

CHEHALIS BASIN STRATEGY – DRAFT TALKING POINTS

UPDATED: FEBRUARY 5, 2020

THE STORY (TALKING POINTS)

***Note:** The following points should carry the complete story arc at the highest level. This is a piece any messenger could use when speaking about the Chehalis Basin Strategy.*

[Setting the stage/the frame] In the Chehalis Basin, when disaster hits, we take care of one another.

[The big statement/why now] The Chehalis Basin Strategy is our best opportunity to come together across the Basin to halt and reverse the devastating decline of salmon and other aquatic species, and protect our communities and landscapes from the predicted increase of flooding disasters.

[What is the Strategy] Through the Chehalis Basin Strategy, people across the Basin are collaborating to create a set of integrated actions to strengthen the region's resilience in the face of climate change. The process is informed by more than 10 years of science and partnership.

[The need - the Basin's importance] The Chehalis Basin is unique. It supports distinct communities and landscapes, commercial farms and forests, and important and rare species of fish and wildlife.

[The need - Tribal rights in the Basin] The Chehalis Basin is home to the Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation. The Quinault Indian Nation's usual and accustomed fishing, hunting, and gathering within the Basin are recognized as rights by treaty with the United States.

[The need - years of habitat degradation] Salmon and other fish and wildlife are in trouble for a variety of reasons in our basin. Habitat restoration is key to their recovery and something we can and must tackle immediately.

[The urgency] We cannot wait to act. Our region is already vulnerable to flooding. Now, climate change is accelerating and increasing rain, sea level rise, and potentially catastrophic floods.

[What's underway] Early actions are already underway to protect both people and wildlife.

[How the Strategy works] The Chehalis Basin Strategy will employ three key and interrelated approaches across the Basin: habitat restoration for salmon and other aquatic species; local landowner and community-scale projects to adapt to and limit increasing flood impacts; and large-scale measures to prevent potentially disastrous flood episodes.

[The role of the dam] The complexity of our challenges requires consideration of new, protective infrastructure, in addition to supporting natural processes.

[What's happening in 2020] The Chehalis Basin Board, a diverse group of state agency, local, scientific, and tribal leaders, is guiding the evaluation process and will make its long-term recommendations for what to include in the Strategy at the end of 2020.

[The process] The Board's recommendations will be informed by Basin residents' input on the Aquatic Species Restoration Plan, local scale flood adaptation, as well as formal state and federal agency review and public comment on large-scale flood protection options.

[How to get involved] This is a critical year in this decade-long process. The Board encourages everyone to participate by engaging in local efforts to prioritize and refine projects under consideration and to consider the necessary mosaic of all the ways we can work together to make our beloved Chehalis Basin more secure and resilient.

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