

July 20, 2005 Meeting Summary

Draft 07/28/05

The eighth meeting of the Vancouver Lake Watershed Partnership was held on Wednesday, July 20, 2005 4:00-6:30pm at the Port of Vancouver administration Offices.

Attending

Partnership members in attendance:

Ron Wierenga for Pete Capell, Brian Carlson, Carl Dugger, Martin Hudson, Don Jacobs, David Judd, Gary Kokstis, Chris Hathaway for Debra Marriot, Clark Martin, Thom McConathy, Lee McCallister, Dave Howard for Iloba Odum, Larry Paulson, Steve Prather for Doug Quinn, Scott Robinson, Jane Van Dyke, Vernon Veysey, Bruce Wiseman, Victor Ehrlich

Partnership members absent:

Nancy Ellifrit, James Meyer, Randy Phillips

Public Information Committee:

Loretta Callahan, Maureen Chan-Hefflin, Jeanne Lawson, Amanda Garcia-Snell

In the audience:

Dvija Michael Bertish, Patty Boyden, Dick Carroll, Kathie Durbin, Justin Clary, Vinton Erickson, Jacquelin Edwards, Lisa Faubion, Paul King, Jeroen Kok, Curt Loop, Bob Moser, Traci Nolan, Lenora Oftedahl, Earl Rowell,

Committee Business

Jeanne began the meeting by introducing new partnership member Scott Robinson of the WA Department of Natural Resources. He is an assistant region manager with the aquatics program. He is responsible for a district that covers 28 counties in the state, 8 on the west side, most of the east side and Clark County. They manage the state owned aquatic lands which include bed lands, tidelands and shore lands of natural waters. Lisa Faubion will continue to be the alternate.

06/15/05 Meeting Minutes

There were no corrections to the minutes.

Options for Public Outreach – Loretta Callahan, Communications committee

Loretta provided a hand-out of past public involvement projects and options for the future. She gave a brief description of some of the types of things that were listed. She mentioned that the recommendation for looking at a technically accurate survey still stands. The survey would be conducted by an outside consultant to collect general information concerning awareness of Vancouver Lake and the watershed, values related to water quality, fish and wildlife habitat,

industry and business, as well as personal use of the lake and lowlands. Ideally this information would be provided to the VLWP for use in achieving their goal. She asked the VLWP if this is something that they would like to pursue. If so, it is important to discuss options for funding that process. It was estimated that this would cost \$10,000. She also described an informal survey, which would not be technically accurate. It would include a brief questionnaire regarding familiarity with Vancouver Lake and information about the VLWP. Although the data collected is largely anecdotal. Loretta mentioned that this is a good way to get information out to the public. The handout also included a menu list of options for future public involvement opportunities. She asked members if they might be interested in having CV TV coverage of the VLWP meetings.

Thom asked if focus groups could be considered instead of a survey, to gain a deeper level of information that could be collected. Loretta explained that the public information committee wanted to make sure that they are getting a sampling of what the entire committee would like to see. She felt that focus groups could more appropriately be used to expand a little more once the options are determined. Thom suggested that focus groups are less expensive than a survey. Jeanne clarified that the cost is dependent on who conducts the groups, how many and how viable the VLWP would like the results to be. She also reiterated that both surveys and focus groups are very useful tools with different kinds of results that can be used in different ways. She also mentioned that a survey can help the VLWP have an idea about the acceptability of some of the concepts that they may have. As well as giving decision makers some confidence that the options are accepted by the public.

David mentioned that if there were inexhaustible resources then it would be best to test the public now and when there are one or two options. It would also be necessary to have a statistically reliable database to use. It would be important to provide basic facts about option A and option B. He feels that this is the key thing that he would like to ensure. If there is only enough money to conduct one of these then he would like to wait until the group has the options narrowed down.

Thom wanted to make a motion that CV TV be involved in the VLWP process and Lee second the motion. Dave asked how this would be funded. Jeanne clarified that CV TV is a public resource and they do not charge for coverage of public projects. Loretta clarified that she would look into the process to see if it is logistically possible and that they are available.

Loretta will look into and report back to the group at which point the group will decide if they want to have CV TV cover the VLWP meetings.

The goal the meeting will be to work toward establishing the evaluation framework and values that guide development of the vision.

Public Comment

There was no public comment at this time.

Presentations

Army Corps of Engineers Overview – Martin Hudson, ACOE– handout attached
Martin Hudson began by giving a brief overview of what the Corp of Engineers does and how they may play a role in the outcomes of the VLWP. He explained that the Corp of Engineers is a water resource agency which includes five different districts. The Portland district is organized by watersheds a map of the entire district is included in the handout. The US Army Corp of Engineers is a multi-mission agency. Within the Portland District there are several different missions that include channel dredging, flood control, jetties maintained, recreation, emergency response, hydropower, regulatory, water supply, fish & wildlife and environmental protection & restoration. Created in 1990, the environmental protection and restoration mission utilizes one third of the Corp's budget making it the largest and most recent mission. Everything the Corp does require sponsors and partnerships with non-federal agencies. The level of involvement is dependent on the project. They have worked closely with the Port of Vancouver, Port of Portland, and other local ports.

Martin then explained the different authorities that the Corps has; a full list with descriptions of general investigation and continuing authorities is included in the handout. Beginning with general investigation, which is for large complex projects. He reminded the VLWP of the a project he had mentioned at the June 2005 meeting concerning a Corp project that addressed restoration of a lake with similar characteristics to Vancouver Lake. He provided electronic and hard copies of a report about a project on Peoria Lake in Illinois. This lake was experiencing problems with sediment and eutrophication. The Corps is working on dredging, creating islands, creating sediment traps and ecosystem restoration to solve the problem. Martin suggested that this might be an example of something that may fit with the issues of Vancouver Lake.

He then further explained general investigation studies. They are two-phase items, beginning with a re-con study to see if there is a federal interest and a local sponsor that wants to be involved. Second, a feasibility study would be conducted, which is cost-shared 50/50 with the non-federal sponsor, to develop an alternative. The 50 percent that the local sponsor contributes can be in-kind, it does not have to be cash. The Portland District has four eco-restoration GI studies that are currently in process. They have found that it works best if the local sponsors match staff to the Corp staff to create an integrated team.

Martin then described the Willamette River Basin Floodplain Restoration, which is an example of a GI study. After the 1996 floods in the Willamette Valley the State of Oregon asked the Corp to restore the land-water relationship in the Valley. The restoration of wetlands and promotion of ecosystem restoration will provide natural flood damage reduction in the area.

He then explained the Continuing Authorities which cover a variety of missions. Continuing Authorities are small authorities that Congress allows the Corps to conduct small projects under their own authority. Martin listed the legislative sections in which congress gives them authority to conduct small projects. A list of these is included in the handout. He showed an example of a continuing authority related to Amazon Creek in Oregon and the Columbia Slough. A diagram and aerial photos are in the handout.

The Corp also provides technical assistance where there is no construction. The Corp is the unique expert and they provide floodplain management, planning assistance to states and tribes as well as support for others. They have a small program called Planning Assistance for States where the Corp can cost share 50/50 actions that do not lead to construction but may answer some of the technical questions concerning a project. The Portland District also has a regulatory program which offers permits. Permits for Vancouver Lake would need to be handled through the Washington office.

Martin then explained some of the misconceptions and realities regarding the Corps. The Corp must have authority, approval and appropriation to conduct a project. They must comply with laws, regulations and policies. The Corps is not a fund granting agency. These are listed on the handout.

He then provided a handout of general investigations studies and how to go about entering into this type of agreement with the Corps. He stated that regardless of whether or not the Corps enters into a GI Study with the VLWP, they are committed to working with the VLWP in looking at ways to address this problem. This concluded his presentation.

Carl asked about what Martin thinks will happen in 2006 with potential budget constraints. Martin explained he is unsure, there is mixed feelings concerning the federal budget. He agreed that some of the funds for smaller projects were cut. One way around this is for local agencies to work with congressional funds. Martin also clarified that the Corp will help where they can, it is also important for agencies to help themselves as well. There are good sources to use,

Scott asked about the difference between a large GI project and a continuing authorities project. Martin clarified that a small project has a 5 million dollar federal limit which is cost-shared 75% federal and 25% non-federal. The larger GI studies are more comprehensive such as the Columbia channel deepening is 146 million dollars on the federal side or the Florida Everglades which is a costing billions of dollars.

Thom asked if the Corp were the sole outside source that the VLWP were looking at would it be a GI study or a Continuing Authority. Martin clarified that the Corps would not be the sole outside source; they would like to work

collaboratively with other related agencies in the area. He felt that a GI study would be appropriate if the VLWP wanted to look at the issues that concern the total watershed. He also mentioned that it is possible to initiate a GI study and decide later in the process to spin-off to a continuing authority project. David asked if this would be done during the reconnaissance process. Martin agreed.

Larry added that the studies themselves are the technical pieces of a project but that there is also a political aspect that needs to be considered as well.

Jeanne explained the general process of developing a plan. She clarified what questions members need to be asking themselves regarding informational needs. She explained that the questions need to identify which questions need to be addressed in order to move farther than the evaluation framework.

Review of Committee Questions – Patty Boyden

Patty explained that Ecology was the only respondent to the questions posed to members regarding informational needs. Aside from this, there had been no other respondents. She explained the general themes of the comments that Ecology submitted, mainly hydrology.

Jeanne asked members to look at the question trends and identify and answer the three following questions on the question sheets and submit them:
Have any of them been answered sufficiently to develop the basic vision / Do you enough for know to take them off the list?
Have you learned enough overall?
Which of these are most essential to be answered before you can develop a vision?

Brian asked what the difference is between the first and second question that Jeanne asked. He wanted to know if it is more from the standpoint of we still may need additional information on these but it is not on the critical path. Jeanne clarified that members should indicate if, based on the information that they have now, they could complete the discussion and evaluation of alternative futures.

Thom mentioned that this seems too early to be embarking on this process. He feels that the VLWP needs a study that would tell the extent of the phosphorous cycle. Jeanne clarified that if he feels that none of the questions have been answered sufficiently then he should indicate that on the sheet.

Thom asked Martin if the Corp maintains a schedule of releases. Martin explained that it is possible to go on the website and see when the releases occur. He mentioned that the question is how do the releases affect the Lake and he was not sure what that connection would be. Thom mentioned that when Dames and Moore were conducting the study they found that they could correlate exactly from the time of different releases at Bonneville. They found release times that the Corp had published. Martin clarified that Bonneville does

not run the River. There are specific releases on the Willamette which may be related.

Jeanne asked members to circle the two questions that are most pressing. She also asked members to state if there are questions that they feel are already answered or do not matter. The group agreed that they have enough information about the recreational uses. It was also mentioned that they may have enough information about the bathymetry (contour map of the lake bottom) for now but will need more information later in the process. They would like to know more about sediments, water quality and hydrology.

Clark agreed that we need more technical information. He expressed concern that we haven't tapped into the research base that is available. He suggested that maybe there is somebody in the Corp that could tell the VLWP what information would be the most valuable to collect.

Carl mentioned that the only way he could see to conduct more flushing would be to intercept more Columbia River water into the shallow water. This would mean that more downriver migrating juvenile salmon would be moved into a bass pond. He thinks that these kinds of issues need to be addressed very carefully in a broader context.

Jeanne suggested that these types of questions should be kept in mind for the alternatives futures discussion also.

Vernon suggested that biggest question is if the initial effort to dredge and flush the lake was worthy, although it was not sustained. If that initial effort had been maintained, would the lake have fewer issues today? If this is so, then he feels that the initial actions and solutions should be implemented. Ron commented that a lot has changed since the initial work was done. How lakes are managed, restored and the watershed itself are different from thirty years ago when the initial studies were conducted. Although that may have been the best information available at that time, it would still need to be redone even if those initial plans were to be followed. He feels that this goes along with what the viable options are. He doesn't see why answering that question will be all that helpful. Brian suggested that maybe the question to be asking is if the initial vision is still the vision that people have for the lake. If it is the vision people still have, then is it sustainable? Larry mentioned that although the vision may still be the same, the circumstances have changed. The impact of determining what was done then does not necessarily mean it can be done now. Brian clarified that this is what he meant by sustainable. It was requested that examples of what has changed be given. Thom suggested that agriculture was believed to be the major contributor of phosphorous at the time and that the problems are now different. There are more flooding problems now. The system is faster reacting due to the increase of development that has taken place. He estimates that it is a 75+% developed

basin now compared to thirty years ago when it was much less impervious surface.

Jeanne wanted to give the technical team what the VLWP priorities were in terms of what are the most pressing questions that need to be answered.

Thom mentioned that this seemed like an arbitrary process. He feels that it is too difficult to limit the selections to two due to the complexity of the process. Jeanne clarified that this is not meant to undermine the process, the issue is that there a lot of questions. This is a necessary step to addressing the questions; the intent is to force members to say what the priorities are. She asked members to ask themselves 'if I didn't know anything else then I would have to know this ...'. This process is not to determine what things need to be studied, it is just to determine what the technical community needs to address first. It is primarily a way of trying to organize the information.

Clark asked how and when the technical team will get back to the VLWP about the process. Ron clarified that the technical committee bases their process on the VLWP and Steering Team meetings. They will not know when they meet again until the Steering Team meets again.

Clark senses that what he and Thom are responding to is that it feels like they are trying to gather a lot of information to sift through and disseminate, which is not what Jeanne said they were doing. What they are doing is to identify things that they have specific concerns about which the technical team will go in to more depth about as the technical team with more experience and access to other research. He is not hearing that there is a really skilled person or team that is addressing doing the work that the VLWP is not capable of doing. Although he is sure that they could develop a list of things but he does not think it would be very insightful. He does not have a lot of confidence that that list would reflect the technical sophistication that is needed to address these concerns. He feels that in order to be lead to a technically viable solution the VLWP need to be guided by a technical committee. Jeanne explained that from the beginning what the VLWP has talked about is that there is no technical team assigned to this study. There are some experts and technical resources are available. Thom feels that the level of technical expertise needed are more academic, perhaps at the doctoral level of technical understanding. Jeanne clarified that intent was to bring everybody up to a common base of what is going on. This way the VLWP could talk about what some of the possible futures are.

Clark compared this process to a jet flying to Hawaii. The jet does not know exactly what heading to take. It takes a heading and gets a GPS signal back that says its five degrees off. So it turns five degrees to the left. It gets another signal back 30 seconds later, it corrects, it gets another signal, it corrects and eventually it gets to Hawaii. The VLWP doesn't have a GPS signal to reflect on what they are do doing to steer it and reflect on the process. Although he is very

impressed with Ron's skills it does not sound like there is anything in place for him to provide a technical reflection on a regular basis. He feels that this will be an incredibly arduous process. Without have an iterative process the VLWP will end up without a good idea of whether or not they can do what they want for the Lake.

Larry agreed with Thom and Clark that the VLWP may be at a point in this process where things are put on hold in order to investigate. It may be necessary to look at the structure of how to proceed with some technical background.

Gary mentioned that he would like to go back the objective. There is a community resource that the community is not able to use in the way that they would like to. The VLWP has been gathering technical information to try to understand what the barriers are limitations as well as how the system works. So that the VLWP will know what areas they have to overcome are in trying to reach their vision. The goal is not information; the goal is to have a community resource that they can use.

Steve asked if the vision is supposed to be based on what the wide group would like for the lake or is it supposed to be based on technical information. Larry suggested that there is a certain consensus to preserve the recreational uses of the lake. The focus, in terms of technical study evaluation, may come from that. Chris also mentioned that there are two levels of recreation, water contact and non-water contact. It may be important to decide which level of those the group is adamant about in order to move further. Jeanne explained that the process has been to identify what we know and what we have enough information to talk about. Jeanne feels that the group should try to put their arms around the technical information that has been discussed to date before they pause to investigate further. She suggested that the group has learned a lot of technical information that should be able to help them clarify what the range of options for consideration is.

Thom suggested that a modern limnologist would laugh at the assumptions that were made in 1980. He also suggested that it is possible that there is no way, with the cost and assumptions with that, that there is no way contact recreation may be viable. The only way to evaluate this is with technical consultation. Jeanne clarified that she thought VLWP was refining their suggestions to eventually take to a technical expert.

Martin suggested that the VLWP process is out of order. Jeanne clarified that he is right. However, the group felt like they needed more information in order to discuss what is viable in terms of a vision.

Brian mentioned that this exercise is being overanalyzed. There are still some significant data gaps. He thinks that everyone would agree that there needs to be

more technical studies in hydrology and water quality. However, there may be other areas where the group feels that they have enough information to move forward. The technical information that is needed needs to come from technical experts no the lay people at the table.

Carl mentioned that this is not rocket science but he does agree with Thom that they need a technical person to help the VLWP to move forward. He feels that the only way to address the problem is with greater flow from the Columbia River, a smaller lake or a combination of those. In order to go in that direction the VLWP needs the input of a technical expert.

Larry feels that if they continue to gather information the VLWP may go nuts. They need to move towards the vision and then test it.

Clark wanted to mention that Larry made an interesting point. On a wish list level, they are probably at a place where the VLWP can talk about what the vision is. He thinks the vision process needs to come up in intervals. He feels that it is possible for the members to say what there vision for the lake is at this point in time. It is an iterative process.

Alternative Futures of Lake Area – VLWP, handouts attached

Jeanne mentioned that the VLWP needs to identify not the elements of the vision but the values of the vision. She asked members to refer to the measures of success and values lists. She asked members to identify any values that are missing or that should not be on the list. Many members felt that this was an adequate set of values. It is also possible to streamline the values by limiting redundancy. Concern was expressed that the vision should not be limited by the values list. Jeanne clarified that this does not limit the vision or even start the consensus process.

Vernon mentioned that the real issue is trying to put a value on the recreation. It is difficult because there is no sense of what that is worth. Larry suggested that this process is looking at an unconstrained vision and then applying reality. This was compared to shopping for a new car. Chris mentioned that the term sustainable is problematic. They VLWP need to consider what maintenance costs.

Vernon expressed concerns that there is no measurement at the beginning of the process. This will require constant management of oversight. The values list was amended to add:

- Clear responsibilities
- Measurable
- Meet regulations

Vernon also expressed concern that there be an awareness of how the public is going to perceive this process.

Jeanne asked members to come to the next meeting prepared to say what their vision is at this point of the process.

Clark asked for clarification of where the iteration is. He would like to know who is on the VLWP for technical expertise and who is working on the vision.

Vernon wanted clarification that the plan is concerning a plan for implementation.

Don asked if the VLWP is expected to give their personal vision. Jeanne clarified that they are serving on the Partnership as representatives of the community. They should be giving their vision as representatives of the community.

Public Comment

Vinton Erickson commented that since the flushing channel was put in he would like to know why it does not work. Is it because the Columbia River is coming down and the Willamette is supposed to be pushing it in. he would like to see what the curve is. Water has got to get in there and there is something wrong, something is missing.

Jacqueline Edwards commented that there has to be something in the archives that says what the flushing channel was expected to do. She also suggested that maybe there it may be necessary to pump it over into the lake. Has the flushing channel done its flushing job that it was supposed to do? She thinks something went wrong at some point and she thinks that should be researched.

Dvija Michael Bertish commented that several people from different agencies have spent located past reports and documents which are now located on the VLWP website. Reinventing the wheel is very costly. All of the past reports have been chronicled and they are still finding past documents. He feels that the intent of the original group is the starting point. He suggests that technical experts would review the past documents and see how much of the original vision can be carried forward. He also mentioned that he was very glad that Ron mentioned the regulations piece as he feels it has been missing. Agency goals, perspectives and visions may be in conflict with the goals of citizens or other organizations. He asked how the regulations that drive the different goals might be in conflict with the values that were mentioned. He thinks discussion needs to happen about what is required, mandated and how the process might be altered or geared toward making sure that takes place.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held Wednesday, August 17th, 2005 from 4:00pm to 6:30pm. The location will be confirmed and sent out via email meeting notice. The focus of the next meeting will be to discuss the measures of success and the next steps of the partnership.