



August 15, 2007 Meeting Summary

The twentieth meeting of the Vancouver Lake Watershed Partnership was held on Wednesday, August 15th from 4:00-6:00pm at the Fruit Valley Community Center in Fruit Valley Park.

Attendance:

Member Present	Member Seat
Patty Boyden	Port of Vancouver
Pete Capell	Clark County Dept. of Public Works
Brian Carlson	City of Vancouver Dept. of Public Works
George Medina	US Army Corps of Engineers
Iloba Odum	WA Department of Ecology
Randy Phillips	Clark County Health Department
Doug Quinn	Clark Public Utilities
Scott Robinson	WA Department of Natural Resources
Tim Rymer	WA Department of Fish and Wildlife
Nancy Ellifrit	Citizen
Thom McConathy	Citizen
James Meyer	Citizen
Donald Jacobs	Citizen
Gary Kokstis	Citizen
Jane Van Dyke	Citizen

Public in attendance:

Dvija Michael Bertish	Citizen
Dick Chandlee	Citizen
Vinton Erickson	Citizen
David Page	Citizen
Bob Moser	Citizen

Other Agency Members Present:

Katy Brooks	Port of Vancouver
Shayne Cothorn	WA Department of Natural Resources
Anne Friesz	WA Department of Fish and Wildlife

Project Management Team:

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

Agenda Review

Introductions

The project manager welcomed the group and attendees introduced themselves. He thanked Katy Brooks for arranging the new meeting space and the Port for providing refreshments.

Agenda/Discussion Topics

The project manager introduced the agenda and asked if there were any modifications. There were no modifications to the agenda. He noted that the primary outcome of the meeting today was a recommendation by the Partnership to the Steering group to support the Corps proposed feasibility study.

Partnership Business

Public Announcements

Dvija Bertish commented that there were citizen representatives that were not attending Partnership meetings and that this should be addressed. He also noted the potential of PCB's entering the flushing channel during dredging operations. He urged the Partnership to keep this in mind as discussions regarding flushing channel management evolve. The project manager mentioned that he will be contacting the citizen members of the Partnership to discuss their involvement with the Partnership. He also noted that the concern regarding contaminants in the flushing channel would be tracked.

Bob Moser passed out a flier and reminded everyone about the Forum at the Library scheduled for September 20, at 7pm at the Vancouver Community Library. He also asked that the flier be posted and distributed.

Two citizens commented that mosquitoes at Vancouver Lake were worse than usual right now.

Partnership Announcements

Gary Kokstis commented that the Clark County Health Department website was out-of-date. Iloba Odum announced that the WA Department of Ecology has had a regional office in Vancouver for 10 years. They will be recognizing their achievements at a public open house tentatively scheduled for November 28, 2007 and to mark your calendars. More information will follow.

Minutes from 6/20/07

The project manager asked if there were any additions or modifications to the minutes of the June 20, 2007 meeting. The minutes were approved as written with no changes.

Project Manager Update

The project manager said that the transition from Jeanne Lawson and Associates to the Lower Columbia River Estuary Partnership and PC Trask & Associates appears to be going smoothly. There had been two Steering Group meetings since the last Partnership meeting and good discussions have been taking place regarding the work plan and Corps feasibility study.

The project management team has been reviewing and organizing the Vancouver Lake questions and has received permission from the Steering Group to begin re-formulating them. Many questions are not technical but management or vision related. The project manager asked for volunteers to make up a small working group to help in this process. The following Partnership members volunteered: Thom McConathy, Brian Carlson, Scott Robinson, Donald Jacobs, and Jane Van Dyke.

Tech Group Update

The project manager updated the Partnership on behalf of the Tech Group as Ron Wierenga was absent. He announced that the Tech Group had had a meeting on August 9th and that Ron had set a good course for the meeting by laying out ground rules and a charter describing the group's roles and responsibilities. The meeting focused on a presentation by the Corps team on their feasibility study and was followed by a discussion on data gaps. Some data gaps that surfaced included: water quality modeling, lake sediment dynamics, warm water fish abundance, and nutrient and contaminant cycling.

PIO Update – The Forum at the Library

The Public Involvement Group stated that they were working on a plan to generate more media attention. They also added that they were considering establishing volunteer groups to help the community get more involved with the lake. They would be rolling out ideas to the Steering Group in the next few months.

Randy Phillips said that the health department will be updating the website and that the latest monitoring data will be available soon.

Gary Kokstis told the Partnership about what he personally feels is his role as a citizen member. He said he sees himself there to: help facilitate bringing in outside resources, help keep the group focused, and keep the emphasis on blue-green algae as that is what brought the group together in the first place.

Draft Work Plan Discussion

The project manager introduced the draft work plan which was forwarded to the Partnership prior to the meeting. He commented that it was a working draft and would need to be reviewed, discussed and refined by the Steering Group and Partnership between now and the end of the year. Feedback is always welcomed.

In highlighting the work plan, the project manager noted that the first part consists of elements he is working on now including Corps coordination, Partnership housekeeping, interacting with Capitol and Moses Lake projects, developing funding sources, refining the list of questions, and work plan development.

The second part of the work plan is for a two year period beginning in January 2008. It outlines a path for the Partnership to follow in the future. Elements listed include: vision refining activities, technical gap analysis, unresolved topic resolution, coordination of additional studies, developing a watershed plan, developing additional funding sources, Partnership administration, and communication with the public and agencies.

At this point the project manager asked for comments and feedback on the draft work plan. He asked for initial reactions and for people to tell him what might be missing.

Iloba Odum said that the work plan was clear and asked what the project manager had planned to learn from Capitol and Moses Lake. Phil said he had a meeting planned in early September in Olympia with people working on the Capitol Lake project. Scott Robinson commented that he was involved with the Capitol lake project and provided information on what was occurring there. He said that they were currently underway with an estuary feasibility study that evaluated aspects of reverting the lake back to an estuary. He noted the potential for the Partnership to get money in the next legislative session.

Thom McConathy asked if writing a plan might be premature for Vancouver Lake. Phil acknowledged that many questions need to be answered but noted that much of the work has already been started. He said that we will know a lot more in a year and that a skeletal plan without definite construction alternatives would be useful to frame questions and make preliminary decisions based on what we already know.

Gary Kokstis added that public communication should be a large part of the plan.

Corps Feasibility Study and Discussion

George Medina from the Corps presented a PowerPoint presentation on their feasibility study. He began by describing how the Partnership's vision is broad and noted that a GI study is better suited for the scope of the project. However, because Congress was not authorizing new GI studies at the time, funding was not available. Funding was available however, under the Section 536 Program and a feasibility study was initiated under that authority. The Corps first performed

reconnaissance work and developed a Preliminary Restoration Plan for the lake. They looked at elements ranging from tide gate operations, depth of the lake, water turn-over time, vegetation, and most importantly, the presence, abundance and distribution of salmonids.

He described how water quality is the crux of the problem. It is influenced by flow dynamics, and currently the lake recharges on average about once a month. Improving flow dynamics will improve overall water quality. The Section 536 program is a cost-shared fish-centric program with a focus on improving habitat by introducing riparian vegetation and favorable hydraulic conditions for salmonids. The feasibility study investigates restoration potential and the cost/benefit of alternatives

George explained their revised policy on cost sharing for the feasibility study. Under the original stated policy, the Corps would cover the first \$100,000 of the study. Costs above and beyond the initial \$100,000 required a 50/50 match. George said that the cost share requirements for this project had been adjusted and the Corps will provide the feasibility study with no money needed up front from the Partnership. If the study is completed and the project identifies alternatives that demonstrate cost effectiveness, the Partnership can elect to move forward with the selected 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 over time. If the feasibility study ends because implementation is not realistic for salmonid benefit, then there will be no cost to the Partnership. Study results would still be available to the Partnership to help inform the larger restoration effort.

In the feasibility study scope, the Corps would investigate habitat potential as recommended in the Preliminary Restoration Plan. It would establish a biological baseline for juvenile salmonid attraction, ingress/egress, and rearing. Some of the challenges identified to date include: heavy sedimentation at the mouth of Lake River and periphery, potential impacts of the Lake Shillapoo project (elevated temp), potential scouring at the mouth of the flushing channel, and potential groundwater withdrawals in the vicinity.

The schedule and scope of the technical studies will remain flexible because of key uncertainties. There will be several go-no-go milestones. The biologic preliminary go-no-go report should be ready in October. At this time the team should know if there is enough evidence of salmonid use and habitat to justify further study. Also in October, hydraulic study and modeling data should determine if the hydraulic potential of the lake can support salmonid habitat. If the study goes to completion, the earliest construction date would be 2012.

Partnership discussion ensued after the presentation.

- *If you increase flow dynamics, how much will you improve water quality?* George said that it is still unknown.
- *What if the Corps alternatives conflict with recreation?* The Partnership is always free to walk away from Corps recommended alternatives and construction with nothing lost.
- *If the construction phase is reached will in-kind monitoring that is occurring prior to implementation count towards match?* No.
- *Since this study is fish-centric, in your experience, will we get enough data to help our bigger vision?* George replied that he thought it would be a great place to start.
- *Who decides the go-no-go points?* The Corps.
- *Is the Corps looking at the flushing channel and making recommendations on operations and maintenance?* George replied that they are looking at many alternatives.

- *How long is this going to take? It is going to take a LONG time.*
- *Does the Corps have enough money to support the feasibility study in the near future? George replied that the money was congressionally mandated and that they are fine for the next few years.*
- *When in October will the Corps have made their decisions on go-no-go? It would be great to coordinate that with the next Partnership meeting. It was stated that there are two steering group meetings prior to the next Partnership meeting and that the Corps will be informing us of their progress along the way and the Partnership meeting can be adjusted if necessary.*

Public Comment

Dvija Bertish reminded everyone that the Corps is not the Partnership's saving grace. Other actions need to occur simultaneously.

With potential no-go's on the horizon, what other Corps options are out there? The GI study.

Who is in charge of operations and maintenance? What happens if this is not kept up? The local sponsor is responsible, but the Corps would not take action if O&M lapses.

Is the Corps going to tell us that the lake is dying? You will never hear that the lake is hopeless from the Corps.

Dick Chandlee mentioned that he was surprised that no one had contacted lake neighbors that have lived by the lake for generations. They are the ones who have first hand knowledge of conditions and changes that have occurred throughout the years. He described large clams that used to be there and showed the group a large long shovel that used to dig holes for piles. He also described the presence of artesian wells at some spots along the shore.

Partnership Recommendation

After the discussion session and public comment period, Brian Carlson made the following motion: The Vancouver Lake Watershed Partnership endorse and support the proposed Corps Feasibility Study. Thom McConathy seconded the motion and the Partnership voted unanimously in favor of the Corps feasibility study.

Next Steps/Close

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

Next Meeting: October 17, 2007