

Source Water Protection Workshop: Chehalis, WA

June 7, 2018

Meeting Notes

GENERAL

- Fish and drinking water diverges, there is not a need to get firm numbers in reductions of turbidity, and it is more about managing risk.
- A lot of places are not meeting the surface water requirements
- “As the water guy, what do I do?” – in terms of fixing the future problems
- “How do I get you there, without having you do EVERYTHING?”
- Communication with the State is very important, so they can notify DNR, DNR is adamant that they are doing the right thing, and won’t acknowledge anything until the damage is done.
- Payment for ecosystem services, Eugene Water and Electric Board has agreements with other parties, they used to call it the voluntary incentives program. We need to protect what we have, so we are providing incentives and TA to make improve. As it has continued, this has gotten bigger, demand and desire has increased. “The utilities participation and dollar value in was the critical element, it was the foundation.” How do you get that started? Towns can be the small base to get started to begin the collaborative – needs leadership & base funds – “Spark”
- “We recognize that timber is always going to be taken off of this landscape, but how can we adopt better practices so that we are not as impacted? Being willing to have those discussions in a way that doesn’t force them out of those industries and jobs”
- “I struggle with the fact, that we have tree farms that are managed to a higher standard than other agricultural farms.”
- Once there are funds, people are willing to adapt or move, to make the landscape better for the water.
- “State agency interaction has a lot of disconnected conversations, it is surprising how many agencies want the same end goal, even though how they get there, may be different?”
- “We need to think in the long run, 14 million dollars, to have clean drinking water, is not that much money”
- Multiple towns pulling water from the same source is there an economy of scale, an opportunity to work together on source water protection plan implementation?
- Would there be interest across communities & utilities to make source water protection better?
- “There is a lot of disconnect on what would be impactful/helpful, in communities with timber companies, it is in their heritage, and hard to let go”
- “Big us vs them mentality, it is an uphill battle to collaborate”
- We need to change the story, to form these collaborations, we need some of those key community folks
- Outreach and education is hard to do, there is too much on their plate, to do outreach and education to the public and land owners about the watersheds and how it impacts their communities’ drinking water.

- We need to have this discussion with wastewater people as well.
- Power Plans are underway with intent of doing some pilot projects = potential opportunities to collaborate.
- Attendees wanted to know how to find information on drinking and wastewater utilities.
- They don't have time to find and talk with every town so are there forums to meet at or other groups that can serve as messengers?
- Attendees would like to hear insights from the other workshops; themes or lessons that may be useful for everyone.
- Recommend involve wastewater folks in the future, especially in Chehalis where ww is on mainstem and dw is on tribs.
- Outcomes from other (all) workshops – Summarize what comes out of all workshops & share
- Authority to penalize & fine violators of water rights – Neighbors & public are the best notification
- Need additional funding, before salmon are gone
- Communication – Education for forestry/DNR: that they are working in a drinking water watershed. There should be an additional checkbox in the forestry systems to notify that it is a drinking watershed, so that loggers know.
- Creative packaging of projects – how can this be accomplished to the benefit of all
- Fix the process so funds can be used where they are needed.
- First fix the money, but also, water rights need to be divested or put into trust, either temporary or permanently.
- Expand communication & telling the success stories to get everyone on board
- “These types of seminars, if I can come, I do, because I always learn something”

Restoration and Conservation Information, Needs, and Opportunities

- Keeping surface water clean (pest spraying & septic runoff)
- Thermal refuge temp – Salmon need cooler water locations
- Lack of riparian buffers creates higher temperatures
- Leaves are an issue
- Need to slow down the water
- Bank erosion should be minimized
- Algae issue from nutrient loading in some areas
- Why are you allowing people to continue to build in the flood plain?
- Water conveyance system leaks reduce the amount of water in streams water in streams benefit salmon
 - Need money available to reduce leakage
 - Less system loss = More water in streams
- Less turbid water = Less backwash at treatment plants = more water in-streams
- Chehalis Tribe has data available but no place to share it. EDT model Fish & Wild Dept can share with Water Providers (Tribe has groundwater sources)
- Habitat (State -wide salmon recovery site) work schedule – May be able to store this data here for restoration folks to access it as they can't do monitoring

- Chehalis Tribe – Land acquisition is a priority & continued maintenance
- Planting requires 10 year agreement, but no money is available for repair
- Flood zone should = people to work on projects
- Conservation easements may be a solution to an acquisition – but these may not be long term. (i.e. 10 year – also is it a critical area)
- Permits came up repeatedly. Difficulty/laboriousness of permits for restoration projects and challenge of securing multi-year funding to support that work.
- Goals locally are to outpace degradation and avoid ESA fish listings.
- People know what the water quality issues are on-the-ground and what kinds of activities can help remedy them but 90% of work in the area is fish passage and culverts because this is where there's landowner interest and funding. Need landowner cooperation and funding to pursue work other than culverts.
- Some larger projects are not even developed/planned because funding is not available
- The investment up-front is large for proposal development
- Funding is needed for monitoring (i.e. need 5-10 years of funding)
- Missing barrier data – multiple entities collecting data – don't always communicate - studies and monitoring take money
- Doing a roads inventory on coast and finding 5x more culverts than what is listed in the WDFW database.
- There are source water plans but not all rigorous, vary in usefulness and detail. Still need to set priorities in most cases. Then need to connect it to fish benefits to leverage \$\$\$. Utility staff capacity is limited for small communities to do the updates on plans.
- Recognize that not all solutions are realistic
- Benefits if multi-phases for both in stream flow & year funding – Single year & permit issues cause challenges & spotty projects in watersheds
- Looking at comprehensive list of best places to do projects (long term work) to be more strategic in project location (Pilot Watershed Restoration Plan)
- Folks need to know where the drinking water systems and source areas are. Restoration practitioners need the time to make the connections with the systems. Corina Hayes is the point of contact for the state.
- Include the wastewater perspective and DOH will work on mapping drinking water intake vs. sewer outfall locations
- Challenging piecing data together
- Washington Coast Restoration Grants & Resiliency Initiative Grants: new \$ for protection, not just salmon projects. Illwaco could apply to this for their lands/timber rights acquisition?

Small Group Discussion: Chehalis basin

- There's an opportunity to do a floodplain project above Boitsfort. Unclear if there's landowner willingness or ripeness.

- Stearns Creek represents an opportunity for large, valley-bottom conservation project as a large ag landowner is putting land up for sale. Great waterfowl habitat, can address nonpoint source pollution, and do wetland mitigation.
- The Newaukum basin (main dw source for city of Chehalis) has a “power” plan forthcoming which will likely tee up more projects. Note that there are a lot of private forest lands, especially Weyerhaeuser. Also have Transalta ownership to the north.
- Any chance of creating flood control zones/districts? Or conservation easements as opposed to acquisition? Do we know where the most sensitive areas are? What about the limited duration of easements?

Small Group Discussion: Cathlamet Water Department-Elochoman River

- Cathlamet has a roads and fish passage issue in town. Opportunity to do a road diet project and fix fish passage concurrently. Can WA Water Trust be of assistance to explore the potential for returning some municipal water instream in exchange for fixing leaky pipes (over 20% conveyance loss rate)?
- In general, difficulties talking with landowners about land use issues so Jess offered to be the messenger so that it's not neighbors talking to neighbors.
- Upstream issues with steep slopes and landslide risks (evacuation notices). Perhaps opportunity for restoration on DNR lands in collaboration with the Cowlitz Tribe, given their experiences in Abernathy Creek?