



# Newaukum Landowner Interview Project for Restorative Flood Protection Approach

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Report to the  
Chehalis Basin Board

June 7, 2018

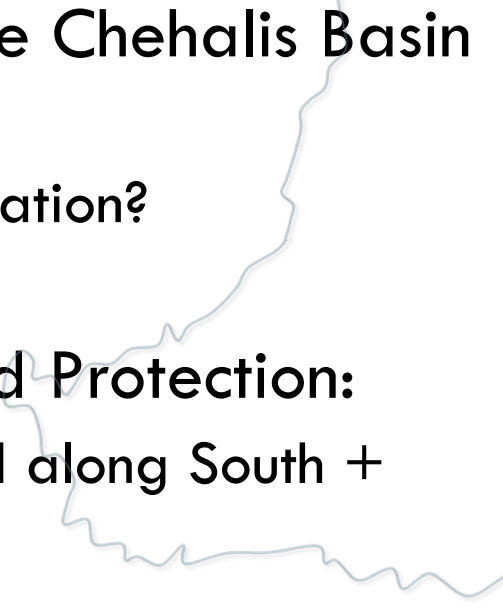
by Cynthia Carlstad (Carlstad Consulting)  
and Andrea Petzel (Broadview Planning)



A woman with blonde hair in a ponytail, wearing a bright pink coat and red rain boots, is walking away from the camera on a wet, cobblestone street. To her left is a brick building with a dark, corrugated metal roof. In the background, another person in a dark hooded coat is walking away, carrying blue containers. The scene is overcast and wet, with water reflecting the light.

WHAT WE DID

# OUTREACH GOALS + OBJECTIVES

- Build community awareness and support for the Chehalis Basin Strategy:
    - What do they know? How do they get their information?
  - Assess landowner support for Restorative Flood Protection:
    - Interview 100 landowners with river adjacent land along South + North Fork Newaukum.
    - Develop a suite of outreach materials.
    - Institutionalize a process for ongoing communication.
    - Ensure people's feedback is accurately and authentically represented to the Board.
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# OUTREACH APPROACH

- One-on-one interviews through referrals
- Postcard mailing
- Open houses
- Website updates
- Dedicated phone line





## Newaukum Landowners Interview Project

# WE NEED YOUR INPUT!

During spring, 2018 Ecology and local community leaders are interviewing 100 landowners along the Newaukum River in order to learn about their perspectives and experience with flooding on their property and the feasibility of the Restorative Flood Protection strategy (see sidebar). If you're a landowner that lives along the Newaukum and would like to be interviewed, please visit us on May 16 or 19 in Onalaska. We'll provide coffee and snacks and would love to hear from you.

**LOCATION:** Nana and Papa's Place  
1752 WA-508, Onalaska, WA 98570

Wednesday, May 16th  
2:00 pm - 6:00 pm

Saturday, May 19th  
10:00 am - 2:00 pm

If you can't join us in Onalaska, we will come to you. Please call (360) 338-7078 to schedule an interview at your convenience.

## What is Restorative Flood Protection?

By adding large amounts of wood to river channels and planting dense vegetation on floodplains, Restorative Flood Protection slows and stores flood waters in a river channel and on the floodplain. While this will increase local flooding by a few inches to several feet on properties adjacent to a river, this process also stabilizes riverbanks and decreases down stream flooding.

In order for Restorative Flood Protection to work, landowners would need to agree to be involved through easements or buyouts. By joining the conversation, you can improve our understanding of local conditions and the willingness of landowners to participate in potential easement or buyout programs.

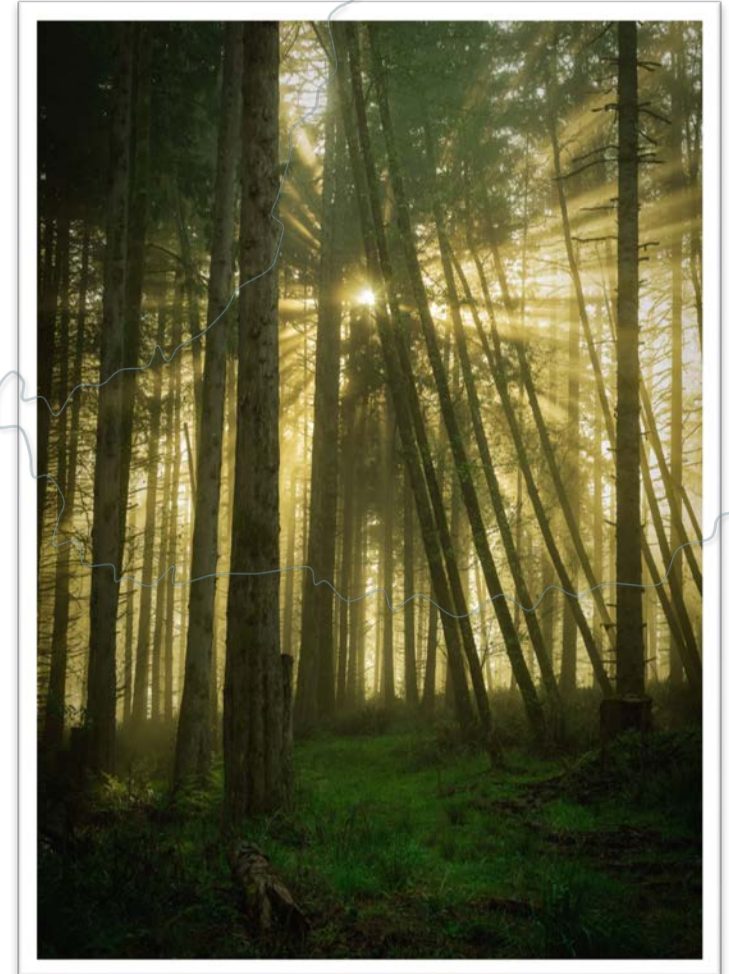
# BY THE NUMBERS

## Spoke to 44 people

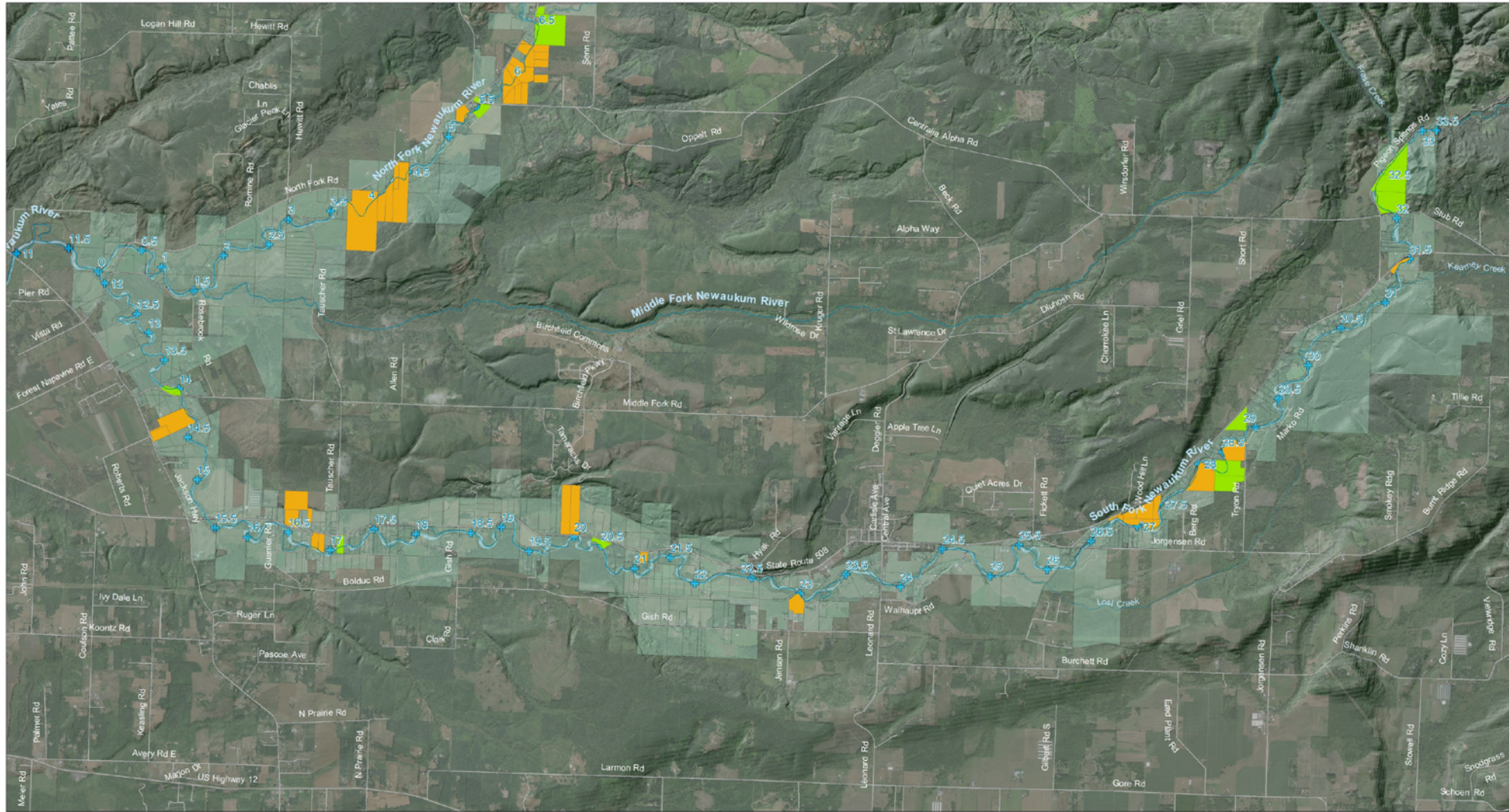
- 42 landowners
- 2 community members

## Venues

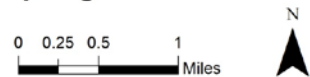
- 19 conversations at Open Houses
- 25 interviews







## South Fork Newaukum River Spring 2018 Landowner Interview Map



- Parcels In Phase 1  
Restorative Flood  
Protection Area  
(2016)
- Interviewed
- Meeting #1
- River/Stream
- Roads
- River Mile
- River Channel









A scenic landscape featuring a vibrant rainbow arching over a dense, forested mountain range. In the foreground, a small village with several houses and buildings is nestled in a green valley. The sky is overcast with grey clouds, and the overall atmosphere is serene and picturesque.

# WHAT WE LEARNED

# PEOPLE ARE EAGER TO TALK...

- *People have a lot to say and they haven't had an avenue to say it.*
- *This is a remarkably resilient and adaptable community that does not feel heard or valued.*





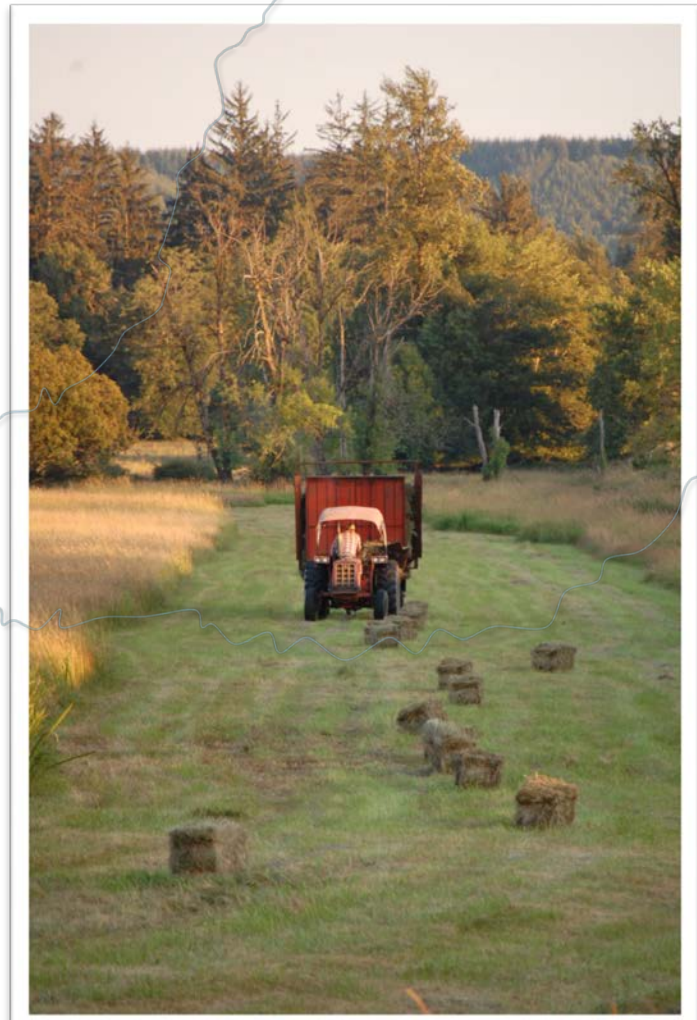
# KNOWLEDGE OF CHEHALIS BASIN STRATEGY AND RESTORATIVE FLOOD PROTECTION APPROACH

- *Overall = Low*
- *“What happens if my neighbor doesn’t participate?”*
- *Most frequently cited information source = The Chronicle*



# LANDOWNER COMPENSATION FOR IMPACTS FROM MORE FLOODING AND RFP TREATMENTS

- *Landowner impacts and compensation – buyouts and easements – discussed with every interviewee.*
- *Framed as fair market value.*
- *Ready to talk about selling their land.*
- *Responses ranged from tolerant to enthusiastic.*
- *Everybody wants more information.*





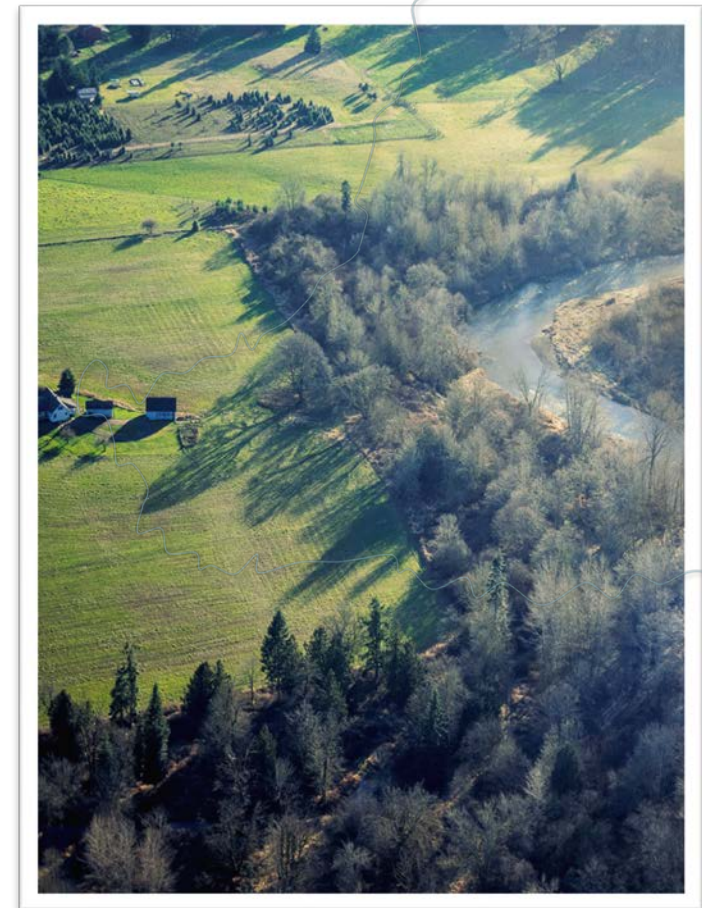
# FLOODING + FOOD IMPACTS

- *Everybody has experienced flood impacts:*
  - *Flood damage.*
  - *Loss of property + land from channel migration.*
- *Highly adaptable and tolerant community – accustomed to living with these impacts.*
- *Focused on removing large woody debris and sediment to keep the water moving.*



# ECOLOGICAL PROCESSES

- *Strong desire to control the river.*
- *Belief that beavers are a threat to long-range restoration success.*
- *Skeptical that wood and plantings will stabilize the river.*
- *Subsequent outreach efforts will need to incorporate a strong educational component.*





# FISH

- *Overwhelming desire to have fish back in the river.*
- *“My great grandfather homesteaded along the river saying ‘we will never go hungry with all these fish’.”*
- *Frustration with lack of resources, continually evolving “best practices,” and lack of coordination between agencies.*



# EQUITY

- Overall distrust of government.
- *Rural landowners making sacrifices for Centralia/Chehalis area:*
  - *Why does the government continue to let people develop the floodplain?*
  - *What will they give up if we have to move?*





# DEFINING COMMUNITY

- *The river defines the community.*
- *Would the Restorative Flood Protection approach mean the end of Onalaska?*
- *Frequent references to the community working together to clean up the river (remove wood and debris)*





A photograph of a narrow dirt path winding through a forest. On the left, several tall, slender trees with distinctive white bark and dark, lenticular scars are visible. The path is flanked by lush green grass and dense, leafy bushes on the right. The background is shrouded in a thick mist or fog, creating a sense of depth and mystery. The overall color palette is muted, with soft greens, greys, and the stark white of the tree bark.

WHAT'S NEXT



# CONCLUSIONS + NEXT STEPS

- Develop a strategy to help people in the Newaukum deal with the flood hazards of channel migration:
  - Currently no active program; channel migration zone not delineated.
- Don't squander the momentum and goodwill generated by this effort:
  - People are expecting follow-up; we promised return visits when more technical feasibility results and impacts for their property are known.
  - *Incorporate community-based solutions into any projects.*
- Combine ASRP + RFP Outreach:
  - The difference between these is not relevant to most people – what matters is what happens to their land.
- Outreach must be face-to-face:
  - People will show up and are ready to talk.