



## March 19, 2008 Meeting Summary

The twenty second meeting of the Vancouver Lake Watershed Partnership was held on Wednesday, March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2008 from 4:00-6:00pm at the Port of Vancouver Administrative Offices.

### Attendance:

Member Present	Member Seat
Patty Boyden	Port of Vancouver
Ron Wierenga	Clark County Dept. of Public Works
Brian Carlson	City of Vancouver Dept. of Public Works
Tom Gonzales	Clark Public Health
David Judd	Vancouver Clark Parks and Recreation
Iloba Odum	WA Department of Ecology
Bruce Wiseman	Port of Ridgefield
Scott Robinson	WA Department of Natural Resources
Tim Rymer	WA Department of Fish and Wildlife
Jacquelin Edwards	Citizen
Thom McConathy	Citizen
Nancy Ellifrit	Citizen
Don Jacobs	Citizen
David Page	Citizen
Gary Kokstis	Citizen
Vernon Veysey	Citizen

### Public in attendance:

Dvija Michael Bertish Citizen  
 Dick Chandlee Citizen  
 Vinton Erickson Citizen  
 Margaret Oscilia Citizen

### Other Agency Members Present:

Jessi Belston Port of Vancouver  
 Katy Brooks Port of Vancouver  
 Loretta Callahan City of Vancouver Public Works  
 Tonnie Cummings WA Department of Ecology  
 Victor Ehrlich City of Vancouver Public Works  
 Jim Gladson Clark County Public Works  
 Annette Griffy City of Vancouver  
 Jennifer Naas WSU Clark County Extension

### Project Management Team:

Phil Trask PC Trask & Associates, Inc.  
 Sabrina Litton PC Trask & Associates, Inc.

## **Introductions**

The project manager welcomed the group and attendees introduced themselves.

## **Agenda/Discussion Topics**

The project manager introduced the agenda and asked if there were any modifications. There were no modifications to the agenda.

## **General Partnership Announcements**

Brian Carlson announced that it was World Water Day on Saturday May 22nd and that the City would be hosting several fun events at the Water Resource Center and other locations. It is a day for celebration and education about water as a resource.

Thom announced that activities on Reiger road are still a problem and hopes that the Department of Transportation, Parks and Recreation and WA Fish and Wildlife will do something about it. David Judd said he would talk to his staff about it.

## **Partnership Business**

### **New Partnership Members**

The project manager told the group that the Partnership member selection was complete. Over the past few months a process for the vacant seat replacement had taken place with solicitation announcements listed in the paper and through several agency outreach avenues. The solicitation phase for the vacant partnership seat closed several weeks ago and three qualified applications were received. At the March 5 Steering Group meeting, there was a vote to increase the number of seats in the Partnership from 21 to 22, as well as the appointment of both David Page and Jacquelin Edwards as new Partnership members. A warm welcome was given to David and Jacquelin.

### **Funding Strategy**

The project manager provided a brief background on funding developments that transpired in recent months. He explained how important fundraising is to the project and that other lakes in the state have received funding through the legislature. A one page budget request was drafted with assistance from the Steering Group to solicit funds from the legislature. In February Phil and Ron Wierenga spent a day in Olympia meeting with Senator Pridemore, and Representatives Fromhold and Moeller to discuss funding for Vancouver Lake. The project was well received by legislators but was told by all that it was a tight budget year. Phil said that the State budget was released last week and unfortunately Vancouver Lake was not in it. Despite the outcome he told the Partnership that this recent supplemental budget year lobbying effort was a good beginning to a larger effort.

Phil referred to the draft Funding Strategy document provided to the group. He highlighted steps the Partnership could take this year to have a better chance of success in securing funds in the future.

The strategy is broken down into three main pieces:

- (1) *Creating a Technical Strategy and defining Project Objectives.* By doing this the Partnership can identify technical studies that require funding and good justification for the work (i.e, where will it lead us).
- (2) *Approaching the legislature.* It is a good avenue to pursue for funding because Vancouver Lake is a regionally important lake and it warrants statewide support. Included in this is piece is coordinating meetings between Steering Group members and legislative and agency representatives to develop regional support for the effort.
- (3) *Grants.* Several grant programs are of direct interest to the Partnership. Last year the Partnership applied for two grants through the Department of Ecology, the Centennial Clean Water Program and the Freshwater Algae Control program. While unsuccessful in the past funding cycle, feedback on the grants was received. By incorporating the feedback for the next

cycle and better connecting with the program and those running it, new grant applications will have a higher likelihood of success.

Phil said that the Funding Strategy is intended to coincide with the Technical Strategy currently being developed by the Technical Group. He reiterated that the Funding Strategy was a draft document and to please provide feedback. Phil opened up the floor for discussion and asked for initial comments or reactions.

Gary mentioned that continuing public awareness of the project will be important to the process. He noted that it will be important to get events in the newspaper so that people know what is going on. Visibility is important and something like merchandising could be a good tool for getting a simple message across.

He noted that if someone was to perform a phone survey right now about environmental issues important to Vancouver citizens, Vancouver Lake would not be on that list. Increasing outreach and awareness is important.

Vern agreed and said that the more specific the Partnership can be about their funding request the better. Funders will not spend money if they can't understand its value.

Thom said that when selling the request to legislators, creating an event for them to remember might be a good idea. A real experience where they can get their boots wet will help them remember Vancouver Lake. David suggested that it would be important to include legislators from the 18<sup>th</sup> district in outreach and education activities.

The project manager agreed that it was important to be as broad as possible with outreach. He noted that the Technical Group is currently assessing study areas to focus on and that the conversation must be in-line with Partnership and Steering Group priorities. It is important to be realistic about what can be accomplished and when.

Bruce agreed and emphasized that an articulate request will be important when approaching the legislature. In addition to being articulate, showing cooperation and agreement among Partnership members will also help.

Phil said that at this time it is hard to predict what the financial climate will be for Washington State. He noted that for the first year of this biennium, the revenue forecast of the State was on solid footing. During this supplemental budget year, the trajectory is not as favorable and legislators were more conservative about spending. It is unknown what things will look like next year for the new biennial legislative session.

Brian commented that the Grants section in the Funding Strategy needs to be flushed out more. There are many more sources than those currently listed under the Department of Ecology.

Iloba added that it will be important to use the feedback received on past grant applications before submitting again. He said that he never had the opportunity to comment on the applications that were submitted and would like to be more involved in the process next year. Phil agreed that last year's grant cycle was rushed and they definitely intend to improve upon it this year. Involving Ecology's Regional Office and Olympia will be important.

### **Planning Objectives**

The project manager described that one of his contractual tasks is to "refine the vision". As it stands right now it is very broad and encompassing. While the current vision is good and important to the Partnership, it needs to be coupled with something more specific (to the degree possible). To help in breaking down the vision into something concrete, the project management team created a draft "objective continuum" graphic, the second handout passed out to the group.

On the left hand side of the graphic were global statements “Regional Community Treasure and Environmental Resource”. These broad statements were further separated into vision elements including: fishable, swimmable, boatable, supports animal communities, supports plant communities, ecosystem, and future scenarios.

The project manager made a point about the vision elements by noting that an element such as fishable could mean many things. Right now people are catching fish. Some would say its fishable, are we done? Clearly the answer is no, and to help with this concept the project management team broke the elements down into finer scale definitions. Phil reminded the group that this is not an end document, but more of a tool to organize thoughts and begin discussions about where we are and where we want to go. In time, management alternatives can be brought in for discussion and the group can narrow the options for what they want to accomplish. Nothing is off the table at this point and it is just a discussion tool.

Thom said that he thought this exercise was premature. He noted there is a lot of technical work still left to be done and he wonders why the group isn't focusing on the hard science addressing blue green algae blooms. It does not make sense to think about objectives when the Partnership is not even planning technical work or identifying data gaps.

Ron reminded the group that there are technical studies going on and efforts are underway to plan technical work and identify data gaps. They have paid WSU \$100,000 to study algae in the system and soon the Partnership is going to know more about algae than before. The Corps is also underway with their 2D model which will provide useful information to the Partnership about hydraulics and lake circulation.

Vern said he liked the continuum because it lays out what can be accomplished. Gary also liked it noting that the vision and objectives are very speakable. This will be a good tool to move from the general to specific.

Brian asked where the ecosystem concept came from because it seems to stray a bit from the bluegreen algae concept that brought the Partnership together in the first place. Phil said that while focusing on bluegreen algae, other benefits will accrue and this larger concept will help sell the project. It is also in enlisting state or federal programs to participate in a regional project. Phil reiterated that this was just the first draft of the objectives. What does the Partnership want it to look like? Rather than answer that question himself, he would like to form an ad-hoc group to work on this. The project manager asked the Partnership if there was anyone who wanted to help. Five people raised their hands and an ad hoc group consisting of Thom McConathy, Scott Robinson, David Page, Tom Gonzalez, and Brian Carlson was formed. Sabrina will be in contact with the group in the upcoming weeks.

### **PIO Update**

Katy Brooks provided an update on behalf of the PIO group. She said that Vancouver Lake is a long term effort and it will be important to keep people involved along the way. The PIO group has been brainstorming ways to get the public to be involved in a project that has a positive outcome on the system in the short term. They had been in touch with LCREP and SOLV to develop some ideas and have decided to partner with SOLV for the May 17<sup>th</sup> Down By the River clean-up event. Jim Gladson added that they are working with Brian Potter of Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation and several events for the day have been developed including plantings and trail maintenance. The projects have been submitted to SOLV and Vancouver Park should be on their promotional materials. Loretta added that Oregon Public Broadcasting will be running a special program on the clean-up in April.

The group asked if anyone wished to be involved with the volunteer recruitment process or had other ideas. Scott mentioned that if any of the projects have a positive impact on state owned aquatic lands there is potential funding assistance available from the Department of Natural Resources.

### **Corps Update**

Ron spoke on behalf of the Corps. He said that they had initiated and completed a bathymetric and topographic survey of the lake bottom and surrounding shoreline. This data will be used in the Corps 2D model and results can be expected in the next few months. Ron was unsure of the survey resolution or its geographic extent down Lake River. Ron thanked Gary and the Sailing Club for allowing researchers to access to the lake. That type of cooperation has been great and is much appreciated.

### **Tech Group Update**

Ron spoke on behalf of the Technical Group. He gave an overview on current activities and mentioned that they had been meeting regularly to work with the questions matrix. Phil described the ad-hoc group process that organized the questions held by the Partnership. The questions were then organized into a matrix that allowed Technical Group members to evaluate the importance of the questions to the scientific understanding of the lake, how much information is known about the subject, and how much it would cost to conduct additional technical studies. The Tech Group is now underway with analyzing the questions and determining which questions might be more urgent to answer than others.

The project manager passed around the question matrix summary that illustrated what had been done so far. Each member of the Technical Group had scored the matrix with responses on a sliding 1-5 scale. Responses were sorted according to the "significance to scientific basis" column and it looks like there is a level of agreement among Tech Group members about what questions might be more urgent than others. After this initial scoring and better understanding the process, the Tech Group agreed to revisit their responses and think further about how different questions could be linked and answered in future studies.

In developing the links and sequences between questions, it is hoped that a class of initial technical studies can be created. As the Partnership works on their objectives this will also help inform the technical work. In time these questions will be organized into something with more narrative such as a technical paper. Organizing the questions in a logical way will also help provide a technical roadmap to help market future restoration efforts.

Thom asked if data gaps will be identified by summer. Ron said that it's possible. The technical group is making good progress.

Thom stated that he believes it is important to not assume that modifying the flushing channel is the only answer. He doesn't feel like this assumption has been questioned and to not accept everything the Corps might tell us without further analysis.

Phil agreed that there are many questions to answer and assumptions to be tested before decisions can be made. Ron reminded everyone that small steps are being made and a conceptual model for the system is being worked on. The questions matrix is an important first step in getting us there.

A citizen asked if the project manager could explain further the latest developments with the Corps and their involvement at Vancouver Lake.

The project manager explained that to-date the Corps has been using Section 536 funding to investigate the potential for juvenile salmonid use in Vancouver Lake. In going forward with technical work they had developed several go, no-go points to help them decide the fit of Vancouver Lake to their mission. The Corps has developed a biological synthesis and ran a 1D model and so far no juvenile salmon habitat restoration potential still appears feasible. The Corps has enough reason to proceed to a 2D model that required new bathymetry data. At this time there is no funding available in this fiscal year for fish studies but it may be possible in the next fiscal year.

The project manager explained that it is difficult to predict future Corps involvement at this early stage. The Partnership has been fortunate to receive the work so far at no cost. Whether or not the Corps proceeds with further fish studies or other technical efforts, the Partnership will have bathymetry data and results from initial modeling efforts. This is useful data that could potentially be given to a consulting firm to ask specific questions related to Vancouver Lake.

It was asked if Vancouver Lake is scoped in the next Corps funding cycle. Phil didn't know.

To finish the Tech Group update, Ron told the group about the joint Clark Public Utilities and Port groundwater model. He said it was developed by the two entities to look at issues related to cleanup efforts and for well field development. The Technical Group received a presentation by consultants involved in the modeling and had the opportunity to ask questions. While the model was not developed specifically for Vancouver Lake, it could be run to answer Partnership questions and to develop a better understanding of the interactions between the Lake and groundwater.

A citizen asked how deep the wells were associated with the model. Patty replied that they ranged from 20-280 feet.

#### **Public Comment**

Tim Rymer said Department of Fish and Wildlife enforcement officers recently ticketed commercial carp netters with illegal largemouth bass in their possession. Tickets had also been issued for fishing without a license and exceeding the possession limit. Tim reported largemouth bass found in possession ranged from 6-9 pounds. Ron added that when he had been out electrofishing with Ecology for their toxics study, they too had seen large bass.

A citizen posed several questions for the Partnership to consider: Is an artesian well possible at the Lake to aerate and provide more water? Could the flushing channel be moved? Or elevation modified? Is it possible to remove the island? Will the Corps be doing the engineering for any future implementation projects?

The project manager noted the questions and stated that no alternatives have been taken off the table and future relationships with the Corps and others are unknown.

Another citizen stated that the flushing channel was currently full of debris on the Columbia River side and asked if there was someone who could address this. Patty said that Port maintenance staff removes debris twice a year or as needed from the flushing channel and she will talk to staff about the request.

He also stated that he is wary of revising the vision because with the past facilitator they sat through many meetings to develop the vision and he hopes that they won't be sitting through an identical process. The project manager said he hoped to move the group forward, not backward and would be mindful of past efforts.

#### **Next Steps/Close**

The project manager closed the meeting and thanked everyone for coming.

#### **Next Meetings:**

Steering Group Meeting on April 16, 2008.

Full Partnership Meeting on May 21, 2008.