

Vancouver Lake Watershed Partnership

Steering Group Meeting Summary

Meeting date: July 18, 2007, 3:30 pm

Steering Group Members present:

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| Patty Boyden | Port of Vancouver |
| Brian Carlson | City of Vancouver Dept. of Public Works |
| David Judd | Vancouver – Clark Parks & Recreation |
| Ron Wierenga | Alternate for Pete Capell – Clark County Dept. of Public Works |

Partnership Members Present:

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| Thom McConathy | Citizen |
| George Medina | US Army Corps of Engineers |
| Vern Veysey | Citizen |

Public in attendance:

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| Jacquelin Edwards | Citizen |
| David Page | Citizen |

Other Agency Members Present:

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| Loretta Callahan | City of Vancouver Dept. of Public Works |
| Jim Gladson | Clark County Dept. of Public Works |
| Katy Brooks | Port of Vancouver |

Project Management Team:

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| Phil Trask | PC Trask & Associates, Inc. |
| Sabrina Litton | PC Trask & Associates, Inc. |
| Mardy Tremblay | Lower Columbia River Estuary Partnership |

Introductions

The project manager welcomed the group and attendees introduced themselves.

Agenda/Discussion Topics

The project manager introduced the agenda and asked if there were any additions or modifications. A Partnership member noted the lake closure posting due to algae bloom.

Partnership Business

Work plan Discussion – The project manager introduced this agenda item by passing out a draft written work plan. He commented that it was a working draft and would need to be reviewed, discussed and refined by the Steering Group and Partnership between now and the end of the year.

The first section of the workplan is for July 1, 2007 to the end of December 2007. It encompasses the current contract period and provides an overview of the tasks being worked on for that period. The second part of the workplan covers the next two (2) years from January, 2008 to December, 2009. The project manager asked the group to take some time and review the document. He said he would email the document to the Steering Group prior to their next meeting. The document will then go to the full Partnership for additional discussion and recommendations beginning August 15th. The work plan will continue to evolve until December, 2007 when it will be presented in final form to the Steering Group.

The project manager highlighted elements of the work plan. One item was Capitol and Moses Lake. Both lakes share similar traits to Vancouver Lake and are going through their own planning processes. The project manager said he would continue to look into what they are doing to see what we can learn from them and report back. Like Capitol Lake, the project manager noted that he thought the Partnership should develop a plan. Once the technical and policy questions are understood and answered to the degree feasible, the Partnership can determine priorities and define an approach for lake restoration.

The project manager asked the group for feedback. It was expressed that the group did not want to use the term "planning". Instead, it would be more appropriate to say that the Partnership was developing a management plan for the lake. The management plan would capture the process in which implementation options were identified and also document decisions. The plan could also identify costs as certain alternatives may reach beyond what the community is willing to do or the funding available.

Another item on the work plan was Partnership housekeeping. The project manager said the project management team is working on developing a better understanding of who Partnership members are and who is the official alternate. He said that they had started tracking meeting attendance to get an idea of participation. A process may need to be set up for how and when to replace a Member and also to help inform the Partnership's meeting frequency.

USACE Update

George Medina from the Corps gave a PowerPoint presentation on the status of the feasibility study currently underway. As part of the presentation, George provided background information. The Corps Feasibility Study is only a subset of the Partnership's larger, more expansive vision. Initially, the Corps had proposed a General Investigation Study for Vancouver Lake. However, because Congress was not authorizing new GI studies, funding was not available. Funding was available under the Section 536 Program and a Feasibility Study was initiated. The Corps first performed reconnaissance work and developed a Preliminary Restoration Plan for the lake. They looked at elements ranging from tide gate operations, depth of the lake, water flushing time, vegetation, and most importantly, the presence of salmonids.

The Corps uses a formal planning process that moves a project from concept through all of the necessary decision documents and deliverables that lead a project to construction. The Section 536 program gives the Corps the authority and funding for the feasibility study, but the planning process is designed to identify challenges and opportunities, inventory & forecast conditions, formulate alternatives, and evaluate and compare those alternatives to select a recommended approach.

Section 536 is a cost-shared program. George spoke about a revised policy on cost sharing for the feasibility study. Under the originally stated policy, the Corps covered the first \$100,000 of the study. Costs above and beyond the initial \$100,000 required a 50/50 match. George said that the cost share requirements for this project had been adjusted and the Corps will provide the feasibility study with no money needed up front from the Partnership. If the study is completed and the project identifies alternatives that demonstrate cost effectiveness, the Partnership can elect to move forward with the selected alternative. At this point a cooperation agreement would be signed with the Corps and the Partnership would retroactively pay 35% of the cost of the feasibility study and commit to 35% of the proposed construction work. In addition, the Partnership would be responsible for on-going operations and maintenance of the project. If the feasibility study ends because implementation is not realistic for salmonid benefit, then there would be no cost to the Partnership. Study results would still be available to the Partnership to help inform the larger restoration effort.

It was asked "what happens if the Corps and Partnership get to the end of the feasibility study and there are no feasible alternatives?" George clarified that even if the study was terminated for technical reasons, or if alternatives were identified, but the Partnership decided not to go forward with proposed construction, the Partnership would still have the hydraulics information from the feasibility study available to apply to use as appropriate.

It was also noted that a funding request was made to Congress for a General Investigation Study on Vancouver Lake for FY 2009. There is a budgetary placeholder for the project, but no funding available or promised. A General Investigation Study is different from the Section 536 program in that it is more encompassing, flexible, and robust. It too is a cost-share program. The downside of a General Investigation Study is that it can take upwards of fifteen years to complete.

It was discussed that there are many different uses of the lake. If the Corps proposes alternatives for improvements that may impact other activities on the lake, could other approaches be developed that

would be more compatible? George reminded the group that the Corps' focus under Section 536 is on salmonid habitat and that under this program the feasibility study is fish-centric.

George continued by saying that in the feasibility study scope, the Corps would investigate habitat potential as recommended in the Preliminary Restoration Plan. It would establish a biological baseline for salmonid attraction, salmonid ingress/egress, and juvenile salmonid rearing. Some of the challenges identified to date include determining the current abundance and distribution of salmonids, water quality (e.g. temperature, pH, dissolved oxygen, etc.), groundwater withdrawals in the area, surface and groundwater hydrology, impacts of storm-water in the flushing channel, and potential scouring at the mouth of the flushing channel.

The schedule and scope of the technical studies will remain flexible because of key uncertainties. There will be several go-no-go milestones. The first biologic preliminary go-no-go report should be ready in late August. At this time the team should know if there is enough evidence of salmonid use and habitat to justify further study. By the end of September, hydraulic study and modeling data should determine if the hydraulic potential of the lake can support salmonid habitat. By late October or November, the Corps should know whether or not to move forward with fish biology studies. If the study goes to completion, a decision document should be completed by February of 2011.

A Steering Group member asked what water quality parameters are being studied. George said that they would be the parameters most directly related to fish. The project manager asked if the Corps needed a commitment in writing to move forward with the feasibility study. George said the Corps does not need a commitment in writing at this point. The Corps will proceed with the feasibility study using its own funding and won't need a cost share commitment until construction. Steering Group members supported the new approach. It was agreed that this would be discussed further at the next Steering group meeting and presented to the full Partnership at the August meeting.

A Partnership member requested that the draft PowerPoint presentation be posted on the VLWP website. The project manager said that it was important that we are thoughtful of how information is presented so that it's not misunderstood. An attendee expressed that the Partnership should stick to the protocol of not posting draft products on the website. The project manager said it was his opinion that the Partnership should receive the presentation at their August 15th meeting with web posting after the presentation. George said he would like to have it reviewed and vetted before presenting it to the full Partnership in August.

Tech Group Update

Ron Wierenga reported that the Tech Group will be looking at the Corps Feasibility Study and the Partnership's vision to identify technical gaps. The next Tech Group meeting is scheduled for August 9th. The tech group will review the Corps scope and identify what isn't being addressed.

Ron also said that a Department of Ecology aquatic plant survey on the lake had been completed recently at no cost.

Public Information Update

Loretta announced that the lake closure notice due to algae blooms had been posted earlier in the day.

Loretta announced that Congressman Baird hosted a dockside briefing at the Vancouver Lake Sailing Club to receive an update on recent efforts to better understand the lake's water-quality issues. Congressman Baird is an important supporter of the efforts of the Vancouver Lake Watershed Partnership.

The PIO is coordinating with the Library regarding the "Forum at the Library" on Thursday, September 20th at 7 pm and more information will follow.

Next Steps/Close

The project manager closed the meeting and thanked everyone for attending. He said when we meet again on August 1st the meeting agenda will be similar to the one today.

Next Meeting: August 1, 2007

Agenda for August 15, 2007 Partnership meeting

1. Welcome/Agenda Review
2. Partnership Business
3. USACE Update – PowerPoint Presentation by George Medina
4. Tech Group Update
5. PIO Update
6. VLWP Workplan Discussion
7. Next Steps

Upcoming meetings:

- Steering Group meeting, August 1st, 3:30 pm
- Partnership meeting, August 15th, 4:00 pm