



October 21, 2009 Meeting Summary

The thirtieth meeting of the Vancouver Lake Watershed Partnership was held on Wednesday, October 21, 2009 from 4:00-6:00 pm at the Port of Vancouver Administrative Offices.

Attendance:

Member Present	Member Seat
Patty Boyden	Port of Vancouver
Loretta Callahan	City of Vancouver Department of Public Works (alternate for Brian Carlson)
Ron Wierenga	Clark County Department of Public Works (alternate for Pete Capell)
Iloba Odum	WA Department of Ecology
Anne Friesz	WA Department of Fish and Wildlife
Jacquelin Edwards	Citizen
Nancy Ellifritt	Citizen
Gary Kokstis	Citizen
Thom McConathy	Citizen
David Page	Citizen

Public in attendance:

Dvija M. Bertish	Citizen (Riverkeeper)
Lehman Holder	Sierra Club
Harvey Claussen	Vancouver Lake Sailing Club

Other Agency Members Present:

Jessi Belston	Port of Vancouver
Gary Bock	Vancouver Watershed Council
Tonnie Cummings	WA Department of Ecology
Lisa Goorjian	Vancouver Clark Parks and Recreation Department
Annette Griffy	City of Vancouver
Jeff Mize	Clark County Public Works
Andrew Ness	Port of Vancouver
Jeff Schnabel	Clark County Public Works
Dorie Sutton	City of Vancouver

Project Management Team:

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

Introductions

The project manager welcomed the group to the 30th meeting of the Vancouver Lake Watershed Partnership. Everyone was thanked for coming to the meeting, and moreover for their work over the 5 years of the Partnership. The Port of Vancouver provided a cake for the Partnership in recognition of the 5 year anniversary.

Agenda/Discussion Topics

The project manager introduced the agenda and asked if there were any additions or modifications. One modification was that Clark Public Utilities staff was unable to attend the meeting to give a presentation on the Vancouver Lowlands water supply. There were no other modifications.

General Partnership Announcements

The project manager asked if there were any general Partnership announcements. There were no general announcements at the time.

Port of Vancouver Remediation Projects

Ms. Patty Boyden of the Port of Vancouver gave an update on the Port's groundwater cleanup efforts. This work has been underway for ten years. In 2009 a new cleanup system was built.

As background, the source of the contamination came from the Swan Manufacturing Company and the Cadet Heaters, both facilities used solvents (trichloroethylene (TCE) and tetrachloroethylene (PCE) as cleaning fluids in their manufacturing process. The Port purchased the 0.8 acre Swan property in the 1980's. The cleanup is one of the largest in Washington, and once complete, the work will cost over \$30 million. The Lower Columbia Fish Recovery board Watershed Plan was developed in 2006, which recognizes the need to balance natural resource need with drinking water. The plan identified the Vancouver Lake Lowlands as a future regional water source. It also called out the need to clean up the groundwater.

On-going monitoring tracks the success of the cleanup efforts that have been implemented for the project clean up actions have greatly reduced the extent of the contamination as well as reduced the level of solvent contamination in the groundwater. The 2009 facility is a pumping station that extracts the ground water, and removes the contamination through air stripping towers. Clean water is then discharged to the Columbia River. In summary, the treatment processes 3.6 million gallons of water per day. Since the start in June 2009, a total of 276 million gallons of water has been processed, removing a total of 88 pounds of TCE, 37 pounds of PCE, and 138 pounds of total volatile organic compounds. The total volatile organic compounds include TCEs and PCEs, along with other volatile organics.

The presentation was then opened up for questions:

- *Could the water that is being put into the Columbia be used as dilution for Vancouver Lake?*

The Corps model says that it is a small amount compared to the size of the lake, but some people wonder if it still might help.

- *What precautions are in place to avoid contamination from the treatment system?*

The entire facility is contained within a concrete berm, and there are several safety and alarm systems in place. Extensive on-site testing and monitoring is conducted daily.

- *What impacts are seen on the amount of water in the water system?*

This is a prolific aquifer. Although there is a cone of depression showing water removal, the aquifer is so large and plentiful that the amount of water being withdrawn is considered negligible.

- *How long will the system take to deplete what's left of the toxins?*

A majority of the contaminants are removed within the first 5-10 years but due to the extent of the contamination operation is expected to continue for many decades potentially up to 50 years. In addition, there is a finer grained layer at approximately 17-21 feet below the ground surface which tends to have a stronger hold on the solvents requiring more time to remove.

- *Do you have to replace the plastic balls that strip the VOCs from the water?*

The Port doesn't think so since the water is chlorinated prior to going through the extractor. The water is chlorinated in order to keep the extractor tower clean. (Water is then de-chlorinated before discharging to Columbia.)

- *When the City cleaned up TCEs near Clark College they extracted the TCEs from water but did not discharge to the air, why is the Port discharging to the air?*

The Port is following the same Southwest Clean Air Agency clean air standards as the city did in terms of allowable discharge. The allowable level of discharge to the air is much higher than the amount that the Port is discharging. The Port tested their discharge levels weekly at first and now tests monthly. Results confirm that discharge levels are very low and meeting all permit requirements.

You may view the entire Power Point presentation on the Vancouver Lake website under the "Maps and Materials" page.

The project manager thanked Patty for updating the group with this information from the Port.

Water Quality Toxics Study of Vancouver Lake

Ms. Tonnie Cummings of Washington Department of Ecology gave an overview of the upcoming study by Randy Coats of Ecology. The *Toxic Study of Vancouver Lake Inflows* is a toxic investigation of concentrations of chlorinated pesticides, PCBs, and dioxins/furans from major surface water inputs to Vancouver Lake. The inputs targeted for sampling include the Flushing Channel, Burnt Bridge Creek, and Lake River. Results from the proposed study will help define the relative contributions and seasonality of target contaminants from the Columbia River and urban watersheds contributing surface water to the lake. Seasonal samples will be collected during fall, winter, and spring from one site in Burnt Bridge Creek and the Flushing Channel, and two sites in Lake River. The proposed toxic analytes are hydrophobic and not typically detected in whole water samples. Semi-permeable membrane devices (SPMDs) will be used for sample collection as a means to concentrate the contaminants and achieve low detection limits. SPMDs will be deployed for a one month period during each of the three seasons. There will not be a summer measurement due to the low summer flows (the devices only work when a sufficient amount of water is passing over them). This is seen as a pilot study, with a report to be completed in the fall of 2010. If the study shows that the water sources are delivering these toxins to the lake then Ecology will likely conduct a follow up study to try to identify the sources of contamination.

The presentation was then opened up for questions:

- *Why did you choose to not look at fish or invertebrate tissue?*

This is a water quality study that is looking at water source contamination. The devices are a passive surrogate for animal tissue, as toxins bind to the material in the devices, much like they bind to fatty body tissue. A problem with studying toxins in fish is you do not know where the fish came from and if it was contaminated before it entered the lake.

- *Can the Partnership have a copy of the study plan?*

Ms. Cummings will send the web link to the study plan, called a QAPP, to Eileen when it is available, and Eileen will forward it to the Partnership.

- *Ron Wierenga commented that he appreciates Tonnie and Iloba's work with the Partnership on the part of Ecology. This research is a good addition to other efforts and will give the Partnership valuable data.*
- *Statement from Partnership member: the last two presentations were not strictly tied in to the original questions regarding Vancouver Lake (i.e., cyanobacteria). The Partnership should prioritize according to these questions, not pull in additional concerns.*

As a follow-up, while this and the previous presentation are not linked to cyanobacteria (blue-green algae), they are potentially linked to having a swimmable, fishable lake, which is of interest to the Partnership.

The project manager and the Partnership thanked Tonnie for presenting the upcoming research to the group.

Trails in and around Vancouver Lake Park

Lisa Goorjian of Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation Department delivered a presentation on Parks trails and access around Vancouver Lake. The entire Power Point presentation is on the Vancouver Lake Partnership website's map and materials page.

In 2007 the City of Vancouver and Clark County jointly adopted the Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan. The plan is mandated by the Growth Management Act. The Plan is on Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation's website (http://www.cityofvancouver.us/parks-recreation/parks_trails/planning/pdf/compplan.pdf). There is also a city plan which is more detailed, adopted by the city of Vancouver in 2004 which is on the city website (<http://www.cityofvancouver.us/compplan.asp?menuid=10463&submenuid=10485>).

There are over 20 miles of shared use paths that encircle the Vancouver Lake Area. Current Projects include the Vancouver Lake Trail extension, which will extend the existing soft surface hiking trail at the southern end of Buckmire Slough north. The trail will follow the top of the levee on the east side of the slough. Planning and design took place the fall- spring of 2009. Development is planned for the summer of 2010.

Other plans for the near term are trailhead signs at Frenchman's Bar, and they hope to install quarter mile markers along the trail. A trail is also being planned along Lake River Road, although funding sources are still being pursued, so a date is not yet known. The original idea for this trail was a paved surface, but Parks is considering a soft surface hiking trail in order to build the trail sooner with limited funding.

The Parks and Recreation Department conducts an annual survey of six trails during the same week and time period each year. This year they found a 50% increase in trail use over the same period in 2008. Vancouver Lake - Frenchman's Bar Trail had the second highest user counts (second to Blue Rock).

The Parks Department has formed a partnership called The Intertwine, which includes Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation, Columbia Land Trust, Portland Parks and Recreation, and many other local parks departments and several non-profit groups. The Bi-State Trail Project is a component of the Intertwine. The Intertwine (www.theintertwine.org) also helps get the word out about 37 regional trails. The more regional aspect of the trails better stages the trails for funding sources.

The Project Manager thanked Lisa for her presentation. Several members stated an interest in meeting with Lisa to discuss trail plans around Vancouver Lake in more detail. Eileen will follow up with Lisa to plan such a meeting.

Project Manager Update

The main projects the Project Management team has been working on the lately are the Research Plan for Vancouver Lake, the Management Options report for the lake, and an application for the Washington Department of Ecology's Centennial Grant.

The team is scoped to develop a draft research plan as a means to lay out the schedules and costs of research tasks identified in the Technical Foundation. The Project Manager has subcontracted with a lake expert, Rob Zisette, of Herrera Consultants, for his technical expertise to discuss these research tasks in detail, along with the cost effectiveness of each task. The Technical Group met to discuss an initial draft of the Research Plan on October 19th. A more complete draft will be given to both the Technical Group and the Steering Group mid November, and the final will be presented to the Partnership at the December 16th meeting.

The Management Options report has also been reviewed by the Technical Group in early draft form. There is more work to do on this document, as it lays out the many management strategies utilized at other lakes to address cyanobacteria or algae concerns. This document will follow the same timeline as the Research Plan, with a final report to be presented to the Partnership at the December 16th meeting.

Other work by the team has been working on a new application for Washington Department of Ecology's Centennial Grant, which is due December 1st. With the USGS scientists identified to do the nutrient budget and water balance study, along with their research methodology, the manager feels there is a good chance at receiving this funding, although funding levels will be tight once again. The Steering Group has made the commitment to go forward with the USGS for the work even without Ecology funding due to the critical nature of this work. The team is currently working on the contract with USGS, with Technical Group and Steering Group review of the Statement of Work.

The team submitted a pre-proposal to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for a grant for a portion of the same work, but did not receive a request to submit a full proposal. Although there was only an outside chance of receiving this funding, the time investment was small and seemed worthwhile.

The Project Management Team gave a presentation to the Fruit Valley Neighborhood Association on September 3rd regarding the Partnership's recent efforts. The group was pleased to be informed about efforts to address lake issues. Several neighborhood residents voiced the opinion that they valued the need to conduct research in order to make good management decisions for Vancouver Lake.

Technical Group Update

Ron Wierenga noted that the Research Plan and Management Options documents will tee up research and potential management strategies for people to consider for the lake, making great steps towards understanding and managing the lake.

Washington State University scientists are finishing up their field work in the lake under Ecology's Fresh water algae grant. Their grazing experiments will wrap up in the spring. This stage of the WSU study is looking at cyanobacteria bloom timing and how grazing affects the birth and death rates of cyanobacteria.

Public Information and Outreach (PIO) Update

Loretta Callahan noted that in the Parks and Recreation Department presentation the 2004 parks plan was finalized right when the Partnership was forming.

Loretta will post Ecology's Toxic Study QAPP and the Parks trail information onto the Partnership's website once they are available.

The PIO Group met to discuss what the Partnership is working on for the coming months, and how to get the word out about the Partnership's efforts, including the USGS work and the Research Plan. The group is considering whether or not to repeat the postcard distribution next summer to park users as was done this year, and also opportunities to add signage around the park regarding partnership efforts.

The PIO Group is happy to add Jeff Mize to the team as the Clark county representative. Jeff was formerly with the Columbian Newspaper. He has been on board for about four weeks and is looking forward to learning more about Vancouver Lake.

Public Comment

There was group comment and discussion on the extensive development along the waterfront, to which Vancouver Lake Park is the closest recreational area. Expanding trails to and around the lake will allow for increased publicity about the lake, which can bring greater interest in addressing Vancouver Lake issues.

There was no additional public comment.

Next Steps/Close

The Project Manager thanked everyone for coming and closed the meeting.

Next Meetings:

Steering Group Meeting on November 24, 2009 – 3:30-5:00 p.m.

Full Partnership Meeting on December 16, 2009 – 4:00-6:00 p.m.

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