

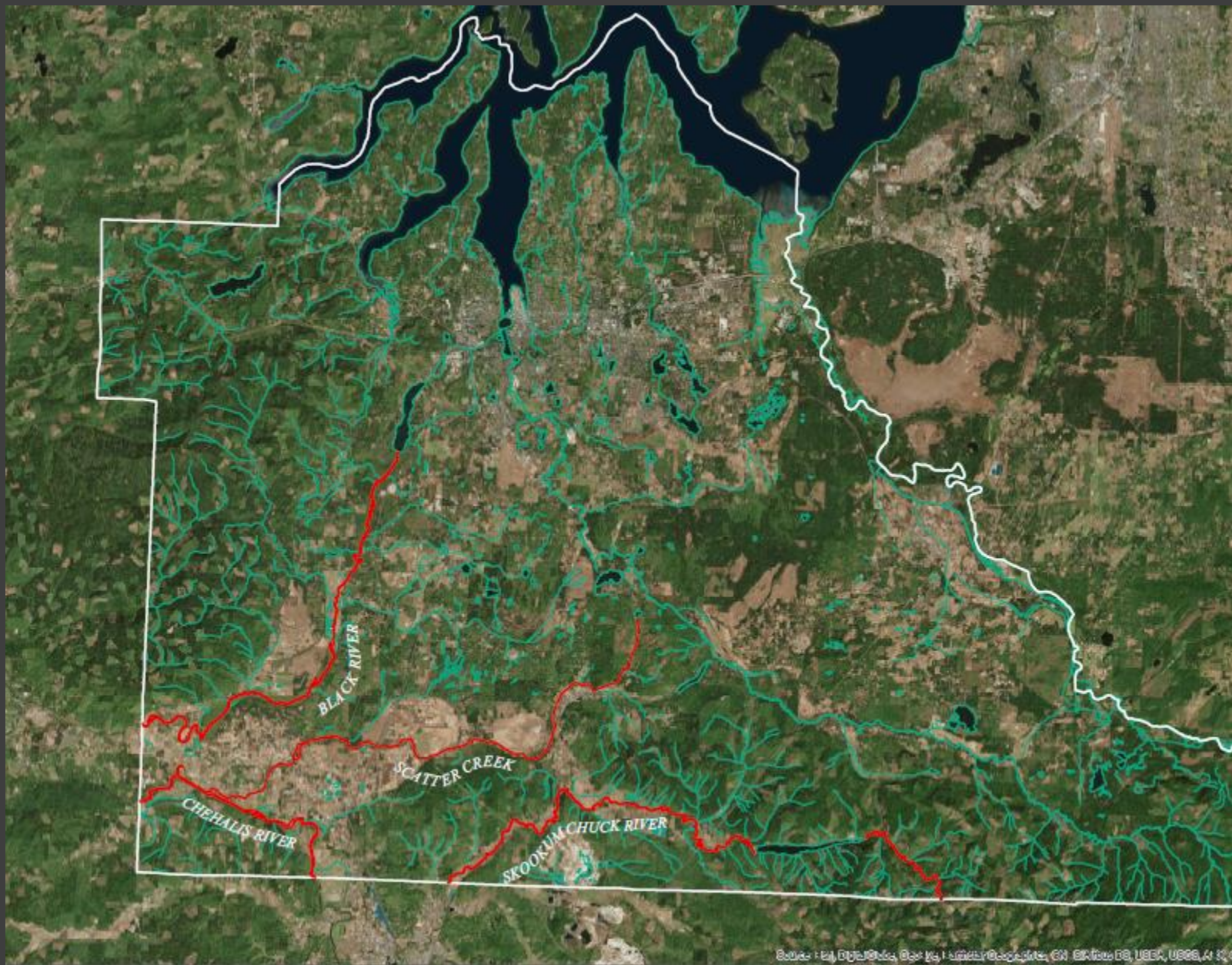


Thurston Conservation District

Chehalis Floodplain Community Listening Sessions

NACD Webinar, January 19th 2017
Kathleen Berger, Habitat Specialist





Source: 1:250,000-scale map by USGS, 1980s; aerial photography, 2001; USGS, 1980s; USGS, 1980s

History

- 14 federally declared disasters since 1971
- 5 of the largest floods in recorded history in last 30 years
 - 2007 and 2009 were 13 months apart
- Extreme flooding and declining health of the Chehalis River and the aquatic species
- Recent state attention to identify a comprehensive, basin-wide solution



Current Status

- Statewide interest on the Chehalis Basin
- Governor and a Governor's Work Group examining various large and small scale projects to address flooding impacts and habitat loss
- Decisions are being made at a larger agency level.



A group of people, mostly women, are standing in a field of tall, green plants, possibly tomatoes. They are engaged in conversation. The background shows a line of trees under a clear sky. The image is semi-transparent, allowing the text to be overlaid.

Thurston CD Role


Hear from landowners about what they need to lessen flooding impacts on their properties and to their livelihoods.

Use this feedback to be a voice for landowners and reflect their ideas, concerns and needs to the decision-makers during this process.

Bring funding from the massive effort of the Chehalis Basin Strategy to local, small-scale projects that make a difference within our community.

The Sessions

- Labeled the events as Community Listening Sessions
- Sent invitation letters to every landowner in the floodplain of each watershed
- Served food
- Positive messaging
 - “Share your flood concerns, discover solutions, and help Thurston CD identify and prioritize potential projects...”
 - “Landowners attending this meeting will assist in prioritizing future projects that Thurston CD will pursue to improve the natural resources within the Scatter Creek area and the Chehalis Basin”



THURSTON CONSERVATION DISTRICT

**Chehalis Basin
Community Session**

Share your flood concerns, discover solutions, and help Thurston Conservation District identify and prioritize potential projects to improve flood conditions in the Chehalis Basin

Hear about the other financial and technical assistance programs that are offered by the Thurston Conservation District

Thursday July 28th, 5:30pm-7:30pm

Violet Prairie Grange #996
17028 Violet Prairie Rd., Tenino

BBQ dinner provided, please RSVP

Landowners attending this meeting will assist in prioritizing future projects that Thurston CD will pursue to improve the natural resources within the Scatter Creek area and the Chehalis Basin

RSVP to Kathleen Berger
Phone: 360.754.3588 ext. 118
E-mail: kberger@thurstoncd.com

Format

- Quick introduction to who we are and what we do, followed by presentation on the Chehalis Basin Strategy
 - Emphasized our non-regulatory role
 - Explained our goal of finding local projects to implement on the groundwork.
- Majority of the time spent in small groups receiving feedback from landowners
 - Used questionnaire to focus questions
 - Examples:
 - “How have you been affected by flooding?”
 - “Do you experience bank erosion on your property?”
 - “Do you have suggestions to improve the flooding issue on your property?”

Community Feedback

- Bank erosion and loss of land were primary concerns
- Frustration expressed about lack of funding to address erosion and flooding
- Too many studies, not enough action
- Concern over noticeable decline in salmon over the years
- Desire for farm pads and other flood protection structures
- Frustration expressed at disconnect between County Government and local ag producers
- Concerns with logging methods upstream
- Frustration expressed that landowners have intimate knowledge of land and are rarely consulted



Results

- 80+ attendees over the four meetings
- Landowners opened up and shared their issues
- Attendees felt a part of the process
- One landowner in the final selection process for a large scale habitat restoration project
- Two landowners added to a voluntary list of Thurston County floodplain acquisition
- Many landowners interested in farm pads-- raised areas within a floodplain.
 - Historically not permitted according due to Thurston County regulation
 - Brought the issue to Thurston County and agreed to work together to look at new designs
 - Wrote for and received a grant to fund a needs assessment, design work and implementation.

Results

- Presented the list of frustrations and concerns to the Chehalis Basin Flood Plain Authority
- Partnered with Lewis Conservation District and Grays Harbor Conservation District
- Continue to emphasize the need for local, on-the-ground projects
- Promote the importance of landowner willingness at all times for the Chehalis Basin Strategy
- Changed my own perspective

Next steps...

- Utilize targeted mailings and invitations more often
- Scheduled several other community sessions in other watersheds under a variety of topics
 - Adds to the community-driven aspect of our district
 - Helps us to identify exact areas of need for projects and stay in tune with the watershed
- Continue to build on the relationships built at the first round of community sessions
 - Farm-pad development
 - Reporting back to the community with follow-up targeted mailing

Summary

- Community Listening Sessions
- Gave landowners the opportunity to contribute
- Targeted areas for a variety of habitat projects
- Continue to advocate and share the feedback from the sessions
- Still much work to do

