

# Vancouver Lake Watershed Partnership

## **Steering Group Meeting Summary**

Meeting date: May 26, 2009 3:30 pm

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

Patty Boyden	Port of Vancouver
Pete Capell	Clark County Dept. of Public Works
Brian Carlson	City of Vancouver Dept. of Public Works

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

Loretta Callahan	City of Vancouver Dept. of Public Works
Andrew Ness	Port of Vancouver
Ron Wierenga	Clark County Dept. of Public Works

### **Project Management Team:**

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

## **Project Manager Update**

### **Legislative Update opening the door**

Phil Trask informed the Steering Group that Centennial Clean Water Program funding is not likely. A final decision has not yet been made, but the Vancouver Lake project is no longer on the proposed funding list. The Department of Ecology's re-opening of the water quality funding program had un-anticipated consequences to the Centennial draft offer list, but with the Legislature's reduction of the Governor's proposed budget from \$35 to \$31 million our project would have fallen off the funding list regardless. Ron formally commented to Ecology on behalf of the Partnership regarding the grant process and mid-stream changes to the program.

Phil stated that that submitting the Vancouver Lake project for Centennial funding was a good step forward in that the project was highlighted for legislators and agency staff and as a result it will have a better chance of success in the future. However, he recognized that grant development was a significant commitment of resources on behalf of the Partnership. He would like to work to further build relationships, but asked the Steering Group for their advice. The group agreed with continuing in this manner. Patty noted that the Partnership must move forward in this way, recognizing that there will be both setbacks and successes. There was discussion that if it wasn't such an unusually challenging budget year this project likely would have been funded.

Eileen and Phil will talk to Ecology staff to see when the final decision date will be as well as to get their thoughts on the likelihood of funding this or a similar project in the future. Ron commented that the Centennial Clean Water grant process is about to start again for next year.

### **Other Approaches**

Phil told the Steering Group that the project team is continuing to look at other funding sources. There is a good idea of what opportunities are available, but the team hasn't found another source with the right fit for Vancouver Lake. Phil posed to the Steering Group the feasibility of spending money that the Partnership currently has in reserve in order to fund a study, such as one on nutrient budget. US Geological Survey (USGS) submitted a proposal, but we have not yet asked other agencies/firms for proposals. Maybe the USGS study could be broken down into phases, or maybe a private firm would be more affordable at this time. The Steering Group agreed that at this time we should ask others how they would approach the questions raised in the Technical Foundation Report. After seeing more ideas the Partnership would be better positioned to make a decision on how to move forward without the Centennial funding and clarify final study elements.

## **Other Business**

Phil told the Steering Group that the project team is forming relationships with staff of the West Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District. Particularly relevant to Vancouver Lake is Sturgeon Lake on Sauvie Island, which is quite similar to Vancouver Lake. Sturgeon Lake had some studies conducted in the eighties, circulation was considered an issue, and the Corps of Engineers re-connected the Columbia River to Sturgeon Lake via Dairy Creek. This appears similar in design and intent to the flushing channel of Vancouver Lake. Sturgeon Lake has sedimentation and temperature issues, and some algal blooms, but monitoring is not as intense there as at Vancouver Lake. Phil and staff are not sure if cyanobacteria are an issue there.

The project team will continue conversations with the Soil and Water Conservation District and may share information between the Sturgeon Lake interest group and the Vancouver Lake Partnership as appropriate. Presentations on each lake's issues may be of future interest. Ron commented that he found it interesting that Sturgeon Lake seems to have more complex habitat than Vancouver Lake but still has similar issues.

## **PIO Group Update**

Loretta and Andrew have completed Vancouver Lake informational postcards that are being targeted to Vancouver Lake Park users. They were given to the Vancouver Lake Park fee booth to hand out to individuals as they enter the park. The first batch of 400 postcards was printed in the Port of Vancouver office. PIO staff does not know how many were handed out over Memorial Day weekend, the first weekend of use for the season. Loretta circulated the postcard to the Steering Group.

It was noted that Jim Gladson will be leaving Clark County for a position elsewhere. He will be missed.

There has not been a recent update regarding WSU's education outreach. Ron will check with WSU and will update Loretta.

## **Next Steps/Close**

### Future planning

The Steering Group discussed the need for a comprehensive research plan for the lake. Once we know our five year research plan then we will understand our larger direction, and be able to place specific studies in the larger context. At that point the group could determine if funding a specific study is a priority given other needs. Pete commented that it is good to have a plan, but to be sure the plan is flexible. As we learn from completed studies the priorities and direction may change. The group discussed the value of having a rough dollar amount for each study component and the need for flexibility and adaptive management as conditions change. The group concurred and the project team will begin developing a research plan.

Loretta and Andrew brought up a similar need to look at outreach needs and funding over a five year planning window. The overall funding request would be much smaller than that needed for research, but having a comprehensive plan ensures everyone knows what is needed to move forward in outreach efforts.

### Planning for the next Partnership meeting

At the next meeting, the Partnership will be updated on the Centennial Clean Water funding, although the decision may still not be final at that time.

EPA will be presenting their findings from recent monitoring at the meeting. While a final report might not be out it will be good to know what is occurring and how it may affect Vancouver Lake. Depending on EPA's findings Ecology may be interested in conducting a follow up toxics study.

The Steering Group discussed the need to also have Clark County Public Health give a short presentation on their monitoring of Vancouver Lake at the June Partnership meeting. They monitor the

Lake starting on Memorial Day. Per Ron's discussions with Marty McGinn, the County follows the State protocol in their monitoring. However, Ron is not sure what parameters are being monitored. Phil noted that there was a protocol change last year in issuing cyanobacteria advisories based on the monitoring results. The group concurred that it would be valuable for the Partnership to know the monitoring parameters and alert protocol early in the Lake's summer use season.

In addition to the Centennial update and the EPA and County Public Health presentations, Phil will present brief information about Sturgeon Lake at the Partnership meeting.

Phil thanked the group for attending and closed the meeting.

**Next Meetings:**

Full Partnership Meeting on June 17th, 2009, 4:00 - 6:00 pm

Steering Group Meeting on June 30th, 2009, 3:30 - 5:00pm

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