

## **Spirit Lake/Toutle-Cowlitz River Collaborative**

February 9<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
- Share information regarding floodplain management and challenges
- Plan the workshop

### **Meeting Attendees:**

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

- Karl Ahlen, Chris Budai, Liza Wells – *US Army Corps of Engineers*
- Pete Barber, James Gordon – *Cowlitz Indian Tribe*
- Rich Doenges – *WA Department of Ecology*
- Gordon Grant, Donna Mickley, Michele Palmer – *US Forest Service*
- Dave Howe – *WA Department of Fish & Wildlife*
- Steve Ogden – *WA Department of Natural Resources*
- Ted Perkins – *Federal Emergency Management Agency*
- Dan Restivo – *US 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 – *Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments*
- Greta Holmstrom – *Cowlitz County Building & Planning*
- Steve Manlow – *Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board*
- Dave Vorse – *City of Castle Rock*

#### **Representing US Congressional Offices:**

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

#### **Representing Other Interested Parties:**

- Mark Gaither – *Lower Columbia College*
- Mark Smith – *EcoPark*
- Colin Thorne – *University of Nottingham*
- Ray Yurkewycz – *Mount Saint Helens Institute*

### **Welcome & Introductions:**

Kara Whitman and Chris Page welcomed the participants to the meeting. Chris reviewed the meeting's agenda and ground rules. Chris invited the participants to state their names and affiliations before answering the following question: What was your first job?

### Updates from Participating Organizations:

- Steve Manlow: The Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board has grants available for projects related to salmon recovery. About \$4.5 million will be available for projects across the region. Folks interested in pursuing funding can look at the Recovery Board's website.
- Ray Yurkewycz: The Mount Saint Helens Institute has received \$250,000 for the campground and the outdoor school projects. The Institute has \$7 million worth of funding requests pending. Additionally, the Institute has been working on a Mount Saint Helens license plate. Funds raised through the license plate will support youth education, land stewardship, and scientific advancement at Mount Saint Helens.
- Mark Gaither: I will be speaking with the geology department at Lower Columbia College to get students involved with the Collaborative.
- Liza Wells: The US Army Corps of Engineers is resoliciting the contract for the crest raise. Additionally, the Corps is supporting the US Forest Service by assisting with improvements to the intake gates. The Corps will present data regarding levels of protection at the workshop. If possible, the data may be available before the workshop.
- **DECISIONS:** Meeting summaries will be approved by the Collaborative. Members of the Collaborative will have opportunities to edit the summaries. Additionally, there will be no meeting in March. The workshop will serve as a substitute for the meeting.

### Updates from the Steering Committee:

- Bill Fashing: The Steering Committee will request legislative funding for the next fiscal year. The Committee will submit applications to Senator Murray and Senator Cantwell.
- Chris Page: The workshop will take place on Tuesday, March 21<sup>st</sup> and Wednesday, March 22<sup>nd</sup>. The first day will focus on high-level themes. The second day will focus on technical work.
  - Dave Vorse: Jim Mallett and Darin Houpt could discuss riverbank restoration.
  - Mark Smith: It would be helpful to view drone footage at the workshop.
  - Dave Howe: There are rules that must be followed to conduct drone surveys. It's not realistic to have drone footage available at the workshop. I hope there is participation from Cowlitz County Building and Planning. I'm interested in building updates. We should talk about flood management and development permitting.
  - Greta Holmstrom: Cowlitz County Building and Planning will be prepared to talk about flood management and development permitting at the workshop.
  - Jim Mallett: We should discuss the nature-based rehabilitation of the lower debris field. We must look at using natural products to stabilize the shorelines of the debris field.
  - Liza Wells: Should the discussion include the Corps' regulatory authority?

- Dave Howe: The discussion should be around the operating environment in the Basin, not regulatory authority. We don't necessarily need "regulatory people" from the Corps.
- Michele Palmer: The time frame for presentations may be too short, especially for permitting and regulatory processes. We should identify the key information.
- Dave Howe: The Steering Committee will speak with the presenters about expectations and key information. When discussing a long-term vision for the Mid-Toutle, Cowlitz County should have a presence.
- Mark Smith: We're missing the Mid-Toutle area from the SRS to the Cowlitz. Property owners have development concerns about that area.
- Jim Mallett: In the Mid-Toutle, the fee-in-lieu program unifies property owners.
- Donna Mickley: Should we have breakout sessions for specific topics? Or should everyone have a similar, broader understanding?
- Amy Boyd: We could establish short-term committees to focus on specific interests.

**Cowlitz County Floodplain Management:**

- Susan Eugenis: Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC). The Cowlitz County Department of Public Works has looked into replacing culverts and roadways that flood. When the Cowlitz is high, creeks become backed up and roadways flood.
- Ted Perkins: The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is helping fund BRIC. FEMA can provide technical assistance to those struggling with the grant process. Individual communities must implement floodplain regulation as part of the national flood insurance program. Someone may be available for a discussion at the workshop.

**Paradoxical Challenges Activity:**

Kara Whitman invited the participants to discuss paradoxical challenges in breakout groups. The participants were encouraged to answer the following questions:

- How is it that we are... and we are... simultaneously?
- How can we accomplish... while also accomplishing?
- How can we address... while also addressing?

**Paradoxical Challenges Activity Debrief:**

- Ray Yurkewycz: We all have individual needs, but we must invest in other's needs. There are many different opinions about the river. We must consider different ways to tackle challenges.
- Colin Thorne: I have sympathy for overstretched government employees. We shouldn't misinterpret the intentions of government employees. If people stay involved and build trust, we can work around any regulation.

- Donna Mickley: We talked about the long-term. We have a sediment retention structure that is part of the landscape. How do we factor in that structure?
- Dave Howe: We should address common tensions around public safety.
- Mark Smith: We're always concerned about the environmental impact. We should elevate our solutions. Dredging is a short-term solution, but we want long-term impact. We have ideas. It's good to develop ideas that involve natural processes.
- Colin Thorne: An ecosystem is hard to kill. Some elements of the ecosystem will survive the spillway raise. Tributary junctions are ecological hotspots.

**Adjourn:**

Chris Page and Kara Whitman thanked the participants for attending the meeting. Chris reminded the participants of the workshop on Tuesday, March 21<sup>st</sup> and Wednesday, March 22<sup>nd</sup>.

## Appendix A: Meeting Chat Transcript

02/09/2023 09:39:13 AM from Steve Manlow, LCFRB to Everyone: Steve Manlow, LCFRB. First job, working in the oyster beds in Willapa Bay.

02/09/2023 09:39:45 AM from Ted Perkins to Everyone: Ted Perkins, FEMA, First job - worked the deli of the local supermarket.

02/09/2023 09:39:46 AM from David Vorse, City of Castle Rock to Everyone: David Vorse, City of Castle Rock

02/09/2023 09:39:50 AM from Ray Yurkewycz to Everyone: Ray Yurkewycz, Mount St. Helens Institute. My first job was at the pizza joint down tehstreet from my hosue at age 14. Chicago thin crust, not deep dish :) I spent all of my money on fishing gear.

02/09/2023 09:40:45 AM from Steve Ogden to Everyone: Steve Ogden, WA DNR-State Uplands in Pacific Cascade Region (SW WA). First job was working in the hayfield.....still a current job BTW :)

02/09/2023 09:41:20 AM from Dan Restivo to Everyone: Dan Restivo (Hydrologist, USGS Washington Water Science Center) - shoveling snow in the neighborhood

02/09/2023 09:41:42 AM from James Gordon, Cowlitz Indian Tribe to Everyone: James Gordon, Cowlitz Indian Tribe. My first job involved weed-whacking nine schools in Trumbull, CT - continuously pointless because grass and weeds just kept growing through the hot, humid summer. First non-summer job - Conservation Intern with Student Conservation Association.

02/09/2023 09:41:56 AM from James Gordon, Cowlitz Indian Tribe to Everyone: Room - We Lost Audio.

02/09/2023 09:42:22 AM from James Gordon, Cowlitz Indian Tribe to Everyone: Audio is back but variable quality.

02/09/2023 09:42:54 AM from Karl Ahlen to Everyone: lost audio again

02/09/2023 09:43:07 AM from Ray Yurkewycz to Everyone: No audio here as well...

02/09/2023 09:43:56 AM from Kara Whitman to Everyone: working on the audio

02/09/2023 09:44:20 AM from James Gordon, Cowlitz Indian Tribe to Everyone: Also, we are losing the transmitted image. It is being replaced with a gray grid / matrix.

02/09/2023 09:44:30 AM from James Gordon, Cowlitz Indian Tribe to Everyone: Thank you, Kara.

02/09/2023 09:47:20 AM from James Gordon, Cowlitz Indian Tribe to Everyone: FYI - audio is breaking up again.

02/09/2023 09:59:41 AM from Kara Whitman to Everyone: how is tha audio now?

02/09/2023 09:59:56 AM from James Gordon, Cowlitz Indian Tribe to Everyone: We are having trouble hearing every other speaker in the room.

02/09/2023 10:00:21 AM from David Vorse, City of Castle Rock to Everyone: Cannot hear the people in the room. Please mic closer to those who are speaking.

02/09/2023 10:00:35 AM from Kara Whitman to Everyone: how about now?

02/09/2023 10:00:52 AM from Chris Page to Everyone: We switched the input. Did it help?

02/09/2023 10:00:56 AM from Karl Ahlen to Everyone: we can hear Liza

02/09/2023 10:01:03 AM from David Vorse, City of Castle Rock to Everyone: not much better.

02/09/2023 10:01:06 AM from James Gordon, Cowlitz Indian Tribe to Everyone: Also, if people could restate their name when they start speaking, that would be appreciated. It's a pain, but it really helps us keep track of who is saying what.

02/09/2023 10:01:32 AM from Chris Page to Everyone: ok thx

02/09/2023 10:06:37 AM from Ray Yurkewycz to Everyone: MSHI received \$250k from RCO for our campground and outdoor school project. at Coldwater. We have another \$7M in pending requests. <https://rco.wa.gov/recreation-plan-grants/>

02/09/2023 10:07:49 AM from Steve Manlow, LCFRB to Everyone: <https://www.lcfrb.gen.wa.us/grants>

02/09/2023 10:08:24 AM from Ray Yurkewycz to Everyone: We also have been working on a MSH license plate. It's current in the legislature with some great momentum. Funds go to support youth education, land stewardship, and science at Mount St. Helens. If you're a resident and like the plate, sign and share the petition! <https://www.ipetitions.com/petition/MSHSLP>

02/09/2023 10:28:19 AM from Colin Thorne to Everyone: I contribute to the Corps national training programs (PROSPECT) on streambank protection methods that are effective, permittable and affordable. I could put together a short presentation if requested.

02/09/2023 10:30:45 AM from Colin Thorne to Everyone: I highly recommend this podcast those with an interest in bank stabilization: <https://limno.sharefile.com/share/view/s3dac350957d3414db9ac1c6e78f1628f>

02/09/2023 10:32:25 AM from Colin Thorne to Everyone: It is by a leading expert at the US Army Corps of Engineers, ERDC - Dr David Biedenbarn - who has over 40 years of experience in affordable and effective bank stabilization.

02/09/2023 10:33:15 AM from Colin Thorne to Everyone: It's less than half an hour and his presentation style is clea and not overly technical.

02/09/2023 10:34:09 AM from Colin Thorne to Everyone: clear

02/09/2023 10:49:01 AM from Colin Thorne to Everyone: With respect to bank and slope stabilization upstream of the SRS and sediment plain: not everybody may be aware that Pad Smith of WDFW has successfully been using NNBF approaches along several miles of right bank of the North Fork Toutle River for over a decade. The purpose is to conserve Elk habitat, rather than reduce sediment yield into the SRS sediment plain. But Pad's experience and advice would, in my opinion, be invaluable!

02/09/2023 10:53:46 AM from Colin Thorne to Everyone: Resurveys of the NF Toutle made by my students last September suggest that channel erosion in the reach between the Monument boundary and the upstream limit of the sediment plain may be a significant source of sediment that is currently passing through the SRS.

02/09/2023 10:59:53 AM from Greta Holmstrom to Everyone: I need to leave for another meeting - Cowlitz County Building and Planning will be happy to present information on regulatory framework, planning efforts, and development activity at the upcoming workshop.

02/09/2023 11:13:36 AM from Hazel to Everyone: If you're online, you can find the activity materials under the February 9th meeting materials:  
<https://ruckelshauscenter.wsu.edu/projects/current-projects/spirit-lake/>

02/09/2023 11:18:45 AM from Colin Thorne to Everyone: Raising the spillway without wiping out all the vegetation on the sediment plain. In my expert opinion, it is possible to conserve much, perhaps most, of the vegetation & wildlife along the fringes of the sediment plain despite the spillway raise.

02/09/2023 11:19:59 AM from Colin Thorne to Everyone: This would key into ensuring that the raise doesn't cause fish passage barriers to develop at the mouths of Alder, Deer and Hofstadt Creeks

02/09/2023 11:21:58 AM from David Vorse, City of Castle Rock to Everyone: Key to Colin's comments is fast tracking the regulations so work can happen in a timely manner that would have the most positive impact.

02/09/2023 11:22:28 AM from Chris Page to Everyone: Colin, that sounds like a win-win. We will do a short breakout group session then bring back the full collaborative for debrief.

02/09/2023 11:22:30 AM from Colin Thorne to Everyone: As I understand it, WDFW will be monitoring passability for aquatic organisms at the tributary mouths post-rise and monitoring of vegetation and wildlife could piggy-back on those efforts.

02/09/2023 11:24:35 AM from Hazel to Everyone: Does anyone need help joining their breakout group?

02/09/2023 11:25:03 AM from Kara Whitman to Everyone: hazel, can you move karl and Chris Budai to the other breakout room?

02/09/2023 11:36:52 AM from Kara Whitman to Everyone: no, keep them open a bit longer.

02/09/2023 11:37:01 AM from Kara Whitman to Everyone: conversation in the room here is still going

02/09/2023 11:43:25 AM from Kara Whitman to Everyone: 1 more minute

02/09/2023 11:58:14 AM from James Gordon, Cowlitz Indian Tribe to Everyone: I need to leave for another meeting. Thank you, everyone!

02/09/2023 11:58:28 AM from Kara Whitman to Everyone: thank you James