

Spirit Lake/Toutle-Cowlitz River Collaborative

November 9th, 2022 | 9:30 AM – 12:00 PM

Cowlitz County Museum, 405 Allen Street, Kelso, WA 98626 | 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:

- Receive updates from the Steering Committee and participating organizations
- Decide whether to hold a technical workshop in February 2023
- Continue discussing and developing the workplan

Meeting Attendees:

Representing Sovereign State, Federal, and Tribal Governments:

- Karl Ahlen, Valerie Ringold, Liza Wells – *US Army Corps of Engineers*
- Monica Blanchard, Janine Castro, Joe Skalicky – *US Fish and Wildlife Service*
- Christina Donehower, Erik White – *Cowlitz Indian Tribe*
- George Fornes, Kessina Lee – *WA Department of Fish and Wildlife*
- Matt Gerlach – *WA Department of Ecology*
- Johanna Kovarik, Donna Mickley, Michele Palmer, Sue Ripp – *US Forest Service*
- Steve Ogden – *WA Department of Natural Resources*
- Ted Perkins – *Federal Emergency Management Agency*

Representing Local Governments and Special Purpose Districts:

- Amy Boyd – *Port of Longview*
- Susan Eugenis – *Cowlitz County Department of Public Works*
- Bill Fashing, Brandon Robinson, Avery Schlecht – *Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments*
- Darin Houpt – *Cowlitz Conservation District*
- Dave Vorse – *City of Castle Rock*
- Dennis Weber – *Cowlitz County*
- Steve West – *Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board*

Representing US Congressional Offices:

- Sarah Kohout – *US Senator Maria Cantwell's Office*
- Colin Swanson – *US Representative Jaime Herrera Beutler's Office*

Representing Other Interested Parties:

- David Hodges, Page Strickler – *CFM Advocates*
- Ashley Short – *Cascade Forest Conservancy*
- Mark Smith – *EcoPark*
- Colin Thorne – *University of Nottingham*
- Raymond Yurkewycz – *Mount St. Helens Institute*

Welcome & Introductions:

Kara Whitman welcomed the participants to the meeting. Kara invited the participants to state their names and affiliations before answering the following question: *What are you most looking forward to this fall and winter?* Kara reviewed the agenda and the ground rules.

Updates from Participating Organizations:

- Darin Houpt: The Cowlitz Conservation District received money to address channel migration issues. Channel migration is threatening the nearby motorcycle track. We would like to organize a field tour for legislative representatives and others to see the channel migration.
- Susan Eugenis: Federal money is available for projects related to fish passage. We're evaluating our culverts and deciding which projects will move forward. Applications are due in February.
- Matt Gerlach: The Shorelines and Environmental Systems Program has grants available for flood control. The grants will pay for Cowlitz County's flood management. The Department of Ecology will be visiting Cowlitz County to gauge participation in flood insurance programs.
- Liza Wells: We're in the solicitation phase of the crest raise. For Deer Creek, we're planning for the contract early next year. We're on the cusp of the construction contract.
- Colin Thorne: On November 18th, I'll be leading a tour of the SRS and the sediment plain. Lamprey habitat is developing in the area. Beavers are creating good lamprey habitat. The WA Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Army Corps of Engineers, the National Marine Fisheries Service, and the Cowlitz Indian Tribe are interested in joining the tour.

Field Tour Reflections:

Kara Whitman shared key takeaways from the field tour.

- Colin Thorne: Because the Army Corps has begun the process of the spillway crest raise for the SRS, volitional upstream fish passage isn't yet on the table. The cross-valley wood structures are building islands and promoting vegetation along the sediment plain, which now function to trap a great deal of fine sediment. Water flows along the edge of the valley along the sediment plain to the spillway, allowing fish to bypass the sediment plain on their way downstream. Beavers have colonized the area. The spillway raise, which will potentially kill the willows and alders, puts the beavers in jeopardy. There will be a lag between the spillway raise and sedimentation. We have two to three years to protect the channel, which it would be possible to do with carefully positioned wood structures.
- Valerie Ringold: Section 408 (to determine whether a project might impact the levels of protection the Corps is authorized to provide) should be considered. The timeline for a Section 408 analysis depends on the information we receive from the applicant. We usually have a few meetings to understand the ask.
- Colin Thorne: The benefits of the SRS crest raise can be leveraged to enhance downstream fish passage. The purpose of the spillway is to trap sediment. Let's keep that sediment on the sediment plain. If we can work with the National Marine Fisheries Service, the Lower Columbia Fish Enhancement Group, and the Cowlitz Indian Tribe, I think there's a way forward.
- Dennis Weber: Without an accommodation like Colin's idea, fish passage is at risk. Federal laws should encourage fish passage.
- Colin Thorne: The Corps has been studying the effects of wood structures since 2010. The structures are storing the right sediments.
- Valerie Ringold: Section 408 includes NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) compliance and ESA (Endangered Species Act) consultation. 408 decisions often couple with 404 decisions (related to potential Clean Water Act issues) because people are doing work in water.
- Liza Wells: With 408 review we have to ensure NEPA compliance. We consult with fisheries for the projects we're implementing. We take required actions so listed species aren't in jeopardy.
- Janine Castro: The original wood structures are separate from the SRS and the spillway. We might not need 408. We could use a lighter approach, such as vegetation.
- Bill Fashing: The field tour was a great opportunity. We should do another field tour within the next year. Hopefully, more people will return to attending meetings in person.

Updates from Steering Committee & Working Groups:

- Kara Whitman: The collaborative and steering committee have been discussing branding. WSU's Center for Civic Engagement has branding options we could pursue. We could also connect with communication, advertising, or public relations classes. We could also have an internship for a digital technology student or tap into the AmeriCorps program.
- Mark Smith: Would it be possible to connect with Lewis and Clark College?
 - Kara Whitman: I'd be happy to connect with Lewis and Clark College.
- Kessina Lee: I'm offering up the public affairs folks with the Department of Fish and Wildlife. These folks can do videos, blogs, and social media highlights. Drone footage could help—George Fornes is a drone operator.
- Chris Page: The steering committee also discussed a technical workshop, similar to those the Spokane River Toxics Task Force held. Are there topics you would like to focus on, such as what other post-eruption sediment management solutions have been tried elsewhere, and which have worked best?
- Valerie Ringold: In Alaska, the Corps and the Nature Conservancy held an annual meeting. Folks from different organizations shared research at the meeting. It was a great experience.
- Mark Smith: There would be international interest. The sediment retention structure is one of the largest in the world. We could have a symposium with worldwide access. A symposium would help the economy in the community.
- Bill Fashing: We have many different topics that could be addressed. We have to focus quickly. There might be state money available.
- Kessina Lee: We have one-time funds that are available before June 30th. We would be open to supporting something like this. We would need more information.

Project Tracking Tool (Monday.com)

Brandon Robinson shared draft language regarding the Monday.com system.

- Brandon Robinson: The Monday.com system would display the project publicly and track the project internally. The system is still a draft and has been presented to the Steering Committee.
- Ashley Short: The wording is vague. What happens if an organization doesn't provide information about its project?
- Brandon Robinson: The wording is vague to maintain information sovereignty. Sometimes, not much information can be released about a project. We're choosing to work together and agreeing to provide as much information as possible.

Workplan: Salmon Recovery Projects

Large Wood Structures:

- Colin Thorne: We're talking about wood structures, not woody debris. Wood structures are part of engineering with nature. Just like other materials, wood structures aren't always appropriate.
- Kara Whitman: The river shifts too quickly for trees to establish. Wood structures would help trees establish as the river shifts.

Invasive Weed Eradication:

- Darin Houpt: The Cowlitz Conservation District has several projects focused on eradicating noxious weeds. We're working with the US Forest Service to remove milfoil. This is under the supervision of our Noxious Weed Coordinator, Jennifer Mendoza.
- Ashley Short: We have volunteer trips for weed removal.
- Ray Yurkewycz: We have done weed removal work with the Forest Service. We can provide volunteers. Many folks are interested in helping.

Adjourn:

Kara Whitman and Chris Page thanked the participants for attending. Kara will send a survey to determine the date of the next meeting (December 7th, 14th, or 15th).

Appendix A: Meeting Chat Transcript

- 11/09/2022 09:31:20 AM from Chris Page to Everyone: Hi Everyone, we'll get started in a few minutes. Still waiting for folks to trickle in...
- 11/09/2022 09:38:57 AM from Karl Ahlen to Everyone: Karl Ahlen USACE
- 11/09/2022 09:38:58 AM from Matt G to Everyone: Matt Gerlach, WA ECY.
- 11/09/2022 09:39:05 AM from Amy Boyd to Everyone: Amy Boyd, Port of Longview. I'm looking forward to snow! I will have to leave at 11:30.
- 11/09/2022 09:39:06 AM from Colin Swanson Jaime Herrera Beutler to Everyone: Colin Swanson Jaime Herrera beutler
- 11/09/2022 09:39:16 AM from Liza Wells to Everyone: Liza Wells - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, looking forward to Christmas cookie day!
- 11/09/2022 09:39:22 AM from Ashley Short to Everyone: Ashley Short, Cascade Forest Conservancy, looking forward to having the christmas tree up and the fireplace on
- 11/09/2022 09:39:22 AM from Ray Yurkewycz to Everyone: Ray Yurkewycz, Executive Director, Mount St. Helens Institute. I am looking forward to cross country skiing!
- 11/09/2022 09:39:31 AM from Janine Castro, USFWS to Everyone: Janine Castro, USFWS, Vancouver WA
- 11/09/2022 09:39:41 AM from Monica Blanchard to Everyone: Monica Blanchard, USFWS/WDFW
- 11/09/2022 09:39:44 AM from Joe Skalilcky to Everyone: Joe Skalicky, USFWS, Vancouver
- 11/09/2022 09:39:49 AM from Erik White - Cowlitz Tribe to Everyone: Erik White, Cowlitz Indian Tribe, snow skiing.
- 11/09/2022 09:40:40 AM from Michele Palmer- USFS to Everyone: Michele Palmer- USFS. Looking forward to holiday treats.
- 11/09/2022 09:40:41 AM from Colin Thorne to Everyone: Colin Thorne, University of Nottingham, Using River Science for enhanced River Management, traveling to Chile for the 9th Gravel-Bed Rivers Workshop.
- 11/09/2022 09:40:53 AM from George Fornes WDFW to Everyone: George Fornes, Habitat Biologist with WDFW. Looking forward to hosting family from out of state.
- 11/09/2022 09:41:17 AM from Christina Donehower to Everyone: Christina Donehower, Policy Analyst, Cowlitz Indian Tribe, looking forward to more rain!

11/09/2022 09:41:23 AM from Sue Ripp to Everyone: Sue Ripp, USFS. I'm looking forward to spending time with my kids during the holidays

11/09/2022 09:43:09 AM from steve west to Everyone: Steve West, Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board- snow boarding

11/09/2022 09:43:10 AM from beradette to Everyone: Bernadette Barthelenghi, Acting Monument Ranger, Gifford Pichot National Forest. Looking forward to Winter on Mount Siant Helens.

11/09/2022 09:45:10 AM from Sue Ripp to Everyone: Thanks Ray! I will miss working with you and the Institute.

11/09/2022 09:45:31 AM from Donna Mickley to Everyone: Donna Mickley, acting Gifford Pinchot National Forest Supervisor. Looking forward to gather with family for the holidays now that all of our family is living in the Pacific Northwest.

11/09/2022 09:45:42 AM from Ted Perkins to Everyone: Ted Perkins, FEMA, Engineer focused on flooding in the Mitigation Division

11/09/2022 09:46:06 AM from Johanna Kovarik she/her - Gifford Pinchot to Everyone: Johanna Kovarik, Acting Deputy Forest Supervisor Gifford Pinchot National Forest. Looking forward to skiing in the cascades this winter!

11/09/2022 09:59:35 AM from Ray Yurkewycz to Everyone: I need to be in another meeting from 10-11am, but will rejoin ASAP.

11/09/2022 10:05:14 AM from Joe Skalilcky to Everyone: Can the primary contacts (WDFW/USACE) for the Toutle Fish Collection Facility redesign be shared? We would like to work with to evaluate passage and collection options for Pacific lamprey.

11/09/2022 10:07:04 AM from Joe Skalilcky to Everyone: Thanks!

11/09/2022 10:07:15 AM from Karl Ahlen to Everyone: email for Karl Ahlen
karl.t.ahlen@usace.army.mil

11/09/2022 10:07:23 AM from Liza Wells to Everyone: Thanks, Karl!

11/09/2022 10:07:25 AM from kessina lee to Everyone: For WDFW the contact would be Bryce Glaser, Regional Fish Program Manager: Bryce.Glaser@dfw.wa.gov

11/09/2022 10:57:30 AM from kessina lee to Everyone: I need to hop off - thanks everyone.

11/09/2022 11:18:07 AM from Ashley Short to Everyone: Will do!

11/09/2022 11:18:59 AM from Ashley Short to Everyone: I was suggesting that we have some sort of disclaimer somewhere on the public facing part of the monday site that this list is not literally everything all of the entities are working on to starve off misunderstandings etc

11/09/2022 11:26:07 AM from Ashley Short to Everyone: we can hear you

11/09/2022 11:43:12 AM from Liza Wells to Everyone: I can't get my brain to tell me what CFC is in the parties involved column

11/09/2022 11:45:50 AM from George Fornes WDFW to Everyone: In context of an Instream wood bank, it's probably Cascade Forest Conservancy.

11/09/2022 11:45:58 AM from Ashley Short to Everyone: Cascade Forest Conservancy, Liza