

Vancouver Lake Watershed Partnership

Steering Group Meeting Summary

Meeting Date: November 16, 2011

Steering Group Members Present:

Patty Boyden	Port of Vancouver
Kevin Gray	Clark County Environmental Services
Jane Tesher Kleiner	Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation (alternate for Pete Mayer)

Other Agency Members Present:

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.

Phil started the meeting with a review of the agenda. No topics were added to the agenda.

Project Manager Update

Funding Considerations Table/Wrapping up 2011 and Planning 2012

Phil discussed the funding considerations table that was developed with Jeff Schnabel. In a recent meeting with Jeff some minor changes were discussed as well as having Rob Zisette, sub-contractor with Herrera review and comment on the table. The revised table will be emailed to the Steering Group for review prior to the next Partnership meeting.

The group discussed the value of the table as a vehicle to engage the Partnership about where the Partnership should focus in 2012 and beyond. The December Partnership meeting can help narrow the direction of the Partnership: what are the most valuable management targets? The table helps show how beneficial uses are supported under different scenarios.

The Steering Group is ready to start this conversation now: How do we frame this properly for the larger group? Information in the table can guide the conversation: what aspects are realistic? The plan is to have preferred management alternatives at the end of 2012.

This process is not intended to refine the vision. The broad vision doesn't necessarily need to be narrowed, but we need to narrow the many available management actions down to preferred options.

If management actions are lowered on the priority list, they could still be visited in a future work plan. The prioritization can be part of taking incremental steps forward for the lake.

The narrowing process should be framed by the questions: "What do we want the outcome to be?" Once we know what the partnership's preferred outcome is we can evaluate specific actions to achieve that goal. The

USGS results will be needed in terms of which actions should be implemented, but not to answer the question of what is the goal of the group. There are several criteria for prioritization, including desired outcome, funding, and likelihood of attaining results.

The Steering Group will help frame and facilitate the discussion with the Partnership in December. A likely process would be that after a preliminary discussion, each Partnership member could have some ranking chip for each member to attach to their priority outcomes. Once everyone provides feedback a prioritized ranking of management focus areas should result.

Going through this process with the Partnership in December will help narrow the list of eight management focus areas. If a certain aspect comes out as a priority that requires additional information we can get that information during 2012, during the USGS study, so that we can have preferred alternatives afterwards.

The Steering Group will go through the prioritization process ahead of time as a group to see how the process would work, and understand how the Steering Group would prioritize before engaging the larger Partnership. This is not to bring a shortened list to the Partnership, but to allow the Steering Group to develop the process for the 21st through a work session. The work session will also allow the Steering Group to be better prepared to discuss and facilitate points for the 21st. Inviting the Technical Group to the Steering Group work session will allow them to indicate what they see as likelihood of success of different outcomes.

The group discussed the timeline: the prioritization process is intended to result in a relative ranking of management focus areas. Then at the end of 2012 a preferred alternative will be selected. The funding considerations table will be appended to the management plan so future efforts can build upon it if desired.

Eileen will send an email for the Steering Group to decide on a date and time for a Steering Group work session on December 8th or 9th. Discussion could be up to three hours.

The following suggestions were discussed regarding the table: Clarify the column on management focus. Some aspects reach across several focus areas; e.g., public education. More information would be useful in the outcome column; e.g., if we implement "a," "b" is the outcome.

Habitat Restoration/Centennial Grant

Phil explained to the group that after the project management team inventoried habitat quality around the lake it was evident that the lake edge is in reasonably good shape from a habitat perspective. There are medium and large scale projects that could be implemented to improve lake habitat, but nothing at a scale small enough to be appropriate for a Centennial Grant application this year.

Partner Resignation

Jim Meyer indicated by email that he would be resigning from the Partnership. The Steering Group will consider if they wish to recommend filling the seat to the Partnership, as the last time a member resigned the Partnership membership was expanded to accommodate two new members.

Planning Meeting Dates for 2012

The group agreed to hold a Steering Group meeting on January 18th.

Technical Update

A summary of the USGS presentation will be provided by Eileen at a future Steering Group meeting.

There was no other Technical Group update at this time.

Outreach Update:

Sept 17 Vancouver Lake Event

The September 17th Clean up event was very successful – there was an excellent turnout of people who now know about the lake. This was very successful from an outreach perspective, although the Partnership could have been better promoted to the volunteers.

Outreach Ad-Hoc Group Recommendation

Andrew gave an overview of the recommendation from the Outreach Ad-Hoc group. Jane had the idea of an educational monitoring event. There would be several stations at such an event, each with a different aspect of monitoring. This would work along the lines of education about water quality, what the Partnership is doing.

Jane has seen success with this type of event elsewhere. It is similar to the Watershed Stewards– what goes on behind science. The various stations would be at different on-site areas. Besides education, some aspect could develop into a community based monitoring program and provide baseline information to the Partnership.

There are many groups we can partner with for the event, with the Partnership as host: Watershed Stewards, Columbia Springs, Lower Columbia River Estuary Partnership, Clark College-Horticulture, and Audubon Society.

Potential dates for such an event could be in May, June, or September. We will look to avoid other big volunteer days in the area, such as Get Outdoors Day, Earth Day, etc.

Patty asked if such an event is manageable. Jane commented that with tapping into existing resources it can be very reasonable. Each group would be in charge of running their own monitoring stations according to their interest/expertise. The event would be family oriented, with activities for all ages, including fun alternative activities for others such as ecological art for younger children.

Kevin and Patty endorsed the Ad-Hoc group's recommendation. If some funds are needed, education is a great use of Partnership funds. The County has other resources it can tap into as well. The Ad-Hoc group will need to look into what resources are needed and report back to the Steering Group.

Annual Report

Phil announced that the project management team is working on an Annual Report for December. Some prospective information will be included. The report could be sent to legislators to give them an update on Partnership activities. In talking with Jeff, getting a report to legislators right now is a better use of time than meeting with them during our research phase.

Eileen asked for the group to contact her with suggestions for the annual report. Rob commented that the county is doing a planting near the lake in February and will forward information to Eileen.

Other announcements

Phil commented that the US Army Corps of Engineers and Bonneville Power Administration are currently looking along the Columbia River for potential salmon restoration projects. The process is considering several locations for feasibility studies. Along with Buckmire Slough, Vancouver Lake has been identified as a possibility. No specific project has been suggested at this time. Kevin asked for a briefing or one page fact sheet on what the federal process is, where Vancouver Lake is in the process, how it could affect the Partnership and stakeholder agencies, as well as who Partnership members should talk with to advocate, and how timing is important.

The meeting was adjourned.

Next Meetings

The next meeting of the full Partnership is on December 21st at 4 pm at the Port of Vancouver offices.

A Steering Group work session in early December will be scheduled with Steering Group members by email.

The next regular Steering Group meeting is January 18th at 3:30 pm at the Port of Vancouver offices.