



April 18, 2007 Meeting Summary

The eighteenth meeting of the Vancouver Lake Watershed Partnership was held on Wednesday, April 18th from 4:00-6:00pm at the Port of Vancouver Administration Offices.

Partnership members in attendance:

Patty Boyden, Pete Capell, Brian Carlson, Thom McConathy, Jim Meyer, Illoba Odum, Doug Quinn, Scott Robinson, Jennie Ju, Deb Mariott, Gail Lovell, Vern Vesey, Nancy Ellifrit, Don Jacobs, Tim Rymer, Tonnie Cummings

Staff in attendance:

Loretta Callahan, Randy Coots, Jeanne Lawson, Phil Trask, Kalin Schmoltdt, Ron Wierenga

Public in attendance:

Nancy Chandlee, Vinton Erickson, Dvija Michael Bertish, Dick Chandlee, David Page, Lehman Holder, Anne Friesz, Mike Kerbs, Jordan Larnar, Eldon Edwards, Jacquelin Edwards, , Nelson Holmberg

Agenda Review

Jeanne Lawson described the day's meeting as a milestone, noting that Phil Trask is now onboard as project manager and will henceforth be facilitating the Partnership meetings. Jeanne summarized the agenda and noted that in the transition to a new stage of the study, it will be important to leave time for discussion at the end of the meeting.

Partnership Business

Phil thanked Jeanne and the partnership recognized Jeanne's efforts over the past two years.

Thom McConathy asked to address the issue of making the meeting notes briefer. Jeanne said that the notes would not be different for this meeting and the issue could be discussed during the discussion at the end of the meeting. There were no other comments on the agenda.

Minutes from 2/21/2007

Phil noted that the meeting minutes had been posted after being circulated to and reviewed by the committee. There were no additional comments on the meeting summary.

General announcements

Deb Marriot noted that there will be a three day conference co-hosted by the Lower Columbia River Estuary Partnership and the USGS beginning the morning of May 7. She said that the conference would bring scientists and policy implementers together with the goal of creating a dialogue between the groups. She noted a variety of invitees and said that Bill Reilly will facilitate. She said that registration is open and more information is available on the LCREP website. Deb said that the morning forum is free, but the registration fee is \$235 for the whole conference or \$95 per day.

Thom announced that he had attended a conference on freshwater mussels at the Water Resource Education Center. He said it was fascinating and an important issue to deal with in the course of the Vancouver Lake cleanup.

Project Manager Status and Scope

Pete Capell noted that LCREP has been officially hired to provide Phil's service. He noted that using LCREP provides added benefits such as support staff and grant assistance. He explained that they have been hired for a six month contract up to \$50,000 with the goal of developing a work plan for proceeding and creating a more defined scope of services. He noted that this process gives Phil the opportunity to come up to speed on the ongoing work. Pete said that the work plan will come back to the partnership for review and discussion. He added that he anticipates a long-term engagement.

Phil noted the inherent difficulty of describing the job, as part of the job is defining the work. He noted that he will be working with the various committees to make sure processes are connected and coordinated. He said that he will be working to understand aspects of the proposed feasibility study and the WSU water quality study. He noted the recent technical group meeting and the importance of dovetailing the Corps and technical group studies. He said he would be working directly with the Steering Group to strategically guide the work while in coordination with Ron and the technical group. He said that he would be looking to do whatever is necessary to help define the position and move things forward, including looking for money and trying to actively solve specific problems. He added that he will be trying to keep everyone informed along the way.

Thom asked how soon Phil anticipated having a defined timeline with target dates for different goals. Phil said that he felt he was already beginning that process. He noted the timing associated with the WSU study and Corps feasibility studies and said that he couldn't know specific dates at this point. He noted that he would be moving forward with coordinating the two studies as quickly as possible. Thom emphasized the need for a formal timeline in order to keep the project moving forward.

Patty Boyden thanked Pete, Ron, and all those involved in setting up Phil's contract and she acknowledged the hard work involved. Phil said he was looking forward to working with the group on this important project.

Tech Group Update

Work Group Meeting - Phil noted that the meeting on March 21st was attended by 15-16 people. He noted that he had learned much about the lake and that the conversation went very well.

Ron Wierenga noted that the meeting was the first with the expanded Tech group. He noted that the group had invited other agencies to participate and to pick up where the smaller group left off. He said that the first half of the meeting dealt with technical issues and getting people onto the same page. The second half consisted of discussion. He noted that the Tech group had previously compiled many of the Partnership's questions and there was a round-table discussion of those items. Ron emphasized the tremendous amount of material to study. He said that he and Phil were already planning the next meeting and that the meetings will be folded into the work plan. He said that the work plan will give a good sense of how the WSU study and the Corps study will be coordinated. He added that everyone is welcome to attend the Tech work group meetings and said that the meeting summaries will be available for review. Phil noted that the summary notes of the tech meeting have been posted on the website.

Thom asked about the time and agenda for the next meeting. Ron said that a date has not yet been set and that the meeting will continue discussion of the topics from the March meeting.

WSU technical work update - Ron noted that WSU's contract has been signed and they are working. He said they will be collecting samples and can give the Partnership updates as necessary. Ron said that the report is due June or July of 2008.

Corps Process & Policy Update

Gail Lovell said that George Medina wanted to give the Partnership a sense of where the Corps team is in developing the Feasibility Study. She said that there is wordsmithing yet to do and that the document will be distributed to the Partnership and available on the website. She highlighted sections from a chart of product deliverables, noting that the meat of the project is the environmental compliances. She noted that Pat McCrae is the economist who will describe impacts with and without project conditions. She noted that part of the work involves a literature search to ensure that the components of the feasibility report

have been documented. She said the plan is to complete the report by summer 2008 and to coordinate with WSU. Gail said that the price estimate is currently about \$500,000, but could vary if they find any existing studies that could be used. Ron noted that the Partnership and Corps process were married together in such a way that developing individual timelines without coordinating would be a waste of time.

Doug Quinn asked whether dredging was necessary as a part of the project. Gail said that it will be necessary to coordinate with the people working on the EIS for the turning basin. She said that the goal is to coordinate efforts so as to avoid duplication or affecting others.

Pete asked whether the report conclusions would include a preferred alternative that would require construction drawings as the next step. Gail said that developing design and specs would follow the approval of a preferred alternative.

Vern Veysey asked for confirmation that the Partnership will need to approve of the preferred alternative. Gail said that there will be considerations of cost/benefit ratios, as well as operations and maintenance costs that will affect the preferred alternative. She said there would be other tangibles that will need to be weighed and the Partnership will need to back the alternative.

Thom asked about the threshold for requiring an EIS. Gail said that her understanding is that only an EA was necessary, but offered to check. Ron said that a proposal is necessary before it can be evaluated, and that it will probably be ready in July or so next year. He noted that the studies will be feeding the evaluations of the alternatives.

Public Comment

Dick Chandlee – Has lived on the lake for 65 years. He encouraged Phil to create a CPM Chart. He noted the frustration that the County Commissioners feel at the length of time this group has spent, and suggested that a CPM chart would put the Commissioners at ease.

Dvija Michael Bertish – Asked for follow up information on the TMDL. Ecology responded that the TMDL has gone forward, though the decision won't take place until this summer.

Vinton Erickson – Noted that \$28 million had been spent on Burnt Bridge Creek to date and has accomplished nothing. He noted that the money could have been spent on a sewer line and getting the houses off of septic tanks. He asked how deep the lake needed to be in order to provide for good fish habitat.

Jeanne noted that the meeting will conclude with a wrap up and acknowledgement of hanging issues.

Salmon Creek Watershed Council Briefing

Ron introduced Mike Kerbs, Chairman of the Salmon Creek Watershed Council. Mike noted that the Council had been meeting since October of 2006. He said that the council was formed because there was a deficit of watershed citizens groups and a lack of vision as to what they want their legacy to be.

Mike described the group's purpose, mission, and vision. He emphasized the vision of promoting the watershed as an asset and embracing the resource. He described the organizational structure of the council and noted the different groups they hope to include. He explained what's been done so far on their shoestring budget. He said that they had applied for 501c(3) status and adopted a section of I-205. He noted that they were looking for cleanup volunteers in June. He noted their first community event with the Department of Fish and Wildlife last weekend.

He described their short term priorities, including obtaining non-profit status, increasing community visibility and integration, fundraising, and identifying potential projects. Long term, he said that they hope

to have a full time Program Manager and staff that can work with watershed projects and groups, coordinate and advocate for stakeholders, and ultimately raise awareness and create action.

He described some of the habitat restoration efforts, coordination, and recruitment opportunities.

Vinton Erickson noted the hazards associated with some debris in Salmon Creek. Mike noted that large woody debris is good habitat, but making sure it doesn't float away is important.

Mike said they would be looking out for additional board members. He provided his phone number for the Partnership in case anyone has questions: (360) 573-3589.

Ecology Toxics Study Results

Ron introduced Randy Coots who led a toxics study on Vancouver Lake. Randy noted that he works out of a program called the Environmental Assessment Program and Toxic Studies Unit. He explained that they act as pseudo-consultants, with developing TMDLs as the main focus of their activities.

He noted the agencies involved in the toxics study and their roles. He noted that Dave McBride of the Department of Health may be at the next meeting. He said that DOH and Ecology use different standards for issuing Fish Consumption Advisories, and suggested that Dave could answer questions about DOH standards.

Randy described the background of the lake. He said that the study was prompted because a previous study in 1993 found high levels of PCBs and DDEs, while a study in 2002 found lower levels, with DDEs being far below the findings of the original study. The discrepancy was the reason for the second look. He noted that the goal of the study was to determine if the lake should be dropped from the 303d list or whether there were different contaminants involved today.

Randy described the sampling areas and methods for catching the fish in the different locations. He described how each tissue sample was taken from a resident fish species, and he described how they focused on fish species that were likely to be consumed. He noted the types of fish in the lake and described the tissue analysis. He added that the varieties of fish they encountered had raised the question of whether the fish tended to move, given the relatively low diversity in December.

Randy described the sediment sampling locations, noting that sediment grain size was important to note because coarser materials do not retain chemicals as well. He described the process of extracting sediment samples.

He showed images of the electro shock boat, and examples of the fish in the lake. He indicated the size and weight of the various fish samples. He noted that the listed age range for the suckers (listed as 9-16 years,) was incorrect and was more likely to be 2-16 years.

He described the PCB levels found in the edible fish tissue in the lake. He noted that carp had the highest concentrations, followed by bass and suckers. He showed a graph indicating how all of the sample fish were higher than the standard, although the fish in Vancouver Lake fish were higher than those from the river. He noted that it was rare to actually find a lake where the PCB level was as low as the NTR standard. He noted that because PCBs are everywhere, it can be beyond the realm of what water quality managers can deal with.

Randy noted DDT levels, and noted that DDE levels are expected to be higher. He showed a graph indicating that Lake River is has lower levels than Vancouver Lake. He noted that Vancouver Lake is at about the 50th percentile for DDT in freshwater fish in Washington. He added that the sediment findings were unremarkable, with only four of the 31 compounds having a detectable concentration and with only four of 186 total analyses detecting chemicals above the reporting limit.

Brian Carlson asked about the depth for sediment samples. Randy said that the samples were surface grabs consisting of only the top 2 cm. He said they were looking at only the most recent sediments.

Randy described their recommendations, including a surface water quality study of potential PCB and chlorinated pesticides in Vancouver Lake and Lake River; analysis to determine where the dioxin and PCBs in the fish tissue is coming from; as well as other chemicals. He recommended further monitoring.

He said it was still unclear to him where the fish reside, though he suggested several methods for finding out.

Thom noted that the ethnic groups fishing in Vancouver Lake don't go for bass, but fish such as flounder and crappie. He suggested that those species would have been better representatives. Randy said that they shocked multiple times and didn't find any of those species. Thom suggested that Randy go look and see what people are catching.

Nancy noted that a study in the early 70s yielded species like yellow perch and salmonids. Randy said that they found fingerling, but not within the target size for consumption. He acknowledged that sampling all summer would make a difference.

Patty asked about signage for a consumption advisory. Randy said that DOH advisories are more in-depth and complex in terms of what is necessary to determine an advisory. He said he was not sure who was responsible for posting advisories at sites. Ron noted that Randy had suggested having Dave McBride come talk about human health issues. He said that Dave is currently scheduled for the June meeting.

Ron asked about the reasoning for taking the top 2 cm for sediment samples. Randy said that the idea is to gather samples of the most recent deposits. He said that 2 cm is the standard measurement. He noted that it can be difficult to determine sedimentation rates, and 2 cm probably represents some years of sediment deposition anyway.

Doug Quinn asked for a copy of the presentation. Loretta said she would post it when she gets it.

Partnership Role in Next Stage

Phil noted that with the hiring and launching of the tech studies, the Steering Committee discussed how the partnership meetings should be structured into the future.

Jeanne reminded the group of their original charge, noting that the goal was to develop consensus around an unconstrained vision, with the next step to develop consensus around the restrained vision. She indicated the process map and noted how a year was spent on presentations providing background before arriving at the unrestrained vision. She noted that the answers to the technical questions fed into the adopted values and eventually into the adopted unconstrained vision. She described how developing the scope of work and seeking funding has been a circular effort. Now we will be moving into the studies, refining the vision, and developing the implementation plan. She noted that the heart of the group's work is around the refined vision and deliberation. She noted that the agencies are charged with managing funding and resources with the Partnership providing an advisory role and ensuring accountability.

Jeanne noted that it will be for the group to decide how the group wants to keep working. She noted that many in the Partnership have said that it's the most valuable to meet when there is a key decision, while others want to remain involved in the technical elements. She said that the question is how to maintain access and transparency. She noted that as the group moves into an advisory role, the group may want to meet at milestones when there are meaty issues to decide. She added that the tech group will meet more regularly for those who want access to the technical information.

Thom said that he felt that meeting less frequently means getting less done. He said that he felt that less and less is being accomplished by the committee. Jeanne noted that it was the Partnership that decided

to meet less frequently. Deb Mariott said that she felt progress has been made with the Steering Group taking a more active management role. She said that she thought that the concept of the Partnership coming together to take actions on milestones makes sense. She suggested using the website and electronic communications as tools to keep the Partnership up to speed. She noted that the process is inherently slow and can be frustrating, but added that it would be worse to act without adequate information.

Pete noted that from what the Corps and WSU Vancouver has outlined, the real substantive work for the group will begin in 12-15 months. He emphasized that he didn't want to burn people out. He noted that attendance by non-agency members has dwindled and he cautioned that they would lose people if they continue to meet on such a frequent basis. He noted the importance of having the original members involved in developing the vision.

Jim Meyer noted that a work plan is expected in six months, and will set out milestones and a framework. He said that the work plan will be key in setting direction.

Nancy Ellifrit said that once studies get going, there won't be as much to make decisions on. She said that so long as information is available at the Technical meetings, there isn't a reason to meet without new information.

Vern said that balancing the scope of work with funding is important. He noted that while he isn't qualified to determine the basic data, and wouldn't be much use during the study phase, he would be able to help with the refined vision. He said that he didn't see the need to get together without having decisions to make, but asked that he be kept informed of what goes on at the Steering Group and Technical Group meetings.

Brian said that he agreed that the pace of the study is frustrating, but he pointed out that there is a lot of study and analysis that needs to be done. He said that it's important to maintain continuity and keeping a group that won't need to be reeducated.

Doug said that he concurred with Vern and felt that they should meet when there are milestones and there is the need for decisions to be made

Illoba Odum noted that he had attended the County Commissioner's session that morning and he noted that the commissioners are paying attention to the project and the many meetings.

Thom noted that a series of tasks had been identified in December and it appeared that nothing was being done about them. He said that hiring Phil has taken a long time and Commissioner Stewart is frustrated, as are members of the community. He indicated that there is work to be done that doesn't require the Corps and WSU to be finished. He said that the group needs to decide whether to proceed on those issues of concern.

Jeanne noted that she understood the frustration, but noted that many of the issues are being addressed. She noted the Salmon Creek presentation and the toxics study were both requested items.

Illoba asked that the list of concerns be revisited so as to create a tool for shaping subsequent meetings.

Jeanne noted the following hanging issues:

- Mercury
- Tributaries
 - Characterization
 - 303d
 - City's Burnt Bridge Creek Work
- Drinking Water Plans
- Lake River
- Public Outreach

- Funding
- Other cleanup and expansion (Port)
- Rieger Road

Jeanne passed out the list of technical questions conceived earlier in the process.

Deb said that the list raises questions about what the group wants to accomplish at these meetings. She asked whether the meetings were just for hearing new information or for receiving an assimilation of the Technical work concurrent with decision points. She said she was not in favor of just meeting only to hear more technical information.

Jeanne asked which issues should be carried forward and which should be sent to the tech group. Vern said that if the questions are being dealt with by the tech group, then the Partnership should let the studies happen.

Jeanne asked whether there was anything on the list that does *not* need to be addressed by the tech group.

Randy noted that a study of mercury was included in the 2002 study and did not stand out relative to the state standards. Jeanne asked Randy to formulate an email related to mercury levels and circulate it to the group.

Jeanne asked whether there were any other issues to carry forward more immediately to deal with off her list. None were proposed. Thom said that he felt there was a full list of items.

Patty confirmed that the committee has decided to meet on milestones and to use the technical group meetings as the avenue for more frequent participation. Pete said that they were still planning to meet in two months on the regular schedule, when Phil and the tech group will bring back a recommendation and seek approval by the Full Partnership.

Public Comment

Jacquelin Edwards – Said she understands Thom's frustration and asked whether it would be possible to take Thom's list and note directly where the issues have been addressed. Phil said that he would, as informed by the progress of the tech group over time. He noted that not all studies would be possible, he suggested that they could map out what can be done within the scope of limited resources. Jacquelin suggested finding something for Thom to do.

Jim Meyer – Said that he sees the role of the Partnership as determining which studies should be done given the limited resources. Phil noted that the Tech group is launching as well and cautioned against expecting that they will reconvene with a complete picture.

Deb Marriot – Summarized that they were asking the Phil to come back and report on the roadmap and what has to happen, who will do it, and how we get to the end point. She said that the frequency of the meetings should be the last detail to worry about.

Dvija Michael Bertish – Suggested adding Port projects to the issue bin, along with treatment for the plume, cleanup plans, what is happening within the affected area, and how that might have impacts. Ron noted the trash problems associated with Reiger Road.

Vinton Erickson – Asked about the protocol for dismissing truant members from the group. Jeanne said that no one has officially left, though some roles have changed. Dvija asked whether there were plans to replace non-attending members. Jeanne said that there has only been one so far, and it is an issue for the Steering Group to address.

Illoba asked for clarification on whether alternates are expected to attend. Jeanne said that the agencies are charged with keeping their members updated.

Next Steps

Phil encouraged members to call him if they have questions or concerns.

Close

- Next Meeting: June 20, 2007