



NEWS RELEASE

Date: April 30, 2020
Contact: Scott Boettcher, Staff
Phone: 360-480-6600

Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority Endorses Basin-Wide Solution

The communities that make up the Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority (Lewis County, Grays Harbor County, Thurston County, Centralia, Chehalis, Napavine, Pe Ell, Aberdeen, Cosmopolis, Hoquiam, Montesano, Oakville and Bucoda) live under the threat of catastrophic flooding predicted to get worse in the years and decades ahead. Since 2010 Flood Authority members have endorsed a water retention facility above Pe Ell as one component of a larger set of longer-term actions to address catastrophic flooding, enhance aquatic species and restore a vibrant fishery.

At their April 16th meeting, Flood Authority members again endorsed a proposed water retention facility above Pe Ell as part of a Basin-wide solution that is appropriately mitigated for its impact on fisheries. The Flood Authority's action was prompted by the Washington State Department of Ecology's call for comments on their recently released draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) addressing the Chehalis River Basin Flood Control Zone District's proposed "Chehalis River Basin Flood Damage Reduction Project."

Key to the Flood Authority's endorsement is the recognition that a Basin-wide solution, where all interests are considered through an open, collaborative, and well-represented process, is the only way to deliver meaningful solutions to complex scientific and regulatory issues, like Chehalis Basin flooding and fisheries impact issues.

The DEIS evaluated the negative environmental impacts of the District's proposed project without considering any mitigation measures. Flood Authority members support aggressive mitigation for the proposed water retention facility alongside an aggressive Basin-wide aquatic species restoration effort.

In 2016, the Washington State Department of Ecology authored a programmatic environmental impact statement (PEIS) that showed that water retention at the top of the river, along with local flood management measures downstream, and construction of the Aberdeen-Hoquiam North Shore Levee, would together comprise the best Basin-wide flood protection for communities and families. The PEIS also showed that these measures to protect communities and livelihoods could be implemented in parallel with an aggressive aquatic species restoration plan to result in a net positive benefit of both a more vibrant fishery and flood protection for families and communities.

Said Grays Harbor County Commissioner Vickie Raines, who serves as Chair of the Flood Authority and Chair of the Chehalis Basin Board, “the Chehalis Basin process has repeatedly shown us that working together is the best way to achieve the most for all of our communities and interests in the Basin.” She goes on to add, “if it wasn’t for the Chehalis Basin process, I very much doubt our county (Grays Harbor County) would have received the \$35 million in direct, on-the-ground investment in flood and fish projects we have over the past decade.”

Lewis County Commissioner Edna Fund echoes this sentiment: “In the past we separately studied and studied solutions for flooding. We also separately studied and studied solutions for fish. We didn’t get the results our citizens and communities want.” “Today, with this process (the Chehalis Basin process), we are all at the table and achieving more for flooding and fisheries than ever before.”

Thurston County Commissioner and Flood Authority member Tye Menser offered his perspective “while it’s true working together is the best approach, in order for Thurston County to support water retention, any mitigation plan will need to be shown as fully effective and able to sufficiently and technically mitigate impacts from such a structure.”

Commissioner Fund goes on to add, “working together, through this process, is really the best and only way to secure the benefits of significant reduction in catastrophic flooding impacts from the top of the Basin to the bottom of the Basin” and closes with “it is our only hope”









For more information contact Scott Boettcher (Staff, Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority) at 360/480-6600 or scottb@sbgh-partners.com.

Scott Boettcher

From: Scott Boettcher
Sent: Wednesday, May 20, 2020 12:18 PM
To: Scott Boettcher
Subject: FW: News release ----- RE: Question -- News Release -----RE: Local Resolutions
----- RE: Thursday's Flood Authority Meeting
Attachments: FINAL CRBFA News Release 4-30-2020.docx

From: Scott Boettcher
Sent: Thursday, April 30, 2020 5:53 PM
To: VRaines@co.grays-harbor.wa.us; Edna.Fund@lewiscountywa.gov; Tye Menser <tye.menser@co.thurston.wa.us>
Subject: News release ----- RE: Question -- News Release -----RE: Local Resolutions ----- RE: Thursday's
Flood Authority Meeting

All -- Attached went out to the following today.
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