

# Vancouver Lake Watershed Partnership

## **Steering Group Meeting Summary**

Meeting Date: September 9, 2011



### **Steering Group Members Present:**

Patty Boyden	Port of Vancouver
Brian Carlson	City of Vancouver
Kevin Gray	Clark County Environmental Services
Eric LaBrant	Fruit Valley Neighborhood Association
Jane Teshler Kleiner	Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation (alternate for Pete Mayer)

### **Other Agency Members Present:**

Jeff Schnabel	Clark County Environmental Services
Rob Guttridge	Clark County Environmental Services
Andrew Ness	Port of Vancouver

### **Project Management Team:**

Phil Trask	PC Trask & Associates, Inc.
Eileen Stone	PC Trask & Associates, Inc.

### **Project Manager Update**

Phil began the meeting with an overview of the agenda and introductions were made.

### **Funding Strategy Update**

The project management team gave an overview of the funding strategy document.

Kevin commented that it is tough to look at a funding strategy when you don't know what lake issues would be addressed. The various funding sources should be put into context of the range of issues and funding needs for various management techniques.

Jeff distributed and described a table of funding considerations that examines costs and lake management techniques by management focus for the lake. This is a draft document, but helps move the discussion forward. The table includes possible funding resources, confidence level, likelihood of success and timing. It also portrays what types of additional information are needed to move forward under each scenario.

Kevin commented that the table can facilitate choices. Of the range of management options, the table shows what is being considered and in what way a chosen technique would affect beneficial uses of the lake.

Patty noted that the table helps to look at what issues the Partnership wishes to solve and potential costs when considering each technique. The typical planning process is to think of what you want, have alternatives and redefine overtime.

Phil asked about the trajectory for the funding strategy and the table: the document is close to maturity, but it will take more effort to incorporate the table if that is where the table should go. The document could be put aside for awhile, and more focus given to the table, and finding a way to use the table as a bridge between the funding strategy and techniques document.

Eric mentioned that the table is very informative with the disclaimer that it is draft. This is a good top down snap shot, like a road map. The roads may change on the map, but it gives a framework of potential directions for the lake, including the considerations for each. This can help discussions and be especially helpful to someone just learning about the Partnership. The table could be added to the funding strategy as an appendix, but if it stood separately it would have better visibility. Someone looking at the website could easily view the table on its own and then be referred to the funding strategy.

Brian suggested that the table should be placed on page two of the funding strategy. The table is a vehicle to launch the next round of discussion. We can send the table to the Technical Group as needed: maybe for cost estimate refinements. When looking at the funding to date, nearly \$1 million has been spent by funding agencies. There has been some concern over what we've spent in the past few years and what we have to show for it. An alternate view to this is that while there isn't something on the ground, we may have saved \$45 million by not implementing the wrong project.

Kevin mentioned there may be some management actions for which we have enough information and can pursue funding if we wish to implement those actions. We know what studies would be needed to implement other actions. The funding strategy can be used to find a funding source for an action once we are ready to implement. The table or something equivalent should be included in the funding strategy to provide context for the range of funding and implementation possibilities.

The table is helpful from a policy standpoint, where questions are: How much will an action cost? Where will the money come from for periodic cyanobacteria blooms in terms of funding priorities? Cyanobacteria is the current focus, but what will the beneficial uses that will be preserved and/or enhanced?

The group discussed how the next step for the funding strategy is to refine the Partnership's vision. What are we trying to solve and where does this group really want to go? Do we need a reality check on funding amounts? How much should be spent on blue green algae blooms? The table reinforces the importance of the diagnostic phase in understanding how some techniques would impact the lake.

At the Partnership meeting on Wednesday there will be discussion of the funding strategy and Phil will introduce the table. The table will be sent to the Partnership before the meeting as a draft. The group agreed that there will not be final approval of the funding strategy right after the September Partnership meeting. A bridge from the funding strategy to the table will be needed. Otherwise the funding strategy likely requires little change. The table is the exploration of a range of options. It can be continually refined but likely help lead discussion of scope and vision in December.

### **September 17<sup>th</sup> Cleanup Overview**

Eileen gave an overview of the Vancouver Lake Cleanup to be held on September 17<sup>th</sup>. The event is in partnership with Vancouver Watersheds Council and SOLV. Eileen, Phil, Andrew, and Rob are helping on

the day. Jeff will be working with the Sherriff's Department on the lake. We are expecting up to 500 people at the event. Volunteers are needed to assist at the registration tables; Patty and Eric signed up to help with registration.

### **Non-Profit Entity**

Eric led a discussion on a possible non-profit arm of the Partnership. There are advantages to such a group from an outreach standpoint. It can be easier for a non-profit to interface with the public as the non-profit seems less governmental. The Partnership and a non-profit could each utilize its strengths in community and agency involvement. Eric would like to discuss the possibilities at a full Partnership meeting. He will also look to discuss with the Fruit Valley Neighborhood.

Kevin commented that there has been a model used at the county for non profits. CREAM is a non-profit electronics recycling company. It is a tough environment for non-profits right now, but as a model it is something the county can get behind. We could partner with existing non-profits in the area, which include: the Parks Foundation, which has a recreation focus, but there is some overlap; the Estuary Partnership is on the VLWP already; and the Hazel Dell Neighborhood Association has a foundation. Felida and Fruit Valley may have foundations as well. What would a Vancouver Lake non-profit be focused on: operation, maintenance, restoration, or recreation? If focus would be recreation and access – is that niche already filled?

Eric mentioned that there is more flexibility to a non-profit than the Partnership. After a non-profit is established, it can focus on what the Partnership wants, and form temporary partnerships. Advocacy and voice is a role a non-profit can fill.

Kevin remarked that a non-profit can be a good idea, but they require energy and organization. He suggested developing a business plan and checking in with agencies and the Partnership to gauge interest and willingness to undertake the effort to set up a non-profit.

Brian pointed out that a non-profit defines its area of focus. How much effort has the Estuary Partnership been donating to the VLWP? How about Vancouver Watersheds Council? The Watersheds Council often helps out the VLWP (e.g., September 17<sup>th</sup> event). The Outreach Event group has discussed the possibility of regular annual events on the lake.

There was input from Lee McAllister at a recent neighborhood meeting that the Fruit Valley neighborhood should form a non-profit for the lake. Eric mentioned the neighborhood is interested in the lake, but managing the watershed is beyond the ability of the group.

There is concern that a new 501(c)(3) may draw people away from groups that people are already part of: Vancouver Watersheds Council, Salmon Creek Watershed Council, and the Sailing Club for example.

We should first look to the Partnership functions. Leveraging volunteers is one of the Partnership's functions. In outreach and event planning we have had success in partnering with both the Vancouver Watersheds Council and Salmon Creek Watershed Council. If the county decided to implement planting and can fund it, the work could be done with an existing non-profit or a new one. Currently, we can move within the Partnership to provide resources for a volunteer group.

The Partnership already has a linkage to the Parks Foundation mission. Let's bring Salmon Creek Watershed Council, Vancouver Watersheds Council, and the Estuary Partnership in on discussion. Our discussion should focus on what niche needs to be filled.

Eric commented that funding is a critical element of a non-profit. We should strengthen our access to Vancouver Watersheds Council and Salmon Creek Watershed Council. Is there enough reason for us to consider a separate 501(c)(3) or should we support an existing one? Could we be feeding tasks to non-profits? We should check if these non-profits want to partner with the VLWP. It is relatively easy to administer funds to non-profits. Vancouver Watersheds Council is reliant on city funding right now, so a subcommittee of Vancouver Watersheds Council might be the way to start.

Brian mentioned that Vancouver Watersheds Council has decided it will soon change its name to Vancouver Watersheds Alliance.

### **Technical Group Update**

Jeff reported that the Technical Group met on August 24<sup>th</sup> to discuss the scheduled update of the Algal Control Techniques report. The group felt there was not much value added by updating the document at this time. It will need updating, but not until after the USGS information is available. This will also free up time to apply for early action grants, including the Centennial Grant program.

In lieu of an update to the Algal Control Techniques report, the group recommends creating a running bibliography of other algal control ideas that emerge so they are in one spot. Eileen will spend a few hours in getting this established and then new information can be appended as it comes in.

### **Outreach**

Eileen will check with Eric about giving a Partnership presentation to the Fruit Valley Neighborhood Association. Based on feedback from recent neighborhood association meetings getting information to the neighborhood about the Partnership would be a higher priority than informing groups that reside further away from the lake.

Jeff and Ron will be delivering the Partnership presentation to the Silver Lake Watershed Advisory Council on September 15<sup>th</sup>.

### **Other announcements**

Phil commented that the US Army Corps of Engineers is considering some habitat restoration reconnaissance that may include Vancouver Lake. Kevin asked Phil for the contact information.

The meeting was adjourned.

### **Next Meetings**

The next meeting of the full Partnership is on September 14<sup>th</sup> at 4 pm at the Port of Vancouver offices.

The date for the next Steering Group meeting is to be determined.