



**Vancouver Lake Watershed Partnership
Meeting # 3 Summary
4-6 PM, Wednesday, May 22, 2014
Port of Vancouver
3103 NW Lower River Road, Vancouver, WA**

ATTENDEES

Members and Facilitated Group Participants:

- Patty Boyden, Port of Vancouver
- Thom McConathy, NE Hazel Dell Resident
- Ron Wierenga, Clark County
- Jeff Schnabel, Clark County
- Bruce Wiseman, Port of Ridgefield
- Stephen Willie, Private Citizen
- Gary Kokstis, West Vancouver Resident
- Lehman Holder, Vancouver Resident
- Chris Hathaway, Lower Columbia Estuary
- Vern Veysey, NE Vancouver Resident
- Jacquelin Edwards, Felida Moorage
- Brett Raunig, Department of Ecology

Comment [MJ1]: Please note there is no "e" on the end of her first name.

Staff:

- Loretta Callahan, City of Vancouver
- Julie Rawls, Port of Vancouver
- Jeff Mize, Clark County

Consultant Team:

- Jim Gladson, BergerABAM
- Eileen Stone, PC Trask and Associates

Other:

Dorie Sutton, City of Vancouver
Harry Claussen, Sailing Club
Annette Griffy, City of Vancouver
Sunrise O'Mahoney, Van Watersheds Alliance

WELCOME, AGENDA REVIEW, PUBLIC COMMENT

JIM GLADSON

Jim welcomed everyone and introduced the agenda. During the section on potential projects and studies, Jim suggested the group avoid talking about specific projects and keep its focus on governance.

Thom – Who developed the Potential Organizational Structures matrix that will be discussed later in the meeting? Eileen replied that Phil Trask prepared the matrix.

Jim asked for public comment. There was none.

NONPROFIT GOVERNANCE ALTERNATIVES

RON WIERENGA

Ron said Jane Van Dyke, executive director of the Columbia Slough Watershed Council, would not be able to make the meeting until after 5 p.m. He proceeded to introduce Chris Hathaway, deputy director of the Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership.

Chris briefly reviewed the Estuary Partnership's history, including:

- Created by the states of Oregon and Washington in 1995 under the National Estuary Program.
- Spent its first three years developing a management plan for protecting and restoring the lower Columbia River.
- Employees initially worked for the State of Oregon and housed in Oregon Department of Environmental Quality offices.
- Has grown from 4-5 employees when Chris started in 1998 to 21 employees today.
- Continues to receive money from both states, as well as from EPA.
- Has 6 employees focusing on environmental education and stewardship, including invasive species removal and tree plantings.
- Works closely with and receives funding from the Bonneville Power Administration for salmon recovery.
- Does invasive species removal and other work in Salmon Creek and the East Fork of the Lewis River.
- Close to securing a Washington State Department of Ecology grant for reforestation along the East Fork near La Center.

Chris said the group set up a nonprofit organization in 2000 after receiving a large donation. This created an awkward situation for about a year while employees worked for the state of Oregon but also operated a nonprofit foundation. This was resolved when all the employees resigned and went to work exclusively for the nonprofit organization.

Questions/Comments

- Jim – What is the partnership's relationship to watershed councils? Chris replied the Estuary Partnership works as both a collaborator and a convener. Chris said the Estuary

Partnership provides some technical expertise to watershed councils. Most of these councils are small; one with 5 employees would be considered large.

- Vern – How much of the Estuary Partnership’s money comes from public sources and how much comes from private? Chris said he did not have a precise breakdown but estimated 70 percent public and 30 percent private. Bonneville Power Administration is the Estuary Partnership’s largest funder.
- Gary – How many staffers focus on applying for grants? Chris said no one has that as his or her exclusive duties.
- Ron – Clark County Environmental Services spends a considerable amount of time applying for and, when successful, administering Washington Ecology grants.
- Chris – Identifying a group’s mission is essential to starting a nonprofit. His group’s mission goes back to the management plan developed in its early years with considerable public input.
- Lehman – What types of organizations does the Estuary Partnership approach with grant requests? Chris said his group has a variety of efforts. Many grants are project specific and it can be difficult to raise money for rent, electricity and other overhead. Sometimes grants won’t even pay for the staff needed to implement projects. Others require a grantee match.
- Thom – Has the Estuary Partnership ever received money from legal settlements? Chris said the Estuary Partnership does not because it is not an advocacy group. It has never sued anyone and never will.
- Patty – What is the logistical and administrative process for forming a nonprofit? Chris said it took about a year, and he would not describe it as an easy process. There are different types of nonprofits, with the Estuary Partnership being a 501(3)(c).
- Chris – A board of directors often is an important piece to a nonprofit’s success. Directors can bring different skill and other resources to the group, plus they have the ability to drum up public support. The Estuary Partnership has a broad-based 19-member board of directors that has included representatives from local government, state agencies, agriculture and business/ industry.
- Jim introduced Sunrise O’Mahoney, executive director of Vancouver Watersheds Alliance – She emphasized that it is not easy to set up a nonprofit organization. Her group initially was started by the City of Vancouver, and the city remains its primary funder. Establishing the group’s mission is critical and can take a long time to complete.
- Sunrise – Her favorite part of funding is partnerships. Because the alliance is small, based in Vancouver and has not received grants before, it can be difficult to secure grants. It

would be better positioned to obtain grants if it were based in Portland. There are not a lot of local organizations giving out grants. The alliance is “thrilled” when it gets \$1,000.

- Thom – Can Vancouver Watersheds Alliance engage in advocacy? Sunrise said the group can advocate for general issues but cannot get involved with any candidates or ballot measures.

REVIEW POTENTIAL PROJECTS LIST

EILEEN STONE

Eileen Stone of PC Trask and Associates made a short presentation on where the partnership is regarding scientific studies. Eileen said the group is roughly at a midpoint where it has recommended management actions but not an alternatives analysis.

A final U.S. Geological Survey report should be released in June or July. A draft already has been released.

The partnership knows that the driving factors for nutrient loading are internal lake loading and Lake River. That said, there are data gaps that underscore the need for future research, specifically:

Internal:

- Mechanisms of sediment nutrient release

External

- Hydrodynamics between Salmon Creek and Vancouver Lake
- Nutrient inputs along Lake River

Management Alternative Analysis

- Select analysis method (model)
 - Management objectives/approaches
 - Uncertainty and cost
 - Data needs and gaps
- Analyze alternatives
 - Sensitivity testing
 - Determine if more data is needed
- Further analysis of existing data
 - Lake River in/out dataset
 - Combined WSU + USGS results

Eileen said the partnership could use a model to guide it forward in deciding what data gaps to fill. Such a model has been developed by Portland State University.

Such modeling would provide information on what happens to Vancouver Lake if nutrient inputs are reduced from various sources (e.g. sediment or Lake River). It could indicate that no matter what the partnership does with sediment, it may not have a significant impact, so that further study of sediment is not critical. In short, the model could help determine what data gaps need to be filled and what alternatives are worth pursuing.

Eileen said additional work could be done to further analyze existing data.

Cost estimates:

- Sediment studies (biological, physical and chemical factors), \$90,000 to \$160,000 total
- Lake River study, \$150,000 to \$300,000
- Modeling: \$70,000 to \$120,000
- Further analysis of existing data: \$10,000

Questions/Comments

- Thom – A fisheries study still needs to be done and should be listed. Eileen said this study could be important when it comes to securing funding and for permitting.
- Thom – There is a potential revenue stream the partnership is ignoring if it does not pursue a fisheries study.
- Vern – Likes the modeling approach. The partnership needs to be able to say what studies still need to be done and at what cost. This provides a good picture of where we are, what we need to know and how much it would cost, an important platform for moving ahead regardless of governance issues.
- Jim – Partnership seems to be looking at a three-legged stool: governance, financing and studies/projects.
- Stephen – Came to the partnership late to participate in these four facilitated meetings. We do not want to lose our direction. Individual projects and studies can be a distraction to determining what the partnership will be in the future.
- Vern – The partnership needs to have clear goals and objectives stated upfront.
- Chris – There needs to be some additional information. There may not even be a need for an organization until studies are completed.
- Thom – The partnership was told that if it did not go through a facilitated discussion about its governance and financial future, funding would not be available. Chris replied that funding is never assured.

- Stephen – Agrees that partnership needed to know where it was going to determine its future governance.
- Jim – This is a “chicken or egg” conversation. Governance structure and what the partnership will do are both important.
- Bruce – Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership has a broad mission, so could it pursue grants for Vancouver Lake? Chris replied that Vancouver Lake is an important part of the Columbia River’s flood plain. Potentially, there are a number of organizations that could seek grant funding for additional scientific studies and the best approach might be a partnership with different groups.
- Bruce – Not sure the partnership is ready to assemble a new group. It may want to try to form a coalition or enlarge the partnership and go after available grants.
- Chris – More grant dollars are available for implementing projects than for conducting studies or monitoring. Would like to see Washington State University more involved in the partnership.
- Thom – Washington Ecology Department needs to be providing funding rather than only attending meeting. The group needs to bring in additional partners, and Ecology needs to contribute financially.
- Vern – Each one of the remaining studies may have a grant source for which the partnership has not actively sought funding. The partnership needs to be more specific for what it wants to accomplish and then look for funding sources. A former boss would say, “If something is worth doing, you will find a way to do it.”
- Patty – A coalition or partnership should be added to the matrix of governance options.
- Jim – Suggested the group turn its attention to the potential organizational structure matrix prepared by Phil Trask.

REVIEW ALTERNATIVES MATRIX

GROUP DISCUSSION

Interlocal agreement (status quo)

- Jim – Is the group prepared to take this option off the table? Vern replied that he was not prepared to do that.
- Ron – Clark County cannot sustain its current commitment of \$50,000 of direct support. The county already has contributed \$450,000 to fund the partnership’s work, plus an additional \$150,000 to \$200,000 in staff time.

- Vern – Doesn't believe the partnership has pushed hard enough for additional money from the three funding partners. The partnership could bring in new entities and, with some money from the three funding partners, may be able to bring in enough money to pay for the remaining scientific studies.
- Ron – The partnership cobbled together enough money to pay for the USGS study. The partnership may be able to broaden its ranks with new members and new money, but the status quo is not sustainable.

Conclusion: There was general agreement that a broadened or restructured interlocal agreement should remain under consideration but not the current funding arrangement.

Lake Management District (RCW 36.61)

- Thom – The Washington Legislature have added specific lake management districts to state law.
- Patty – A lake management district could be a long-term option for a later date.
- Vern and Bruce – Agree.
- Bruce – Enacting legislation is a long process. Who around this table is prepared to lead that charge? The state Legislature is dealing with many bigger issues and can't make progress on those big issues.

Conclusion: There was general agreement that a lake management district could be a long-term option but was not a viable governance structure in the near term.

Special District (RCW 85.38)

- Loretta – Some of these districts are based on interlocal agreements between different governments.
- Jeff Mize – The Discovery Clean Water Alliance includes Clark County, Clark Regional Wastewater District and the cities of Battle Ground and Ridgefield and was established for regional sewer issues. (The alliance was created under RCW 39.106)
- Ron – Special assessment districts are similar to lake management districts. Funding is tied to the benefit received by individual property owners.

Conclusion: There was general agreement that a special district could be a long-term option but was not a viable governance structure in the near term.

Nonprofit entity 501(c)(3)

- Thom – Sees a potential problem because a nonprofit organization could not advocate.

- Sunrise – Vancouver Watersheds Alliance does advocate for clean water but does not get involved with candidates or ballot measure.
- Thom – Could create an uncomfortable situation where a nonprofit would not want to take a different position from one of its major contributors.

Conclusion: There was general agreement that nonprofit organization should remain under consideration.

Questions/Comments

- Vern – Each one of the remaining studies may have a grant source and that the partnership has not actively sought funding. The partnership needs to be more specific on what it wants to accomplish and then look for funding sources.
- Bruce – There could be a hybrid approach, an interlocal and a nonprofit. He added that the greatest form of advocacy is one-on-one communication with elected officials.
- Vern – Can see several groups involved in studying the nutrient sources in Lake River, including:
 - Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge
 - Port of Ridgefield
 - Conservation district
 - Discharger of treated effluent into Lake River (City of Ridgefield)
- Vern – The man with a plan will beat the same with a complaint.
- Brett – The Washington State Department of Ecology has been involved with lake efforts and is willing to participate. Ecology could help with modeling and other work as soon as the partnership achieves consensus about its future direction.
- Gary – It make take years to implement a long-term approach for the partnership. Doesn't want to see it lose momentum that it may not be able to get back.
- Thom – Partnership still has some money in the bank.

ACTION ITEMS AND NEXT MEETING AGENDA

GROUP DISCUSSION

Next Meeting – Date/Time/Location

The next meeting of the Partnership will be from 4 to 6 p.m. Wednesday, June 18 at the Port of Vancouver, 3101 NW Lower River Road.

Suggested Action Items/Agenda Topics

- Vern – Who is the partnership is and who speaks for the partnership. He said he wants to ask the county, city and port what financial support they would provide to finish the

remaining studies.

- Patty – Need to set goals of the new organization (e.g. is it to maintain momentum, provide simple process, conduct studies etc.)
- Thom – Group needs to go to the Legislature for a long-term approach and find an interim structure. One interim structure would be to broaden the interlocal agreement by adding new partners.
- Ron – By the end of the fourth and final meeting, the partnership needs to leave knowing what will happen next.
- Patty and Ron – The port and county, respectively, will continue to provide staff time to help the partnership move ahead.
- Jim – Funding partners will not disappear, only their ongoing annual funding commitment.
- Vern – Meeting notes should reflect the specific items Eileen outlined in her presentation.

Based on the discussion, Jim listed the following topics on a flipchart for meeting No. 4:

- Who are we?
- Goal of new structure:
 - Maintain momentum
 - Long-term entity
- What needs to be done:
 - Short
 - Long
- Partnerships:
 - Other entities involved
 - Government and nongovernment organization
- Funding for studies
- What's next for process?