



June 23, 2010 Meeting Summary

The thirty second meeting of the Vancouver Lake Watershed Partnership was held on Wednesday, June 23, 2010 from 4:00-6:00 pm at the Port of Vancouver Administrative Offices.

Attendance:

| Member Present | Member Seat |
|-------------------|---|
| Brian Carlson | City of Vancouver Dept of Public Works |
| Ron Wierenga | Clark County Dept of Environmental Services (alternate for Kevin Gray) |
| Steve Prather | Clark Public Utilities (alternate for Doug Quinn) |
| Chris Hathaway | Lower Columbia River Estuary Partnership (alternate for Debrah Marriot) |
| Patty Boyden | Port of Vancouver |
| Iloba Odum | Washington Dept of Ecology |
| Anne Friesz | Washington Dept of Fish and Wildlife |
| Jeroen Kok | Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation (alternate for Pete Mayer) |
| Jacquelin Edwards | Citizen |
| Nancy Ellifritt | Citizen |
| Don Jacobs | Citizen |
| Gary Kokstis | Citizen |
| Thom McConathy | Citizen |
| David Page | Citizen |
| Jane Van Dyke | Citizen |
| Vernon Veysey | Citizen |

| Other Agency Members Present: | Association: |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Tonnie Cummings | WA Dept of Ecology |
| Andrew Ness | Port of Vancouver |
| Dorie Sutton | City of Vancouver |
| Jeff Schnabel | Clark County Department of Environmental Services |

| Project Management Team: | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Phil Trask | PC Trask & Associates, Inc. |
| Eileen Stone | PC Trask & Associates, Inc. |

Opening of Meeting/Agenda Discussion

The project manager opened the meeting by welcoming the group to the 32nd meeting of the Vancouver Lake Watershed Partnership. Phil expressed that PC Trask & Associates is excited to be back on the project under the new contract. He and Eileen are looking forward to working with the partners to achieve positive outcomes for Vancouver Lake.

Phil asked for any additions or changes to the agenda. It was clarified that the fourth quarter Partnership meeting of 2010 will be on Wednesday, December 15th.

General Partnership Announcements

The following general Partnership announcements were made to the group:

Iloba Odum announced that EPA released their report on the Site Investigation of Vancouver Lake/Flushing Channel and asked if there would be discussion of this at the meeting. Phil indicated that Jeff Schnabel would discuss it as part of the Technical Group update later in the meeting.

Tonnie Cummings announced that Ecology's SPMD (Semi-permeable Membrane Device) toxin study, which was presented at the October 2009 Partnership meeting, is now underway. Samples are being collected at the Flushing Channel, Felida Moorage, Ridgefield Marina, and Burnt Bridge Creek. The analysis of all samples will wait until the study is complete due to cost savings. The last sampling date will be this fall, and the report will be released in fall of 2011. The study is examining fat soluble contaminants (Dioxins, PCBs, and PAHs) in the water column. This study is a follow up to a fish toxin study Ecology conducted several years ago.

Vernon Veysey announced that as alternatives are examined he would like to see discussion of utilizing the water coming out of the Westside plant and the Port's groundwater cleanup project as potential longtime sources of increased water volume to assist in flushing/diluting Vancouver Lake.

Thom McConathy asked about studies on Vancouver Lake that haven't provided final reports to the Partnership. He would like a report on the current status of Army Corps of Engineers and Washington State University work in Vancouver Lake. Ron Wierenga commented that the Corps provided a literature review and a report on the hydrologic model to the Partnership as a courtesy of the work they were conducting under their own purview. No further reports are expected of the Corps. WSU has provided interim reports on their work and their final report on the three year study is expected this fall.

Ron Wierenga announced that with the reorganization of Clark County Department of Public Works, Director Pete Capell will no longer be the County's Steering Group member for the Partnership. Kevin Gray, Director of the newly formed Environmental Services, will be the new County representative with Ron serving as alternate. Ron commented that Pete Capell did an excellent serving job the Partnership during his tenure on the Steering Group.

Project Manager Update

Contract

Phil gave an overview of the work to be completed under the new contract, which includes technical support by Rob Zisette of Herrera Environmental Consultants. Rob was a critical component in development of the research plan and the management techniques report last winter.

Areas of note in the new three year contract are the following:

1. At end of the three year period we are to be narrowed down to a management technique(s) with which to move forward. More analysis may be needed but the techniques to be investigated will be narrowed down so the Partnership can prepare for implementation.
2. In view of the need for additional funding for research, there is a need to move into a greater outreach role, making sure the community is aware of Vancouver Lake issues. This will help to gain financial support so that needed research results are in place to support implementation decisions. Also, the community will be aware of the plans when it becomes time to implement. There is a lot more work to do with both the broader community and individual partners than under the previous contract.
3. During this research mode, the Steering Group has set quarterly Partnership meetings and bimonthly Steering Group meetings so that time can be better used. There will be more work to do with both the Steering Group and the Partnership members outside of meetings, but without research results to report on a frequent basis, more frequent meetings didn't seem fruitful.

There was discussion among the group that there is a perception that less frequent meetings will mean slower progress, and that despite dwindling resources, partners wouldn't want to see quarterly meetings dwindle further. The Sailing Club recently completed a 20 year vision plan, which includes working with

the broader community, not just club members. The Sailing Club would like to see commitment put forth by other Partnership members to make further progress at Vancouver Lake. Phil described the commitment he is seeing from the Steering Group as no less than it was before under the earlier contract. Meetings are fewer, but the commitment and work on behalf of Steering Group members is at least as high as before.

A request was made to generate a timeline so the Partnership knows where we are. The Research Plan timeline addresses the technical side. However, a road map of how the Partnership should approach selection of management techniques isn't complete at this time; nor is a plan for the social outreach component.

The research plan and timeline will be re-circulated along with the management techniques document, and a timeline of other work will be constructed and distributed as well.

Research Plan and Funding

Questions regarding the research that has yet to be conducted and the certainty of funding for future research projects were raised. Phil explained that three and a half of the research areas were partially covered already, but there was more work to be done; more than can be funded through the Partnership. Other funding resources will be needed to get the research done.

At the December meeting the status of our request for Centennial Grant funding was not known. This spring selections were made and the Vancouver Lake project did not receive funding. This was the third year we applied. Those projects that did receive funding were "turn dirt" projects; funding of research did not rank well under this grant source. We did receive funding two years ago under the Freshwater Algae grant for the work conducted by WSU.

Part of the project management contract is to find funding for projects. We need to look more broadly at funding, using some innovative approaches. Group discussion touched on looking at the private sector, especially as the state isn't looking to fund lakes at this time. Implementation funding looks better, but research is not as attractive for funders, although we cannot put forth a sustainable project without the research to back it.

Vernon Veysey asked how much the research in the research plan will cost. If the total funding need for research was known, then the Partnership could start pointing to specific funding needs. The cost estimates are within the research plan and total \$1 to \$1.6 million to complete all research outlined in the research plan. Funding for implementing management techniques is not included in that number.

Technical Group Update

Phil asked for Jeff Schnabel to interject with the Technical Group update at this time as it is part of the research discussion, and Phil will finish the project manager update afterwards.

Water Balance/Nutrient Budget Study

Jeff explained to the group that the water balance/nutrient budget work identified in the research plan was identified as the highest priority research for Vancouver Lake. The Technical Group approached USGS early last year about partnering on this research. On Tuesday, June 22nd, the County Commissioners approved the funding, so research will be starting almost immediately. This research will be conducted over several years, with funding almost 50/50 in terms of Partnership funds and USGS funds.

The work will be conducted in phases. First, gages will be installed, to be ready for data collection at the end of this summer. Water quality and flow data will be collected over two years, after which a comprehensive report will be completed, due September 2013, which will shed light on which management activities should be considered/ how the Partnership should move forward. The total

budget for this work totaled \$751,000, with roughly \$350,000 from the Partnership. Phil thanked Jeff for his work in securing approval from the commissioners.

Brian Carlson requested that the Technical Group have a kick-off meeting with USGS. Ron stated that the Technical Group's primary role over the next few years will be working with the USGS.

Washington State University Algal Research

WSU completed its third year of field work in early spring. They are currently analyzing data and writing the final report on this study of Algae/zooplankton interactions.

A question was raised regarding if there is an upcoming WSU work on Vancouver Lake for which WSU will be requesting Partnership funds: For now there isn't a specific project. We will likely apply for Ecology's Freshwater Algae grant again with WSU and if received there could be some match from the Partnership. Ron informed the group that WSU was partnering with other universities on a National Science Foundation research project on urban ecosystems, including Vancouver Lake. It looks like a portion of that proposal will be funded. The Technical Group will look for ways to partner with WSU, but nothing is planned right now.

Environmental Protection Agency Site Investigation

EPA released its Site Investigation report on Vancouver Lake, after including clam sampling in September. Joanne LaBaw of EPA gave a presentation at the June Partnership meeting on the first part of their study. Based on the concerns about a lack of clam samples, the EPA contractor returned for clam sampling in September. EPA will release a letter in late July that will provide recommendations for future actions based on the findings in the report. EPA will be invited to the September Partnership meeting to give a presentation on the results and their recommendations.

Project Manager Update, continued

Overview of Research Areas and Funding:

Phil gave an overview of the areas of research outlined in the Research Plan and the status of each.

- Water Dynamics and most identified nutrient research will be covered by USGS.
- Sediment studies: depending on how in depth we wish to go in this area, some work will be covered by USGS.
- Food web research: baseline work has been completed by WSU.
- Toxic contaminants research: EPA and Ecology have done work recently and we have information from older studies; after EPA's recommendation is received more work may or may not be needed.
- Fish, Wildlife, and Habitat: only have information from the 1980s – this gap will need new funds.
- Model development: this will need to wait and pull together information from the other areas as completed. This will require new funds. When we get to this point we should be in a good position for a grant due to work completed.

If we project Partnership funds in the same manner as it has been funded in the past from the County, City, and Port, and spend funds as planned on project management and the USGS study, there will be limited financial resources. Looking for other money will be essential to have some funds available for unforeseen Partnership needs, as well as to fund other needed research.

Suggestions for Project Management Team

Phil asked the group to provide input, at this meeting or later, for suggestions on what the project management team or the Partnership in general could do better. One thing the project management team will be doing is calling members individually. Members are welcome to call Eileen and Phil as well. It will be important for the project management team to understand the members' interests and their concerns with various management techniques. There were no comments at this point.

Outreach and Outreach Planning

Eileen updated the group on the Partnership's presence at the REI Outdoor Fest held at Vancouver Lake on June 6th. The Partnership had a booth with information about the Partnership's efforts as well as a button making activity for any children attending the event. The booth was staffed by Andrew Ness, Ron Wierenga, Kevin Gray, and Eileen Stone. Unfortunately the weather didn't cooperate and approximately 200 people attended. Last year an estimated 600 people were at the event. Approximately 15 people visited the Partnership booth. Although this event didn't result in extensive outreach it was helpful in preparing for future outreach events.

Phil commented that with the greater emphasis on outreach at this point in the project that he and Eileen will be asking for input/ideas from partners on ways to better reach the community, such as presentations to neighborhood groups and/or watershed councils. We are asking for such input in concert with PIO group efforts.

For example, two years ago the Partnership was part of a Library event. We are looking at what other events we can do. Any ideas from members in building support, approaches to working with the community and even fundraising will be appreciated.

The Vancouver Watersheds Group event calendar was mentioned as a good resource on upcoming events, as well as Facebook group(s). The idea to tie Ridgefield and Vancouver Lake together with a boating event or something similar was raised as well.

An Outreach Plan is to be developed by the project manager and the PIO group.

PIO Group Update

Andrew Ness gave an overview of PIO activities. The PIO group met last week to talk about the new project management contract's inclusion of outreach. The PIO group will work together with the project management team to develop an Outreach Plan.

The first half of this year the PIO group also helped with securing the current contract and in April sent a brief update to the general Partnership to keep everyone up to date on Partnership issues.

Also of note, Matt Graves of the Port of Vancouver swam across Vancouver Lake in May to raise awareness of the lake's water quality and as a fundraiser for Elementary youth in the area. There was a brief article in the Columbian about the swim.

Thom McConathy voiced interest in making the PIO group meetings more public as outreach is more important to the goals of the entire Partnership at this time. If the time and date of PIO Group meetings were circulated beforehand, partners who wish to be involved can participate. Andrew clarified that the PIO group does not meet regularly, having had only two meetings in the last year. However, such meetings might become more prevalent with an increase in outreach. Typically, PIO group discussions take place at the Steering Group meetings. Phil commented that as there was not a Partnership meeting the first quarter of this year we could hold an outreach event, something slightly different than a Partnership meeting in lieu of the missed meeting.

Phosphorous and Vancouver Lake Presentation

Thom McConathy, a citizen member of the Vancouver Lake Watershed Partnership, presented his white paper on restricting phosphorus from entering Vancouver Lake. A copy of the white paper is attached to

these meeting notes. Thom recommended that individuals visit the links in the electronic version of the white paper for more information.

In summary, Thom noted that many lake projects elsewhere that are aimed at managing cyanobacteria have found the need to limit the amount of phosphorus entering the lake. Thom urges the Partnership to utilize BMPs to reduce the amount of phosphorus entering Vancouver Lake from various sources.

Thom suggested that the Technical Group further research BMPs to come up with a plan for Vancouver Lake. Such a plan may be somewhat different from suggestions included in this paper.

Potential BMPs include: bioretention ponds, alum injection, septic system management and conversion, bioretention (rain gardens), agricultural BMPs, nutrient BMPs in the Stormwater Management Manual for Western Washington, and the upcoming statewide ban on phosphorus in detergent (July 1 effective date).

The presentation was then opened up for questions:

- *One of the suggested BMPs was to close the flushing channel when Columbia River water is higher in nutrient concentration: Is the Columbia a source of Phosphorus?*

There was some discussion on this topic in the room. The upcoming USGS research will identify the sources of nutrients to Vancouver Lake and can answer this question conclusively. Thom considers the biggest source of phosphorus to the lake to be sediment from Lake River, Burnt Bridge Creek, and Felida Slope.

- *Is the phosphorus from these water inputs from fertilizers?*

Thom: Not necessarily, as there isn't much agriculture in the area, but from is likely from historical phosphorus load in the sediment. Thom expects that the main sources are likely stormwater and failing septic tanks.

- *What impact to the lake, if any, was there from the 2005-2006 Burnt Bridge Creek restoration project?*

Thom: It appeared that a plug of sediment moved through the system, likely increasing nutrients at the time, but the rechanneling was likely okay for the system overall. Off site wetlands are usually good for long term water quality.

- *On failing septic tanks; is there a system to identify failing septic tanks? And at what cost?*

Thom: The City of Vancouver is actively conducting septic-sewer conversions. Other communities are attempting the same with more limited financial resources. For one residence outside of the city limits a recent estimate for conversion was \$26,000.

- *Can looking at these nutrient sources be added to the Research Plan?*

Ron: Nutrient sources (and sinks) are part of USGS study: where are contributing nutrients, and where are legacy nutrients?

- *This paper addresses surface water bodies; was groundwater looked at as a potential source?*

Thom: Groundwater was not covered here, but it could be a source as well.

- *If this is a request that the Technical Group look at BMPs, to whom would they make a recommendation?*

Thom: The Technical Group can look at techniques more specifically and make recommendations to local jurisdictions and partnerships; the Vancouver Lake Watershed Partnership can advocate.

- *Brian: Going to the larger community at this time seems a little ahead of the game in that we don't have the studies yet that point us to major phosphorus sources. It doesn't seem like we should*

Thom: I would want the Partnership to show a commitment to reducing phosphorus from entering the lake. Based on my conversations with Ecology staff and research on lake restoration activities, lake restoration projects are only successful when watershed phosphorus is reduced. Implementing BMPs also sends a signal to potential funders that we are actively addressing the problem.

- *Ron: Given limited financial resources, the highest nutrient loads should be targeted first, and the highest loads have not yet been identified. I appreciate the information in this white paper. With this, the Technical Group could put more detail to management techniques to bring to the Partnership. This would be a natural next step in adding detail to the draft management techniques report.*
- Thom: There are BMP recommendations to reduce stormwater inputs from the Department of Ecology in the Western Stormwater Manual Volume V. Implementing BMPs demonstrates community commitment that can be important in receiving State or Federal funding. The earlier BMPs are applied the earlier lake water quality improvements may be realized.

The project manager thanked Thom for his work and closed questions.

Burnt Bridge Creek Total Maximum Daily Load Report

Tonnie Cummings of Washington Department of Ecology gave an overview of the status of the Burnt Bridge Creek Total Maximum Daily Load Report (TMDL). The presentation is attached to these meeting notes.

The TMDL is now in the data analysis phase, with the data collection phase completed. As a refresher, a TMDL looks at what the Department of Ecology can impact in terms of current sources of water quality impairment. There is no water quality standard for phosphorus in streams. Nutrient issues can be addressed by looking at temperature, pH or dissolved oxygen if those factors exceed allowable limits.

The Burnt Bridge Creek study recorded a number of exceedances of temperature, dissolved oxygen, pH and fecal coliform standards. Stephanie Brock of Ecology will be looking at how much pollution reduction is required for individual segments of Burnt Bridge Creek to meet water quality standards. This will involve modeling work, followed by stakeholder participation to develop a cleanup plan. The cleanup plan will then be submitted to EPA for approval (targeted for summer of 2013).

Both the City of Vancouver and the County are already addressing some of the problems that have been identified.

The plan will include an adaptive management process, in which each year Ecology staff and the stakeholder group will meet to discuss and modify cleanup actions, as needed.

On a separate front that also has a role in Vancouver Lake: Ecology is doing a special study to look at dissolved oxygen and pH in the Salmon Creek watershed to determine if low concentrations are a natural condition. If the concentrations are not due to natural conditions, Ecology will look at factors, including nutrient levels, that contribute to impairments. This study will start this year and continue for one year.

With no questions from the Partnership, the project manager thanked Tonnie for her presentation.

Public Comment

There was no additional public comment.

Meeting Closure

The project manager thanked everyone for coming and reiterated that he is glad to once again be part of the Partnerships' efforts to improve Vancouver Lake. Phil then closed the meeting.

Next Meetings

Steering Group Meeting on July 14, 2010 – 3:30-5:00 p.m.

Full Partnership Meeting on September 15, 2010 – 4:00-6:00 p.m.

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