Office of Chehalis Basin

Reducing flood damage and restoring aquatic life.

The Chehalis Basin Strategy Year in Review

2025

CREATING A SAFER, MORE RESILIENT CHEHALIS BASIN

The Office of Chehalis Basin and partners made great strides in 2025 to restore habitat and reduce flood damage. From innovative floodplain restoration to pump station installations, these projects have created visible, positive community and ecosystem benefits across the Basin.

With the addition of this year's progress, we are thrilled to share that **our work has resulted in more than 200 on-the-ground projects, on time and on budget, protecting our most flood-prone residents and businesses against catastrophic flood damage and restoring aquatic habitat**.

Meanwhile, the Chehalis Basin Board also took significant steps towards identifying a recommended long-term strategy to protect people and aquatic life for decades to come, which it will deliver in fall 2026.

The December floods across western Washington underscored the importance and urgency of our work. We appreciate the ongoing support from the State of Washington, the Chehalis Basin Board, and our strong network of partners, and we look forward to carrying this momentum forward together, in 2026 and beyond.

WHO WE ARE

The Office of Chehalis Basin, working hand-in-hand with the independent Chehalis Basin Board and housed within the Washington Department of Ecology, serves as the focal point for actions and plans successfully reducing flood-related damage and restoring aquatic life throughout the Chehalis Basin.

2025 BY THE NUMBERS

68 projects underway in the 2025-2027 biennium

More than **115 total river miles** more accessible to fish*

Over **300 acres** of habitat restored*

More than **200 landowners involved** in restoration-focused groups and processes

Approximately **1,200 homes and businesses now protected** by lower basin pump stations*

14 city councils and county commissions briefed on the long-term flood and aquatic restoration solutions being considered

Thousands of members of the public engaged at local community and online events, in-person meetings, and via social media

Over **5,400 sign-ups** (and counting) to the Chehalis River Basin Flood Warning System for the 2025-2026 flood season

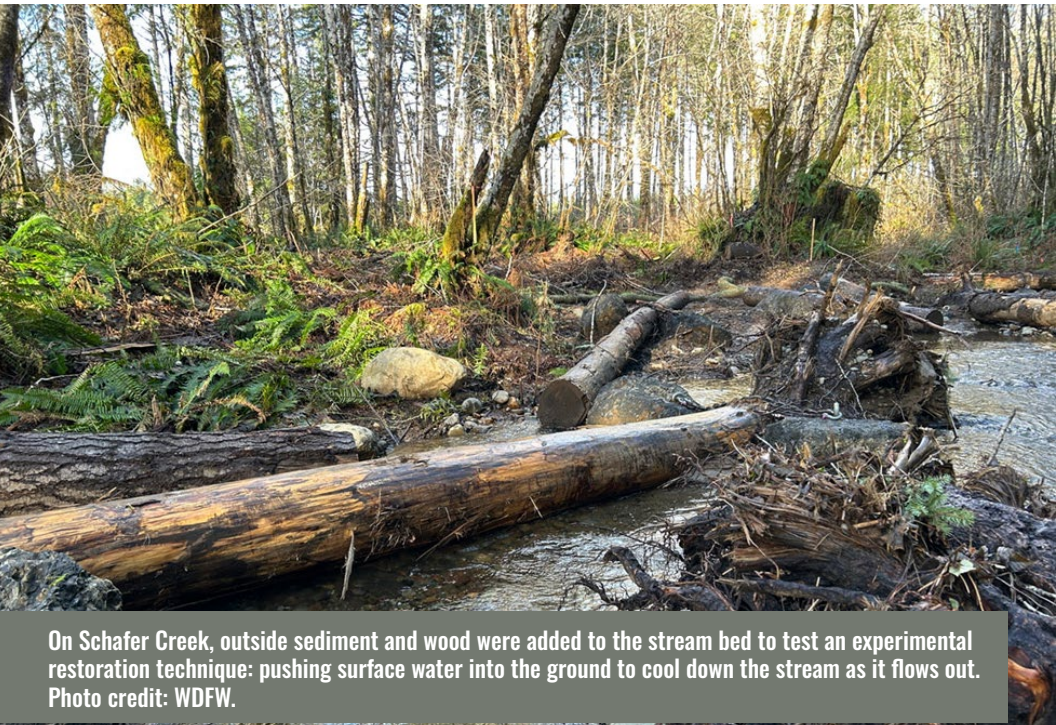
* Amount since investments began

Dozens of active restoration projects

The Aquatic Species Restoration Program (ASRP) improves the health of habitats for salmon and other species with funding from the Office of Chehalis Basin and in collaboration with local, Tribal, and state partners.

In 2025, ASRP distributed approximately $11.8 million to restoration and protection projects. One is on Schafer Creek, outside of Montesano, where an experimental restoration technique adding sediment and wood has transformed this previously simple channel into a more complex, three-dimensional mosaic of habitats.

The installation is being monitored to evaluate its ability to cool and slow the water in the stream. With increasing water temperatures threatening salmon and other species across the Basin, this type of restoration offers a promising approach that could be scaled to support healthier aquatic life.



On Schafer Creek, outside sediment and wood were added to the stream bed to test an experimental restoration technique: pushing surface water into the ground to cool down the stream as it flows out. Photo credit: WDFW.

Julie Grobelny, ASRP Coordinator, shows the next generation of scientists and restoration practitioners how to collect biological data from salmon at the 2025 Onalaska Apple Harvest Festival.
Photo credit: WDFW.

Science informs how ASRP restoration projects are prioritized to ensure they provide the most benefits to focal species and their habitats. In 2025, the ASRP Steering Committee recommended funding for several new projects that will achieve:

- Watershed-level restoration in the Black River basin and in the Grays Harbor estuary
- Wetland protection along several tidal sloughs
- Large-scale holistic restoration for over two river miles
- Restoration design for over 10 river miles

Each year, the ASRP publishes its own annual reporting. Read the full 2025 ASRP Annual Report.

Community-scale flood protection with two new pump stations

Lower Basin communities such as Aberdeen and Hoquiam are particularly vulnerable during winter storms, receiving floodwaters from the Chehalis River combined with coastal flooding and tidal surges from Grays Harbor.

In 2025, the Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority completed two new pump station projects at 10th Street and Queen Street in Hoquiam – doubling the number of new and updated pump stations across the two cities.

In total, these lower Basin pump stations now protect approximately 1,200 homes and businesses. Three more are being planned for other nearby neighborhoods, which would increase that number to an estimated 5,000 properties protected.

The Flood Authority also runs the Chehalis River Basin Flood Warning System, providing real-time flood data and alerts.

The Fry Creek Pump Station in Aberdeen is one of four OCB-funded pump projects built to protect flood-prone lower Chehalis Basin communities. During storms, it can pump up to 130,000 gallons of floodwater per minute out of the area. Image Credit: *The Chronicle.*

The home of a dairy farming family in Rochester was one of the initial CFAR projects completed in 2025. Construction crews raised the home three feet above flood levels, successfully getting it out of harm's way and reducing the family's risk of costly repairs in the future. Image credit: OCB.

Eight home elevations across the Basin

The Office of Chehalis Basin's Community Flood Assistance and Resilience (CFAR) Program provides technical and financial assistance for home elevations, acquisitions, and floodproofing. **In 2024-2025, CFAR supported its first eight home elevation projects across the Basin, from Bucoda to Aberdeen.**

CFAR is pursuing an additional 10-12 more home elevation projects over the next two years and laid the groundwork to scale up efforts even further in the coming decades.

"I want to say thank you, because this has given me huge peace of mind."

CFAR homeowner participant

The program is also working with Basin communities on how to respond to flood damage and use local regulations to best manage flood-prone areas.

ADVANCING TOWARDS A LONG-TERM STRATEGY

The Chehalis Basin Board made significant progress towards recommending much needed long-term solutions to protect the Basin's people and aquatic life for decades to come.

We know a long-term strategy will include support for local projects, policies, and the existing programs that are already protecting basin communities and habitats. Through its process, the Board is working to answer several complex, connected questions, including:

What happened in 2025....

Team leading the technical analysis of the long-term strategy options begins developing evaluation framework

Proposed system of levees and floodwalls reached preliminary concept (~10%) design

Chehalis Basin Board identified six long-term strategy options for further analysis

Board confirmed approach for analyzing the options

State draft environmental review of the revised Chehalis River flow-through dam released

Long-term options evaluated by technical exp

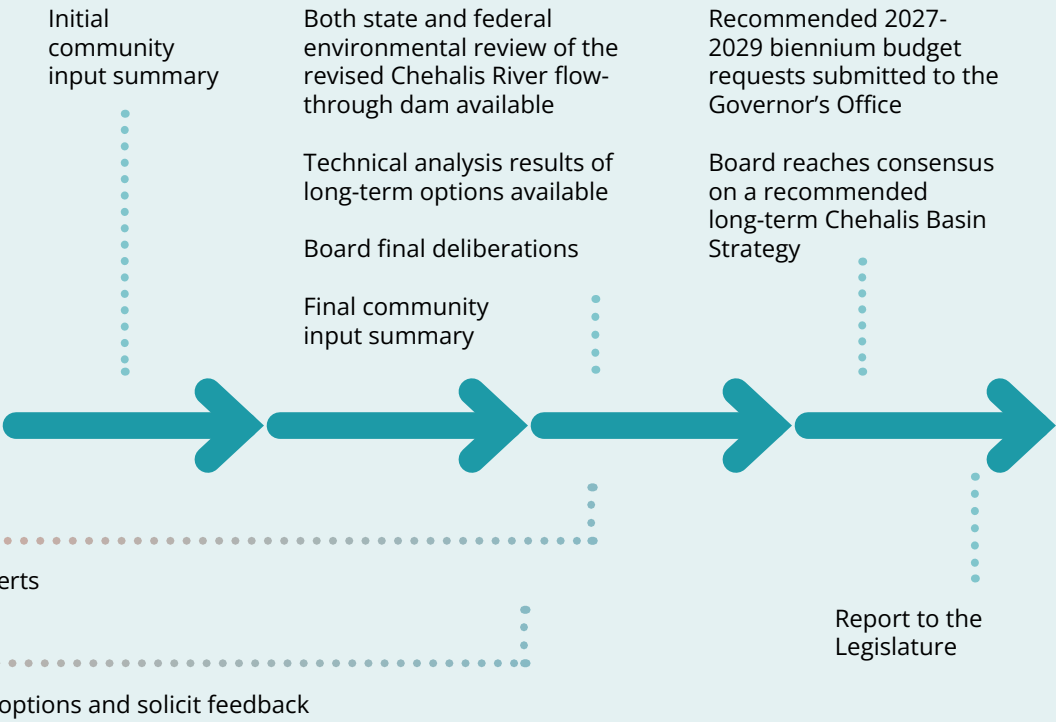
Ongoing outreach efforts to inform the Basin about the long-term strategy

- How much should be invested in aquatic restoration for the next 30+ years?
- Are large-scale structural flood option(s) needed for the upper Basin, such as a flow-through dam on the Chehalis River near Pe Ell, a system of local levees and floodwalls in and around Chehalis and Centralia, or some combination of both?
- What is the best pathway for the Skookumchuck Dam going forward?

Rigorous technical analysis and community input are a key part of the Board's decision-making process.

Watch our 7-minute video about the long-term strategy to learn more.

What's ahead in 2026...



RECENT, ACTIVE, AND PROPOSED PROJECTS

Flood Warning System Expansion

Four new rain gages and three new river gages installed across the basin, including those at Wishkah River, Dillenbaugh Creek, Skookumchuck River, and Logan Hill.

Project Sponsor: Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority

Aberdeen-Hoquiam Flood Protection Project

In design, with portions preparing for construction. If fully built, would create approx. 11 miles of levee protecting over 3,000 properties.

Project Sponsors: Cities of Aberdeen and Hoquiam

Hoquiam

Aberdeen

Cosmopolis

Montesano

Satsop

Satsop River Mile 0-2 Restoration

Restoring habitat and stabilizing swiftly eroding banks with installed log jams and riparian plantings.

Project Sponsor: Grays Harbor Conservation District

Proposed Chehalis River Flow-through Dam

A unique flood control dam that would temporarily hold back floodwaters to provide flood protection from Pe Ell to Centralia.

KEY

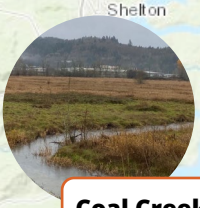
- **Example projects active or completed in 2025**
- **Proposed major projects being considered for the long-term strategy**

Other active or completed projects:

- Flood Damage Reduction Project
- Integrated Project
- Habitat Project

Proposed System of Levees and Floodwalls (aka the Local Actions Non-Dam Alternative, or LAND)

A system of new and expanded levees, floodwalls, and drainage improvements primarily in and around Centralia and Chehalis that could be built instead of, or in combination with, the proposed flow-through dam.



Coal Creek Restoration and Flood Storage Project

In planning phase to restore wetlands, create floodwater storage, and install new public trails near the Southwest Washington Fairgrounds.

Project Sponsor: American Rivers

Skookumchuck Dam

Potential pathways being considered include modifying or removing the existing dam.

Flood Strategy and Investment Plan (FSIP)

Comprehensive planning to identify and manage flood risks at key locations within the City and Port of Chehalis.

Project Sponsor: City of Chehalis, Port of Chehalis

North Fork Newaukum Lawson Reach-Scale Restoration

Reach-scale restoration featuring logjams, side channels, and riparian vegetation to benefit Chinook, steelhead, coho, lamprey, and beaver.

Project Sponsor: Lewis Conservation District

Skokomish Reservation
Shelton
Lakewood
Lacey
Elma
Capital State Forest
Rainier
Tenino
Deschutes River
Chehalis Reservation
Centralia
Chehalis
Napavine
Chehalis River
3449 ft

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS

Year after year, our work wouldn't be possible without the collaboration of an incredible network of partners.

Thank you to the Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation and the Quinault Indian Nation, the original and continuing stewards of the Chehalis Basin, whose commitment, leadership, and knowledge keeps this progress successful and moving forward.

We are grateful to build on and support the important work of many in the region:

- American Rivers
- Capitol Land Trust
- Chehalis Basin Fisheries Task Force
- Chehalis Basin Partnership
- Chehalis Basin River Flood Authority
- Chehalis River Basin Flood Control Zone District
- Chehalis Basin Lead Entity
- Coast Salmon Foundation
- Conservation Northwest
- Ducks Unlimited, Inc.
- Forterra
- Grays Harbor Conservation District
- Grays Harbor Noxious Weed
- Lewis Conservation District
- Mason Conservation District
- Port of Chehalis
- Port of Grays Harbor
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Thurston Conservation District
- Trout Unlimited – WA Coast
- Washington Farmland Trust
- Washington State Conservation Commission
- Washington State Department of Ecology
- Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Washington State Department of Natural Resources
- Washington State Department of Transportation
- Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office
- Washington Water Trust
- Wild Fish Conservancy
- Wild Salmon Center

In October, scientists and practitioners came together to discuss key next steps for restoration priorities across the basin. Photo credit: WDFW.

Crews planting live willow stakes to slow erosion of valuable farmland on the Lower Satsop River. Photo credit: Grays Harbor Conservation District.

LET'S CONNECT!

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