

Spirit Lake/Toutle-Cowlitz River Collaborative

December 7th, 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:

- Hear updates from the Steering Committee and participating organizations
- Discuss insights and a potential project from the November 18th field tour
- Discuss the workshop and select a date and location

Meeting Attendees:

Representing Sovereign State, Federal, & Tribal Governments:

- Karl Ahlen, Chris Budai, Chris Nygaard, Valerie Ringold, Paul Sclafani – *US Army Corps Engineers*
- Jerry BigEagle, James Gordon, Erik White – *Cowlitz Indian Tribe*
- George Fornes, Bryce Glaser, Gordon Grant, Maddie Nolan – *WA Department of Fish & Wildlife*
- Matt Gerlach – *WA Department of Ecology*
- Michele Palmer, Sue Ripp – *US Forest Service*
- Joe Skalicky – *US Fish & Wildlife Service*

Representing Local Governments & Special Purpose Districts:

- Amy Blain – *Consolidated Diking Improvement District No. One*
- Amy Boyd – *Port of Longview*
- Susan Eugenis, Jim Mallett – *Cowlitz County Department of Public Works*
- Bill Fashing – *Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments*
- Ken Hash – *City of Longview*
- Dan Restivo, Dave Vorse – *City of Castle Rock*
- Adam Trimble – *Cowlitz County Building & Planning*
- Steve West – *Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board*

Representing Other Interested Parties:

- Bruce Barnes – *Mount St. Helens Rescue*
- Ashley Short – *Cascade Forest Conservancy*
- Mark Smith – *EcoPark*
- Colin Thorne – *University of Nottingham*
- Raymond Yurkewycz – *Mount St. Helens Institute*

Welcome & Introductions:

Chris Page welcomed participants to the meeting and invited folks to state their names and affiliations before answering the following question: “What is your favorite binge-worthy show that you recommend someone watch when it’s cold?” Chris reviewed the agenda and the ground rules.

Updates from Participating Organizations:

- Michele Palmer: The Forest Service is establishing the Northwest Forest Plan Advisory Committee in accordance with FACA. Nominations for the Committee members are due by January 17th, 2023. There will be 20 members. Nine members will represent the scientific community, seven members will

represent various organizations, three members will represent various governments, and one member will represent the public.

- Matt Gerlach: The Department of Ecology has funding available for data collection. We will hold two applicant workshops in early January. We will review applications in April and establish contracts in July. We would love to fund a project in Southwest Washington.
- Colin Thorne: Is consideration being given to managed flooding?
 - Matt Gerlach: We are encouraging communities to write comprehensive flood management plans. We are looking at nonstructural solutions whenever possible. The Department of Ecology's larger grant program has communities who are implementing big construction projects at the watershed level.
- Karl Ahlen: Information regarding the level of protection will be available in January or February. We are currently analyzing the information.

Steering Committee Updates:

- Bill Fashing: We are waiting for final input regarding the Monday.com tracking system. After January 1st, we should have something available online.
- Maddie Nolan: The Steering Committee discussed the collaborative hosting a two-day workshop. The first day would focus on the big picture and establishing a shared information base, including sediment management (and related efforts) before the collaborative. The second day would focus on more technical and project-specific work, including discussing the workplan. (It's hard to discuss the workplan in only two hours.)
- Bill Fashing: We are looking for input regarding specific projects and topics to discuss at the workshop. This is also an opportunity for public outreach. We could ask for public comments and have some press coverage. We could also inform our legislators of our progress.

Collaborative Roster & Contact Info

- Kara Whitman: Should we list the representatives and alternates on the Center's website? Should we include contact information?
- Matt Gerlach: When we list large groups of people, sometimes people start calling around and looking for conflicting stories. Does it make sense to list the contact information for the Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments instead?
- Chris Page: We can list the representatives and alternates with the Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments as the primary source of information.

November 18th Field Tour Discussion:

- Colin Thorne: Large wood structures were built by the Corps in 2010 to reduce flood risk in the lower valley. There are three elements to the structures: the geo-tubes, the engineered logjams, and the step-weir and baffle system. There are 14 structures across the valley. The structures have evolved.
- Bryce Glaser: It was helpful to see the structures. We spotted fish in the channels. As we move forward with fish transport, fish migration is a concern. The best places for this to occur are in the wall-base channels at the edge of the sediment plain. Finding ways to promote the continued protection of those channels is important.
- Erik White: The wall-base channels are providing better habitat for salmon. We should consider structures that protect those channels. There is beaver activity, which increases the area where juvenile salmon can reside.
- Joe Skalicky: Pacific lamprey are ecosystem engineers. We should account for pacific lamprey when thinking about fish passage. Most fish passage only considers adult salmon.

- Chris Nygaard: You can build structures on the sediment plain—there was concern that the structures wouldn't last but we've proven that isn't true. We need to consider downstream conditions. The third structure was most effective in trapping material on the sediment plain. The whole sediment plain seems to be vegetating more robustly over time.
- Bruce Barnes: Once we raise the dam, the structures and the beavers will be gone. The fish will be trying to swim through concrete. What will happen to the fish and wildlife habitat? How much sediment can the dam hold back? The tribes should be extremely concerned.
- George Fornes: I've been on the plain near the grade-building structures. The structures have become noticeably shorter. We saw the wall-base channels and the beaver dams on the plain.
- Paul Sclafani: Looking back at the LIDAR, these is one major channel. What I see on the LIDAR is the ability to cut across the sediment plain. The channel would cut across the sediment plain and cause erosion. In November, I saw more vegetation. It will be interesting to see the resiliency of the natural habitat. The channel is pretty destructive as it moves.
- Mark Smith: If we raise the spillway, the beaver will be wiped out. The beaver will be forced onto the banks. There will be a setback of a few years.
- Colin Thorne: There will be a setback, but the beaver won't be wiped out completely. There have been setbacks in the past. It's difficult living near a volcano. We need to increase monitoring. The Corps committed to monitoring. Let's get a drone up there to see the vegetation.

Pullen Creek Culvert Replacement & other Fish Habitat Restoration Projects

- Colin Thorne: On Pullen Creek, a blocked culvert on Mark Smith's land is preventing fish passage and folks on the field tour saw a need for culvert replacement. This would have multiple benefits for fish, wildlife, and sediment. Sarah Kohout was confident that Maria Cantwell would support a funding request. I'm putting this forward as something that would make a difference.
- Mark Smith: I've applied for funding from the Family Forest Fish Passage Program (FFFP) and have been accepted to the program for review. We have agency members coming to review the collapsed culvert. I'm pretty confident.
- Colin Thorne: There is wholehearted support from WDFW. We need other interested parties to express support. We should consult with the tribes.
- George Fornes: The culvert replacement would require a permit from WDFW. I would be the person to review the permit. I would encourage those involved to include me in your discussions.
- Joe Skalicky: You need to be careful when fixing barriers. What about the other tributaries?
- Colin Thorne: We can remove other culverts. The culverts aren't helping the trap-and-haul program. We want that program to be as effective as possible.
- Susan Eugenis: Biennial funding is available from the Brian Abbott Fish Barrier Removal Program. The legislature will select projects for the funding. Counties, cities, tribes, and others are eligible applicants. Cowlitz County has received quite a bit of funding from that program.
- Erik White: The Cowlitz Tribe has a habitat restoration program and has completed several culvert replacements. I'll put you in touch with someone.
- Jerry BigEagle: I can look into how the tribe has traditionally used lamprey. I'll find out if there are FFFP projects listed in our area and if the tribe is interested.
- George Fornes: WDFW has received funding for lamprey passage. It's not clear which organization will complete the work.
- Colin Thorne: There may be brook lamprey at the fish collection facility. There is a possibility of surveying lamprey. We can make better decisions with more knowledge.
 - Joe Skalicky: Surveying lamprey is something we could do.

Workshop Planning Discussion:

- Chris Page: The Cowlitz County Event Center is reserved on February 14th, 15th, and 16th for the workshop. Two dates will be chosen. The purpose of the workshop is to:
 - Build a baseline understanding
 - Identify collaborative projects that have multiple benefits
 - Prioritize projects and identify pathways to completion
 - Ensure projects have the latest science and data
 - Create disappearing task groups
 - Connect with the public
- Ray Yurkewycz: Should we leave the workshop open to anybody?
- Comment: We should hold meetings in Toutle, Kelso, and Castle Rock. The collaborative and the public should be involved. There are many stakeholders.
- Chris Page: We could include a public comment period. We could also invite a reporter. Bill Fashing had the idea to charge for entry. We'll bring those ideas to the Steering Committee.
- Matt Gerlach: I wonder if technical experts could dig into the details and bring ideas to the larger group. Is this workshop a way to get more organizations involved at a deeper level?
- Chris Page: There are clusters of topics that would lend themselves to small groups. We could have issue-focused task groups.
- Valerie Ringold: The Corps has technical expertise and historic knowledge. The Corps doesn't have the funding to support this effort. We have to limit our participation. As we talk about technical groups, please send requests to Liza or me.
- Michelle Palmer: For the tunnel project, there is a contract solicitation out for repair work. The solicitation closes on January 5th. The project should be initiated next summer. We can share more information in February.
- Amy Blain: I'm hoping the Corps will present the results of the hydro survey in February.
- Karl Ahlen: February is a doable timeline.

Adjourn:

Chris Page thanked the participants for attending the meeting and reminded participants of the Steering Committee meeting on Friday, December 16th.

Appendix A: Meeting Chat Transcript

December 7, 2022 9:24 AM from James Gordon - Cultural Resources Tech, Cowlitz Indian Tribe to everyone: With regards to the legislation on the SRS (mentioned at 9:21am, before the meeting) being posted vs. not being posted, was this circulated to the Tribes for comment? If so, when (specific date) and from which entity?

December 7, 2022 9:25 AM from Kara Whitman to everyone: James, that may be a good question for Army Corp or Forest Service.

December 7, 2022 9:26 AM from James Gordon - Cultural Resources Tech, Cowlitz Indian Tribe to everyone: Thank you, Kara. Unfortunately, I can't tell who is who from the small image, and I'm not sure if the comment(s) is (are) part of the record (as the meeting hasn't officially started yet) to ask about.

December 7, 2022 9:27 AM from Kara Whitman to everyone: I don't think anyone in the room yet from either

December 7, 2022 9:27 AM from Kara Whitman to everyone: The chat will be part of the meeting records

December 7, 2022 9:28 AM from James Gordon - Cultural Resources Tech, Cowlitz Indian Tribe to everyone: Thank you - including from 9:24am on? I thought that the meeting started at 9am, so I hopped on early. :)

December 7, 2022 9:28 AM from Kara Whitman to everyone: Yes, all from when the Webex started

December 7, 2022 9:29 AM from James Gordon - Cultural Resources Tech, Cowlitz Indian Tribe to everyone: Okay. Thank you.

December 7, 2022 9:31 AM from Kara Whitman to everyone: Good morning all!

December 7, 2022 9:33 AM from James Gordon - Cultural Resources Tech, Cowlitz Indian Tribe to everyone: Sure - With regards to the legislation on strengthening the edges of the SRS to prevent structural failure (mentioned at or about 9:21am, before today's meeting started) being posted vs. not being posted for public input / comment, was this circulated to the Tribes for comment? If so, when (specific date) and from which agency or entity?

December 7, 2022 9:42 AM from Karl Ahlen to everyone: Karl Ahlen, USACE

December 7, 2022 9:42 AM from Kara Whitman to everyone: Kara Whitman, Ruckelshaus Center. my current bingworth show right now is "Dark" on netflix.

December 7, 2022 9:42 AM from amy boyd to everyone: Amy Boyd, Port of Longview. We really enjoyed the Tick :)

December 7, 2022 9:43 AM from James Gordon - Cultural Resources Tech, Cowlitz Indian Tribe to everyone: James Gordon - Cultural Resources Technician, Cowlitz Indian Tribe.

December 7, 2022 9:43 AM from Ashley Short, Cascade Forest Conservancy to everyone: Ashley Short, Cascade Forest Conservancy, the new rings of power show

December 7, 2022 9:43 AM from David Vorse, City of Castle Rock to everyone: David Vorse, City of Castle Rock

December 7, 2022 9:43 AM from Matt G to everyone: Matt Gerlach, WA ECY.

December 7, 2022 9:44 AM from Gordon Grant to everyone: Gordon Grant, USFS PNW Research Station

December 7, 2022 9:44 AM from Colin Thorne to everyone: Colin Thorne, Chair of Physical Geography, University of Nottingham, UK.

December 7, 2022 9:44 AM from Michele Palmer- USFS to everyone: Michele Palmer, USFS

December 7, 2022 9:46 AM from George Fornes WDFW to everyone: George Fornes, Habitat Biologist with WDFW. Enjoyed the House of the Dragon series.

December 7, 2022 9:48 AM from Valerie Ringold Portland District Corps to everyone: Valerie Ringold - Corps of Engineers, Planning Branch Chief

December 7, 2022 9:48 AM from Chris Budai to everyone: Chris Budai - USACE, Project Manager

December 7, 2022 9:49 AM from Kara Whitman to everyone: sorry, there is a little delay in me switching slides and the response on that end

December 7, 2022 9:56 AM from Dan Restivo to everyone: Dan Restivo - USGS Washington Water Science Center, Hydrologist. Our office recently agreed to take over the two streamgages on the NF and mainstem Toutle River, and the elevation gages at Spirit Lake.

December 7, 2022 10:00 AM from Matt G to everyone: <https://ecology.wa.gov/About-us/Payments-contracts-grants/Grants-loans/Find-a-grant-or-loan/Flood-control-assistance>

December 7, 2022 10:01 AM from David Vorse, City of Castle Rock to everyone: Does ACE have an update then they will have the Cowlitz River flood determination survey out for the agencies review?

December 7, 2022 10:12 AM from Kara Whitman to everyone: That is mark Smith

December 7, 2022 10:24 AM from Jerry BigEagle, Cowlitz THPO to everyone: ATTN: Valerie G jbig eagle@cowlitz.org, please note the collaborative agreement can be sent to this email, Cowlitz Tribe voting participant.

December 7, 2022 10:27 AM from Jerry BigEagle, Cowlitz THPO to everyone: Colin, above is a braded sand bar without the applied riprap.

December 7, 2022 10:29 AM from Kara Whitman to everyone: Also Chris Nygaard

December 7, 2022 10:31 AM from Colin Thorne to everyone: Apologies - I didn't see Chris Nygaard is in the meeting. He should speak too.

December 7, 2022 10:45 AM from Valerie Ringold Portland District Corps to everyone: Could you let us know who is speaking in the room please

December 7, 2022 10:45 AM from Kara Whitman to everyone: speaking is

December 7, 2022 10:45 AM from Colin Thorne to everyone: This is Bruce Barnes - local resident, hunter and environmentalist.

December 7, 2022 10:45 AM from Kara Whitman to everyone: thanks Colin

December 7, 2022 10:54 AM from Paul Sclafani Corps-Portland to everyone: the beaver may be following a vegetation succession.. not that the vegetation as evolved in the area i'm not convinced that the beaver will be "wiped out".

December 7, 2022 10:55 AM from Bryce Glaser to everyone: Thank you to Mark for his hospitality during the tours!

December 7, 2022 10:56 AM from Valerie Ringold Portland District Corps to everyone: I think it is important to acknowledge this is a "young" system from a biological succession perspective after a large volcanic eruption so things will continue to be dynamic and evolve so what is there now will continue to change for many years to come with or without the crest raises at that SRS

December 7, 2022 10:58 AM from David Vorse, City of Castle Rock to everyone: Sorry, but I need to leave the meeting.

December 7, 2022 10:58 AM from George Fornes WDFW to everyone: If we can define some objectives and a focal area for drone observations, I can likely assist with that. I can pilot a WDFW drone and process imagery.

December 7, 2022 11:03 AM from Bryce Glaser to everyone: I do need to jump soon to another meeting. Thanks for the opportunity to share my thoughts.

December 7, 2022 11:09 AM from steve west to everyone: For both the BAFBRB and FFFPP, it may be helpful to check on the funding timing? Some of these are held to biennial funding; others are annual. As such, it may take some more time than anticipated/ hoped for. There may be other funding opportunities as well.

December 7, 2022 11:13 AM from Jerry BigEagle, Cowlitz THPO to everyone: the FFFPP program is prioritized, it helps if industry is willing to provide funding to a culvert removal (or bridge replacement)

December 7, 2022 11:13 AM from Kara Whitman to everyone: This is Susan Eugenis talking.

December 7, 2022 11:14 AM from Paul Sclafani Corps-Portland to everyone: @Valerie. Totally agree with the concept of a "young" system. It should be noted that the sediment plain and the SRS is still a very active part of the sediment management plan. We are only in the second phase (of three phases) of the project. In other words, the SRS and sediment plain is not "full". The crest raise is not because of a "full" sediment plain.

December 7, 2022 11:25 AM from Jerry BigEagle, Cowlitz THPO to everyone: The answer to the group is YES, the Cowlitz Tribe has lamprey traditional history as a food source, which drainage and sub-species is unknown, I will find out more specifics on this

December 7, 2022 11:25 AM from Jerry BigEagle, Cowlitz THPO to everyone: I have an email I can send out to the group....

December 7, 2022 11:27 AM from Valerie Ringold Portland District Corps to everyone: The dates are February 14 and 15? What month I just heard 14, 15

December 7, 2022 11:27 AM from Colin Thorne to everyone: As I said, I'm taking Tom Hausmann - NOAA-NMFS to see the sediment plain and passage barrier on the morning of 16 December. If anyone would like to join us, you would be welcome. Just email me at cthorne@wolfwaterresources.com

December 7, 2022 11:27 AM from James Gordon - Cultural Resources Tech, Cowlitz Indian Tribe to everyone: And that's at the Cowlitz County Fairgrounds?

December 7, 2022 11:28 AM from George Fornes WDFW to everyone: Pullen Ck Culvert at 1:00 on the 12th?

December 7, 2022 11:29 AM from Colin Thorne to everyone: Fenton Khan (Corps of Engineers, Portland District) isn't available. But Andy Goodwin (Corps of Engineers, Engineering Research and Development Center, Vicksburg Miss. will be joining us.

December 7, 2022 11:33 AM from Dan Restivo to everyone: I have to jump off, but I appreciated the opportunity to learn more about the work going on in this basin as well as the concerns regarding sediment deposition, erosion, and aquatic habitat. As the USGS Washington Water Science Center takes over the streamgages from the Cascades Volcano Observatory over the next few months, I'd be happy to chat with anyone about the current sediment monitoring programs on these gages and the potential for the involvement of USGS in any sediment/water quality studies that you may be scoping as your work moves forward. Thank you. (drestivo@usgs.gov)

December 7, 2022 11:38 AM from Kara Whitman to everyone: please remember to announce your names in the room

December 7, 2022 11:45 AM from James Gordon - Cultural Resources Tech, Cowlitz Indian Tribe to everyone: Could we have a copy of this slideshow, please?

December 7, 2022 11:46 AM from Kara Whitman to everyone: Yes, will post to the meeting files

December 7, 2022 11:46 AM from James Gordon - Cultural Resources Tech, Cowlitz Indian Tribe to everyone: Thank you.

December 7, 2022 11:49 AM from Kara Whitman to everyone: they should now be posted

December 7, 2022 11:50 AM from Matt G to everyone: I have to jump off to for another meeting. Thanks all for the conversation today!