

CHEHALIS BASIN BOARD SUMMARIZED MEETING AGENDA AND ACTIONS

Date: April 4, 2024

Time: 9:00 AM to 3:00 pm

Location: Hybrid meeting – Fairfield Inn & Suites by Marriott Grand Mound Centralia: 6223 197th Way SW, Rochester, Washington 9579.

ITEM	FORMAL ACTION	FOLLOW-UP ACTION
1. Approval of current Agenda and March 7 Meeting Summary	Decision: Current Agenda approved; March 7 summary approved	No follow-up actions.
2. Flood Authority Projects	Discussion	No follow-up actions.
3. Aquatic Species Restoration Plan (ASRP)	Discussion	No follow-up actions.
4. Acquisition Program	Discussion	No follow-up actions.
5. Quarterly Budget Status Update	Discussion	Board members were asked to begin considering a 2025-2027 target budget recommendation. Staff will work internally and with project partners to generate budget estimates for different work elements and compose preliminary 2025-2027 budget scenarios for Board consideration.
6. RCO-Ecology Contract Management Transition Updates	Discussion	No follow-up actions.
7. Flood Control Zone District	Discussion	No follow-up actions.

ITEM	FORMAL ACTION	FOLLOW-UP ACTION
8. Chehalis Basin Strategy Development	Discussion / Direction	Staff will update work elements based on Board member feedback. Staff will work to schedule a June workshop focused on the Strategy development process as well as an additional online special session to cover other agenda items.
9. Director's Report	Discussion	No follow-up actions.
10. Next Steps and Closing	Discussion	No follow-up actions.

Attendees

Chehalis Basin Board Members

NAME	APPOINTING AUTHORITY	ATTENDANCE
Vickie Raines	Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority	Present
Edna Fund	Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority	Present
Jay Gordon	Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority	Present
Tyson Johnston	Quinault Indian Nation	Present
Glen Connelly	Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation	Present
J. Vander Stoep	Office of the Governor	Present
Steve Malloch	Office of the Governor	Present

Chehalis Basin Board Ex-Officio Members

NAME	AGENCY	ATTENDANCE
Michael Garrity	Department of Fish and Wildlife	Present
Katie Allen	Department of Natural Resources	Present
Mark Gaines	Department of Transportation	Present
Josh Giuntoli	Washington State Conservation Commission	Present
Jennifer Hennessey	Department of Ecology	Present

Board Staff/Board Guests Present:

- See Attachment A

Welcome, Introductions

Board Chair Vickie Raines called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and welcomed the Board, staff, and audience. Ken Ghalambor (Ross Strategic) facilitated a round of introductions and welcomed Bobbak Talebi, Department of Ecology's new Southwest Region Director.

Agenda and Meeting Summary Review

Ken Ghalambor (Ross Strategic) provided an overview of the meeting agenda. The Board did not have any additions or revisions to the April 4, 2024, meeting agenda.

BOARD DECISION: Agenda approved by consensus.

The Board did not have any additions or revisions to the March 7 meeting summary.

BOARD DECISION: March 7 meeting summary approved by consensus.

Below are the links to the meeting materials:

- [April 4, 2024, meeting agenda](#)
- [March 7, 2024, meeting summary](#)

Flood Authority Projects

Katrina Sukola (Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority [Flood Authority]) presented a memo regarding Flood Authority project modifications/adjustments. She discussed how the Flood Authority values public investments, seeks funding opportunities, and manages funds and timelines to ensure that funds are spent efficiently. She reviewed several updates covered in the [memo](#) that the Flood Authority has approved including project extensions, fund redistributions, changes in sponsorship, and a number of project closeouts and transitions. Local flood project costs will not increase beyond the allotted 2023-25 budget appropriation. Key comments and discussion topics included:

- The city of Hoquiam was able to complete two of their planning projects under budget, saving \$140K and allowing funds to be returned to the City of Centralia and Grays Harbor County for respective projects.

- Board members appreciated the work of the Flood Authority. They noted that the Flood Authority has shown remarkable success by fostering trust among its members so that communities help each other to complete urgent projects and act as good stewards of public funds.

Below are the links to the meeting materials:

- [Flood Authority Local Project Modifications and Adjustments Memo](#)

Aquatic Species Restoration Plan (ASRP)

Drew Mealor (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife [WDFW]), John Stepanek (Grays Harbor Conservation District [GHCD]), and Kiley Smith (Grays Harbor Noxious Weed Control Board [GHNWCB]) presented on an ASRP Cloquallum Knotweed Control project that would result in 63 acres of invasive treatment, 50 acres of planting, 63 acres of floodplain restoration, and 250-300 landowners engaged. Mr. Mealor provided information in preparation for a project funding request for Board approval of \$675,276 at the May 2nd Board Meeting. He reviewed the ASRP funding approval process, as well as the project summary, benefits, budget, description, metrics, current feedback, and connection to the overall Strategy. He described the importance of knotweed removal in restoring diverse native riparian vegetation and maintaining ecosystem processes. Knotweed removal projects could foster future landowner engagement and lead to future ASRP projects. Key comments and discussion topics included:

- The Board acknowledged that knotweed removal and invasive species management more broadly will be a long-term issue and will require portions of ASRP funding going forward.
- Many landowners understand knotweed issues and want assistance removing it but not all are able to receive assistance due to funding and project location.
- Knotweed removal requires an effective removal process over a sustained period of time and continuous monitoring. Knotweed must be removed in a process from the upper to lower river reaches, and larger removal projects are more effective.

Below are the links to meeting materials:

- [Cloquallum Creek Knotweed Control Project Summary](#)
- [Cloquallum Creek Knotweed Control Project Comment Tracker](#)

- [Cloquallum Creek Control Presentation](#)

Dual-Purposed Voluntary Acquisition Program and Process

Nat Kale (OCB) reviewed recent activities to develop an Acquisition Program and write an Acquisition Manual to guide acquisitions across the Chehalis Basin Strategy. Mr. Kale reviewed two goals for the 2023-25 biennium: development of the Dual-Purposed Voluntary Acquisition Program and acquisition of one or more properties with input from a diverse group of acquisition workgroup members. He reviewed the Dual-Purposed Voluntary Acquisition Program overview, goals, eligibility criteria, and project selection process. Mr. Kale also reviewed a project example (Spencer Farm) that the workgroup determined not to move forward with funding due to a lack of clear flood benefits. Project funding is still available for 1-2 acquisition projects. Staff will ask the Board at a later meeting for input on potential acquisitions. Key comments and discussion topics included:

- There is a need to show benefits (not necessarily of equal weight) for both “flood and fish” when considering dual-purposed acquisitions. The Board’s input is valued on this topic.
- Some Board members suggested that eligibility criteria should acknowledge and support agricultural viability.
- Ecology cannot hold title of a property, so a third-party landowner should be identified. In the past, Ecology has worked with land trusts to purchase a property, and then Ecology has taken a deed of right to be able to enforce acquisition terms on that property.
- Chair Vickie Raines supported the proposal for her to provide project approval for projects under \$500K and ask for full Board approval for projects exceeding \$500K.

Below are the links to meeting materials:

- [Dual Purpose Voluntary Acquisitions Program Memo](#)
- [Dual Purpose Voluntary Acquisitions Program Presentation](#)

Quarterly Budget Update

Ken Ghalambor (Ross Strategic) provided a quarterly budget update. He presented current 2023-2025 funding obligations through February 2024, pending/upcoming contracts, and a high-level 2025-27 budget development schedule. He asked Board members to begin

considering a target recommendation for the 2025-27 budget with the goal of identifying a total budget recommendation target by June. He noted that the Board may want to consider creating another subgroup to support their budget development process. Key comments and discussion topics included:

- Board members would benefit from:
 - Development of preliminary budget scenarios earlier than July to help determine an overall target for their 2025-27 budget recommendation.
 - Information on both funding successes, and high-level historical investment to date.
 - A detailed breakdown of spending by work elements to support decision making.
- Board members noted that unobligated funds can be liabilities when asking for new funding. It is important to explain the status of unobligated funds when requesting future funding.

Below are the links to meeting materials:

- [Quarterly Budget Update Presentation](#)
- [Quarterly Budget Update Memo](#)

FOLLOW UP:

- Board members were asked to begin considering a 2025-27 target budget recommendation.
- Staff will work internally and with project partners to generate budget estimates for different work elements and develop preliminary 2025-27 budget scenarios for Board consideration.

RCO-Ecology Contract Management Transition Updates

Nat Kale (OCB) provided an update that OCB has been meeting with RCO and WDFW and they have developed a draft plan for managing the RCO to Ecology transition, including major actions to take to facilitate the transition. Two major transition dates include:

- 6/30/2025: target for no new grants/contracts for RCO

- 12/1/2025: target to transfer all existing contracts and grants from RCO to Ecology

State sponsors are reviewing a plan to determine how to meet the key dates. Project sponsors will then review the plan and it will be delivered by the end of April. Staff are working to address project sponsor questions. The difference between grants and contracts will be very important to distinguish in the transition from RCO to Ecology. OCB will hire a fiscal manager and two grant and contract managers in the next few months to help with the transition process. RCO-Ecology transition updates will remain a standing Board meeting topic.

Proposed Chehalis River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Project – Revised Project Description Design Update

Matt Dillin (Flood Control Zone District [FCZD]) presented on modifications and changes to the Flood Retention Facility (FRE) project proposal since it was submitted for the draft SEPA and NEPA Environmental Impact Statements. A revised project description will be available in three weeks and will be submitted to the US Army Corps and Ecology, respectively. Mr. Dillin provided an overview of engineering design refinements and FRE site realignment features. Overall, the revised design will allow for improved flood control, natural mimic of river flow, and fish passage. Over the next few Board meetings, the FCZD will continue to provide more detail on major changes including fish passage construction phase and conduits, and mitigation plan updates. Key comments and discussion topics included:

- The location of the proposed FRE has moved upstream as far as possible to minimize impacts on fish and traditional cultural properties while still providing flood damage reduction benefits.
- The proposed FRE would be built with features to allow for future expansion. If the proposed FRE were to be expanded, it would require separate environmental review and be done so for flow augmentation, not for additional flood protection.
- An open channel at the riverbed of the proposed FRE would allow for natural channel processes such as sediment transport to continue when the proposed FRE is not operating.

Below are the links to meeting materials:

- [Revised FCZD Project Description Design Update](#)

Chehalis Basin Strategy Development

Ken Ghalambor provided several updates on the Chehalis Basin Strategy development process. OCB has determined that a Request for Proposals (RFP) is more appropriate than a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to hire a future consultant to support the comparative analysis. The comparative analysis RFP process will take approximately 3-6 months and OCB is exploring the possibility of using Ecology's consultant roster to circumvent a competitive process. If this option is valid, OCB will discuss interest with the Board subgroup. A more detailed schedule and description of needs for the proposed modeling for the Board's Strategy development process will be presented by the May or June Board meeting. Mr. Ghalambor also reviewed the June Workshop draft agenda, which Board members were generally supportive of.

Board members then divided into two small groups to discuss the next set of descriptions of the work elements, with a focus on clarifying the definitions and refining the principles associated with each work element. After a period of discussion, small group facilitators Ken Ghalambor and Nat Kale reported on key points from the small group discussions. Along with wording changes and clarifications identified, primary discussion points for each work element included the following:

Floodproofing, Elevations, and Acquisition:

- Board members supported the overarching principles.
- Principle 2: revise "very important" to "is a useful component."
- Principle 3: not all homes and businesses may want or be able to be acquired or raised and may not be protected regardless of whether major flood damage reduction infrastructure is in place. Add language to say that "those structures will be supported where possible."
- Principle 5: include people with disabilities in the category of disadvantaged communities.
- Add language into the principles that speaks to the methodology, i.e., how, and why and when specific interventions are proposed to be used.
- Demand for this work could shift significantly if there is another big flood.
- The scale and need for acquisitions will depend on what work elements are in any package that the Board ultimately decides to move forward.

- Be clear in description how this connects with existing CFAR and Acquisition programs.
- This work element description focuses on existing structures versus future development.

Aquatic Species Restoration Plan (ASRP):

- Principle 1: add an introductory statement about the fact that the fishery is in decline, and this is predicted to get worse with climate projections.
- Principle 3:
 - The Board acknowledged that habitat is a primary limiting factor but there was discussion of whether other limiting factors should be receiving more attention. Suggested edits proposed include additions such as “ASRP will take action on other limiting factors as needed, or as approaches develop.”
 - Various entities have developed different definitions to describe all that habitat restoration entails.
- Landowner participation and buy-in is critical for the success of the ASRP.
- ASRP funding could be scaled with respect to other CBS work elements in the future and external ASRP funding sources may be needed if the Legislature does not provide as much funding in the future.

All Hs and Predation

- Principle 2: do not repeat the principles in the ASRP work element.
- Principle 3: strengthen the language in terms of the Board’s commitment or desire to do more regarding non-habitat actions. The language should not preclude the Board from identifying tangible ways to work on all-H options through actions, analyses, and/or advocacy.
 - A matrix presented in May will show examples of actions, who can lead those actions, and costs and time considerations to help the Board think about next steps with more specificity to the all-H and predation considerations. The Board subgroup can also work to continue this discussion.
- Be clear and strategic about what action items are within the Board’s scope to act on.

- The Board should understand and learn how actions are taken and decisions are made regarding all-H topics in order to help develop a strategy, even in areas that the Board will not be able to exert significant influence.

Flood Retention Facility (FRE) & Airport Levee Improvements / Levees, Diversion, & Conveyance

- Principle 2: some Board members said the principle works generally for both the FRE and levee, diversion, and conveyance work elements, but more details need to be determined for what it will mean in practice. Other Board members thought mitigation projects should not include ASRP projects, because the ASRP has spent a lot of time identifying where projects should take place. They also noted that using identified ASRP projects for mitigation raises ASRP costs.
- Cost estimates will need to be updated for both the FRE and levee, diversion, and conveyance work elements.

Skookumchuck Dam

- Board members were generally supportive of the principles and clarified that the five principles are not in any priority order.
- Principles 1 and 2 are similar and could be merged.
- Principle 5: change “maintain or replace” to “maintain or enhance.”
- The Skookumchuck Dam was constructed in a laxer regulatory environment.
- The agreement that WDFW has with TransAlta to manage flow pre-dates the water bank.
- The hatchery does not currently raise spring Chinook, but that could be considered with an Endangered Species Act (ESA) listing.
- Skookumchuck river instream flow will be altered if the Skookumchuck Dam is removed.

General Comments and Next Steps:

A Board member noted generally that it would be beneficial to develop a document or summary to show all flood damage reduction alternatives that have been considered and why

they haven't gone forward to determine what has already been considered and why decisions were made.

Board members suggested to not include the same principles twice in different work elements (as is done with ASRP needing to go above and beyond mitigation for flood projects, and how habitat is the primary factor in ASRP), to ensure that no principle is portrayed as more important than others.

The May Board meeting will include a discussion of the forest practices work element. Work elements will serve as a foundation for the comparative analysis and the guiding principles will be used to support legislative outreach and the 2025-27 biennium budget process.

FOLLOW UP: Staff will update work elements based on Board member feedback. Staff will work to schedule a June workshop date focused on the Strategy development process as well as an additional online special session to cover other agenda items.

Below are the links to Meeting Materials:

- [Strategy Development Process Presentation](#)
- [Strategy Development Process Element: Floodproofing, Elevations and Acquisitions](#)
- [Strategy Development Process Element: Aquatic Species Restoration Plan \(ASRP\)](#)
- [Strategy Development Process Element: All H's and Predation](#)
- [Strategy Development Process Element: Flood Retention Facility \(FRE\) & Airport Levee Improvements](#)
- [Strategy Development Process Element: Levees, Diversion, and Conveyance](#)
- [Strategy Development Process Element: Skookumchuck Dam](#)

Director's Report

OCB Director Jeff Zenk provided the following updates:

- A Federal Funding Report was distributed that identified opportunities and clusters of projects throughout the Chehalis Basin that were identified based on geographic location of

aquatic species. Staff will continue to work with state, local, and Tribal partners for how to implement these opportunities.

- A North Shore Levee contracting approach was identified. The Legislature provided Ecology with \$18.5 million matching funds for the project. Ecology determined OCB can apply a one-time grant with no administrative fees to both Aberdeen and Hoquiam.
- All eight Community Flood Assistance and Resilience (CFAR) program properties out-to-bid received bids. Four of the bids, all in Bucoda, will be accepted. The rest were not accepted due to high costs.
- Skookumchuck Dam fish survival work continues, including tagging and releasing steelhead into the Skookumchuck reservoir to assess their downstream survival rate after passing through the dam.
- The Flood Control Zone District has updated the target date for their Revised Project Description Submittal from late March to approximately mid- to late-April. They feel the additional time will result in a more complete submittal for the agencies.
- Staff are in the process of planning a Basin tour for legislators and Board members. The tentative date is September 2024 and the plan to focus in the Skookumchuck area.
- A hybrid ASRP Symposium will be held on April 17th and 18th at Centralia College.

Chair Vickie Raines noted that 2025-2027 project submittals are being solicited by the Flood Authority for the next funding cycle.

Public Comment

No public comments were made.

Next Steps and Closing

Ken Ghalambor (Ross Strategic) thanked Board members for their participation and adjourned the meeting. The Board will meet next on May 2nd at Montesano City Hall in Montesano Washington.

Attachment A

Board Staff/Board Guests

Those that participated virtually are noted with an asterisk.

- Adrien Glenn Owens, CNW contractor*
- Bob Amrine, Lewis Conservation District*
- Bobbak Talebi, Ecology*
- Casey Hart, Ross Strategic*
- Celina Abercrombie, WDFW
- Cindy Malay, OCB*
- Col. Ronald Averill, Flood Authority*
- Colleen Granberg, DNR
- Dave Bingaman, Quinault Indian Nation
- Drew Mealor, WDFW
- Eric Eisenberg, Lewis County*
- Erik Martin, HDR*
- Jeff Zenk, OCB
- Jenn Tice, Ross Strategic
- Jennie Lewis, OCB
- Jess Helsley, Wild Salmon Center*
- Jerry Otto, HDR*
- John Stepanek, GHCD
- Kat Dickey, OCB
- Katrina Sukola, ICF*
- Ken Ghalambor, Ross Strategic
- Kristen Harma, Chehalis Basin Lead Entity*
- Kiley Smith, Grays Harbor Noxious Weed Control Board*
- Lauren Dennis, Ross Strategic*
- Larry Karpack, WSE*
- Mara Zimmerman, Coastal Salmon Partnership*
- Mark Gaines, WSDOT*
- Mark Glyde, Quinault Indian Nation*
- Matt Dillin, FCZD
- Merri Martz, Anchor QEA*
- Nat Kale, OCB

- Nicole Czarnomski, WDFW
- Steve Emrich*
- Stevie Colson, OCB
- Tara Livingood-Schott, Chehalis Tribe*
- Teri Wright, Wild Orca*
- Victoria Knorr, WDFW*