

Communications 2023 Year in Review

Chehalis Basin Strategy



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Our Overarching Goals

1. Create a **shared understanding of what the Strategy is, what its process looks like**, and the options in consideration—including understanding of the complexity of decision-making, challenges, and what's at stake as it relates to the Strategy.
2. Increase **resident engagement in and utilization of Strategy programs** and resources.
3. Ensure the Strategy's long-term flood planning process receives **diverse and inclusive feedback** from across the Basin.
4. Ensure continued **visibility for successful, on-the-ground impact**, to foster buy-in for the Strategy and ongoing investments in its continued success.

Priority Audiences & Goals

Audience	Communications Goal	How We Reach Them
Basin residents and landowners	Make it easy for residents to find information about how the Strategy currently benefits them, and how they can get involved / access resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Email newsletter• Social media posts and ads• Local media coverage• Webinars
Strategy partners	Connect partners to relevant resources and up-to-date information about the Strategy that streamline and simplify their efforts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Email newsletter• Partner's toolkit• Partner syncs & briefings
Decision-makers	Clearly and concisely demonstrate the Strategy's impact and importance — locally, regionally, and statewide.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Direct outreach• Briefings• Media coverage• Site tours

Communications Highlights From 2023

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How people engaged with the Chehalis Basin Strategy in 2023

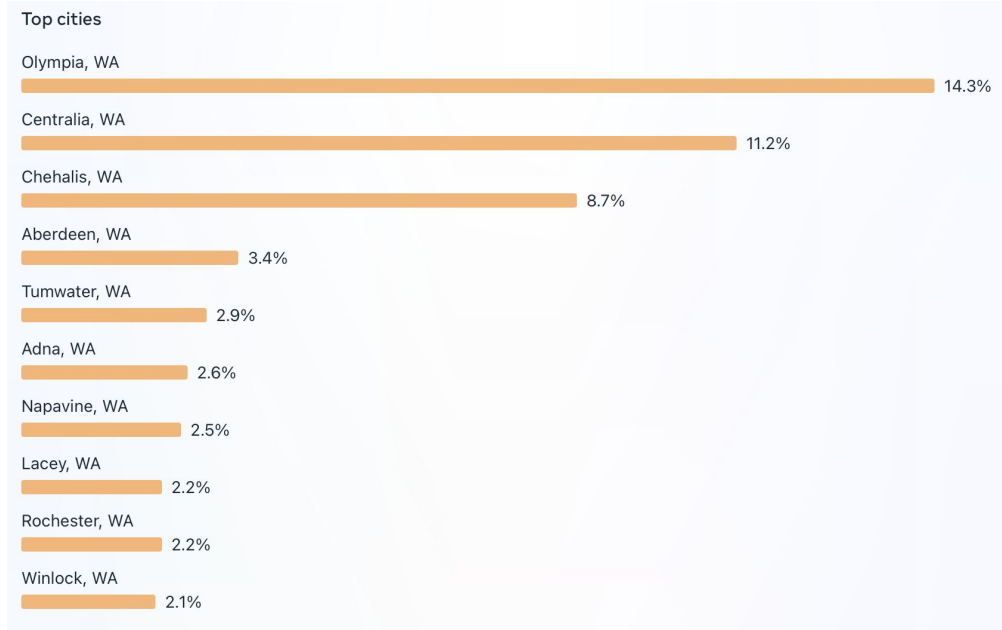


2023 By the Numbers

- **27 articles** about Chehalis Basin Strategy projects and activities
- **2.5 million** people reached on Facebook
- **1,387** newsletter subscribers
- **10,452** opened newsletters
- **2,000+ residents** reached by community webinars
- ... Plus in-person site tours and presentations to dig in deeper with partners and stakeholders

We are successfully reaching priority audiences.

- Facebook followers are primarily Basin residents, spanning from Centralia to Aberdeen
- A large concentration of Facebook followers are based in Olympia—decision-makers and state partners
- Webinar attendees typically include a mix of Basin residents, Strategy partners, and local reporters



Breakdown of Facebook audience locations

People are highly engaged and find Strategy communications valuable.

- People engage with Chehalis Basin Strategy emails at incredibly high rates—newsletters have a **43% average open rate**, compared to a 29% average for other similar entities.
- YouTube is a valuable channel to increase the longevity and reach of content. For example, recorded webinars received an average of **130 views per video**.
- Free Chehalis Basin Strategy webinars maintain high attendance rates (**average 50+ attendees**) and engagement during Q&As.

Snapshot of Chehalis Basin Strategy communications in 2023



Free Community Webinar Series

- Bi-monthly webinars
- Live Spanish interpretation available
- Topics included:
 - Atmospheric Rivers Explained (and the Flood Warning System)
 - Get to Know the Chehalis Basin Strategy
 - Collaboration and Community: The Aquatic Species Restoration Plan
 - Skookumchuck Dam Study Update (Phase Two)
 - Preview the Local Actions Non-Dam Alternatives (LAND)

Centralia Chronicle Success Story Series

- Bi-weekly story series in local media
- Highlighting on-the-ground project successes
- Stories included:
 - Chehalis-Centralia Airport Pump Station and Levee
 - Montesano Wastewater Treatment Plant
 - Ramer Street Pump Station
 - Middle Fork Wildcat Creek
 - Erosion management at Haul Road
 - Stillman Creek restoration
 - Flood Warning System success



Chehalis Basin Strategy progress in review: Bringing Stillman Creek back to life



Stillman Creek in Boiafort is pictured prior to work to restore the waterway in this photo provided by the Office of Chehalis Basin.

Two-Pager Summary of Legislative Report

- Elevated key takeaways from report to the Washington State Legislature, June 2023
- Crafted to distill full report for broader audiences, with an emphasis on sharing the long-term strategy progress and timeline
- Shared with residents and partners through email newsletter
- Shared with decision-makers via direct outreach



An Integrated Long-Term Plan to Improve Aquatic Species & Reduce Flood Damage

Summary of legislative report to the Washington State Legislature, June 2023

Salmon declines and rising flooding dangers are urgent today, and will intensify over time. That's why the Chehalis Basin Strategy is taking action now to protect people, fish, and wildlife, while also planning for the future — thanks to **collaboration across local cities, counties, Tribal Nations, nonprofits, and leadership from the Chehalis Basin Board and Washington Department of Ecology's Office of Chehalis Basin.**



Restoration progress in work along the Satsop River

Our Phased Pathway to Reducing Flood Damage & Restoring Aquatic Life

PHASE 1

Early Action Implementation and Initial Strategy Development

Timeframe: 2012 through the 2021-2023 biennium **✓ COMPLETED**

What Success Looks Like:

- ✓ More than **140 projects** and **\$152 million** in investments have meaningfully restored aquatic species and reduced flood damage across the region
- ✓ **Significant progress** to advance near-term priority actions and long-term planning
- ✓ **Foundational structures in place to advance Phase 2**, including new programs, collaborative decision-making structures, state-of-the-art climate and fish modeling, and exploratory analyses to identify the suite of Strategy options to inform long-term planning decisions

PHASE 2

Mid-Term Action Implementation and Release of the Final Integrated Long-Term Strategy

Timeframe: Completion between Q3 2024 - 2026 **WE ARE HERE**

What Success Looks Like:

This is a critical decision-making period. During Phase 2, the Chehalis Basin Board will finalize a vision for the integrated, long-term Chehalis Basin Strategy, including:

- Provisional decisions on a recommended approach to flood damage reduction
- Long-term investment levels across the various elements of the Strategy
- Prioritization and sequencing of implementation to maximize benefits
- Final quantitative and qualitative outcomes measures to monitor performance
- What, if any, new governance structures might be required to carry out the Strategy's vision

PHASE 3

Integrated Strategy Full Implementation with Ongoing Monitoring and Adaptive Management

Timeframe: Beginning upon completion of Phase 2, as early as Q4 2024

What Success Looks Like:

Once all major elements of the long-term Strategy are decided on, the Office of Chehalis Basin, the Chehalis Basin Board, and partners will continue to work collaboratively to:

- Continuing to secure appropriate funding from diverse sources
- Establish any new governance structures identified as necessary
- Scale implementation to meet the Strategy goals within a determined planning horizon
- Adaptively manage implementation and investments to optimize success

The Chehalis Basin is the center of some of Washington state's most vibrant communities, important industries, critical transportation corridors, and vital aquatic life. As programs and projects across the Chehalis Basin Strategy continue to scale and mature in the coming years, ongoing investments will create even more positive benefits for the region and the state.

Rooted in a set of shared values and commitment to this region, we accomplish more when we work together.

READ THE FULL REPORT





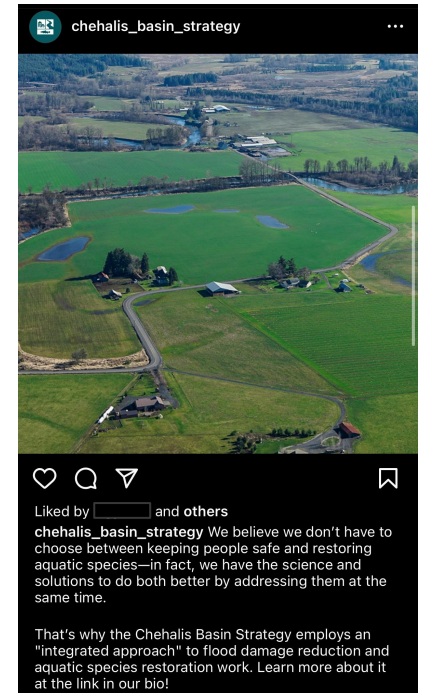
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Launched Instagram: @chehalis_basin_strategy

- Social media is an important part of how the Strategy reaches residents, but younger people are spending less and less time on Facebook
- Created Instagram account in Dec. 2023 to help diversify who the Strategy reaches
- Emphasis on sharing success stories through visual medium



2023 Chehalis Basin Strategy Year in Review Report

- [Annual Year in Review report](#), crafted for residents and decision-makers
- Highlights on-the-ground impact as well as progress toward a long-term integrated strategy
- Digital report with physical leave-behinds (coming soon!)



Planning for Deeper Resident Engagement in 2024

- Developed strategic communications plans for engaging new Chehalis Basin residents in 2024, with a goal of preparing for feedback and engagement in the long-term strategy development
- *See “Preview of 2024 priorities” section for more detail*

Emergent themes from community feedback



Recurring or Noteworthy Community Input Themes

- Concern about Skookumchuck dam removal/changes
 - How would sediment build-up be handled if the Skookumchuck Dam is removed? Who will hold responsibility?
 - Will hatchery production be used to enhance fisheries along the Skookumchuck?
- “Stop building in floodplains.”
- OCB work is “all studies”
- Salmon restoration should be a priority
- Disapproval of Chehalis River dam and concern for habitat

Preview of 2024 Communications Priorities

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Priority 1: Resident Outreach & Engagement

Focused on **broadening the Strategy's reach** beyond its currently well-established audience, which is predominantly older, White, civically-engaged, landowning residents.

- **Spanish-speaking residents**, with an understanding of Hispanic and Latino residents as the second-largest racial/ethnic demographic in the Basin.
- **Renters in the Basin**, with an understanding of their unique needs for safety during and after flooding in particular; as well as an understanding of renters as making up approx. 30% of Basin residents.

Priority 1: Resident Outreach & Engagement

Our primary strategies:

- **Creating resident-specific resources** (leave-behinds for renters, Spanish-language website page and leave-behinds)
- **Setting up SMS (text message)-based communications** infrastructure to allow us to engage with residents less active on social or local media
- **Launching a consistent paid ads presence** to maintain visibility and exposure to the Strategy (primarily social media and Google Search, with radio and print at key moments)
- **Developing relationships with community organizations** who serve the populations we want to reach; distributing resources and information through these organizations
- **Tabling at key community events** throughout the calendar year

Priority 1: Resident Outreach & Engagement

Phases of work include:

- 1. Initial socialization push and foundation-building (Dec. 2023 – April 2024)**
 - a. Expanding audience-specific resources library
 - b. Beginning to build relationships with Basin organizations serving audiences
 - c. Audience building: Centralia Chronicle story series, launch Instagram, social media ads
- 2. Sustained visibility (Approx. May – Dec. 2024)**
 - a. Consistent presence through digital and print ads, ongoing organic content
 - b. Continuing to build and maintaining community relationships
- 3. Input and awareness for the long-term integrated strategy (Timing TBD)**
 - a. Activate connector organizations and ambassadors with partner toolkits
 - b. Community surveys, briefings and input sessions
 - c. Ad placements across digital, print, radio (potentially also mailers)
 - d. In-person materials distribution at key community centers

Priority 2: Key Decision-Makers Outreach & Engagement

- Continued visibility in local media
- Briefings, to be coordinated with partners
- Site tours, to be coordinated with partners
- Audience-specific materials (one-pagers, decks, key messages and stats)

Priority 3: Strategy Partners Outreach & Engagement

- Continued coordination across internal meetings and gatherings
- Coordinated planning on outreach and engagement tactics
- Partners briefings
- Updates and promotion of partners toolkit
- Updated messaging guide for consistent and unified language

Priority 4: Public Engagement in Long-Term Strategy

- To be developed in partnership with Ecology and OCB, informed by the Chehalis Basin Board's decisions and guidance
- To include focus on in-person engagements—tabling, events, organizations
- Will build on efforts identified in Priority 1: Resident Outreach & Engagement

Priority 5: Continuing Proven Engagement Methods

- Chehalis Basin Strategy digital channels—website, newsletter, and social media
- Webinar series
- Supporting site tours
- Chronicle story series and other local media engagement
- Coordinating communications needs with the Strategy's network of partners

Key Questions for Board Input



Board Guidance & Input

- Are there other resident groups who feel important to engage more intentionally, based on where there are current gaps and needs?
- Thinking about key community events in 2024—where should the Strategy have a presence? (Festivals, town halls, etc.)
- Which community organizations are key to engage with? For Spanish-speakers, renters, or more widely? (*see Appendix A*)
- If you could bring state and/or federal legislators to any Strategy project, what would it be and why? (*see Appendix B*)

Appendix A: Basin community organizations “short list”

For Spanish-speakers and renters

- Downtown Aberdeen Association
- Centralia Downtown Association
- LEWIS COUNTY SENIORS
- Boys & Girls Club of Lewis County
- Young Professionals Lewis County
- Economic Alliance Lewis County
- Local church finder
- Hispanic Roundtable/La Mesa Redonda
- Grays Harbor Public Health and Human Services
- Chaplains on the Harbor
- NeighborWorks of Grays Harbor County
- Boys & Girls Club of Chehalis
- Boys and Girls Club of Centralia
- CIELO Centro Integral Educativo Latino de Olympia
- Grays Harbor RISE
- Circulo Para la Justicia
- Firelands Workers United/Trabajadores Unidos
- Firelands Together
- Tu Hogar WA
- PAVE WA (Partnerships for Action Voices for Empowerment)
- Dispute Resolution Center of Grays Harbor & Pacific Counties
- Greys Harbor College
- Centralia College
- Washington State University - Thurston ext.
- Pacific County Immigrant Support

Appendix B: Potential 2024 site visits

- Newaukum River acquisitions
- Haul Road
- China Creek
- Stillman Creek (ASRP)
- CFAR home elevation pilots
- North Shore Levee

Thank you!

Questions or ideas? Contact
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