

Vancouver Lake Watershed Partnership

Steering Group Meeting Summary

Meeting date: August 1, 2007, 3:30 pm

Steering Group Members Present:

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

Partnership Members Present:

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

Public in attendance:

Jacquelin Edwards	Citizen
David Page	Citizen

Other Agency Members Present:

Loretta Callahan	City of Vancouver Dept. of Public Works
Ron Wierenga	Clark County Dept. of Public Works
Katy Brooks	Port of Vancouver

Project Management Team:

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.

Agenda/Discussion Topics

The project manager introduced the agenda and asked if there were any additions or modifications. The location of the August 15 Partnership meeting was discussed due to a conflict with meeting room renovation and it was suggested that the Fruit Valley Community Center might be a possible nearby location. Katy said she would contact the Fruit Valley Community Center to see if it was available.

Partnership Business

Work plan discussion – The project manager introduced this agenda item by passing out the latest version of the draft work plan. He said it was his intent to email it to the full Partnership prior to the next Partnership meeting and asked if the Steering Group had any comments.

One Steering Group member commented that he thought that the “Additional funding” element could be located more prominently and use more information as this is a very important item as the Partnership moves forward. A Partnership member asked that it be noted that work plan element numbering was not a prioritization. The project manager agreed that “Additional funding” did need more content and that the numbering of the items was not a prioritization and would make changes in a later draft where all elements would be expanded on.

The project manager said that he would like to form a small ad-hoc group, consisting of three or four Partnership members to go through the question list to expand questions and develop important concepts. It would be important to refine the questions and to see which are technical and which are management related. Once the questions are refined and further developed, we can begin to see how

they relate to existing studies to help determine gaps. A Partnership member noted that when the group applies for funding, the answers to these questions will be important.

It was asked what kind of a time commitment would be involved for the ad-hoc group. The project manager said that it would not be a large time commitment; possibly consisting of an introductory meeting followed by review and feedback loops for the document.

Housekeeping - The project manager mentioned again that the project management group was keeping track of meeting attendance to help inform the Partnership's meeting frequency and membership discussion. It was decided that the project manager would contact Partnership members to assess their current feelings regarding their participation in the Partnership. After checking-in with each member and reporting back to the Steering Group, the Steering Group would then decide if there was a need to formalize a process for replacing members who do not wish to or are unable to regularly attend the meetings.

USACE Update

George Medina from the Corps provided an update on the feasibility study. He repeated from the last Steering Group meeting that cost share requirements for this Section 536 project had been adjusted and the feasibility study is proceeding with no money needed up front from the Partnership. If the study is completed and the Corps of Engineers plan formulation process identifies alternatives that demonstrate incremental cost effectiveness, the Partnership can elect to move forward with the preferred 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 after construction. However, even though no money is needed at this time, the Corps is looking for an expression of buy-in from the Partnership.

It was asked what was needed for buy-in. George said the Corps does not need a commitment in writing at this point and that they are proceeding with the feasibility study using Federal funding. He noted that it is important that the Partnership understand the costs involved and their responsibilities. Even though the Corps is not requiring a signature at this point in the feasibility study, the Corps will keep the Partnership aware of expected costs or changes to the proposed budget. It was agreed that after the Corps presentation and discussion at the August Partnership meeting, a consensus vote would be needed to formalize the Partnership's recommendation to the Steering Group.

George said that someone had asked earlier about the policy change on the funding structure. Was this change because at the end of the feasibility study the project was not likely to go forward? He said there were some staff at the Corps that were concerned the data generated through the feasibility study would not support a project going forward. The expressed concern was centered on whether or not regulatory agencies would allow the fish to enter Vancouver Lake, given its current water quality (e.g. temperature, pH, dissolved oxygen, etc.) and other salmonid habitat related issues. He said others believed there was a chance that it will go forward. 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 other uses as appropriate. The Corps is proceeding as if it will go forward, but some obstacles have already been identified.

A Partnership member stated that it was his understanding that modifications to the flushing channel were the answer to water quality problems. He asked that if this is not the answer, what are the other options and what are their costs? George said the flushing channel is passive. Even if after fixing the tide gate, cleaning out the flushing channel, and dredging sediment at the mouth of the Lake River, it still may not be enough to support salmonid ingress and egress. If that is the case the project will not proceed, but it is still unknown at this point. On the matter of projected costs, George indicated that it would be inappropriate to speculate on what a potential project might end up costing.

George said he would like to know if the Steering Group supported taking this proposal to the Partnership. Steering Group members supported the new approach and advancing it to the Partnership.

The study is going to provide the Partnership with excellent information even if the feasibility study does not result in a Section 536 project.

Tech Group Update

Ron Wierenga reported on behalf of the Tech Group. He stated that they are on separate but parallel paths with the Corps as they go through the Corps feasibility study and the Partnership's vision to help identify technical gaps. The next Tech Group meeting is scheduled for August 9th.

Ron held up a photo of one of the species of blue-green algae currently present in Vancouver Lake. A recent sample taken from a high concentration location indicated that there were 2.5 million bacteria per milliliter of water. This is more than they have seen of this particular type of algae in the past. Levels over one million bacteria per milliliter can have an effect on public health. Ron gave a brief and informative description on the species.

Public Information Update

The PIO is coordinating with the Library regarding the "Forum at the Library" scheduled for Thursday, September 20th at 7 pm. The PIO Group reported that the Library Forum would prefer to not have a representative from WSU on the panel as they felt the information provided may be too technical for the audience. They would like a member of the Tech Group to provide the technical information. The Steering Group thought that it would be a good idea to have someone from WSU in the audience should additional technical information regarding their study be requested. The format of the forum would be opening comments by Bob Moser, introduction by panel moderator (Phil Trask), a brief presentation by panel members, and a question and answer period with the audience. Katy will confirm the process of how the questions will come from the audience.

The PIO group is continuing to meet with USACE and WSU to coordinate information relayed to the public.

The PIO group is discussing the possibility of initiating some hands-on projects on Vancouver Lake like plantings and cleanups. There will be more information on this to follow.

Next Steps/Close

A few modifications were suggested for the next Partnership Meeting Agenda and the project manager closed the meeting and thanked everyone for attending.

Next Meeting: September 19, 2007

Agenda for August 15, 2007 Partnership meeting

Welcome/Agenda Review

Partnership Business

- Minutes from 6/20/07
- General announcements
- Project Manager Update
- Tech Group Update
- PIO Update

Draft Work Plan Discussion

Corps Feasibility Study Presentation and Discussion

- Public Comment on Feasibility Study
- Partnership Recommendation on Feasibility Study

Public Comment

Close

- Next Meeting: October 17, 2007 4:00 pm