both Governor Inslee and Governor Gregoire on the Chehalis Basin Governor’s Workgroup.
- **Washington State Dairy Federation**
 - **Policy Director** – 2015 to present: work legislative and regulatory affairs on behalf of dairy farmers and farmers across our state. Work includes local, state and national policy initiatives. Work with local, state and national elected officials and a wide variety of agencies and experts. Involves 50-90 days a year hill in Olympia or in D.C. advocating to the legislature and Congress.
 - **Executive Director** (full time staff position) - 11/2000 to 12/2015: Oversee Policy work and board management. Include developing and overseeing budgets, hiring, contract and grant

administration, board development and boardmanship training, managed four strategic planning processes and implemented those strategic plans and annual association plans.

- **Board of Directors, Washington State Dairy Federation** -(volunteer position) 11/1996 to 11/2000. Assisting with setting and overseeing policy of Association, set goals for staff and budgets, and assist with legislative and regulatory activities.

➤ **Gordon Farm**

- **Owner and manager**, 1979 to present: Along with my wife and a longtime farm partner, we operate and manage our eighth generation, 600-acre crop farm, owned by my family since 1872. We raise corn, grain, grass and a variety of vegetables and seed crops.
 - **Flooding personal perspective** - Our family has experienced the trials of farming in a flood plain for generations. We understand, farm and live most of the time quite well with floods, but the floods since the early 1990's have become more extreme and costly for my neighbors and citizens up and down the valley.
 - **Fisheries personal perspective** – My great uncles and aunt were commercial fishermen in Grays Harbor and I have fished recreationally my whole life. Living along the Chehalis, I see so much potential for improvement of our fishery, especially in the salmon and steelhead runs. With careful stewardship, and wise investments in our sometime “forgotten” Chehalis Valley, I see the potential for a world class fishery, once again. Our challenge is achieving a sustainable salmon legacy for future generations of fishermen.
- Other volunteer service and experience includes:
- **Board member, William D. Ruckelshaus Center**, 2004 to present: This board and center specializes in providing assistance to groups to help solve tough public policy issues through collaborative involvement and consensus processes.
 - **Grays Harbor Conservation District Board Member and Associate member**, 1989 to present: Oversee staff, district projects, work with neighboring farmers on conservation activities, work with a variety of federal and state agencies including State Conservation Commission, & USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.
 - **Washington State Conservation District Association, Treasurer**, 1990 to 1996: oversee and manage finances of the Association, assist with conference planning, policy development, legislative and regulatory actions. Work with Local, State and Federal Agencies and elected officials.

The flood of 2007 was an experience that changed things. I have included one photo (below) of our family farm on December 1st 2007. When the flood waters finally receded, while our fields, fences and houses were damaged, it was nothing compared to the farmers and cities upstream. Once our

farm and our immediate neighbors were safe, we heard the stories from the “upper valley”. As people came back to their homes, cities and farms they and we all realized the magnitude of the work it would take to help “fix” the damage of that flood (and again in 2009).

Our Association, fellow farm and local organizations, county and state agencies and hundreds if not thousands of volunteers went into action, with boots on the ground in the upper Valley. I am proud of the work to help farms and towns recover, but it still haunts me that we “lost” farm families who simply decided they didn’t want to risk rebuilding in our valley in the face of more flooding. The concern then, as now, is “are we safe to live and rebuild here?”. Now, when the rains fall hardest, we wonder if the next big or bigger flood is coming...again.

The directives outlined in the legislation that formed the Office of the Chehalis Basin are audacious mile-posts; I look forward to and hope I may continue to work with this OCB team to meet the goals of the legislation and the needs of citizens of our valley. In the past six years of my service on the OCB, I have missed one meeting of the OCB and none of the Flood Authority meetings (that I recall). I expect – as should your Flood Authority members – the same dedication if I am so granted another few years of service as a representative of the Flood Authority to the Office of the Chehalis Basin.

Thank you for considering my letter of interest for one of the appointed board seats from the Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority. If you have any questions, please contact me by cell phone at 360-951-8419 or email at: Jay@wastatedairy.com

Sincerely,

W. Jay Gordon

Our farm is the bottom right of this image, the bridge “over the Chehalis” at Porter is mostly underwater.



From: [Scott Boettcher](#)
To: [Jay Gordon](#)
Cc: vraines@graysharbor.us; [Jay Gordon](#)
Subject: Re: letter of interest for service on Office of Chehalis Basin Board
Date: Monday, May 8, 2023 11:13:39 AM

Jay. Thank you for your letter of interest, received on-time.
Scott

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone
Get [Outlook for Android](#)

From: Jay Gordon <jay@wastatedairy.com>
Sent: Monday, May 8, 2023 11:10:29 AM
To: Scott Boettcher <scottb@sbg-h-partners.com>
Cc: vraines@graysharbor.us <vraines@graysharbor.us>; Jay Gordon <jay@wastatedairy.com>
Subject: letter of interest for service on Office of Chehalis Basin Board

Scott and Chair Raines,

Please see my attached letter of interest for serving as a representative to the Office of the Chehalis Basin on behalf of the Flood Authority.

It has been my pleasure to serve the past 6 years and I would be honored to serve another four-year term.

Thank you.

Jay Gordon

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