

## Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority

**Work Session – 9:00 a.m.**

Lewis County Fire District #5  
102 2<sup>nd</sup> NE, Napavine

### **April 19, 2012 - Meeting Notes**

**Board Members Present:** Jim Cook, City of Aberdeen; Alan Carr, Town of Bucoda; Lionel Pinn, City of Napavine; Dolores Lee, Town of Pe Ell; Ken Estes, City of Montesano; Vickie Raines, City of Cosmopolis; Merlin MacReynold, City of Chehalis; Ron Averill, Lewis County Commissioner; Dan Thompson, City of Oakville; Edna Fund, City of Centralia; Terry Willis, Grays Harbor County Commissioner; Karen Valenzuela, Thurston County Commissioner

**Consultants Present:** Paul Schlenger and Bob Montgomery, Anchor QEA

**Others Present:** Please see sign in sheet

#### **Handouts/Materials Used:**

- Agenda
- PowerPoint: Findings of the Chehalis River Fish Population Impact Study

#### **1. Call to Order and Welcome**

Chairman Raines called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. She thanked Mr. Pinn and the City of Napavine for the meeting location. Mr. Pinn thanked everyone for attending, with a special thanks to Chief Linn for the use of the fire hall.

#### **2. Introductions**

Self-introductions were made by all attending.

#### **3. Update on Fisheries Impact Study – Anchor QEA**

##### **a. Quick recap**

Mr. Schlenger and Mr. Montgomery presented a summary PowerPoint presentation of the study (presentation available on the website). Mr. Schlenger stated that approximately 500 comments were received regarding the fisheries impact study, to which Anchor QEA responded or considered in the updated report.

Mr. Montgomery explained the reduction in temperatures. Cooler water would be released from the reservoir. The benefit of downstream temperature improvements dissipates over distance; the temperatures would converge at Porter because of heating through the Chehalis River system. The biggest temperature difference in the mainstem Chehalis would be between the proposed dam site to the South Fork.

A question was asked about when the temperatures would affect fish survival. Mr. Schlenger stated that temperatures higher than +16 to 18 degrees affect fish survival.

Anchor QEA incorporated fish behavior into the study – how fish react to a barrier. Only a fraction of the fish will run into the barrier and go to another habitat (stray rate). The best available study of fish responses to a new barrier was on the Toutle River after the eruption of Mt. St. Helens. The study

showed that a higher percentage of fish migrated to different locations in the area because of unsuitable conditions. The fish will adapt to their condition, but not necessarily all of the fish. Anchor QEA took the conservative approach and incorporate a stray rate of 20% in the analysis.

Mr. Johnson asked, assuming there is a percentage of the fish that would go to alternative reaches, how long would it take for the spawning salmon to have all adapted. The ones that don't get to spawning ground will probably die. The ones that do adapt will go back after how long?

Mr. Schlenger stated salmon are known for their straying, so their next generation will be "homed" to the water from which they originate.

Mr. Johnson stated with the dam there are fish that would spawn above the dam but over time the loss of habitat would be less because the fish will adapt to another area. Mr. Schlenger stated a large percentage of those fish that survived will be downstream.

Mr. Nelson, WDFW, stated steelhead is a species that does not do well when re-distributed. Coho are more adaptable, as are Chinook. How much do we care about our steelhead and what can you do for Chinook and Coho? Steelhead are particular about where they spawn.

Mr. Muller asked if the base line for percentages is for the main stem, or was Anchor going down to the Newaukum. Mr. Schlenger stated the study area was for the main stem to Porter, not the tributaries.

Mr. Schlenger stated that the analysis used conservative estimates for model inputs such that the potential impacts would be more likely to be overestimated than underestimated. He thought that was the appropriate approach to take.

Two major summary points emerged:

- Winter steelhead and Coho salmon populations were predicted to be substantially reduced in either dam configuration.
- Spring Chinook abundance was predicted to more than double (based on median numbers over 50-year analysis period) with Multi-Purpose Dam operated to maximize fish habitat through water releases. Any alterations to flow release schedule would decrease predictions.

Mr. Schlenger will be finalizing the comments. He thanked the Flood Authority for the opportunity to provide this report.

Ms. Fowler stated that Anchor had promised a draft report [circulated in November 2011] and a final report [this version]; while Anchor QEA staff are happy to answer questions, they will not be issuing another version of the report. The Flood Authority would like to collect any comments people may have on this final draft and will include comments in the official record. The Fish Enhancement Study will be reviewed at the May meeting.

Mr. Schlenger expressed his gratitude for the increased budget. He stated this has been an expensive study and he hoped a lot of questions had been answered, not just the fish study but the H & H modeling as well. Anchor did not ask for the full offset of expenses – they are committed to the project and appreciate the budget increase.

#### **4. Discussion of Legislative Session/Capital Budget**

Ms. Fowler stated this topic would go on the afternoon agenda.

#### **5. Public Comment**

Question from the audience: What happens if you build the flood control only dam and don't back up water in the winter? Allow water to go through the fish channel, holding it at a minor level. That dam could back up that amount of water and hold it and allow it to drain down which would allow fish passage upstream.

Mr. Schlenger stated that is essentially what the flood storage only would do. It would be an earthen dam so it could not open up. For that there would need to be a human-induced control.

(Unknown speaker) stated there could be a spillway. During early spring that water could be retained.

Mr. Schlenger stated that is what the multi-purpose dam does.

Mr. Nelson stated the design would be more complicated. Fish passage would be another apparatus to the dam. There are ways to do fish passage with a pool up above; we could talk about that later. There are different ways to do that and it is very complicated for fish passage upstream and downstream.

Mr. Nelson thanked Anchor for the hard work and "taking the arrows". WDFW wanted everyone to realize there are a lot of issues with a dam – fish are one. Things will change if a structure is built upstream.

Mr. Panesko referred to the tour along the Newaukum River. He stated there is some dispute between FEMA and the County. He stated the FEMA maps of the 1980s and 1990s showed the flood plain and the County built there. The new maps came out with a bigger flood plain and flood way and the County still has problems with that. There is contention of where FEMA lines are. The County is ignoring the flood way and the flood plain areas there.

Mr. Johnson asked if Mr. Panesko was referring to the LOMAR submitted by Napavine to FEMA. There is not contention. The LOMAR that was submitted was not approved. The County is asking for engineering to show impacts upstream or downstream. That has not been done. The County has been clear that the County will not sign off on that. It has not been ignored but the County will not accept the study until the engineering is done.

Commissioner Averill stated there needs to be a response from the city. The County was sued over the original changes and the map out there now is the 2006 FEMA map, which is more accurate than previous maps. There were also some changes made on the course of the river to get elevation for the site to be built and that was the County's concern. Did those changes cause an adverse impact downstream? That will be shown as the result of the engineering and is the purpose of the LOMAR.

#### **6. Tour of Newaukum area**

Mr. Pinn gave directions to the bridge and Newaukum River.

#### **7. Wrap up tour/lunch**

The meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.