



**Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority
Flood District Formation
Lewis County Public Meeting
Centralia Middle School, Centralia
October 28, 2010**

**Draft Meeting Summary Report
November 9, 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 Lewis County meeting. Approximately 45 people attended the meeting. The Flood Authority was represented by the following members: Edna Fund, Centralia City Council; Julie Balmelli-Powe, City of Chehalis Flood Authority representative; Ron Averill, Lewis County Commissioner; Karen Valenzuela, Thurston County Commissioner; Terry Willis, Grays Harbor County Commissioner and Chair of the Flood Authority; and Mark White, Chehalis Tribe. Other elected officials in attendance included: Harlan Thompson, Mayor of Centralia; Bonnie Canady, Centralia City Council; and Bill Schulte, Lewis County Commissioner. 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, and Mark Swartout, Thurston County Natural Resources Program Manager, also attended the meeting.

Presentation

After a welcoming introduction by Harlan Thompson, Chris Hoffman began the presentation by 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:

Public Vote. 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.

Flood reduction project costs. Participants said they wanted to know more about the projects before a district was formed and what they cost before they are asked to help pay for them. Questions were asked about moving people out of the flood plain instead of building infrastructure.

Concern about infrastructure projects. Participants were concerned about the cost and environmental impacts of large scale infrastructure projects. The cost of these projects would be extremely high and would place a large burden on those who have to pay for them. Participants wanted to know more about potential non-structural solutions.

Flood reduction project benefits. In general, participants said that they don't want to pay to address problems if they are not contributing to them. They also said that the state, and those that drive on I-5 through Lewis County, should help pay for projects since those outside Lewis County benefit from I-5 remaining open.

Types of project revenue levies. Participants asked a number of questions about how money could be raised to pay for flood reduction 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. There was a general belief that flood problems are caused by "others" or the flood problems could be "lived with".

Land use concerns. Participants expressed doubt that the flooding problems could really be fixed; that it would be necessary to remove all buildings from the floodplain. They don't want to pay to fix problems caused by questionable land use decisions.

Flood district boundaries. Participants had a number of questions about the flood district boundary—how it was developed and how it will be approved. Participants were generally concerned that those within the boundary should benefit from flood reduction projects and programs.

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

Centralia Middle School, Centralia – October 28, 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

Lewis County Flood Damages

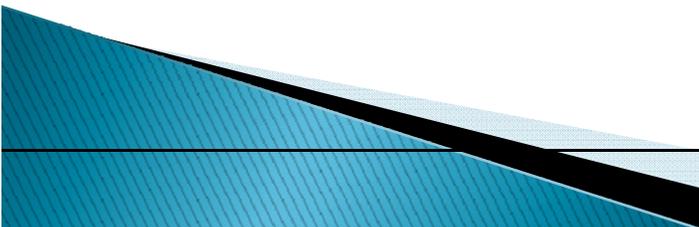
- ▶ 16 federally declared disasters in past 30 years

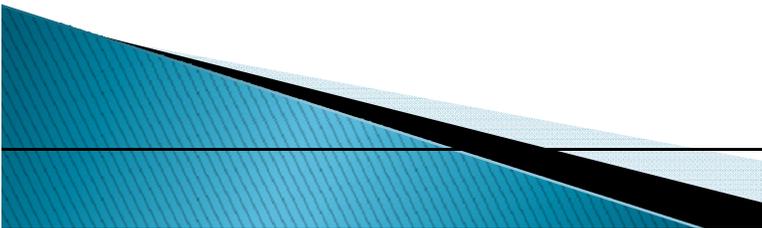
1978 – 2009

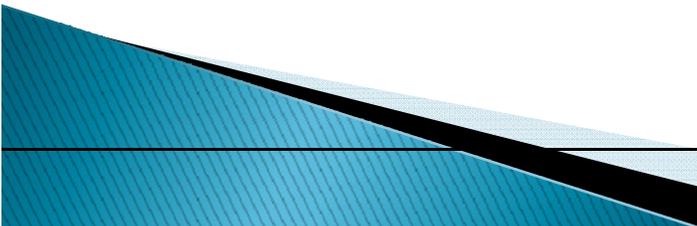
- ▶ Over \$75 million in FEMA payments for flood damage

2007 December Flooding

- ▶ \$165 million in total damages
- ▶ \$44 million in damages – public infrastructure
- ▶ \$69 million in damages – private property
- ▶ \$52 million on damages – business losses
- ▶ 1,262 homes destroyed or damaged
- ▶ 20 mile section of I-5 closed for 4 days

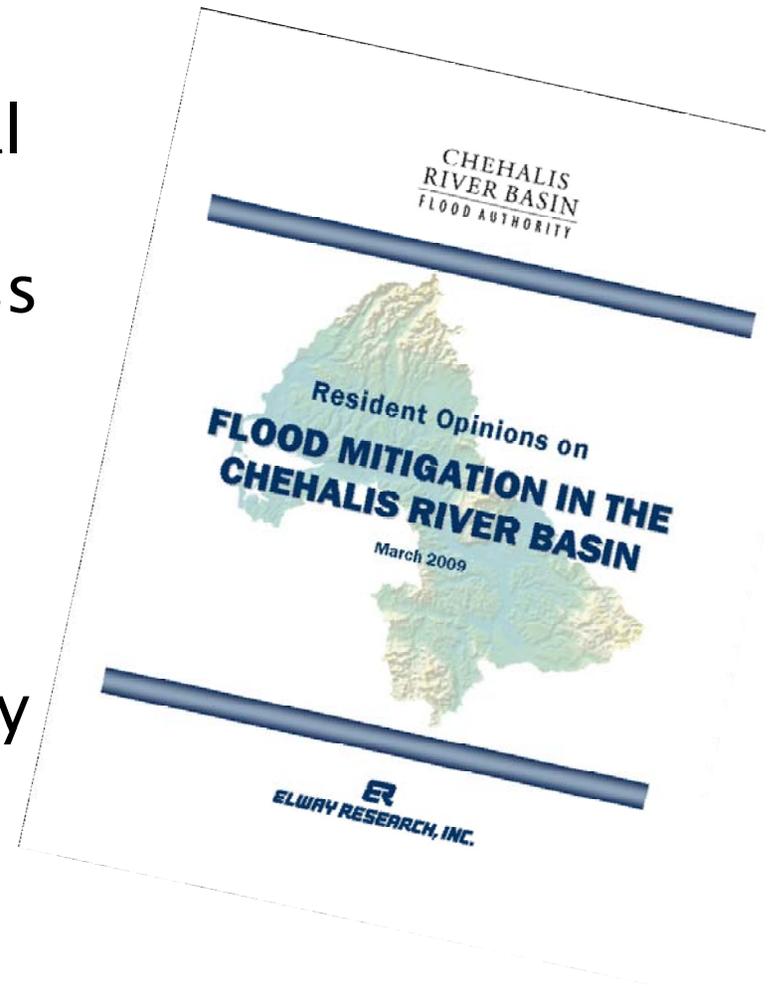






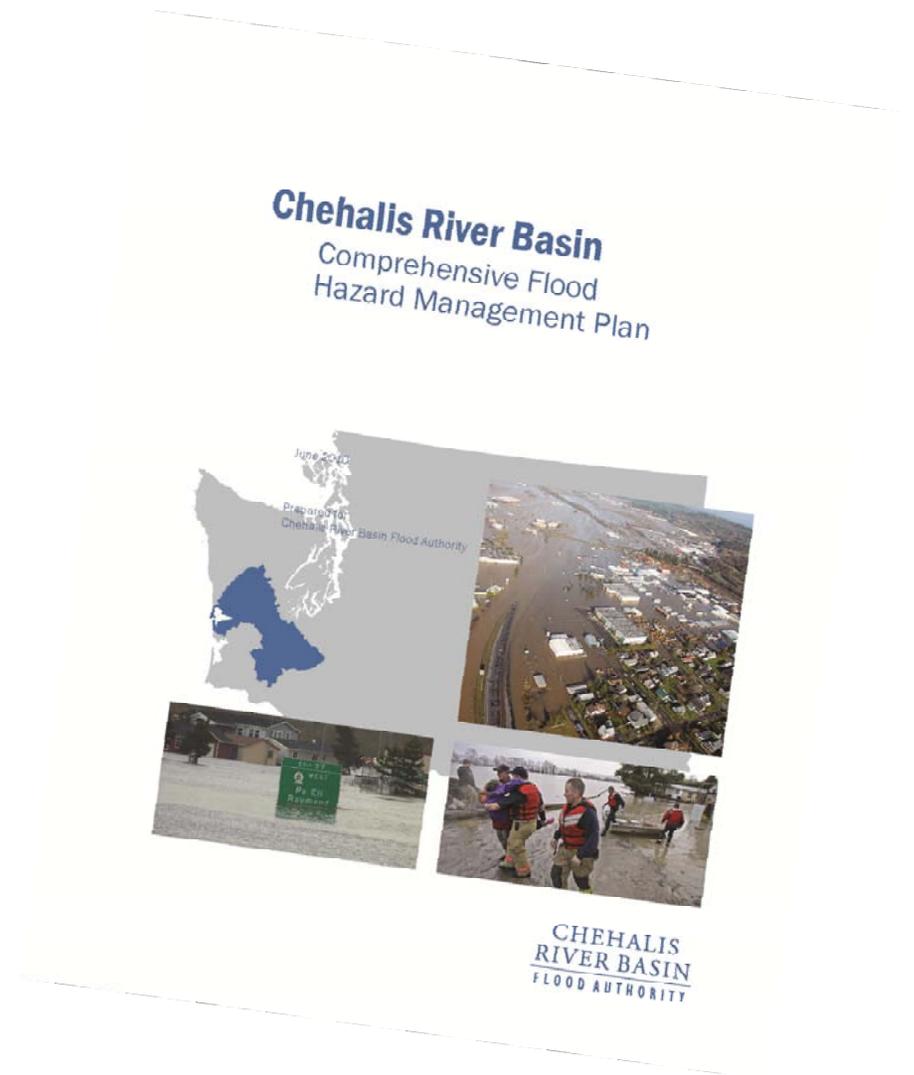
Actions to Date

- ▶ 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 (CFHMP) in June 2010



Flood Authority Project List

- ▶ “Start list” of structural and non-structural projects in the basin – part of a package of solutions to reduce flood damage
- ▶ Compiled from existing flood plans, member jurisdictions, and input from the public
- ▶ Projects are not adequately defined or developed to move forward. The Authority and local governments don’t have funding to develop projects or conduct an alternatives analysis
- ▶ A Flood District could develop the projects on the list and determine costs and impacts, then prioritize and implement the best projects.

List: Non-Structural Mitigation Measures

- ▶ **Public Information:** Education materials – flood proofing guidance
- ▶ **Regulation:** Improve floodplain regulations, develop conservation easement programs
- ▶ **Planning and data collection:** Improve hydraulic modeling, study woody debris and stream gravels
- ▶ **Reduce damage to existing structures:** Develop home evaluation and buyout programs
- ▶ **Emergency response and preparedness:** Develop early warning systems
- ▶ **Natural resources protection projects:** Protect and restore riparian areas

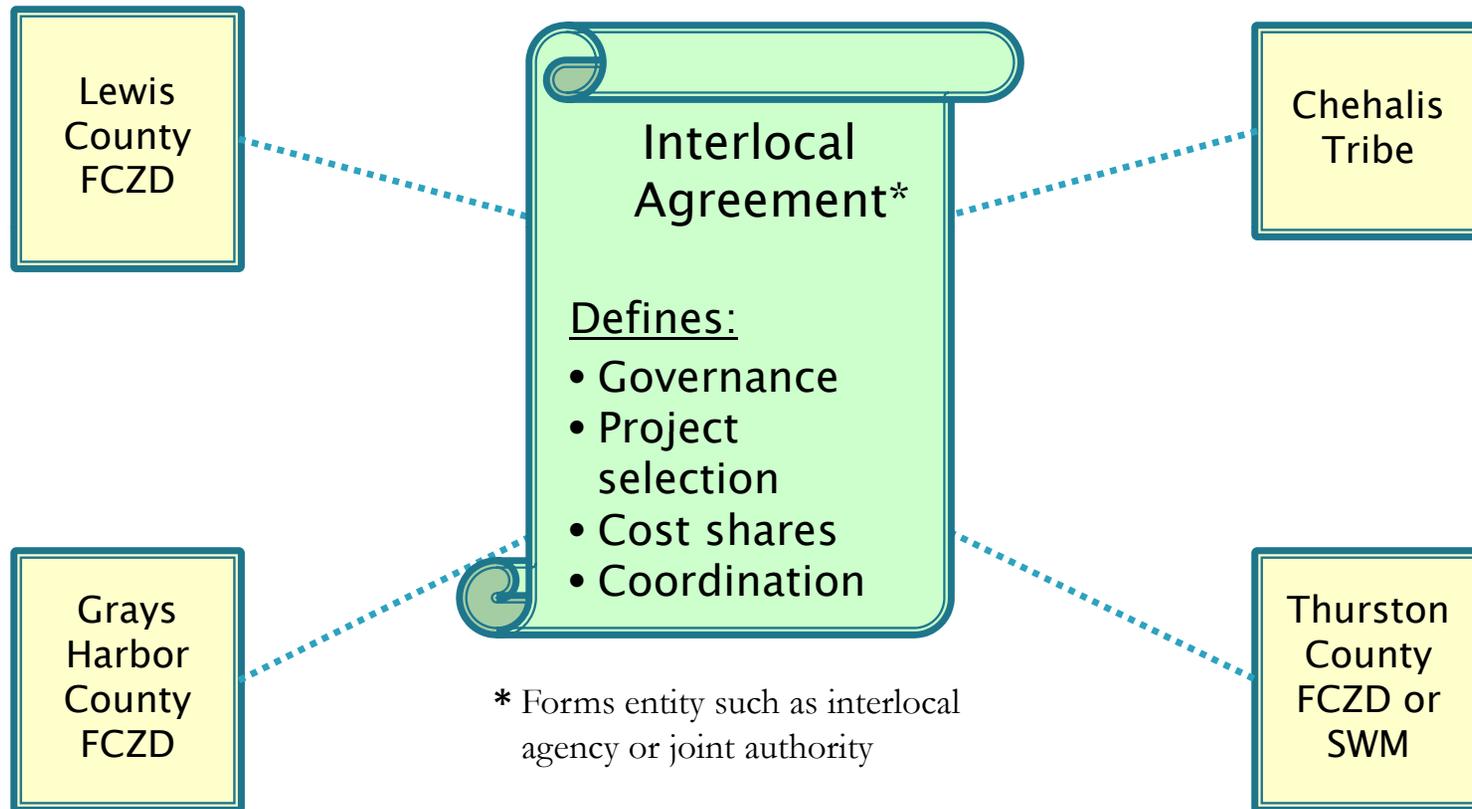
List: Structural Measures

- ▶ Floodplain protection
 - Culvert improvements, tributary drainage improvements
- ▶ Bank protection
 - Bank stabilization and protection
- ▶ Conveyance capacity
 - Open channel migration zone

Recent Actions to Date

- ▶ State legislation appropriated \$1.2 million to the Flood Authority to initiate the formation of a basin-wide flood district by June 2011
- ▶ The FA provisionally directed that a multi-county partnership be formed by interlocal agreement by that deadline

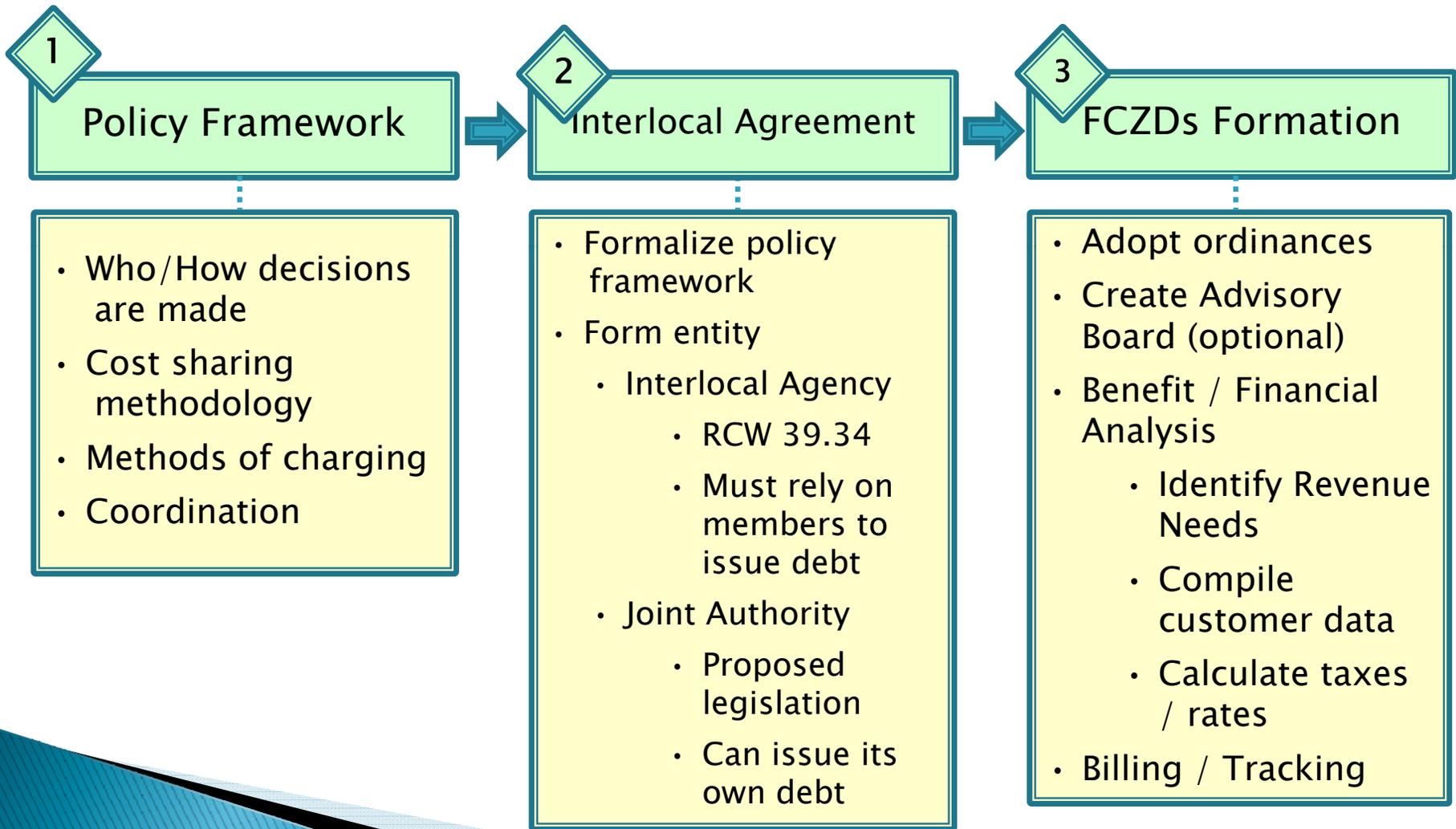
Multi-County Partnership



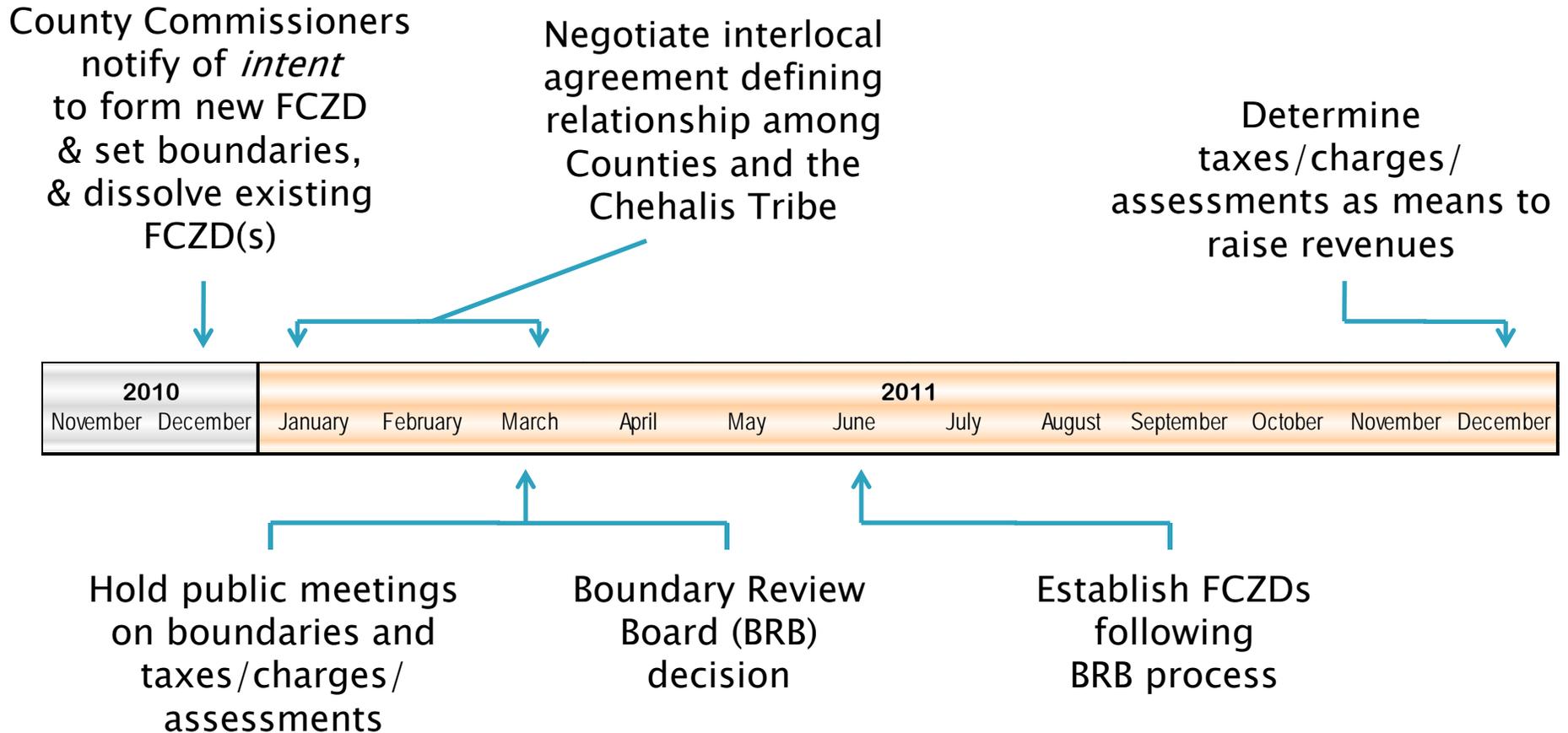
What is a Flood Control Zone District (FCZD)?

- ▶ **Broad Authorization**
 - Decides on flood projects, both structural & non-structural
 - Provides funding through property taxes, charges and/or assessments for flood projects & for matching money for State/Federal flood funding
- ▶ **Formation by BOCC vote**
 - BOCC serves as Board of Supervisors; can be later replaced by separately elected board
 - County staff administers
- ▶ **Advisory Committees**
 - Could be composed of city and other representatives and stakeholders

Project Process



Formation Process: Next Steps



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



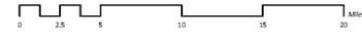
CHEHALIS RIVER BASIN FLOOD DISTRICT FORMATION PROCESS

Upper Chehalis, Lower Chehalis, and Grays Harbor Subbasins

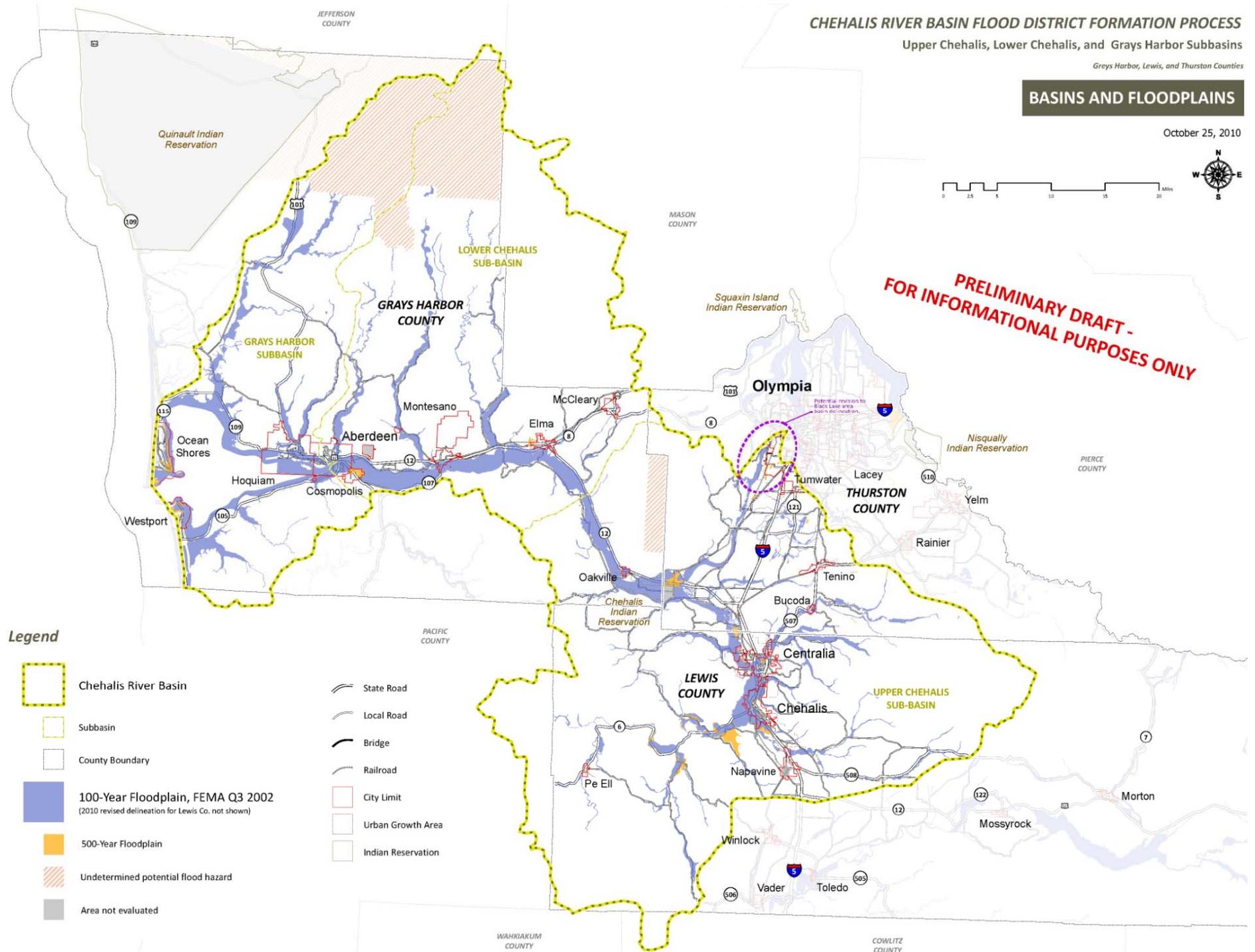
Grays Harbor, Lewis, and Thurston Counties

BASINS AND FLOODPLAINS

October 25, 2010



**PRELIMINARY DRAFT -
FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY**



Legend

- Chehalis River Basin
- Subbasin
- County Boundary
- 100-Year Floodplain, FEMA Q3 2002
(2010 revised delineation for Lewis Co. not shown)
- 500-Year Floodplain
- Undetermined potential flood hazard
- Area not evaluated
- 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 ability to comprehensively address Chehalis Basin flooding:
 - which the individual jurisdictions cannot do alone

and

 - Ensures coordination: problems are solved rather than pushed up/down stream



Options for the Future

- ▶ Multi-County partnership could continue based on the terms of the interlocal agreement

or

- ▶ Multi-County partnership could be replaced by an independently governed multi-county flood control zone district
 - Legislation currently being drafted to allow for this option

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 #3

Centralia, WA

October 28, 2010

Questions and Comments from the Public

Q: If the water that we divert becomes a problem and hurts a neighbor, how do we fix that? Bring them into the coalition?

A: If we plan together the whole point is to not create a problem. If there are impacts they have to be fixed. If it goes through SEPA they have to be mitigated. We want to not create more problems in the first place. Some of the non-structural solutions are to get the river back to its natural state.

Q: I've been to all three of these meetings. They've changed all their handouts. I was so surprised to hear that Lewis County has a Flood Control Zone District (FCZD). Is that correct? All this stuff you're talking about the County Commissioners can/will/could have someplace already done that – created a FCZD – is that correct?

A: Yes – Lewis County has a FCZD.

Comment: So all you have to do is decide what taxes you want to charge – that's already been done. You should explain that it's already been done in Lewis County so we can talk to our elected officials to let them know what we think about this. We need to talk about the disruption of lives. We all live where we choose to live. If you live by the river that's your choice. I live on a hill – that's my choice. Why should I be taxed to pay for these flood problems that will come down the pike. What law/authority does this group have to tax me for something I'm not involved with?

Q: When was this FCZD formed? I was at a meeting at the courthouse where you were discussing between the FCZD and Flood District (FD) – the FD would have to put projects out to be voted on. The FCZD was where you just assessed a tax. When was this formed?

A: The FCZD formed in 1997. We were looking at a doing a better job – the FCZD would do that. This is only for Lewis County. Now we're looking at the problem for the entire district.

Q: I'd like to see the minutes from that meeting brought in front of the public. You discussed the difference between FCZD and FD – the major difference was that you as commissioners can assess a tax without a vote of the people. I don't care about the other two counties. If that was formed I'd like to see the notes from that meeting. About what the difference is. At that time I understood it but I need to see the difference between the FD and the FCZD.

A: The minutes are available.

Comment: It's even worse than you think. The FCZD was formed in 70's and forgotten and reformed in 1997 and forgotten. When we went to form it there were already two on the books. We had to dissolve one and may have to dissolve the other. We're here recreating the wheel once again.

Q: What is the difference between FCZD and Flood Control District (FCD).

A: A FCD is different in that it can only assess property. It requires a complete list of projects – all costed out and designed – then it goes to local improvement district process. That’s how things are paid for. A district is formed by a vote of the people. They vote on creation of the district, on the officials that run the district, and then the district goes through this list of projects and approves them and then costs them out.

A FCZD has different properties. A broader type of government that doesn’t have to be voted on by the people. It can be put out for a vote but it’s not required by state law. It can assess properties like a flood district, and can also levy rates. It has up to .50 / thousand of property value taxing authority.

Q: Who puts the reign on how much you can assess? I know that .50 is the maximum – I know we’re at the bottom. What kinds of taxes push this one to the bottom?

A: libraries, schools, fire, hospital – only one below it is parks.

Q: I was told that Lewis County had the ability to tax the .50 per thousand on property.

A: They have the authority if the capacity is there. They may have authority but the capacity has to be there within the 5.90. Under the state law there’s a limit of 5.90 per thousand that anyone can be taxed on property value. If 5.00 is all that’s been taxed then there’s .90 left – but in my county 5.80 is already taxed so only .10 is available.

Q: If you have a \$200,000 house that would be \$100? Right?

A: Yes

Q: In Thurston County we were reminded that water flows downhill. I grew up in a house that was built in the 1800’s. Over the years as asphalt got build the road got higher than the house. Every time there was a big event, water started to run into the basement. We had to have a sump pump and sand bag the front door. My dad told me don’t ever build your house in a hole. I didn’t build my house in a hole. I heard the consultant answer a question about mitigation – there would be no activity that would cause mitigation if we put it downstream. Why would we make the same mistakes? We know water runs downhill. Look at the maps and look where river floods and you don’t build there anymore. From what I can see, we’re still doing that. Water flows downhill, and the only part of Thurston County that’s uphill is the Skookumchuck. I guess I’d like to see – there’s no reason why we can’t stop building in the flood plain now without the FCZD – we can stop building in the flood plain now and start moving people out without forming the district and charging people \$100 or whatever. It just makes sense – don’t keep making the same mistakes over and over.

A: The flood hazard mitigation plan recognizes that. Not all projects in there are structural. There are a number of them in the plan. It’s difficult when development happened long ago and those regulations weren’t in place and yet people’s properties and lives now are experiencing that. I want to underscore that the structural solutions aren’t the only ones in the plan. Giving the river back it’s breathing space in the flood plain is also part of that.

Q: The material I read described ripe and ready projects – those were structural – they were dams and dikes. If you’re looking to tax – you already have a flood district in Lewis County – you’re looking to bring

in Thurston and Grays Harbor Counties, you're looking to acquire money to do projects that cost a lot of money. That's what I see.

A: You can go to the Lewis County website and look at the Flood Hazard plan – chapter 9 - it talks about the projects under way /under analysis – Twin Cities and proposed upper river storage projects. The ripe and ready studies were studies that the FA undertook to look at - Modeling, lidar, money for early-warning system – the other projects – 81 listed projects that are suggestions from people – they are not listed. They aren't major projects – they are not getting federal funding. They are smaller projects people said would really start helping the problem. When we looked at the projects, there is no way to do further analysis to see how much they would cost or what their benefit might be. We couldn't even analyze which would be best across the whole basin and have no way to fund them. If the FCZD is formed there would be a possibility of having money for them. We would qualify for federal funding.

Q: I grew up on the Chehalis River. Swam it in flood stages to retrieve birds I shot. That was at flood stage. As I understand it the Chronicle and their cronies the BOCC and puppet One Voice want to keep clear cutting, developing the flood plain and want to tax us to keep doing it – is that right?

A: That's a matter of opinion – flooding is happening in the Chehalis basin. The question for everyone living in the basin is do you want to keep living with flooding or is it worth trying to mitigate the flooding.

Comment: Instead of all this monkey business – best and quickest thing to do is get grants to buy out or raise their homes. This isn't going to be an overnight solution – Lewis County is going to continue filling in flood plains and cut the hillsides – install an early warning system and get the government grants – then let Lewis County destroy it if they want to.

Q: We have a .50 maximum tax on the county - I'm reading that the FCZD can be funded by property tax/charges and/or assessments. They can do all three. How much are you going to assess me? This "and/or" statement sounds like you can do all three.

A: It's true the FCZD would have all three of those options available. I don't know any district in the state that uses all three.

A: There are limitations. Assessments can only be charged up to the increase to your property value due to whatever capital improvement is made. That is rarely used for flood control or stormwater improvements. It's difficult to show. Taxes of .50/1000 can only be exceeded by public vote. Rates can be imposed but there is language in the statutes that you have to be contributing to problem/benefitting from the solution to be charged a rate. There has to be a linkage to services provided and rates charged. It is possible that all 3 could be layered, but likelihood is small. We have to say and/or because that's what the law allows. But the Flood Authority will decide which tool is the best fit.

Q: I'm not saying this happens, but what if you get the taxes and do some of these projects and it turns out the flooding still happens? What if they don't "work," which is possible with global warming and all that. What if the flooding continues and gets worse? Some of the things happening along the basin - clear cutting – might cause the flooding to continue.

A: The idea of coordination and getting the counties and tribes to work together to identify solutions that will address the problems. That's the whole benefit with coordination and agreeing on solutions. The benefit of coordination and collaboration is if it doesn't work then everyone has a voice. Hopefully with the collaboration the solutions will work.

A: On the Green River in King County, in 2006 UW ran hydraulic models and on all the rivers and we saw what was happening. If there were breaches in the levees it would take out the Kent Valley – which is the largest distribution center in three states. We did the modeling and it showed the levees would be breached, so in 2007 King County formed their FCZD to repair levees to make sure they were ready for whatever came – higher and more frequent flows. Most are earthen levees. The types and frequencies of the flows weaken them. When Howard Hansen became crippled, the FCZD had money set aside for the levees and immediately did work on the levees to try to increase the structural integrity. Those will stay there until Howard Hansen is fixed. King County did it with global warming in mind. With the district or some organization thinking about that, whose responsibility and focus it is to ask those questions, you get answers so you go through the list and do the right projects.

Q: Everybody who is part of the problem should help pay for it. In Chehalis and Centralia why not just tax the businesses and everyone who shops there. If you want to have that kind of growth there, then charge them the taxes. By the Ford/Toyota place they had to breach the dike to let the water out so it makes sense to tax that area. The stadiums did it in Seattle – used taxes to build them.

A: These are decisions that haven't been made yet. One of the concepts is that when you charge a property tax in a FCZD, constitutional requirements apply and the tax option can only be uniformly applied in the district. If they are higher assessed values they will pay higher taxes as those rates are applied. You can add on a rate in areas that are especially benefitted by the services or contributing to the problem. It's a possibility to charge those areas more.

Q: Who decides how much protection you are getting from this thing? When you flood, property value goes down so taxes go down so you will go to other means. How do you determine how much this specific business is getting or that specific resident?

A: You are talking about applying rates - most commonly done with stormwater utilities – don't quantify benefits received – look at contribution to run off. Look at impervious surface area that adds to run off. I don't think that applies here. We are looking at less tried and true ways through our economic benefit analysis to determine what the benefits are to reducing flooding. It's going to be difficult apply it to specific properties other than to say you're in or you're out.

Q: Why aren't you getting federal money to help people move? Whoever does the zoning in these areas, why do they keep making these mistakes? Why don't they pay to fix their mistakes?

A: In the past, it was mostly done prior to the time these regulations were in place. Before FEMA created their maps and prior to the requirements that they shouldn't build in the floodplain. With the combination of regulations to stop new problems we're talking about fixing problems of the past. As to federal money, there is money out there and there has been money out there. There is FEMA money out there for buy-outs. The problem is that it takes matching money. The federal government seldom pays 100% of anything. One of the reasons to put the district in place is to have a way to go out and get those funds. That's the benefit of forming the district.

Q: That is a very old cop out. The problem is still here. We may end up paying millions for protection or pay a million here or there to buy people out and just call it good. Why aren't we looking into alternatives instead of taxing people 2, 3 different ways? It doesn't make sense.

A: The argument is about what the solutions are and what solutions should be. Whatever the solutions are, that will take revenue generation from the Counties, whether it's leveraging federal money or something else.

Comment: The Howard Hansen dam – that's the kind they want to put in the upper Pe Ell. It's 220' high. It's a \$330 million project. On the project list it's not listed under dams or water retention. They're hiding it. There's a group that wants the dam. It's been flooding here for 10,000 years. A lady just mentioned earmarks – I'd like to see Rossi stand here and say if you vote for me there are no earmarks. If he's elected he can't bring you one penny. If he's elected he can't help. This money is an earmark.

Comment: The Howard Hansen dam/Green River was messed up from the start. You let them build in the valley and then the dam filled up with silt. This is not what you need down here. This is a place that will flood forever. I have water coming through my barn every year or so – I just figure out what I can do to help myself – it's got to be done. When it comes to taxes – the water is still going to come. If you want to vote in more taxes for politicians instead of neighbor helping neighbor go for it – I'm not.

Q: I have a question for this guy that swam - how deep was the bottom of the river when you were swimming?

Comment: In the 60's I ran baling twine across the river to mark the depth. It was always the same. As the clear cutting kept happening it got higher and higher. In 2007 I had water in the house. It's a combination of everything – clear cutting of the trees and then you've got a bottle neck down here filling up the flood plains. I never see people saying stop fill in the floodplain and cutting the trees – just buy out the houses.

Comment: My solution is different – deepen the river – dredge the river. If it doesn't reduce it then dredge it again. That's what we have dredges for.

Q: The Washington Department of Transportation was talking about how they were going to put 25 foot berms so the water can't go through it. To me that's a levee. Talk about stopping progress – when I was a kid they told them not to put the highway through the flood plain. But they put it through the flood plain. Perhaps we can put a little toll so you can pay to drive through Lewis County on I-5. When I was a kid and we had high water – the water was right where WalMart is. They would row to the airport because all around the airport was water except where the airport was. So now you can't tell me that's not the flood plain. Most people here remember that. Little by little, all over, I'm sure Thurston and Gray's Harbor have done their share. They have probably filled in or dredged or dug canals or developed. Now I come here and all the homes are all adding to the flooding. Not just the logging. They're building houses. They're all up on the hill where they should be. But all the water comes down to the valley. We have a lot of other problems. Since we're stopping progress on I-5 we should tax them for going through Lewis County.

Q: WSDOT has been participating in the FA meetings. They are willing to participate financially in this effort. They are acknowledging that they benefit as much as you do locally.

Q: How big of an organization is this? What would the budget look like? How are you going to pay these people? Seems to me there are some issues it would be nice if you made clear – are you going to have 12 commissioners making \$800,000 or have a reorganization? High water is what this was called years ago. You got the benefit of that rejuvenating water – didn't have to irrigate – and all of a sudden you fill it in. Remember that dam saved you for years and years. Dams work everywhere and levees fail everywhere – dams help for years and years. Tell these people what it's going to cost them.

A: We don't have a budget yet for the program. One of the things that the FCZD authorization allows is it appoints the County Engineer to be the engineer for the FCZD, it allows the FCZD to contract with a lot of others. A lot of the services for the FCZD will be done by existing staff in the Counties.

Comment: Don't forget the economic value of everything in the flood plain. The real issue here is money. Why will you charge a tax? Will you gain from it? I like it that the Corps went through a little bit about how they will buy you out. I like some of the ideas. The issue is how many 100-year floods did we have in the last 12 years. FEMA is making the rules. FEMA payroll is nothing compared to the damages. FEMA is going to make rules for insurance. I'd like to see you tell people what will be involved in that. We need a professional staff. Thurston County believes they aren't doing any harm. Do you have a house – impervious surface?

Q: We're going to be taxed. That's a given right now. I have to accept the fact that taxes will go through. When will you use the taxes to buy people out or to fix the damages done – you could dig large reservoirs and help with the flooding everywhere – rather than building an extremely expensive dam? If you do build it how much will be federal money and how much will be tax money? We are the federal government – it's our money.

A: We aren't talking about specific solutions here. If the solution is a dam or otherwise, that will be decided later. Our hope is that the way to get the best solutions will be to talk amongst the three counties and as many interested parties as we can get to the table.

Comment: Regarding the question of why don't we just buy everyone out? It's a viable solution if people want to be bought out. The majority of the basin is rural farm land. Go try to buy the farmers out and find another 200 acres and a house with what the federal government will offer today. They can't go buy anything else with the money the government would pay. No way could they buy the same acreage with the money they would get. They've been devalued by the flooding. It's not by choice – keep it mind it's not that easy.

Q: Address the freeway – read the Olympian, Tacoma News Tribune, comments in the paper – people outside Lewis County think we're nuts for allowing building in the flood plain and clear cutting – they say you've caused your own problems (filling in flood plain) – they don't understand Lewis BOCC.

Q: It's not just that we buy everybody out – I suggest you buy a few of the houses and reuse the land to absorb the water. It's a cheaper option than building a huge dam. If you don't want to move, you don't want to sell your place when the offer is given, you won't have to pay those taxes. But for those who can't afford to move in the first place – if they are offered the chance they will take it. How much federal money will we get for these projects or is it all coming out of this area.

A: There are opportunities for federal matching funds.

A: You're talking about a project getting federal money; there's a very stringent process to go after those funds. At the present time the only one that's gone through the process for federal money is the Twin City Project – 12 miles of levees around Centralia and Chehalis and the Skookumchuck Dam water retention project – estimated at \$150 million. The funding would be 65% from federal funds and the rest local – which would be state and local doing that project. We're only at 35% design – a long way from actually building it. Currently it's projected for 2016 start and 2020 finish. It's not going to do a lot before 2020 and there's probably going to be a rain or two before that. The water retention project south of Pe Ell is purely on the books at this time – estimated in feasibility – building the dams as hydro dams. It is also an alternative, we had something much smaller that can be done to hold water during a storm. If that project were to be done, the Corps would go through the process of going to feds for the same 65/35 share of funding. Right now there are obviously those who don't believe dams are the answer. We are going through studies to see what impacts would be and mitigation that can be done. There are a lot of smaller projects that can be done that the FCZD might be able to do. I do need to address another area that I feel is a misperception. I have told people we didn't build in the flood plain yesterday. We started building there in 1893. Farmers came in and wanted land because it was wet and in order to farm it they had to bring in loam. The railroad came in and put berms on it. Railroads all built in the valley. Then the freeway came in; that freeway is the largest dike we have in the valley. There are areas where it dips down and it goes under water. Not talking 10, 40 homes – we're talking 5,000 homes, that have been built in this valley for years. Lewis County hasn't approved any building in the flood plain since 2002. The City of Centralia just changed their rules two years ago; to build in flood plain in Centralia would take some extraordinary measures. FEMA standards change. Years ago you could do just about anything. Current rule is that you can't cause more than a 1 foot rise in the entire plain of the river. River is 100 miles long in it's main channel. Chehalis will tell you that WalMart and Home Depot – are behind the levee. If you're behind the levee you're not in the flood plain anymore and you can build – FEMA rules. Will the water come around that levee, you bet when we have the 100 year flood. We aren't the only ones who did it. On the Chehalis reservation, Anderson Road was raised, land around the casino was raised so they wouldn't be under water. Land around the community center was raised.

Comment: Incorrect – where casino and community center are is above the flood plain. Show me where we raised it.

Comment: In Thurston County – the whole City of Olympia was raised up. More fill around Olympia than we thought. They dredged all the time. They dredge the river so they can load the ships. Lewis County isn't the only one doing this. Building in the flood plain more isn't going to help the problem. I concur. If the Corps project goes in it will change things too. The FA has put 5 gauges in the river. Working with a consultant to get data from gauges so we can see when the river is raising and pass that info on from one area to the next. We now have an early warning system.

Comment: It's easy to point fingers, there's enough blame to go around. This is an opportunity to fix problems.

Comment: Wetlands absorb water – asphalt makes water run-off. You can't pave over the wetland. I don't care what they did in 1890.

A: It's behind the dike.

Comment: Thank you for coming with opinions and for feedback on what the Flood Authority needs to consider. These are things we are going to be considering. We want to get all the good information we possibly can. There is a lot to consider. We talked about a cap of 5.90 on property taxes. That is the total cap that the county can charge. If a tri-county district were formed we would be limited to the least amount of money that's available in the 3 counties. If Grays Harbor County only had .10 left and Lewis County had .50 left then we would charge the .10 and not the .50.

Q: I heard discussion about cost of the levees and dams and other structures. No decision has been made. These are all on the table. Why are we talking about creating a FCZD without a vote of the people, to put it in place without knowledge of what it would lead to us supporting?

A: It's the chicken and egg problem. Right now the local sponsor for these big projects is the state because there is no local group to be a sponsor. We want to put a local organization in place to make decisions about these projects because it doesn't exist now. If it was in place you would have cost numbers and know the benefits, but since there's no local organization with capacity to do so it doesn't exist. The first task of the FCZD would be to take all those projects and make decisions about them collectively. We can't do that today. The district would give them that authority to come up with costs. Until the district is in place we can't do that.

Q: I've heard there would be different authorities they could use to do things under the emergency clause, like dredging; is that true?

A: In my experience that would not be true. You have to go through Section 7 with Army Corps. Gravel removal has to go through state and fed requirements. Emergency situations just move it along faster. It isn't a strategy to get around requirements.

Comment: When I was on rescue – I couldn't get on a radio signal to get the helicopter and watched a guy drown. Population – 40% seniors and those who are on welfare. People with power – where are the people who are going to pay for this? The BOCC without control – they can do whatever they want to. They have the power to tax us. Fees – if I showed you what some people pay for stormwater municipalities you'd be up in arms. A group of people that want to put a dam in upper Chehalis – they aren't going to want to buy my house. I have been at three different meetings and it's not the same story being told at each meeting.

Q: This is the first update to the presentation and you were going to mail this out. I don't like that none of these people here believe they are going to be taxed on something they don't have a vote on.

A: The presentations are available on line.

Q: Who's going to be the first group – and if they make decisions can we say no? How are you going to pick the initial people from these three county governments? Is it going to be that we read about it afterward or are we going to be able to say it should be someone from Lewis County or what?

A: The initial flood district commissioners are your County Commissioners. They may be supplemented by the interlocal agreement – but they are your sitting elected officials.

Q: How many people will be on this commission?

A: There's no decision yet – these are the things we want to know from you. How many do you think should be on the committee? That's what will help us move forward.

Q: In the 70's the monorail authority was voted in and then folded \$278 million in debt. Are you going to do that?

A: No – that's certainly not our intention.

Comment: The reason we're here tonight is because Chronicle wants to protect their investors and the people that pay for advertising. It's not about the little people – it's people trying to protect their interests that are going to have the power to tax.