

## Spirit Lake/Toutle-Cowlitz River Collaborative

January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023 | 9:30 AM – 12:00 PM

Longview City Hall, 1525 Broadway Street, Longview, WA 98632 | WebEx  
Facilitators: The William D. Ruckelshaus Center (Chris Page, Kara Whitman)

<https://ruckelshauscenter.wsu.edu/projects/current-projects/spirit-lake/>

Meeting Chat Transcript available in Appendix A

### Meeting Goals:

- Hear updates from the Steering Committee and participating organizations
- Decide whether to approve the Monday.com project tracking tool
- Discuss the workplan, including widely-supported projects
- Plan the workshop

### Meeting Attendees:

#### Representing Sovereign State, Federal, & Tribal Governments:

- Karl Ahlen, Chris Budai, Paul Sclafani – *US Army Corps of Engineers*
- John Anderson – *WA Office of the Governor*
- Bernadette Barthelenghi, Donna Mickley – *US Forest Service, Gifford Pinchot National Forest*
- Rich Doenges, Matt Gerlach – *WA Department of Ecology*
- James Gordon, Erik White – *Cowlitz Indian Tribe*
- Dave Howe, Maddie Nolan – *WA Department of Fish & Wildlife*
- Janine Castro, Joe Skalicky – *US Fish & Wildlife Service*
- Kurt Spicer – *United States Geological Survey*

#### Representing Local Governments & Special Purpose Districts:

- Amy Boyd – *Port of Longview*
- Susan Eugenis, Jim Mallett – *Cowlitz County Department of Public Works*
- Bill Fashing, Brandon Robinson – *Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments*
- Tom Iverson – *Confederated Tribes & Bands of the Yakama Nation*
- Steve Manlow, Steve West – *Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board*
- Paul Morin – *Cowlitz County Building & Planning*
- Dave Vorse – *City of Castle Rock*
- Commissioner Dennis Weber – *Cowlitz County*

#### Representing US Congressional Offices:

- Cameron Kockritz, Sarah Kohout – *US Representative Marie Gluesenkamp Perez's Office*

#### Representing Other Interested Parties:

- Susan Saul – *Cascade Forest Conservancy*
- Mark Smith – *EcoPark*
- Colin Thorne – *University of Nottingham*

### Welcome & Introductions:

Kara Whitman welcomed the participants to the meeting and invited participants to state their names and affiliations before answering the following question: *What is something you're willing to share about yourself that no one else in the group knows?* Kara reviewed the agenda, ground rules, and the common interests outlined in the Collaborative's *Declaration of Cooperation*.

### **Updates from Participating Organizations:**

- Sarah Kohout: There is federal funding in the recently passed budget for sediment monitoring.
- Donna Mickley: The Gifford Pinchot National Forest is currently focused on the Spirit Lake tunnel intake gate replacement. The litigation challenging the construction of an access road across the pumice plain to replace the tunnel intake gate got ruled in favor of the Forest Service. There are 90 days to petition that decision for an appeal to the Supreme Court. The tunnel intake gate replacement is scheduled to take place between 2023 and 2026, starting with design work.
- Bernadette Barthelenghi: The Gifford Pinchot National Forest is hiring a Forest Hydrologist, with the application period closing on January 19<sup>th</sup>. The position is important for the Collaborative; I see the person in that position attending Collaborative meetings. Additionally, we have completed some work in the Kalama. The existing restoration work has held up well.
- Amy Boyd: The Port of Longview is writing a climate action strategy looking at risks and evaluating opportunities for action. In July and August, we will be publishing a draft of the strategy, which lasts until 2080 so requires a long look forward to what we should prepare for.

### **Updates from the Steering Committee:**

- The workshop is scheduled for March 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> at the Cowlitz County Event Center. The draft goals of the workshop include:
  - Ensuring current and planned projects have the latest science and data (sharing/learning what's planned for 2023 and identifying what information can enhance those efforts)
  - Determining whether those projects need to be adjusted to align with the latest information.
  - Identifying (current or future) projects that have multiple benefits and ways to complete those projects
  - Forming teams to advance projects (Which projects gain from diverse partners? Ideally, projects can take advantage of interagency collaboration.)
- Jim Mallett: The Collaborative hasn't really addressed or defined long-term sediment management and control. The larger agencies have grants available for research, but the property owners do not have access to capital unless we organize it. We have to pull together our expertise to address the issues. I propose funding sediment remediation and riverbank restoration using a fee-in-lieu mitigation bank approach.
  - Amy Boyd: This fee-in-lieu approach may be applicable to instream mitigation, though it may be difficult to create wetlands from dredged soils. There's a big picture happening.
  - Dave Vorse: We shouldn't lose sight of long-term planning. I would appreciate an option for a discussion at the workshop around long-term sediment management and ecological recovery.
  - Rich Doenges noted in the meeting chat that the Department of Ecology runs the "In Lieu Fee" program, in which developers who propose to build on wetlands pay a fee that funds restoration or creation of wetlands elsewhere (in lieu of preserving the wetlands in the area being developed)

### **Monday.com Project Tracking Tool**

Brandon Robinson gave an overview of this emerging project information system: "On the project submittal form, I added a list of goals under 'collaborative interests' using the shared interests from the Declaration of Cooperation. I also changed the language under 'about the system' to make the language less restrictive. On the project board, we could state that not all projects are included on the board. People are encouraged to add as much information as they can. We could note public comment periods.

- Amy Boyd: There should be a line for “project owner.” Sometimes the project contact is the project owner, but sometimes they are not.
- Bill Fashing: The tracking tool is about consolidating projects. It’s not about passing judgement or approving projects. We can link the project sites if appropriate.

**DECISION:** The Collaborative approved the Monday.com tracking tool and its associated forms.

## **Workplan Discussion**

### **North Fork Toutle River**

Chris Page shared three fish-related projects on the North Fork Toutle River that have received broad support from Collaborative participants. These projects include Pacific lamprey passage above the Sediment Retention Structure (SRS), the Pullen Creek culvert replacement, and maintaining the wall-based channel on the North wall of the sediment plain on the above for downstream fish passage.

Participants shared the following observations:

- Karl Ahlen: Section 408 may be required for the maintenance of the wall-based channel.
- Colin Thorne: The wall-based channel is associated with tributary junctions. The connectivity of those tributary junctions is already covered by an existing biological opinion.
- Amy Boyd: We have completed Section 408 for Port of Longview projects. We may be able to help the Collaborative understand the process. Biological opinions may take longer.
  - Karl Ahlen: Section 408 is separate from biological opinions.
- Steve Manlow: I want to make the Collaborative aware of an emerging project. The Wild Salmon Center and the WA Department of Fish and Wildlife have partnered on a grant application. The purpose of the application is to secure funding for a comprehensive fish reintroduction plan.

### **Lower Cowlitz Projects**

Chris Page shared two project categories focused on the Lower Cowlitz River that have received support from the Collaborative: riverbank restoration and clear communication on levels of flood protection.

- Mark Smith: The county is working on a flood plan. We want to identify where development should and shouldn’t take place. We can’t easily dredge the Cowlitz because development was allowed in the wrong areas.
- Amy Boyd: We (Port of Longview) have been working on the Dredge Maintenance Management Plan.

### **Other Projects of Interest**

- Bill Fashing: I want to complete an update around the economic impacts of Mt. St. Helens. I would love to complete an economic review of the long-term impacts and ongoing challenges. The Collaborative could help with an ask to the US Congressional delegation.
- Steve West: We (Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board) funded a project on the South Fork of the Toutle. The project covers 13 miles and deals with sediment sequestration. Funding is an issue: we need a \$40,000 match.

### **Drone Monitoring of the Sediment Plain**

- Maddie Nolan: George Fornes (WDFW) is a certified drone pilot and would be happy to assist with an aerial survey, but we would need an explicit data collection reason to fly drones. We can then work with George to develop the approach and details required to fly drones.

- Mark Smith: We could look at the wall-based channel and the beaver habitat. The connectivity of the channel is important for fish and lamprey passage. It would be nice to see the separations and the connectivity. We could look at both beavers and vegetation above the SRS.
- Maddie Nolan: We need to balance the workload for George. We need the biggest bang for our buck. This might be worth a small group discussion.

#### **Other Projects and Updates**

- Joe Skalicky: US Fish & Wildlife Service could do a DNA analysis to identify all the species that have been in the North Fork Toutle above the SRS. How it works: all organisms shed environmental DNA into the ground, air, and water as they move around. We can run water samples across hundreds of thousands of species. These samples will tell us whether there is beaver (or lamprey) DNA in the water. We're proposing to do this next year.
- Matt Gerlach: We need consistent funding for data collection. There is an opportunity for participants to apply for our Floodplains by Design program. This program has been around for ten years, and funding has been consistent for competitive applicants. Our next funding round will open in January 2024. I'm happy to talk about Floodplains by Design at the workshop.
- Rich Doenges: This process needs to be completed in close coordination with the Army Corps. We can find someone to talk about in-lieu fees.

#### **Adjourn:**

Chris Page and Kara Whitman thanked the participants for attending the meeting. Chris reminded the participants of the next meeting on Thursday, February 9<sup>th</sup>.

## Appendix A: Meeting Chat Transcript

01/12/2023 09:28:04 AM from Mark Smith to Everyone: Good Morning,

01/12/2023 09:32:49 AM from Steve Manlow, LCFRB to Everyone: do we have audio yet?

01/12/2023 09:33:17 AM from James Gordon - Cultural Resources Tech, Cowlitz Indian Tribe to Everyone: Not yet...

01/12/2023 09:41:37 AM from Susan Saul to Everyone: sitting in for Ashley Short, Cascade Forest Conservancy

01/12/2023 09:42:23 AM from James Gordon - Cultural Resources Tech, Cowlitz Indian Tribe to Everyone: James Gordon - Cultural Resources Technician, Cowlitz Indian Tribe

01/12/2023 09:43:45 AM from Susan Eugenis to Everyone: Susan Eugenis, Cowlitz County Public Works, Something others don't know I have never been to Idaho

01/12/2023 09:43:58 AM from Mark Smith to Everyone: we lost audio

01/12/2023 09:44:01 AM from James Gordon - Cultural Resources Tech, Cowlitz Indian Tribe to Everyone: Room - We lost audio.

01/12/2023 09:44:11 AM from Steve Manlow, LCFRB to Everyone: lost audio?

01/12/2023 09:44:18 AM from Joe Skalilcky to Everyone: I did too

01/12/2023 09:44:22 AM from Maddie Nolan DFW to Everyone: me too

01/12/2023 09:44:40 AM from Chris Budai to Everyone: No audio

01/12/2023 09:46:05 AM from Chris Page to Everyone: Sorry folks about the audio. Trying to manage two "rooms" gets tricky!

01/12/2023 09:46:11 AM from Chris Budai to Everyone: audio is back

01/12/2023 09:46:46 AM from Chris Page to Everyone: Thanks Chris et al, keep us posted. And thanks for sharing, Susan! Kara Whitman grew up in Idaho, so could give you some suggestions for when you finally make it there...

01/12/2023 09:49:32 AM from Matt G to Everyone: Matt Gerlach, WA Ecology. I'm a recovering eastcoaster.

01/12/2023 09:50:54 AM from Maddie Nolan DFW to Everyone: Maddie Nolan, WDFW. I was raised in the midwest and moved to the west coast about 8 years ago

01/12/2023 09:52:24 AM from Joe Skalilcky to Everyone: Joe Skalicky, USFWS-Vancouver, Still have jars of ash from when I was a kid. Known to grow giant pumpkins.

01/12/2023 09:55:09 AM from Erik White - Cowlitz Tribe to Everyone: Erik White, Cowlitz Indian Tribe, I returned from Bali Indonesia 2 days ago.

01/12/2023 10:21:58 AM from Chris Page to Everyone: jim mallett (Cowlitz County)

01/12/2023 10:27:01 AM from Rich Doenges to Everyone: Info on in-lieu fee process from Ecology's website: <https://ecology.wa.gov/Water-Shorelines/Wetlands/Mitigation/In-lieu-fee-mitigation>

01/12/2023 10:27:34 AM from Chris Page to Everyone: Thanks Rich!

01/12/2023 10:29:43 AM from James Gordon - Cultural Resources Tech, Cowlitz Indian Tribe to Everyone: With the realization that the Collaborative itself is not a permitting agency, would the Monday.com project tracking information be available to Tribes as well? I ask because we receive over 200 requests for comment on permit applications in any given month, and it would be helpful to know where each agency is in terms of their decision-making process.

01/12/2023 10:30:40 AM from Mark Smith to Everyone: Long term planning needs to include the County Building and Planning to help identify areas of concerns for development

01/12/2023 10:32:59 AM from Chris Page to Everyone: James, yes the intent is for the Monday.com project tracking tool to serve all the participants in the Collaborative. Certainly the Cowlitz Indian Tribe, as a signatory to the Declaration of Cooperation, qualifies as such

01/12/2023 10:34:03 AM from James Gordon - Cultural Resources Tech, Cowlitz Indian Tribe to Everyone: Thank you. What would the length (and format) of (any) comment period be?

01/12/2023 10:34:19 AM from Chris Page to Everyone: And thanks Mark, Building & Planning reps from the County have attended every one of the last 7-8 Collaborative meetings.

01/12/2023 10:35:28 AM from James Gordon - Cultural Resources Tech, Cowlitz Indian Tribe to Everyone: In other words, would this information (comment periods) be included in these documents? This would be an ongoing issue.

01/12/2023 10:35:42 AM from Steve Manlow, LCFRB to Everyone: May be valuable to figure out how to download from the state's "Salmon Recovery Portal" : <https://srp.rco.wa.gov/projectmap?mlayer=projects>

01/12/2023 10:36:10 AM from Chris Page to Everyone: James if you're talking about these forms that Brandon is presenting, the intent is to get comments today at this meeting (this is the second or third go-around on these) and finalize them.

01/12/2023 10:40:20 AM from Mark Smith to Everyone: I think these are a good start and I do not see why they can not be updated as we identify any future needs

01/12/2023 10:46:28 AM from James Gordon - Cultural Resources Tech, Cowlitz Indian Tribe to Everyone: Is the Steering Committee a permitting agency?

01/12/2023 10:46:37 AM from James Gordon - Cultural Resources Tech, Cowlitz Indian Tribe to Everyone: I'm asking for clarification on this point.

01/12/2023 11:00:52 AM from Colin Thorne to Everyone: Apologies All - I have to drop off now to attend another meeting.

01/12/2023 11:01:42 AM from Joe Skalilcky to Everyone: I would propose fish passage options at the FCF be a break out session.

01/12/2023 11:13:19 AM from Steve Manlow, LCFRB to Everyone: I agree Joe!

01/12/2023 11:18:43 AM from Chris Budai to Everyone: who is speaking?

01/12/2023 11:28:48 AM from Chris Page to Everyone: Chris, I think it was Steve West with Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board when you asked (sorry I didn't see your chat message until now)

01/12/2023 11:29:14 AM from Chris Page to Everyone: Commissioner Dennis Weber w/Cowlitz County spoke before Steve, about Rails to Trails and parks planning

01/12/2023 11:29:35 AM from Joe Skalilcky to Everyone: Another easy project would be to do some eDNA work in the plain. I think we could do this in-house and do a metabarding analysis.

01/12/2023 11:29:40 AM from Rich Doenges to Everyone: Question for Maddie on the data collected by drones: Assume data can be presented in a GIS format, not just orthophotos. Would be interested to document changes in vegetative coverage

01/12/2023 11:32:45 AM from Chris Page to Everyone: Joe, we'll tee you up shortly to say a bit about that

01/12/2023 11:34:44 AM from Joe Skalilcky to Everyone: Great, I know Thomas and will connect with him. The WDFW genetic lab would actually run the assessment. I suspect Thomas is going run targeted qPCR.

01/12/2023 11:45:10 AM from James Gordon - Cultural Resources Tech, Cowlitz Indian Tribe to Everyone: Could speakers please identify themselves each time?