

CHEHALIS BASIN BOARD SUMMARIZED MEETING AGENDA AND ACTIONS

Date: March 7, 2024
Time: 9:00 AM to 1:00 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 December 7 Meeting Summary	Decision: Current Agenda approved; March 7 summary approved	No follow-up action.
2. State Transportation Network in Chehalis Basin	Discussion	No follow-up action.
3. Invasive Species and the ASRP	Discussion	No follow-up action.
4. ASRP Board Sub-Group	Discussion	Staff will present an other-H and predation work element summary at the April Board meeting and an other-H and predation matrix at the May Board meeting.
5. Chehalis Basin Strategy Development	Discussion / Direction	Board members Tyson Johnston, J. Vander Stoep, and Glen Connelly will serve on the comparative analysis sub-group. Staff will revise the work elements to reflect Board member input.
6. RCO-Ecology Contract Management Transition Updates	Discussion	No follow-up action.
7. Director's Report	Discussion	No follow-up action.
8. Next Steps and Closing	Discussion	No follow-up action.

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	Absent
Dustin Klatush	Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation	Initially present
Glen Connelly	Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation	Present
J. Vander Stoep	Office of the Governor	Present
Steve Malloch	Office of the Governor	Absent

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
Rich Doenges	Department of Ecology	Present

Board Staff/Board Guests Present:

- See Attachment A

Welcome, Introductions

Board member Edna Fund called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and welcomed the Board, staff, and audience. Jenn Tice (Ross Strategic) facilitated a round of introductions and welcomed Chehalis Tribal Chairman Dustin Klatush. Office of Chehalis Basin (OCB) Director Jeff Zenk introduced Jenn Hennessey who will serve as the Department of Ecology's ex-officio representative in future Board meetings. Rich Doenges will leave the Department of Ecology on March 15th.

Agenda and Meeting Summary Review

Jenn Tice (Ross Strategic) provided an overview of the meeting agenda. The Board did not have additions or revisions to the [March 7, 2024 meeting agenda](#).

BOARD DECISION: Agenda approved by consensus.

The Board did not have additions or revisions to the February 1 meeting summary.

BOARD DECISION: February 1 meeting summary approved by consensus.

Below are the links to the meeting materials:

- [March 7, 2024 meeting agenda](#)
- [February 1, meeting summary](#)

State Transportation Network in Chehalis Basin

Mark Gaines (Washington State Department of Transportation [WSDOT]) highlighted WSDOT's interest in limiting the closure of I-5 in the Chehalis Basin due to flooding. He reviewed 2011 and 2013 studies that discussed options for making I-5 more resilient to flooding. The basin flood damage reduction approach that is included in the long-term strategy (e.g., the proposed flood retention facility [FRE] or a levee/diversion/conveyance system) will likely affect the need for additional protection of I-5. Once a final long-term strategy for the Chehalis Basin is determined, WSDOT can consider further hydraulic modeling and construction options to protect I-5 based on the assessed impacts. To do further analysis, WSDOT would also need direction and funding from the legislature. Comments and clarifications included:

- WSDOT could work with OCB and/or others on a hydraulic model to determine the frequency and magnitude of I-5 flooding based on the recommended long-term flood-damage reduction strategy, and then estimate costs needed for any potential projects to protect I-5.
- Replacing I-5 overpasses will be expensive if I-5 is raised.
- Climate change information and data has changed since the 2012 and 2014 reports (which responded to the 2011 and 2013 legislative direction) were published. Data may have to be re-analyzed when the Board chooses a Strategy.

Below are the links to the meeting materials:

- [WSDOT Chehalis Basin Approach](#)
- [WSDOT 2012 I-5 Flood Report](#)
- [WSDOT 2014 I-5 Flood Report](#)

Invasive Species and the Aquatic Species Restoration Plan (ASRP)

Drew Mealor (WDFW) discussed how noxious weed control projects fit into the Aquatic Species Restoration Plan (ASRP) and are connected to the Chehalis Basin Strategy. He provided background on noxious weeds, the importance of finding long-term noxious weed removal solutions, the allocated removal budget, and the project approval process. The information was presented to provide Board members with the reasoning behind ASRP's holistic noxious weed control approach and why more funding will be requested for this work. Discussion points and clarifications included:

- WDFW relies on project sponsors, partners, and experts to coordinate on current restoration and invasive species removal best management practices (BMPs). The Chehalis Basin has a weed management control group that a potential coordinator could work with to determine BMPs. A standard set of BMPs would be beneficial to use to ensure success of Chehalis Basin Strategy restoration projects.
- The Chehalis Tribe has been discussing whether to hire an invasive plant coordinator. OCB and the Board could also consider creating this position. WDFW will bring the Board back a proposal when a more tangible next step is determined.
- Grazing is part of reed canary grass control, especially in controlling large areas of land. It is important to provide other more targeted methods of control and monitoring for Oregon spotted frog habitat because their habitat is so small that extreme care is needed to continuously manage these areas.
- A legal and biological feasibility study to relocate Oregon spotted frogs was funded in the last biennium. Relocation could be a more cost-effective approach than the current method of mowing invasive species to restore Oregon spotted frog populations.

Below are the links to the meeting materials:

- [ASRP Noxious Weed Factsheet](#)
- [ASRP Noxious Weed Project Synopsis](#)

Aquatic Species Restoration Plan (ASRP) Board Subgroup

Nat Kale (OCB) provided an update that Board members Jay Gordon, Glen Connelly, and Steve Malloch met with members of the Aquatic Species Restoration Plan (ASRP) Steering Committee to discuss the potential "other-H and predation" implementation options to improve salmonid populations. This group discussed low-flow augmentation, how barriers are currently being addressed in the ASRP, the need to address pinniped predation, the impact of foraged fish on salmon, and OCB support of the co-manager restoration hatchery consideration. From this

meeting, OCB decided to compose a matrix of other-H and predation actions for Board consideration. Key discussion points and clarifications included:

- Board members discussed a need to act and work towards other-H and predation decision points (e.g., implement a study and then use the data to decide whether and how to take actions) rather than to continue discussions and idea generation only. Staff noted that an effort was underway to develop a matrix that would outline potential actions under other-Hs and predation (e.g., studies, policy recommendations, etc.) that the Board could consider including in the long-term strategy, and that this would be discussed in an upcoming Board meeting.
- Potential other-H and predation actions mentioned included supporting a study on the effects of herring run loss near Vancouver Island on Chehalis Basin fish populations, conducting a population assessment to understand how to reduce bass populations and/or to allow for a bass tagging derby, and assessing pinniped damage on fish populations.

FOLLOW UP: Staff will present an other-H and predation work element summary at the April Board meeting and an other-H and predation matrix at the May Board meeting.

Chehalis Basin Strategy Development

Board subgroup for comparative analysis

Nat Kale (OCB) discussed that an RFQ will be issued soon for a consultant to coordinate with the Board, OCB, and partners to support the comparative analysis. The Board approved a comparative analysis subgroup at the February 1st Board meeting and at this meeting Board members decided who will serve on the subgroup.

Board members Tyson Johnston, J. Vander Stoep, and Glen Connelly will serve on the comparative analysis subgroup.

Small Group Work Element Discussions

Nat Kale (OCB) reminded the Board about the concept of work elements (potential components of the long-term strategy), and that this was the second of three meetings from February through April that the Board would discuss individual work elements. Board members then divided into two small groups to discuss the 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 Nat Kale and Jenn Tice (Ross Strategic) reported on key points from the small group discussions. Overall, the groups shared consistent or

complementary insights and expressed that they could have used more time for the exercise. Nat Kale reflected that the discussion was robust and was very helpful to have Board input to refine the work elements. Along with wording changes and clarifications identified, primary discussion points for each work element included the following:

Flood Authority Projects

- Board members were supportive of the Flood Authority work element, which related to local projects implemented by the Flood Authority, and principles described for it.
- Board members expressed differing perspectives around the cost estimates for the work element about Flood Authority projects, noting concern about the cost trajectory, that the last two biennia may be more representative of costs than prior expenses since Flood Authority projects have changed over time, and that future costs may decrease as more projects are implemented.
- Board members suggested a new principle that Flood Authority projects should be scaled to complement other major Strategy infrastructure projects (e.g., FRE/levees).
- All work elements should be considered within the context of climate change and adaptive management.

Floodplain Management and Land Use

- Board members generally supported this work element on floodplain management and land use, which described OCB's consultative and support role in advancing more protective floodplain management policies and practices. However, they had questions about the specific policy recommendations and how they related to state and federal regulations.
- Board members noted the importance of recognizing that many local jurisdictions are already doing a significant amount of work in this area.
- Board members had the most discussion of Principle 4, which outlined a potential "stick" approach of potentially not funding local projects in communities that had not adopted a minimum level of control. One group suggested that the principle could be revised to consider the adoption of protective floodplain management policies in the prioritization of funding project, rather than make it a requirement for funding.

Low Flow Augmentation

- Board members had significant discussion of the low-flow augmentation work element, which described an approach to increase in-stream flows during low summer and early fall for the purpose of restoring aquatic species and improving resilience to climate change.

- Ensure that the low-flow augmentation approach is consistent with ASRP goals and emphasize that it is maintaining and restoring natural flow regimes with consideration of out-of-stream impacts.
- The work element needs to be expanded beyond the focus on the Chehalis Basin Partnership to incorporate other entities and programs, including the Washington State Conservation Commission's Irrigation Efficiencies Program, Ecology's policy on low-flow support, local conservation districts, and others.
- Consider incorporating more activities, such as conservation, beavers, water re-use, and natural solutions, rather than be limited by the Chehalis Basin Partnership mandate. There may be a need for more data and modeling to identify solutions.
- The costs for this work element should be associated with the "fish" funding bucket if the goals of the activity support aquatic species restoration, but it could be in other categories ("integrated" or "flood") if flows were augmented for other purposes.

Resiliency Program

- This work element involves support for actions to increase the ability of basin communities to withstand, respond, adapt, and recover from flood events. Only one group had time to fully discuss this work element; the other group only briefly discussed it.
- Board members recommended clarifying how this work element is described. The term "resiliency" is too broad and could cover climate or ecosystem resiliency. Clarify that this work element is focused on community resiliency and local resilience. Another possible framing would be "event response" or "event management."
- Clarify that OCB will focus on communities that are most in need of assistance rather than having a blanket statement for Principle 1 regarding supporting communities. Some communities are already doing a lot of work in this area.

Transportation System and Accessibility Improvement

- This work element involves local actions to protect transportation corridors from flood damage and ensure future transportation projects incorporate flood protection measures, (e.g., emergency access routes). Board members thought that this work element needed significant revisions and/or reconsideration as it goes forward in the strategy process.
- One group thought that this work element should be a part of the comparative analysis but thought that it was premature to evaluate any of the specific projects identified in the work element description. The other group recommended shifting away from a

project focus to instead support planning and prioritization, because local jurisdictions are likely already implementing major transportation projects.

- Projects should consider a 2080 climate estimate of flooding in their planning and design.
- The costs for this and other work elements are concerning, as they could add up to a large total over the overall implementation period. The Board, OCB, and partners will need to think creatively to find projects with multiple benefits and identify ways to manage overall costs.

Below are the links to the meeting materials:

- [Strategy Development Process Presentation](#)
- [Flood Authority Projects Common Element Development Worksheet](#)
- [Floodplain Management and Land Use Common Element Development Worksheet](#)
- [Low Flow Augmentation Common Element Development Worksheet](#)
- [Resiliency Program Common Element Development Worksheet](#)
- [Transportation System and Accessibility Improvements Common Element Development Worksheet](#)

FOLLOW UP: OCB will revise the work elements to reflect Board member input.

RCO-Ecology Contract Management Transition Updates

Fiscal management of OCB's grants and contracts will move from the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) to the Department of Ecology. OCB is preparing a transition plan by the end of April to guide when changes will be made and how to communicate changes to sponsors. The end of June 2025 is a key transition date. A transition team is meeting every other week to work through questions. Direct communications have been sent out to those with subawards or sub-agreements with RCO. Another transition group is meeting to solicit sponsor feedback regarding concerns and needs. OCB will hire an Ecology fiscal manager and two contract and grant specialists. Board members commented that this transition will be beneficial to achieve fish and flood goals in a timely manner.

Directors Report

OCB Director Jeff Zenk provided the following updates:

- Anchor QEA identified sensor locations at the Skookumchuck dam for a steelhead study. Staff have begun identifying and analyzing potential off-channel water reservoir storage locations for the Skookumchuck dam.
- West Fork Environmental Contractors continue to trap spring Chinook fry for genetic studies.
- OCB and staff continue to meet with partners on the acquisition workgroup and will present information at the April Board meeting.
- The ASRP invested over \$122,000 in a planning project to enhance priority Oregon spotted frog habitat in Thurston County. The property is owned by WDFW and the design will restore breeding habitat.
- The ASRP invested \$70,000 in a Scatter Creek Local Strategy under the Chehalis Basin Partnership to improve habitat and water conditions and to build local community capacity to secure grants from other sources that would prioritize the Chehalis Basin.
- OCB staff are following up with WDFW, consultants, tribes, and the AG's office on mitigation questions regarding flood damage reduction projects and will compose a memo with findings.
- No bids have been received for the Community Flood Assistance and Resilience (CFAR) home elevation projects, but OCB is continuing to solicit and determine how to best move forward with contracting.
- Staff are working on a legislative tour for Board members and elected officials. Details will be provided at the April Board meeting.
- An Erosion Management Program webinar will be held on March 14th at 6pm.
- Senator Braun's Floodway Bill passed in the state legislature and is awaiting the Governor's signature.

Board members and the OCB Director thanked Rich Doenges for his time with Ecology and as a Board ex-officio member. Rich Doenges thanked the Board and noted that Ecology Director Laura Watson announced a new Southwest Region Director for Ecology, Bobbak Talebi, who will be the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) responsible official working on the final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Public Comment

A member of the public provided the following verbal comment:

Erik Martin, HDR: I wanted to thank Rich Doenges for how much care he took in his role. As a regulator, things can be tedious, but Rich always was very responsive, listened carefully, and was very helpful with as much as he could be. I really appreciated that.

Next Steps and Closing

Jenn Tice (Ross Strategic) thanked Board members for their participation and adjourned the meeting. The Board will meet next on April 4th at the Fairfield Inn and Suites in Grand Mound Centralia.

Attachment A

Board Staff/Board Guests

Those that participated virtually are noted with an asterisk.

- Adrien Glenn Owens, CNW contractor*
- Alissa Shay, Port of Grays Harbor*
- Casey Hart, Ross Strategic*
- Celina Abercrombie, WDFW
- Cindy Malay, OCB
- Col. Ronald Averill, Flood Authority*
- Curt Hart, Ecology*
- Darrin Raines, City of Cosmopolis*
- Dave Bingaman, Quinault Indian Nation
- Drew Mealor, WDFW
- Emy Carpenter, Moffat and Nichol*
- Eric Eisenberg, Flood Control Zone District*
- Erik Martin, HDR*
- Erika Britney, ICF*
- George Bryan, Sedron Technologies*
- Jeff Zenk, OCB
- Jenn Tice, Ross Strategic
- Jennie Lewis, OCB
- Jim Weber, CELP*
- Kat Dickey, OCB
- Katrina Sukola, ICF*
- Kylin Brown, Pyramid Communications*
- Larry Karpach, WSE*
- Mark Glyde, Quinault Indian Nation*
- Matt Dillin, FCZD*
- Merri Martz, Anchor QEA*
- Nat Kale, OCB
- Nick Bird, City of Aberdeen*
- Shane Phillips, Moffat and Nichol*
- Steve Emrich*
- Stevie Colson, OCB

- Victoria Knorr, WDFW
- Teri Wright, Wild Orca*