



**Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority
Flood District Formation
Grays Harbor County Public Meeting
City Hall, Montesano
October 18, 2010**

**Draft Meeting Summary Report
October 20, 2010**

**Prepared by:
Norton-Arnold & Company**

Introduction

The Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority is holding three public meetings – one each in Grays Harbor, Lewis and Thurston Counties – to provide information about and receive public input on the potential formation of a flood district to address flooding problems in the Chehalis River Basin, which includes parts of the three counties. All meetings are being held from 5:30 to 8:00 p.m. and consist of an open house from 5:30 to 6 p.m., a presentation from 6:00 to 6:30 p.m., and a public comment period from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Meeting dates, locations, and times are:

- Thursday, October 14 at Swede Hall (18543 Albany Street SW) in Rochester
- Monday, October 18 at City Hall (112 N. Main Street) in Montesano
- Thursday, October 28 at the Centralia Middle School (901 Johnson Road) in Centralia

This report summarizes the results of the Grays Harbor County meeting. Approximately 15 people attended the meeting. The Flood Authority was represented by the following members: Edna Fund, Centralia City Council; and Ron Schillinger, Mayor of Montesano. Al Carter, Grays Harbor County Commissioner represented Terry Willis, Grays Harbor County Commissioner and Chair of the Flood Authority. The meeting was staffed by consultants from the consultant team hired by the Flood Authority to assist with district formation, and included: Pam Bissonnette and John Ghilarducci, from the FCS Group; and Chris Hoffman and Fala Frazier from Norton-Arnold & Company. Bruce Mackey, Flood Authority staff, Lee Napier, Interim Planning Director for Grays Harbor County, and Mark Swartout, Thurston County Natural Resources Program Manager, also attended the meeting.

Presentation

Chris Hoffman began the presentation by welcoming all participants and giving a brief introduction of Flood Authority members and consultant staff. He indicated that the flood district formation process is about creating a new organization to address flooding problems in a comprehensive and cooperative manner on a multi-county basis. He also said that it was important for the Flood Authority to hear from the public on the proposed district, and welcomed participants to fill out comment forms, which were provided at the sign-in table. A copy of the comment form is provided in Appendix A of this report. Chris then turned over the presentation to Pam and John who spent approximately a half an hour covering a range of topics, including:

- Flooding issues
- Actions being undertaken by the Flood Authority
- The district formation process and options for district types
- The role of a flood district
- A description of developing district boundaries and governance structure
- The benefits of forming a flood district
- Ways to stay involved in the formation process

A copy of the presentation is provided in Appendix B of this report.

Question and Comment Period

After the presentation Chris opened up the floor for questions and comments from meeting participants. A complete transcript of the questions and comments, as well as the responses to them, is provided in Appendix C of this report. In summary, the questions and comments followed a number of common themes including:

Methods of raising money to pay for projects. Participants asked a number of questions about how money could be raised to pay for projects, whether the District could use a combination of taxes, rates and levies to raise money. They were concerned that the District would try to raise the maximum amount possible through these methods. They were concerned about fairness and whether those that helped cause problems, or who would benefit the most, would pay a larger share. They also expressed doubt that the flooding problems could really be fixed; that it would be necessary to remove all buildings from the flood plain.

Voting on district formation. Many participants felt that there should be a public vote on flood district formation, specifically because the district will have taxing authority. They were also concerned that cities and towns would not have representation on the flood district. Participants also said they wanted to know more about the projects before a district was formed, to know what they are getting before they are asked to help pay, and whether or not there would be a vote on the list of projects. Participants said that the problem has to be looked at holistically and that there were benefits to the three counties cooperating, but they were concerned about fairness and openness.

Flood district boundaries. Participants had a number of questions about the flood district boundary—how it was developed and how it will be approved. Some asked why Ocean Shores was not included since they are in the Basin. They also wanted to know if the Quinault Tribe was involved and if they could sue to stop this effort given their treaty rights on The Chehalis River.

Public meeting notification. Participants were concerned by the low turnout, and said that while there may be some public apathy that more effort needed to go into public outreach. One participant suggest that the Flood Authority take out full pages advertisements in local newspapers and that they should clearly explain that people may be taxed or required to pay rates.

Appendices

Appendix A - Comment Form

Appendix B – Meeting Presentation

Appendix C - Transcript of the Questions and Comments

Appendix A - Comment Form

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Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority
c/o Norton-Arnold & Company
1932 First Avenue, Suite 802
Seattle, WA 98101

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Appendix B – Meeting Presentation



Chehalis River Basin Flood Entity Formation Public Meeting

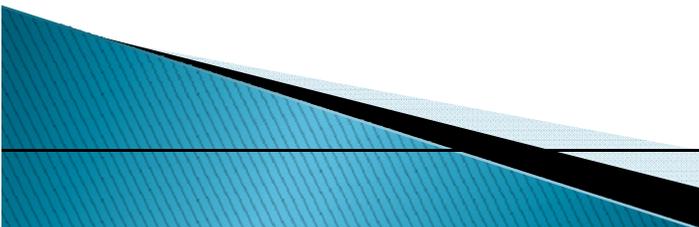
City Hall, Montesano – October 18, 2010

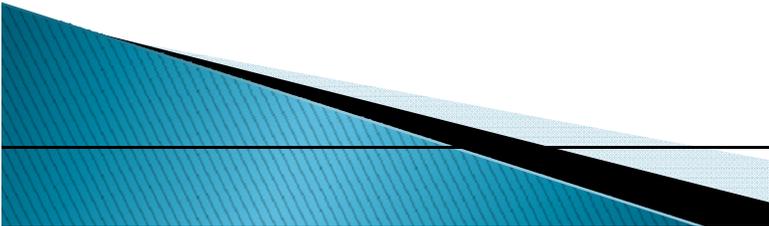
Meeting Goals

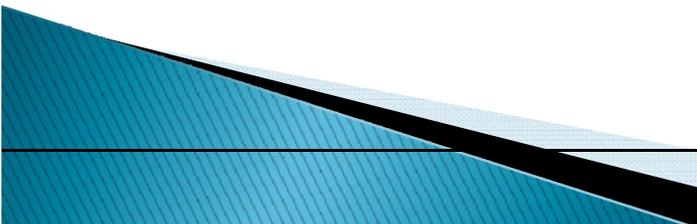
- ▶ Present information and answer questions on forming a multi-county flood district in the Chehalis River Basin
- ▶ Outline formation process and schedule
- ▶ Discuss next steps
- ▶ Receive your input on formation process

The Issues

- ▶ Repeated major flooding in the Chehalis Basin including Lewis, Thurston and Grays Harbor Counties
- ▶ Multiple federally declared disasters
- ▶ Millions of dollars of damages
- ▶ Disruption of lives and commerce
- ▶ Closures of I-5 and State highways
- ▶ No single county can solve this problem alone

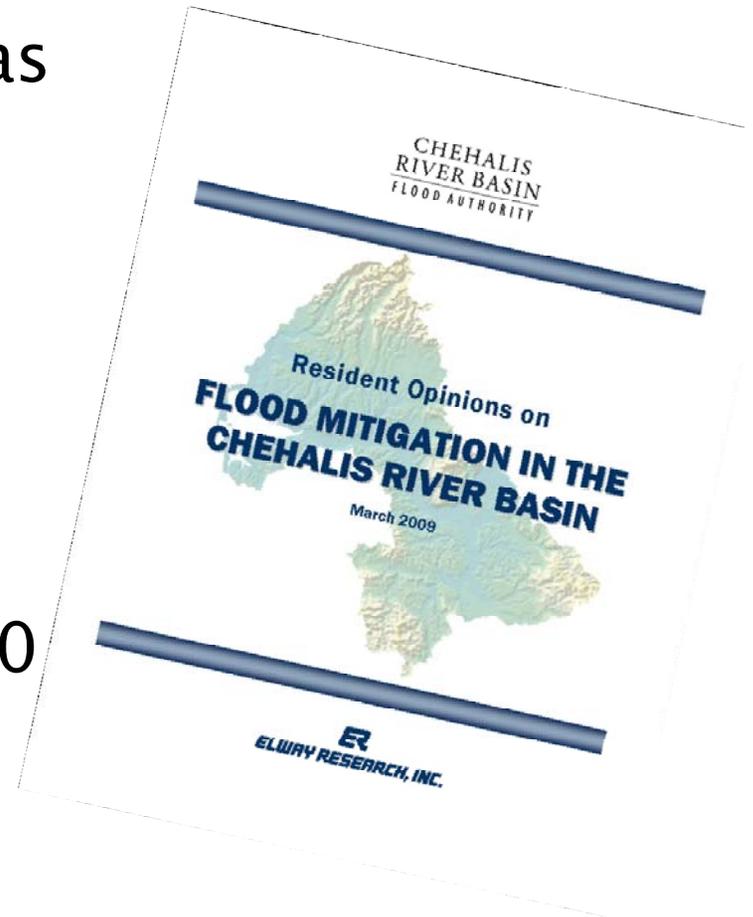






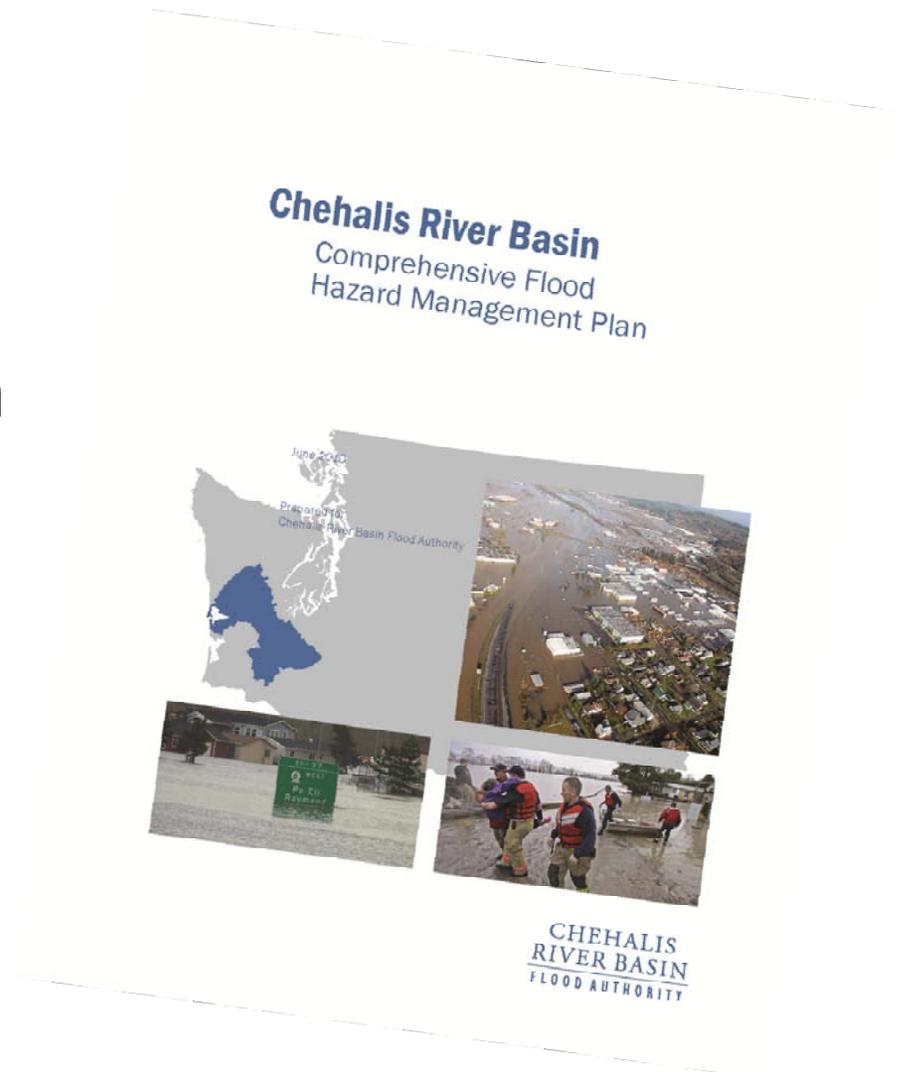
Actions to Date

- ▶ The Flood Authority formed as a temporary entity by Interlocal Agreement among 11 jurisdictions in 2008 to address flood issues throughout the basin
- ▶ Held public meetings in February 2009 and April 2010
- ▶ Conducted a basin-wide survey on flood mitigation in March 2009



Actions to Date

- ▶ The Flood Authority completed the flood hazard mitigation plan in June 2010
- ▶ State legislation awarded \$2.5 million to the Flood Authority in anticipation that a basin-wide flood district be formed as soon as possible



Actions to Date

- ▶ Current state budget legislation created a deadline of June 2011 to form a flood district
- ▶ The FA provisionally selected a multi-county flood entity structure be formed by interlocal agreement of the members as an interim structure, by June 2011 deadline

District Formation Process: Next Steps

- ▶ Legislation to amend state law to authorize creation of multi-county Flood Control Zone District (FCZD)
- ▶ Interim multi-county flood entity formed by interlocal agreement could be replaced by a FCZD
- ▶ County Commissioners (BoCC) decision of *intent* to form FCZD & set boundaries
[December 2010]

District Formation Process: Next Steps

- ▶ Public meetings on boundaries and tax/charge/assessments [March 2011]
- ▶ Boundary Review Board (BRB) decision [March 2011]
- ▶ Establish FCZD following BRB process [June 2011]
 - BoCC initial Board of Supervisors (later may be elected)
- ▶ Determine tax/charge/assessments as means to raise revenues [fall 2011 or later]

Decisions for Grays Harbor County

- ▶ Adoption of Intent to form a FCZD, fall 2010
- ▶ Submit to Boundary Review Board (BRB), winter 2011
- ▶ Adopt ordinance to create FCZD after BRB decision by June 2011
- ▶ Approve Interlocal Agreement to form multi-county flood entity by June 2011

What is a Flood Control Zone District?

- ▶ District formed by vote of Board of County Commissioners, who also set the boundary
- ▶ District Board of Supervisors is the Board of County Commissioners, or can be separately elected after formation
- ▶ Has tax/charge/assessment authority
- ▶ Has broad authority for services
- ▶ Can issue voted general obligation and non-voted revenue bonds

Role of Multi-County FCZD

- ▶ Develop flood projects
- ▶ Develop Flood Hazard Mitigation Plan/Updates
- ▶ Determine funding level and agree on allocations to members
- ▶ Undertake or contract with others to do projects/programs
- ▶ May issue bonds depending on structure

Why A Multi-County FCZD?

- ▶ A Multi-County FCZD provides for a regional, coordinated, and cooperative approach to addressing flooding problems.
- ▶ A Multi-County FCZD can raise revenues for flood purposes through taxes, charges and/or assessments.
- ▶ A Multi-County FCZD can require both incorporated and unincorporated areas [excluding tribal lands] within the County be included in the boundary by decision of the Board of County Commissioners.

Economic Analysis

- ▶ The FA has commissioned an economic analysis
- ▶ The economic impacts of flood damage, disruption to lives and commerce, and flood insurance costs will be documented
- ▶ Analysis will underscore importance of reducing flood impacts within the Chehalis River Basin to the economies of the region and state



District Boundaries

- ▶ May include territory within two or more counties
- ▶ Must generally follow boundaries of watershed area
- ▶ May include tribal reservation land located within watershed area with tribal approval.
- ▶ May not overlap other FCZD boundaries if they exist



CHEHALIS RIVER BASIN FLOOD DISTRICT FORMATION

Upper Chehalis, Lower Chehalis, and Grays Harbor Subbasins

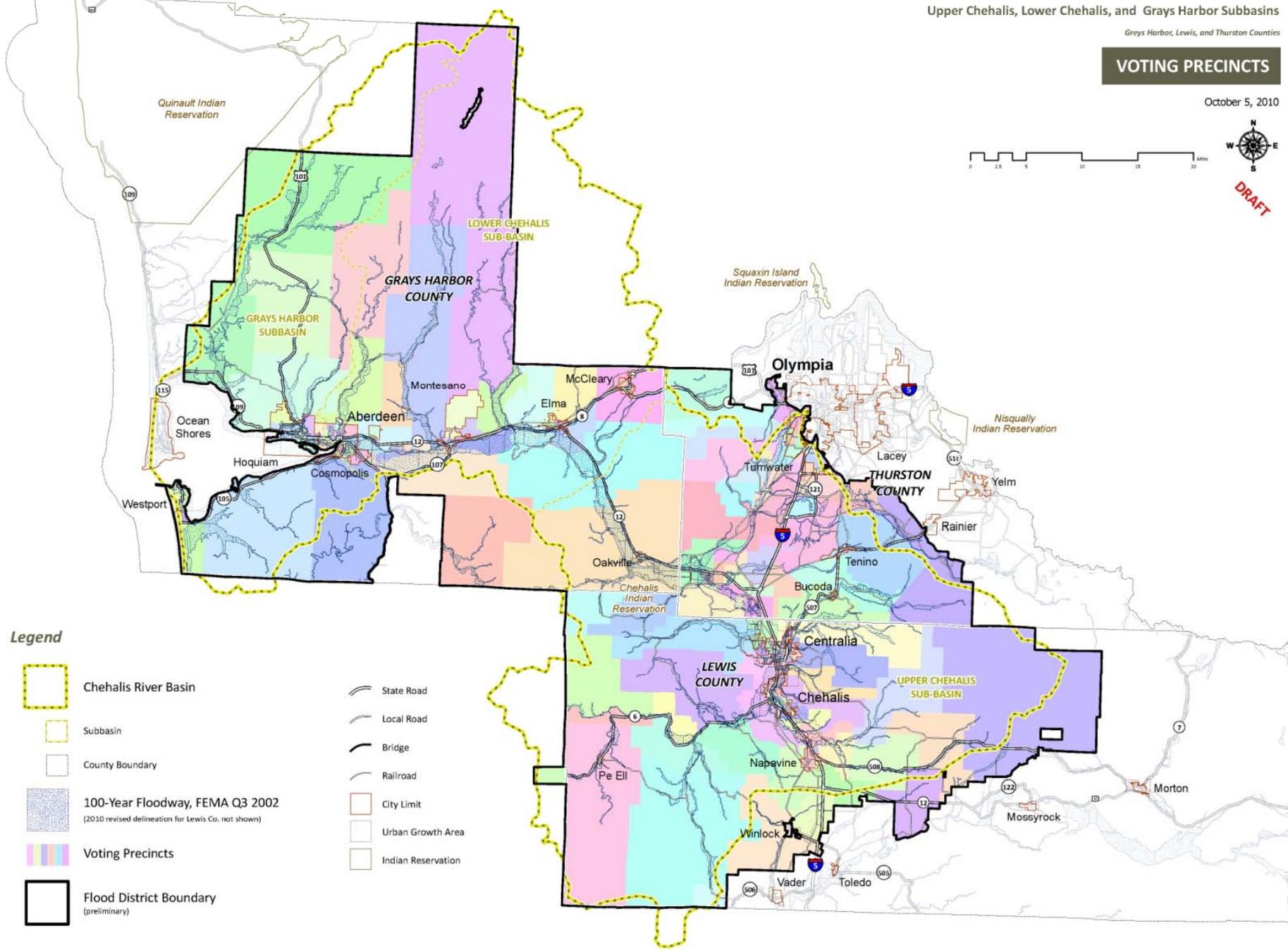
Greys Harbor, Lewis, and Thurston Counties

VOTING PRECINCTS

October 5, 2010



DRAFT



Legend

- Chehalis River Basin
- Subbasin
- County Boundary
- 100-Year Floodway, FEMA Q3 2002
(2010 revised delineation for Lewis Co. not shown)
- Voting Precincts
- Flood District Boundary
(preliminary)
- State Road
- Local Road
- Bridge
- Railroad
- City Limit
- Urban Growth Area
- Indian Reservation

Governance

- ▶ Initially will be the BoCC of each County
- ▶ Decisions made collectively based on an interlocal agreement among members (assumed to be Grays Harbor, Lewis, and Thurston counties/cities, and the Chehalis Tribe)
- ▶ After formation, decision-makers can be directly elected

Benefits

- ▶ Provides additional ability to directly address longstanding flooding issues
- ▶ Provides ability to comprehensively address Chehalis Basin flooding which the individual jurisdictions cannot do alone
- ▶ Provides funding to match federal & state sources to do projects / programs



Public Meetings

- ▶ Public meetings will be held from 5:30 to 8:00 p.m. on:
- ▶ Thursday, October 14 at Swede Hall in Rochester*
- ▶ Monday, October 18 at City Hall in Montesano*
- ▶ Thursday, October 28 at the Centralia Middle School in Centralia*
- ▶ *Presentation at 6 p.m. each night

Other Ways to Stay Involved

- ▶ Attend Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority meetings
 - Held 3rd Thursday of each month – check Lewis County web site for details
- ▶ Check BoCC calendar for each County for public hearings and meetings regarding FCZD formation
- ▶ For more information and all Flood Authority documents, go to <http://lewiscountywa.gov/communitydevelopment/chehalis-river-basin-flood-authority>
- ▶ Email info@chehalisriverbasin.org with questions or comments

Appendix C - Transcript of the Questions and Comments

Chehalis River Basin Flood District Formation

Public Meeting #2

Montesano, WA

October 18, 2010

Questions and Comments from the Public

Q: If it's called a Flood Control Zone District (FCZD) then the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) doesn't have to put it out to vote, if it's a Flood Authority (FA) then they have to go out for a vote. Is that correct?

A: I'll get into more detail about than in a little bit.

Q: The FCZD is independent of the county. There's no one to ride herd on them. They have an open checkbook to do whatever they want to. Right?

A: The FCZD is a quasi-governmental district. It's not like a utility – a department of the county government – it's separate from the county.

Q: Doesn't that mean that the people on this committee can raise out taxes without going to the commissioners?

A: We are working on issues of governance in the FA now that will ensure that representation will be fair. What the taxing authority will be right now – a FCZD is limited to \$.50 / thousand ceiling.

Q: So they can tax me without a vote. Why should I have to pay taxes when I won't be flooded? Every citizen will be taxed for this. What's the money for?

A: Flood control.

Q: You're not going to control this river. If you dam it you impact those upstream, only thing you can do is to dike the whole river. Take all the money they are paying you and buy the big box stores and get them out of the flood plain and get the flood plain back to what it was before.

Q: How much do you make in all this? Who are you? Centralia needs to quit building in the flood plain.

A: We are here tonight to get input from the people. Talking about taxes is getting the cart ahead of the horse a little. Right now, the Flood Authority is trying to set up a structure to fix some of these flooding problems, and we don't know what the projects are yet. We are trying to set up a structure without knowing what the projects are. There won't be rates or taxes until we know what the projects are and then you can talk to your representative.

Q: What about the 7 miles of dikes on the Chehalis – they haven't been built. Centralia is just as responsible as everyone else. We're going to pay to help Centralia and Chehalis keep I-5 open. If you push the river down here faster we're going to flood faster.

Comment: We have no say in whether this is going to be done. Let us have a vote in whether this zone district is even formed.

Comment: I challenge you to go to the people and tell them they will be taxed. No one is going to want it.

Q: What is the vote procedure that it could end up being done without it?

A: The first step is for each county form its own FCZD. That doesn't mean that they will be taxing anyone. Just that the entity is formed.

Q: The \$2.5 million - it's the second \$2.5 million – you've already spent the first \$2.5 million and went back for more.

A: That's not correct. I'm Bruce Makey –

Q: When this happened the Governor allocated \$50 million and said that \$2.5 went to you.

A: The \$2.5 million went towards forming the FA as well as things like LIDAR and early warning systems. In the legislative session it was a re-appropriation of the \$2.5 million to use the money to form an entity.

Q: It looks like it's an additional \$2.5 million.

Q: How much money has been paid out and who got it?

Q: The deadline of December – is that when we have to make a decision on this by?

A: No – it has to go through the BRB first and that will happen in March of 2011.

Q: When it's approved then the taxes would be controlled by a BOCC within Grays Harbor County?

A: Yes

Q: Where does it rank in the hierarchy of the taxing agencies?

A: Low.

Q: Below schools?

A: It's the bottom.

Q: Taxes/charges/assessments – we could be hit with all three of them. Is that correct?

A: The basic answer is yes, but it's extremely unlikely. Assessments can only be charged because of an increase in assessed value because of improvements. Rates can be used in a number of ways to recover costs. The board is representing you and would hear from you.

Q: 12 years ago I tried to get the town to collect fees for stormwater. That could still go on and municipality could charge for stormwater so they could be double charged. We could be conceivably hit with all 3 kinds of charges.

Q: Who oversees the FCZD?

A: The draft legislation is deliberately vague. They want the three counties to decide how it will be structured and how the district will be represented. It doesn't prescribe that 5 members will be from xyz.

Q: You are talking about a quazi governmental agency that spans three counties and representation is going to be across three counties. The counties are going to set up the districts. Based on assessed value? On individual person? Any county can put a large number of their people in the district then they have a large portion of the vote.

A: We are working with the FA right now on that so no one will be disproportionately represented.

Q: It's supposed to be formed by June 2011?

A: That's for Grays Harbor County only. That's step one, getting GH County to form the district. It's the multi-county FCZD that we're trying to not be too prescriptive in that. We're trying to talk about a fair way to govern that district.

Q: What happens if GH County doesn't?

A: We don't know. The other two counties could form the district.

Q: So the other two counties would have all those funds.

A: The counties would have to deal with their county only. Biggest advantage of the multi-county is that it's collaborative – collective buying power.

Q: There no question it has to be done holistically. I live in the Black Lake area – it floods every year. I’m wondering why I want to pay so the truckers can go through Centralia. Those costs should be picked up by the state or feds.

A: Some of it will be.

Q: I don’t think so since the Corps of Engineers is saying they don’t think it’s a good idea. I don’t think the feds will send money out here for that.

A: This is the tool to leverage that money.

Q: What’s the local match that GHC would have to match on a project?

A: We don’t know that one yet. As we’re working through the issues with the FA that’s one we’re working on. How will the costs be apportioned? The board will be able to talk those things through. Will it be majority vote or what?

Q: Suppose we form this thing and start figuring things out and the people decide we don’t like this thing. How would we get rid of this thing?

A: GH County has FCZDs in some areas as does Lewis County and they have done nothing. No taxes have been levied or anything. There wouldn’t be anything done until everything was solved to the publics satisfaction.

Comment: I’m Lee Napier. Those not wanting the multi-county solution, not wanting structural solutions, this could also be non-structural solutions. I’m hearing a lot of “out of county” talk but think about in county. This would be a way for you to inform your BOCC on what’s important to you. One example is the Satsop flood plain – we can’t afford the money to buy that land. This entity would be able to leverage that money.

Q: You said there’s a list of projects. We asked about that in Rochester – what’s it going to cost and is there a list of projects? I brought up the dams – One Voice will be there with PUD attorneys – if you approve the dam want to buy some property cheap? My property values will go down. What’s it going to cost?

Q: I went to the Satsop meetings – that land was bought and given to Fish & Wildlife – they are working to keep land on the other side from flooding – Terry Willis’ land. The Satsop goes up and Terry’s land is going to shift downstream more – the river is re-channelizing now and it is going back to its natural state – you start changing that and . . .

A: That’s just one example.

Q: I’m worried about the smaller cities down here Aberdeen, Hoquiam, – they are not affected by the Chehalis.

Q: Give me an example of a project that benefitted people outside the basin that we have to pay for.

A: In King County the Howard Hansen dam on the green river needs to be repaired. There is a King County FCZD, and the people in the Snohomish and Cedar River basin allowed their money to be allocated to help protect the people below the dam. The Mayor of Newcastle recognized that protecting the Kent valley was more important than keeping to a schedule of project that were less time critical.

Q: The people of Vancouver benefit from having I-5 functional – are they going to help pay?

A: Would you consider a contribution from the state as being from all people in the state?

Q: Many beneficiaries of keeping a major freeway functional live elsewhere. We are paying and others are benefiting.

A: The only way is if state and federal taxes are used. It may sound like we don't have a lot of answers right now, but that's because we're at the very beginning of this process. A lot more study and work will go into this. We'll have more answers next time. We want these questions so we can go get the answers.

Q: Ocean shores was left out of the district on this map. Why?

A: Are they in the basin?

Q: Yes – Ocean Shores should be in.

A: We'll make sure they are inside the boundary.

Q: Is it a watershed boundary or is it the main stem? The partnership looks at the watershed level. The FA looks at the main stem. We need to think about what the problem areas are?

A: We wanted to make sure we have everyone in.

A: We wanted to start larger and go smaller if we needed.

Q: That map would be great if the FEMA floodplain was overlaid on it.

A: It's actually on it – it's just hard to see.

Q: I live on the hill – I realize that when it floods I might not be able to go over the bridge. Why should I pay for Walmart in Chehalis that is built in the floodplain?

A: We're not telling anyone they should. There will be other economic benefits – businesses getting inventory – getting kids to schools – hospitals can't get patients.

Q: But I don't get to opt out of paying the taxes?

A: It depends. The decision to have an election hasn't been made yet. They haven't decided. Those are the things we're wanting to hear about from the people.

Q: Currently I don't have a voice into what happens in Centralia. I can't influence their elected officials. If we aren't participating in this project, that continues. If we participate then we have a say in what happens. As a FCZD we'll have a lot more leverage to do projects that will benefit all of us – beyond just dikes that will just put more pressure downstream.

Q: The map – voting boundaries – can that be adjusted to be county boundaries within the basin?

A: Yes – we showed it by voting precinct in case it went out to a vote.

Q: On the east, the boundary goes way beyond the watershed boundary.

Q: The area south of Olympia – doesn't flow into Chehalis.

A: We're trying to get flow maps.

Q: We just formed a hospital district in North Beach – it cuts through precincts – if you divide a precinct the whole precinct is out – we used the school district map and ended up with a hospital that only served Ocean City because all the others were eliminated because we cut through them. You have to be careful. You almost need overlays to show all the boundaries you've got on there.

Q: The FCZD – if the FCZD doesn't get formed then it goes back to county level? Controlled by the BOCC?

A: It could be the BOCC or another separate entity.

Q: You keep referring to it as a FCZD – that's the one that the commissioners don't have to take it out to the public to vote. If you put the word zone in it they don't have to put it out to a vote. I think that the

commissioners already have the board chosen and they are members of One Voice. I don't think it should be a zone district – we should have a vote on this. There's a lot of money floating around here – I'm not saying anyone's corrupt yet – but the citizens should have an opportunity to vote on this. The commissioners are against letting us vote. The people in One Voice are in place right now. As far as I know the commissioners haven't chosen that it's a zone district yet so don't call it that.

A: The FA is discussing -

Q: We need the project list – I want to know what I'm going to buy. Lee referred to a list that the flood authority already has. Publicize that list. Let us see what it's going to cost.

Comment: Thurston County has a choice in signing the agreement. The BOCC can sign an interlocal agreement using their stormwater district – they have a choice between forming the FCZD or not – they can sign the agreement with the stormwater utility.

Q: This says counties, tribes, and “may” include the cities – I wouldn't try to do this unless it says “MUST” include the cities. That can't say “may” – change that to MUST.

A: We, the consultants, can't change this text – that's the FA's text.

Q: In the formation of a FCZD the municipalities don't have the option of opting out – they are in the district. The decision on governance is separate from that – you could have representations from cities – may or may not include cities. Correct?

A: Yes, correct.

Q: The taxing authority, is that formed by this committee or is it put to a vote of the people?

A: That's up to the FA.

Q: Is the taxing limited to property tax?

A: Yes - just property tax.

Q: I missed this – something about the taxing authority goes back to the individual FCZD – right?

A: yes

(this was about the new legislation)

Comment: If a county doesn't want to be a part of it they don't have to be a part of it.

Q: As a County Commissioner I don't think that by December I'll have enough information to decide if I want to sign this letter of intent. You need to hear from the people in the flats in Hoquiam who are ok so long as the pumps keep working. When I start talking about taxes for flood control people are going to say for what? I'm not flooded. It's a hard sell to tell people the boogie man is coming and this is what's going to happen.

Comment: Aberdeen & Hoquiam dodged a bullet on the last one. The tides and wind causes Aberdeen and Hoquiam to flood. If south Aberdeen hadn't raised the dikes 20 years ago Cosmopolis would have flooded.

Comment: We need to have more discussion. Who set the June 2011 deadline? Why?

A: State money says that's the deadline.

Q: Give us another year to sell this so we can get out to the people.

A: There's a deadline cycle for forming one of these – if it's not formed by August 1 you have to wait until the next year.

Q: Same thing applies here as it did in Rochester. How many people here are not connected to the government? 10 citizens turned out for a meeting this important? Need to a better job getting the word out. You're going to have to tell people they are going to have to pay for this even though it doesn't affect them.

Q: We're talking about mixing up a lot of segments. If the county's should work together? How are they going to pay for it? What to charge in the taxes? Then the projects – what and where? Who's going to be on the board? What about the tribes – couldn't the Quinalt's nix t his whole thing? As far as the county's working together – that's good. The Chehalis River Basin' Partnership's strength is getting everyone to work together. They are looking at it holistically. In 2006 the Quinalt's sent a letter to the partnerships saying don't do anything to the river. If you do we're going to sue you.

Comment: I'm Edna Fund, Centralia City Council, I appreciate everyone coming out. I hope you will all come to Centralia. Regarding the levy project, the corps has been showing their maps, the levys we have right now are too low. If the 2007 flood happened again it would go over them. The Skookumchuck – the maps were built with the assumption – the price tag was \$10 million and now it's up to \$50 million.

Q: So FEMA'S newest maps have more flood zones than the older maps?

A: This process is a different thing.

Comment (Edna): Whatever they do in the Twin Cities, mitigation has to happen here.

Comment: If they do projects up stream and it affects us here who pays for it?

A: For the Corps project – by law the project can't have adverse affects up or down stream. They have to mitigate. Land use decisions made by the county that's different.

Comment: If the Corps can't impact anyone else then they aren't going to do anything.

A: Any modifications to the Skookumchuck Dam is modification to the levees.

Q: Are they going to add storage?

A: No – they are going to put infrastructure into the dam so they can release water when a storm comes.

Q: Seems like common sense to release water when a big rain comes.

A: If there hadn't been capacity behind the dam – the prediction was much higher than the actual rainfall – it would have flooded.

Comment: The Wynoochie Dam was controlled by power company – when the dam was full they released a lot of water and a wall of water came downstream.

Comment: When the Corps comes back out with their 35% completed design, we'll know more about the dam, costs, analysis, and we can start asking the Corps questions.

Q: Can this group regulate land use inside the flood zone of the Chehalis river? Can they regulate what's outside the flood zone.

A: They will no land use authority.

Q: So they can't stop them from filling up the flood zone?

Q: They can put it in the interlocal agreement. What's the cost of moving the stores to higher ground – dig it out and move it uphill?

A: That's the benefit of the FCZD – Grays Harbor County can be at the table with Lewis and Thurston County.

Q: You need to get more public awareness on what is going on. I stopped in Oakville and they didn't know about this meeting. You need get the word out further.

Q: The Commissioner needs to take a full page add in the daily world and tell the people what this is about.