Meeting Summary, Great Old Broads for Wilderness, Cascade Volcanoes

May 16, 2020, 6:30 p.m.

Please don’t forget that any donation to the GOBW will be matched if made through through the website <https://now.firespring.com/nonprofits/great-old-broads-for-wilderness> BEFORE May 26!

Zoom Call: Call in: +1 669 900 9128, or computer:

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84257659538?pwd=RmR0MW9GYTZwWk02WFpKbmR0djVSQT09

Meeting ID: 842 5765 9538 PW: 904953, or “Broads”

Attendees: Linda Buckley, Doran Burrell, Debbie Garman, Barb Fox Kilgore, Jane Heisler, Felice Kelly, Laurie Kerr, Sarah Madsen, Cloudy Sears, Lu Pinson, Micky Ryan, Susan Saul, Katya Spieker (National), Shirley Stageberg, Judy Todd, Kathleen Worley, Pat ? Shelley Morrison, Lorena Herron, Dolores Kueffle, Michelle?, Linda Folkestad I do not have the full list - can we get it from the recording? Jane, this is Micky and I tried to add what I was able to jot down but didn’t always get last names. I think I got everyone else that you didn’t list. Guests: Jessica Helsley, Wild Salmon Center.

Welcome and Introductions: New members introduced themselves. New member, Michelle \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_? friend of Felice’s. Pat \_\_\_\_\_\_\_, from Vancouver. Pat has been in Vancouver five years. Debbie Garman has been a member for a couple of years. She came to the Elliot Forest Trip on the coast. She is becoming more active on forest issues in Hillsboro and is working with climate activists. Debbie likes the fact that Zoom allows her to not have to commute to Portland for meetings! Welcome to all!

Laurie thanked everyone for their support, letters, advocacy and stewardship over the past several months in spite of the fact that we can’t get together. She reminded everyone to abide by sheltering and other COVID rules. Next week Washington will go to Phase 2 reopening which is good news. She introduced Katya Spieker, Grassroots Regional Coordinator for PNW and other states, with the National office in Durango, Colorado. She thanked us for the fantastic work we are doing and for letting her sit in. Welcome, Katya!

Breakout Session: The 24 attendees were broken into groups of three or four to discuss “What is one thing you have learned during the COVID-19 shutdown?

Guest Speaker: Jessica Helsley, Senior Program Manager, Wild Salmon Center. Jessica is speaking about the Chehalis River flood control issues. Jessica mentioned that she relocated to Stevenson, WA right before the lockdown.

She acknowledged that the Chehalis/Centralia area is home to the confederated tribes of the Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis and the Quinault. The Chehalis watershed rainfall and snowmelt comes from the Willapa Hills and Cascade Mts. It was one of the top producers of salmon and steelhead in the state in the past. Currently there are no endangered species within the basin. The Chehalis and its tributaries have flooded throughout history, but have increased in contemporary times due to 1) the extensive timber harvest, 2) development encroachment in the watershed, and 3) climate change. In 2007, the worst flood in recorded history occurred. In response, the Governor’s Office created the Chehalis Basin Board to develop a plan to halt and reverse the decline of salmon and increase flood control. This group is developing a comprehensive aquatic watershed restoration plan. The State of Washington has issued a draft Environmental Impact Statement (ES) for a flood retention facility (a dam) near Pe Ell, WA. The Federal EIS will come out in Fall. Project sponsors don’t like to call it a dam. The facility’s purpose is to reduce flood damage from Pe Ell to Centralia during atmospheric river events in the Willapa Hills, store it during storms and slowly release it over 30 days. It would submerge 6 miles of river corridor behind the dam, and result in the removal of vegetation by clearcutting 800 acres. When the facility is not full of water, it would be a “mud pit”. The dam would not end flooding, nor is it intended to. It would just reduce the flood peak. Portions of Chehalis and Centralia were under 8-10 feet of water during the 2007 flood and this facility would only reduce this by 1.5 feet, so it is hardly a solution to flooding, but has many damaging effects on the environment including spraying of herbicides, debris removal and removal of salmon and wildlife habitat. It would create unmitigable impacts including an increase in water temperatures, increased sedimentation, and increased risk of future flood damage by encouraging more development in the floodplain, with the only “benefit” of a 1.5’ reduction in flooding.

### Jessica said that the Chehalis River Alliance, a coalition of concerned citizens, sovereign tribes, and local organizations invested in protecting the Chehalis River Basin, is trying to provide an alternative to the facility. Ultimately the $628M dam does not make sense for the reasons stated above and also does not help downstream communities. She called it a “twenty-first century problem with a twentieth century solution” and we can do better.

She mentioned that the comment period for State’s EIS closes May 27. You can find the comment form on the Chehalis Basin Strategy website:<https://actionnetwork.org/letters/chehalis-deis>. There is also a documentary that has been produced to describe the issues, “Chehalis: A Watershed Moment” that can be found on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W0PC5Xa_CSc> which is only available for free until Sunday, May 24.

A question was asked about whether the Aquatics Species Restoration Plan is considered part of the dam solution. Jessica responded that the dam proposal comes from and is primarily supported by the Lewis County Commission and is driven by the politics of the Chehalis/Centralia area. Kathleen Worley said she watched the Film and came away thinking that it was promised to everyone at the table that both the dam and the aquatic species enhancement would occur. In fact, the Chehalis Basin Strategy was formed because the dams kept coming up. The tribes said ‘no way’, we need to do something else, but both moved forward together. The dam supporters also have not really found a location that is viable. The site they are looking at now is the location of the Chehalis Tribes origin story and it also doesn’t meet the Federal Cost/benefit analysis.

Jessica suggested that a levy, floodproofing of homes and businesses, and buying out people who are in the floodplain, could all be done and would not impact fisheries.

Felice asked about making flooding issues worse by logging. Jessica said that over 1700 landslides occurred during the 2007 flood because loggers cut but did not remove the trees. Another solution could be revisiting the Forest Practices Act to improve them.

A question was asked about ownership of land in the watershed. Jessica said it is primarily private timber (Weyerhaeuser, a major owner). Felice asked about actions that could be taken to plug in or amplify messages after the EIS Comment period. Jessica suggested we could support the Alliance, join the sign on letter that Washington Wild is pushing out, and another letter will be coming out that says the Local Actions Program is the way to go (The Quinault Indian Nation had a contractor come in and develop a Local Actions Program.) The Federal EIS comes out in November. We can follow and track all of this in the Chehalis River Alliance Website,<https://www.chehalisriveralliance.org/>. She also suggested that the National Broads could sign on.

Advocacy: **Pumice Plain**. Susan discussed the status of the proposal to build a road across the plain to Spirit Lake on the north side of Mt. St. Helens on this 40th anniversary of the eruption. We are in the last week of the 45-day objection period. If you commented on the Forest Service’s scoping in December and January, you would have standing to object. If you did not, you have no legal standing. She has been researching the NEPA documents writing a 24-page objection. The letter will be joined by Washington Native Plant Society, Conservation Northwest, Washington Chapter-Sierra Club, Vancouver Audubon Society, Kitsap Audubon Society, Skagit Audubon Society, Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society, and the North Cascades Audubon Society. Broads agreed that we will join in the Objection, which has a Friday deadline. Gifford Pinchot Staff has said their reports were changed by Washington DC FS to make it look like the impacts are minimal. Look at reports from botanist, hydrologists, etc. They are trying to shoehorn process into an EA, and it should be an EIS. Cascade Forest Conservancy is looking for funding because we will likely have to litigate and go to court to get an injunction. They will try to find a pro-bono attorney from the NW Environmental Law Center. Susan mentioned that the following Broads have standing to comment—so get your comments in by Friday! Felice, Laurie, Joanna, Sarah, Lu, Barb, Nancy Siegel, Judy, Barb Fox-Kilgore.

**Climate Change Webinar Series**: Linda Buckley discussed the three offerings in the “Climate Change and the Coasts webinar series being offered by the Broads National Office. Each is an hour, starting at 1:00 Pacific Time. Maybe it will entice you into the Broadwalk that will be rescheduled next year on June 3-7. Registration opens May 25.

1) “Climate Change and Advocacy”, May 26 1:00 pm, Lance Tapley, Investigative Journalist.

2) “You are the Advocates” June 23 1:00pm Dr. Lisa Pohlman

3) “Climate Change and the Ocean” July 30 1:00pm, Dr. Deborah Bronk

**Reducing Temperatures in the Columbia River**: Laurie reported that the EPA just issued a plan to control water temperatures and protect salmon in the Columbia and Lower Snake Rivers. EPA's plan calls for reducing water temperatures (TMDL) is a big step forward. Oregon also objected to draft Clean Water Act permits for Columbia and Snake river dams unless EPA amends the permits to deal with temperature and other water quality violations caused by the dams and reservoirs. Advocates for the West and Columbia Riverkeeper were two of the plaintiffs making this happen. The Washington Dept of Ecology and the Oregon Dept of Environmental Quality both took steps to make EPA's temperature plan legally enforceable. A comment period starts May 21.

Stewardship Projects: **Backyard Public Lands possible stewardship**? Felice presented a way we might be able to do stewardship close to home. She suggested making a challenge out of removing invasive species in our backyards or a park near us? If anyone has ideas and could champion it, we could do stewardship individually rather than as a group. Discussion ensued about liability in parks with “rogue” volunteers. No volunteers stepped forward and the issue was tabled.

**Solitude Monitoring in Mark O Hatfield Wilderness** Laurie mentioned that the grant has been submitted, and she will hear by next Friday about whether we get it. We’ll be using social distancing, using face masks and driving our own cars, working with Casey Andrews, Forest Service. It may not start until July.

**Chehalis River Land Trust (CRLT).** Lauriesaid we are Partnering with the Washington Broadbands and CRLT regarding how climate change impacts rivers and coasts. The educational event is in the planning process and may be a combination of zoom calls/in person event or just zoom call event. The stewardship project is funded by the National Office but we are looking for other funding sources to fund the cost of the trees/plants. Judy, Linda and Ginny are also on the organizing committee, which involves planting native trees and shrubs along the Chehalis River. The event possibly could occur in November.

**WTA Half Day Women’s Work Party Aug 5.** Susan mentioned this is tentatively scheduled as WTA works on a plan for how to safely restart volunteer work. They hope to restart five-person mini parties, which will likely have no tool sharing, driving separately, and wearing masks. At this point, she does not know where it will be located, but it could be Ridgefield NWR. More information to come as the date gets closer

Education: **“Stop Jordan Cove University”** Felice said this effort is in the planning phase and will build off of the webinar we had in March. It would be a four-part series, possibly between 5-6 p.m. Thursday evenings, every other week. It will allow us to get speakers who could go into more detail about major impacts to land, landowners and tribal members, pipeline dangers and economic arguments. We would get speakers. The FERC approval was handed down in March and since then, the State of Oregon, environmental groups and Pembina (the Jordan Cove Corporate Master) all appealed the decision. Pembina has said that the State has given up its clean water authority because they took too long to make a decision. Is this correct?

Fun! **Mosier Campout Aug 8-9.** Micky will host a picnic and optional overnight camp out on her six-acre property outside of Mosier, as an alternative to our usual summer picnic.

**Chapter Campout Sept 10-13.** Barb Fox-Kilgore said the organizing committee has a meeting scheduled for Wednesday, June 10, 7 p.m. If you want to attend the planning meeting, ask Laurie to add you to the Zoom meeting. We’ll have to see where the pandemic lets us go by September.

**“May the Forest Be with You Broadwalk” Aug 21 –** 25. Micky and Laurie are on the planning committee for this Broadwalk at the Sequim State Park, Ramblewood facility. It is full, but you can get on the waiting list. A decision will be made in June or July as to whether it will happen this year or be rescheduled.

Upcoming Meeting Dates for Cascade Volcanoes: June 16, 6:30, July 21, August 8. Should we have a breakout session after these meetings? How do we create more participation in our Zoom Calls.? If people have ideas for June and July meetings, please share them!

BRATS (Broads Regional Area Teams): Micky mentioned that the current topics the BRATS are talking about include the SE Oregon Management Plan, Lower Snake River Dams, and Jordan Cove. In June and July, we’ll have a zoom call focusing on what we’ve done over the past two years, and we will have lots of time for questions, so you can get your questions answered and become more engaged in it!

Katya mentioned that last year EPA said they were going to issue Clean Water Act Permits over state objections. They will announce rule changes any day now, that would ban the states from issuing other permits for pipelines and terminals and reduce the time for decision making process to one year.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Submitted by Jane Heisler