

**Governor's Chehalis Work Group  
Summary of An Action Plan for the 2013-2015 biennium  
November 9, 2012**

At the request of the Governor, over the past several months a small group of leaders in the Chehalis Basin have met regularly to develop a plan of action to reduce damages from major flooding from the Chehalis River.

The group believes that, while more study is needed in certain areas, enough information is available now to support tangible and important steps forward. The group recommends a series of actions that, taken together, will represent a significant investment to reduce flood damages in the short term, enhance natural floodplain function and fisheries, and put the Basin on firm footing to make critical decisions about large scale projects. The group has consulted with other leaders in the Basin throughout their process and there is broad support among Basin governments for their recommendations.

Objectives

The group set out to make recommendations consistent with a Basin-wide approach to flood damage reduction. In the group's view, a successful Basin-wide approach must explicitly serve people and communities throughout the Basin. It will maximize benefits and avoid or minimize adverse human and environmental impacts of flood damage reduction actions. It will protect key community infrastructure and maintain public services during emergencies. It will not solve one community's flooding problems by making another community's problems worse.

As part of a Basin-wide solution the group puts investments to improve water quality and the vitality of the fishery resource on par with flood damage reduction actions. Appropriate management of floodplains, water, and shorelines can and should play a role in flood damage reduction, and should enhance the overall environmental conditions and habitat for aquatic species, particularly salmon, in the Basin. It is critical that harvestable resources of the basin are increased as flood damage is reduced.

Major Recommendations

1. Finish the analysis necessary to determine the best option for large-scale capital projects that could significantly reduce flood damages across a large geographic area, and make a decision whether to move into project permitting by December 2014. The large capital projects under consideration include upstream water retention and I-5 improvements. The analyses needed to support feasibility assessments for large-scale projects have many collateral benefits in the Basin, including benefits to the other work areas listed below.
2. Design and construct local projects that will provide immediate flood damage reduction including the protection of critical infrastructure, wellheads, wastewater treatment plants, roads, homes and businesses. Concurrent with these projects, develop and implement a long-term strategy for localized flood damage reduction actions.
3. Implement projects that improve fish habitat and populations and floodplain functions in the Basin. Concurrent with initial projects, develop and implement a coordinated long-term strategy with goals and objectives for improving ecological function, aquatic habitat and abundance of fish in the Basin in conjunction with flood damage reduction actions.
4. Reduce the cost of repetitive damage to residences in the floodplain through a strategic program of buyouts and flood proofing and encourage a comprehensive effort to prevent new development in the Basin from increasing flood damages.

5. Ensure flood warning and flood preparedness systems remain ready and effective for the public and emergency responders.