

Vancouver Lake Watershed Partnership

Steering Group Meeting Summary

Meeting date: September 30, 2008, 3:30 pm

Steering Group Members Present:

Patty Boyden	Port of Vancouver
Ron Wierenga	Clark County Dept. of Public Works (alternate for Pete Capell)
Brian Carlson	City of Vancouver Dept. of Public Works

Partnership Members Present

Thom McConathy	Citizen
Vernon Veysey	Citizen

Other Agency Members Present:

Loretta Callahan	City of Vancouver Dept. of Public Works
Andrew Ness	Port of Vancouver

Public Present

Vinton Erickson	Citizen
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Project Management Team:

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

Agenda/Discussion Topics

The project manager welcomed everyone. He reminded the group that the schedule for Steering Group meetings has been changed to the last Tuesday of each month, and that the next Partnership meeting will be Tuesday October 21, 2008.

Partnership Business

Project Manager Update

Phil provided a background on the Vancouver Lake Technical Foundation document. He said that the document began last December as a white paper written by Ron describing what he knew about the Lake. Since then it has evolved into a more structured document, whose purpose is to capture what is known about the Lake to-date and lay a foundation for where the Partnership is headed in the future. The Technical Group has been working with the document over the past several months.

The Technical Foundation was emailed to the Steering Group prior to the meeting. Phil asked for the group's thoughts on the document. Patty said she had reviewed it, but needs time to look at it in more detail.

Thom mentioned that at a previous Technical Group meeting the group discussed the idea of having the document reviewed by a technical outsider to see where the holes are. Phil agreed and added that at previous Technical and Steering Group meetings they discussed the possibility of hiring a consultant to look at the document and fill in detail where it is needed. An example of where detail is needed is in Chapter 5 where potential next studies are briefly outlined.

One option to fill in that detail is for the Partnership to hire someone to describe what a nutrient or sediment study would look like. Brian suggested to have consultants look at it in addition to agencies like Ecology. He suggested sending it out to consultants, maybe twelve or so, and have them provide comments. There have been a lot of engineering consultants attending the past few Partnership meetings on their own time and they might be willing to take the time to review the document and fill in detail for a potential study.

Ron talked about sending it out as part of a RFP (Request for Proposal) or RFQ (Request for Qualifications). He said in the next couple of months we will have final written reports from WSU and the Corps that will provide additional information and could help us decide what next steps to take.

Vern asked what additional information would come from further studies that was not already known at this time? Doesn't the Partnership know enough to go forward with management actions? He said that he could think of several actions that could be pursued as management alternatives such as dredging to improve water flow and reducing the size of the Lake. Thom said that there were a number of things we don't know about the Lake including details related to food web and nutrient dynamics. Ron said that with each study we are learning more about which management actions are feasible. One thing we learned from the recent study and presentation by the Corps, was that dredging might make water circulation worse and that modifying the flushing channel or Lake River might not improve water flow in the Lake.

Phil said that the Technical Group had come up with six main areas for further study including: a water balance, nutrient budget, sediment investigation, food web interactions, fish, wildlife and habitat investigation and toxic contaminants. Working with a lake generalist with expertise in all six areas is one way to go in thinking about next steps. Another way would be to work with an expert for each of the different areas.

Phil said that at this time the document has been reviewed and vetted by the Technical Group and it is now out for the Steering Group's comment. Brian said he thought they had learned a lot about the Lake in two years and suggested that the document go to the full Partnership for review.

Vern asked the group what we need to know next in order to make a decision on what to do. Ron said that the situation is not that easy. At this point we've gotten what we know down on paper, and vetted where we want to go next with Technical Group. What has been realized is that of the six study areas to proceed with, one is not necessarily more important or more urgent than another.

Loretta said there are different points of view and questions out in the public audience. Some people think let's do something and let's do it fast. Others ask what the cost is and will it be effective. We need to be able address these questions and show we are making progress. The Technical Foundation document seems like a good way to do this.

Phil restated that what he was hearing from the Steering Group was that the Technical Foundation document should go to the full Partnership prior to the next meeting for review and comment. Brian confirmed this and asked Phil what he wants to do at the October Partnership meeting. Phil replied that the Partnership has received presentations on two big studies in the past few months and he'd like to gauge people's perception of the new information. Ron added that the information from the Corps has moved the Partnership much further in answering some of their long-standing questions.

Sabrina will send the Technical Foundation document to the full Partnership for review prior to the meeting via email and print. Thom suggested posting it to the Algae List Serve. Ron said it might not be the right time for that because we want people to see it, but we don't want to over distribute it too soon. We should send it to the full Partnership and consider sending it next to those who are part of the greater Vancouver Lake community. Phil added that the Partnership is applying for two grants right now and he did not want to cloud or confuse the grant writing with the list serve.

Brian said the document provides a good progress report to date. He sees the end game being getting a number of the projects in Chapter 5 funded. Thom added that once the Partnership has the written reports from WSU and the Corps, we may be able to extrapolate more information. He sees it as a living document.

Brian said it would be good to have an executive summary or have a summary report. Sabrina mentioned that Capitol Lake does annual reports and study summaries. Phil suggested the possibility of developing an annual report that covers what has occurred at Vancouver Lake over the past year.

PIO Group Update

Phil said that the legislative one-pager is complete. Sabrina, Phil and Ron are also working on two grant applications for funding from the Department of Ecology; the Centennial Clean Water Program and the Freshwater Algae Program. They will be requesting letters of support from the Partnership in the upcoming weeks.

Agenda for October 21, 2008 Partnership Meeting

1. Welcome/Agenda Review
2. Partnership Business
 - Technical Foundation Document Review
 - Project Manager Update
 - Tech Group Update
 - PIO Update
3. Public Comment
4. Next Steps/Meeting

Next Steps/Close

Phil thanked the group for attending and closed the meeting.

Next Meetings:

Full Partnership Meeting October 21, 2008, 4:00 – 6:00 pm

Steering Group Meeting October 28, 2008 3:30-4:00

All meetings will be held at the Port of Vancouver Administrative Offices.