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memorandum

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to Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority
from ESA
subject Final Progress Report

ESA has had the privilege of providing facilitation and staff support services to the Flood Authority since July 2008. Our contract ends on June 30, 2011. As we make our final report that outlines our work over that period, we hope it will also serve as a reminder of the Flood Authority's major accomplishments.

Basin-Wide Comprehensive Flood Hazard Management Plan. When the Flood Authority formed, each jurisdiction in the basin had its own Flood Plan, some of which were a decade old. There was no single source of basin-wide information on flooding that could be used to support decisions about project prioritization. In 2009 and 2010, ESA drafted a basin-wide Flood Plan synthesizing information from existing plans and new studies in the basin. The plan includes a map folio we prepared of flood hazard areas in the basin. The plan also includes a set of basin-wide goals and a list of potential projects in the basin, both prepared with feedback from the public, the Flood Authority board, and member jurisdiction staff. The Flood Plan is intended to serve as a starting point in the future for basin-wide flood mitigation efforts.

Regulatory Work Group. In late 2009, the Flood Authority requested that ESA form a Regulatory Work Group, made up of planning and building official staff from member jurisdictions. We facilitated three workshops with the Work Group to discuss and inventory regulations throughout the basin and develop a list of recommended regulatory changes. Floodplain regulations are one of the most contentious issues within the Chehalis Basin and within every basin affected by flooding. However, with the Regulatory Work Group, we developed a list of 16 basic recommendations and six "ideal" recommendations that every jurisdiction was willing to agree to. The recommendations were approved by the Flood Authority and incorporated into the Flood Plan.

Public Meetings. In February 2009, ESA organized and facilitated public meetings on goals, problem areas, and potential projects. These meetings, which kicked off the Flood Plan process, were held in Chehalis and Montesano and were attended by approximately 250 people. When the full Flood Plan was drafted, we held public meetings to solicit comments before Flood Authority approval. These meetings were held in April 2010 in Rochester, Montesano, and Chehalis. We prepared posters and handouts and attended Corps of Engineers open house meetings to represent the Flood Authority in September 2009 and October 2010. We also helped prepare and attended flood district formation public meetings facilitated by FCS Group in October 2010.

Coordination with Governor's Office and Legislature. Throughout ESA's three years with the Flood Authority, we have kept in contact with the Governor's Executive Policy Office to keep them informed on Flood

Authority progress and communicate information back to the Authority. During the legislative sessions, we also coordinated with the Legislature and its staff. For the 2010 and 2011 legislative sessions, we helped the Flood Authority prepare funding requests that culminated in the Authority's continued funding. During both sessions, we worked with the Flood Authority, both as a group and with individual members, to develop legislative outreach strategies.

Coordination of Other Efforts and Studies. Starting with the **Public Values Survey** in early 2009, ESA has served as the program manager for the Flood Authority's overall work plan and ongoing studies and projects. For projects like the **Fish Study**, **Ecosystem Services Analysis**, and **Early Warning System**, we helped the Flood Authority identify the project, prepare a Request for Proposals, select a firm, and coordinate with the firm to deliver a complete study or project to the Authority. For all of these projects, ESA provided coordination between the Flood Authority and the project consultants that included responding to technical questions from the consultants, quality control of the project deliverables, and assuring that the deliverables were presented on time. ESA prepared a **Stream and Rain Gauge Inventory** that helped focus and inform the initial phases of the Early Warning System project.

When the Flood Authority obtained funding in 2010 for the Fish Study, there were a number of budget provisos that needed to be met before the study could begin. At the April 16, 2010 Flood Authority meeting, several Flood Authority members expressed concerns that it would not be possible to do so. ESA prepared a strategy for meeting the provisions, which included formation of a **Fish Subcommittee**. We facilitated a series of meetings of this subcommittee in spring and summer 2010 and assisted the subcommittee in meeting all of the provisos, including contracting and coordinating an independent **Peer Review** of already completed upstream storage feasibility reports.

In 2010, ESA also helped the Flood Authority and Grays Harbor County form a **General Investigation Work Group** to work with the Corps of Engineers to start the basin-wide dual-purpose General Investigation. We helped arrange and facilitate a series of meetings with the Corps to develop the Project Management Plan. Though the project was eventually put on hold due to several broad policy concerns, we were able to help Grays Harbor County (the official non-federal sponsor), the Flood Authority, and the Chehalis Basin Partnership develop a Project Management Plan that addressed most of their concerns about the project.

In addition to ESA's major roles in the projects listed above, we provided limited coordination with the Corps of Engineers, the Lewis County PUD, and EES Consulting to help ensure that the Flood Authority was kept informed and had input into the **Twin Cities Levee Project** and **Upstream Storage Phase 2 Feasibility Analysis**.

Flood Authority Meeting Preparation and Follow Up. Since the beginning of our contract, ESA has worked closely with the Flood Authority to set the agenda for each meeting; prepare the written agenda; arrange for speakers and reports on topics requested by the Flood Authority; prepare staff reports (both formal and informal) on important subjects on the agenda; led work sessions on the Flood Plan, governance, and other subjects; and help ensure that meetings ran smoothly. In addition to Flood Authority business meetings and work sessions, we facilitated monthly meetings of the Board Advisory Committee as well as meetings of the fish study subcommittee, General Investigation work group, and Regulatory Work Group.

General Staff Support. Finally, ESA provided general staff support to the Flood Authority over the past three years. This included answering questions from Flood Authority members, jurisdiction staff, and members of the public about Flood Authority activities; assistance to Lewis County in maintaining the Flood Authority's website; coordination with the Chair and Vice Chair on meeting agendas; individual meetings with each Flood Authority member (in summer 2008, spring 2009, and winter 2011); additional individual meetings with Flood Authority members by request; and communication with the press, agencies and other governmental entities.

Next Steps. We believe the Flood Authority is well positioned to continue its work after the end of our contract. However, there are several key work elements with important decisions to be made over the next several months. We recommend that the Flood Authority stay focused on the following important transitions:

- The Early Warning System: The Flood Authority's contract with WEST Consulting will end on June 30, 2011. The Flood Authority and/or its member jurisdictions will need to take on ownership and maintenance of the new gauges and the web portal.
- The Fish Study: The Capital Budget includes funding for an extension of the fish study. The Flood Authority will need to quickly authorize that extension and agree to an appropriate scope of work with Anchor QEA.
- Governance and funding: Though the Flood Authority has chosen not to pursue formation of a basin-wide flood district at this time, long-term governance and funding is still a key issue for flood mitigation in the basin. The final report from FCS Group includes valuable information on funding options that will almost certainly be useful in the future, whatever form of governance is used.
- Federal projects: It currently appears that funding for the Twin Cities project and the basin-wide General Investigation will not continue past September 2011 and into the next fiscal year. However, the Flood Authority and its member jurisdictions will need to continue to track these projects, keep in contact with the Congressional delegation, and advocate for federal funding of flood mitigation projects in the basin. Additionally, there may be the possibility to coordinate with the Corps of Engineers on development of a hydraulic model.

Digital copies of our reports, memos, and other documents (as well as those of other consultants) are available on the Flood Authority's website and through Pat Anderson at Lewis County. We will provide Word versions of appropriate files (such as the Flood Plan and Regulatory Staff Report) to Pat Anderson and Board Advisory Committee members.