



March 16, 2011 Meeting Summary

The 35th meeting of the Vancouver Lake Watershed Partnership was held on Wednesday, March 16, 2011 from 4:00 – 6:00 pm at the Port of Vancouver Administrative Offices.

Attendance:

Member Present

Jacqueline Edwards
Nancy Ellifrit
Thom McConathy
David Page
Eric LaBrant
Patty Boyden
Kevin Gray
Annette Griffy
Jeroen Kok
Iloba Odum
Bruce Wiseman

Member Seat

Citizen
Citizen
Citizen
Citizen
Fruit Valley Neighborhood Association
Port of Vancouver
Clark County Dept. of Environmental Services
City of Vancouver (alternate for Brian Carlson)
Vancouver-Clark Parks and Rec. (alternate for Pete Mayer)
Washington Dept. of Ecology
Port of Ridgefield

Other Agency Members Present:

Lisa Willis
Andrew Ness
Brooke Porter
Brett Raunig
Jeff Schnabel

Association:

Port of Vancouver
Port of Vancouver
City of Vancouver
Washington Dept. of Ecology
Clark County Department of Environmental Services

Public in Attendance:

Gary Bock
Lehman Holder
Amanda Roberts
Anita Roberts
Alan Stewart
Vancouver Watershed Council
Sierra Club
Vancouver Housing Authority/Fruit Valley Foundation
Vancouver Lake Crew
Vancouver Lake Crew

Project Management:

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

Not in Attendance:

Member

Don Jacobs
Gary Kokstis
Jim Meyer

Member Seat

Citizen
Citizen
Citizen

Jane Van Dyke	Citizen
Vernon Veysey	Citizen
Tom Gonzales	Clark Public Health
Debrah Marriott	Lower Columbia River Estuary Partnership
George Medina	US Army Corps of Engineers
Anne Friesz	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Nancy Lopez	Washington Department of Natural Resources
Doug Quinn	Clark Public Utilities

Prior to the meeting Thom McConathy showed short videos regarding Vancouver Lake.

Opening of Meeting/Agenda Review and Public Comment

The Project Manager opened the meeting with thanks to Thom for showing the film clips prior to the meeting. Thom commented that there are thousands of videos related to Vancouver Lake on the YouTube website. Some provide good commentary about the lake or lake activities, some are not as interesting, and some are related to less desirable activities like car racing along Reeder Road. Thom encouraged members to look at some of the videos online.

Phil highlighted agenda items and asked if there were any changes, to which there were none. The floor was opened for public comment, with none given.

Outreach Event Planning

Jeroen gave a summary of the Outreach Event ad-hoc group meeting on Jan 24th. The group discussed the idea of an on-the-water day as a means of reaching out to more people, and to get as many people out on lake as possible. This type of event would take a lot of coordinating, so the consensus among the committee was this was a great idea to consider for next year.

The ad-hoc group recommended a Partnership presence at two regularly planned events at Vancouver Lake Park: Alder Creek Kayak Paddle Day and REI Outdoor Festival. Eileen will coordinate with the event planners for both of those events and will coordinate staffing the information booth and provide informational materials. The Steering Group gave support for participating in these events at the March 2nd Steering Group meeting.

The ad-hoc group also recommended Partnership participation in the SOLV cleanup event scheduled for September 17th. There have been several SOLV events in Clark County in recent years. The Partnership effort could be focused on bringing people to Vancouver Lake and engaging volunteers in shoreline cleanup. The County is considering a related activity with the removal of in-water debris; this in-water cleanup may be part of the September 17th event. The picnic shelter at Vancouver Lake Park has been reserved as a base for the cleanup and as an area for providing refreshment/entertainment to volunteers afterwards. The appreciation time may be opened to volunteers who worked at nearby SOLV clean-ups, which would bring more individuals to Vancouver Lake Park. The Parks volunteer coordinator may be able to help in recruiting volunteers.

Gary Bock commented that the Vancouver Watersheds Council discussed partnering with the Vancouver Lake Watershed Partnership on this event at the last Board meeting. The Vancouver Watersheds Council has hosted several cleanups along the river, bringing in 300-400 people per event. Their board approved co-sponsoring the September 17th event with the Partnership.

Phil commented that it is good timing to start coordinating and planning this September event now. David mentioned that Eileen will be making a presentation to the Salmon Creek Watershed Council soon and the Watershed Council would likely be hosting a SOLV cleanup in September as well.

Outreach Priorities for 2011

Eileen gave an overview of Outreach Priorities identified for 2011 and distributed a handout to the group. Suggested priorities are based on the Outreach Plan and the ad-hoc committee's recommendations. The first priority is seen as the September 17th event that Jeroen just discussed. Presentations to the Salmon Creek Watershed Council and the Sierra Club are being scheduled. There are several other groups identified for Partnership presentations for this year: Vancouver Audubon Society, Felida Neighborhood Association, West Hazel Dell Neighborhood Association, Northwest Neighborhood Association, and Friends of Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge as well as participating in the Alder Creek Kayak Spring Paddle Festival and the REI Outdoor Festival. These activities are identified as suggested priorities for this year. Other outreach activities are identified in the Outreach Plan for future years. Feedback is welcome on the suggested priorities.

Thom mentioned the need to update the website. It was pointed out that the website has a lot of text which can make it difficult to find information. A webcam on the lake was suggested, as well as a video about the lake, as the current CVTV video is difficult to view through the website. Eileen noted that website work is included on the priorities handout as a Public Information project.

For presentations to the various interest groups, Eileen will give the presentation to the Salmon Creek Watershed Council and schedule the presentation to the Sierra Club. Steering Group members will be invited to each. A Steering Group representative may give the presentation to the Sierra Club as well as at other meetings.

Discussion followed about presenting to small audiences at some of the neighborhood associations; if the audience is small does it still make sense? It was commented that even if only a few individuals show up to a meeting, the associations usually post the information provided at the meeting on their websites. For example, the Felida neighborhood membership is up in thousands and gets their newsletter out to the neighborhood group. It is important to make sure the neighborhood association chairs are informed about the Partnership. We could also consider inviting several of the smaller groups to one presentation, or have a booth at the neighborhood association conference.

Thom suggested other interest groups to reach out to: the Chamber of Commerce in order to get the business community involved, and the Farmers Market, at which we could hand out fliers about the September 17th cleanup event.

Patty asked what the next steps are for outreach. Phil explained that developing presentation materials and handouts are the tasks that will be worked on prior to presenting to groups and attending events.

Partnership Business

Project Management Update

Phil commented that the project management team has primarily been involved in working on the Technical Foundation which will be presented later, as well as looking at outreach priorities for the year. Phil and Eileen met with Lehman Holder and Kerry Crow of the Sierra Club as a first step in outreach and had a positive meeting. The management team is looking at dates in May for a presentation to the Sierra Club.

In other activities, USGS held an internal meeting March 3rd at which Rich Sheibley briefed other USGS scientists on the USGS study of Vancouver Lake. Dr. Gretchen Rollwagen-Bollens also presented WSUV's research to the group. During the meeting Rich and Gretchen recognized the Sailing Club's hospitality to the researchers in allowing access to the lake through the Sailing Club on a regular basis. Phil noted that WSUV also presented their Vancouver Lake work at the Pacific Estuarine Research Society meeting in Astoria on March 3rd through 5th. These are two examples of the research at Vancouver Lake getting out to larger scientific arenas.

Partnership In-reach Summary

Eileen presented an overview of recurring themes that came up in the individual meetings that took place from August to December 2010. Partnership Members are generally positive about efforts made toward understanding and improving Vancouver Lake. There is support for a strong outreach effort. A need is recognized to build both community and political support now, to keep/build community focus on the lake as a treasured resource and due to the need for public support for legislative funding requests. Through outreach, the public can be informed about the timeline for management decisions, Partnership funding, and the choices and costs for lake management options.

Each meeting included a discussion of lake management. Specific management recommendations are not part of this presentation as those will be examined when management techniques are revisited late spring. Within the discussions, the following recurring themes came through:

- Members are glad to have the USGS research underway.
- Interest in not ruling out options before the USGS results are in, but to show all potential options including the constraints and opportunities of each.
- Support for finding sustainable, long-term solutions.
- Interest in quantifying the flow volumes/impacts that the Corps summarized as "changing the flushing channel input volume would not be enough to impact the lake."
- Conversations included potential wetland enhancement for improving water quality while maintaining recreational uses of the lake.
- Interest in analyzing the best operations strategy for the flushing channel for both water quality and fisheries.
- A desire to pursue demonstration project(s) and take an incremental approach for lake improvement.

Other general aspects of the Partnership that were touched on included refining the Partnership's vision statement and getting the full Partnership more involved and empowered. The need to inform partners and others about efforts that are/will help the lake was also discussed (e.g., Burnt Bridge Creek improvements). There was also the desire to demonstrate how Vancouver Lake is part of larger system which may help bring in outside funding.

After the overview, Thom asked about the benefits of this time investment. Phil discussed the benefit of speaking to partners individually and hearing things outside of group setting, so that the project managers understand the interests of different partners, as well as building stronger relationships. Eileen and Phil kept notes of other topics discussed that are not included in this summary.

Patty asked what the overall feeling was from the partners. Overall, the partners understand that things take time, and are glad to have the USGS work underway. There is also pressure to move forward, a need to continue to make progress; to take incremental results from USGS and move forward from that scientific understanding.

David asked if the USGS will provide us with their findings/annual reports before the end of their research analysis. Phil commented that USGS will provide us with information during the course of sampling, and will come to Partnership meetings as meaningful results become available.

Eric commented that he was looking for information due to his new role in the Partnership and asked if there is a preliminary action plan and a timeframe for making major management decisions for the lake. Phil explained that while there is not an action plan per se, the Technical Foundation that is being updated and will be discussed later in the meeting includes an updated Research Plan for Vancouver Lake and a conceptual model with a timeline for what actions/research are to take place prior to management decisions.

Alan Stewart asked if there is a documented history of the lake, prior to the dredging and flushing channel construction so that people can see how the lake got to where it is today and why the flushing channel isn't working the way it was anticipated; is there a way to improve it?

Phil gave an overview of the Partnership's information on lake history. The Technical Foundation gives a brief history of the lake, with a major change to the lake being the changed hydrology of the Columbia River. There have been discussions in several Partnership meetings as well, including modeling from the US Army Corps that showed that due to the large size of Vancouver Lake, modifying the small inputs at the flushing channel would not be great enough to make a big impact on lake water quality. Some lake history is documented in the Stream Net bibliography that can be accessed through the Partnership website.

Jacqueline commented that she has some historical information about Vancouver Lake from the Oregon Historical Society; she can get it to Eileen to share with the Partnership.

Technical Update

Jeff acknowledged the work of the Technical Group and the project management team on the Technical Foundation that Eileen will be presenting shortly and thanked everyone for their efforts on this project, which helps move the Partnership closer to making management decisions for Vancouver Lake.

Updated Technical Foundation

Eileen summarized the substantive changes to the Technical Foundation, including the timeline for finalizing the update. The document was updated throughout, with the most significant addition to the document being a description of the overall technical strategy, including a conceptual model that illustrates the technical strategy and management alternatives selection. Several maps have been added to describe the Vancouver Lake watershed, as well as a diagram to portray cyanobacteria blooms and lake closures due to both E. coli and cyanobacteria. If Partnership members have comments on the Technical Foundation, please provide them to Eileen by March 21st; or if you need more time to comment let Eileen know.

Jacqueline asked when the next Technical and Steering Group meetings will be held. A Technical Group meeting is not scheduled at this time. The next Steering Group meeting is set for May 18th.

PIO Update

Andrew mentioned that the PIO group has been working on outreach priorities and is looking to develop a Partnership banner for event tables. The group is also starting work on a bookmark to hand out at the park entry booth and events and will look to develop other handouts.

General Announcements and Meeting Closure

Andrew introduced Eric LaBrant, the new president of the Fruit Valley Neighborhood Association. Eric replaces Lee McCallister as the Fruit Valley Representative for the Partnership.

Bruce Wiseman commented that Port of Ridgefield representatives were meeting with state legislators regarding funding. It is likely that the pending economic forecast from Washington State will see further budget cuts.

Thom thanked Jeroen for reserving the park shelter for the September 17th event.

Kevin announced that he was just informed that Jeroen will be leaving Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation to join Clackamas Parks. Kevin and the group expressed thanks to Jeroen for his work for the Partnership and the community and wished him well.

Iloba introduced Brett Raunig as the new Columbia Gorge TMDL coordinator for Ecology, replacing Tonnie Cummings. Brett worked for Ecology in the stormwater program prior to starting his current role.

With no further announcements, Phil thanked everyone for coming and brought the meeting to a close.

Next meetings:

Steering Group: May 18, 2011 at 3:30 pm.

Partnership: June 15, 2011 at 4 pm.

All meetings are at the Port of Vancouver offices.