

June 15, 2005 Meeting Summary

The seventh meeting of the Vancouver Lake Watershed Partnership was held on Wednesday, June 15, 2005 4:00-6:00pm at the Port of Vancouver Administration Offices.

Attending

Partnership members in attendance:

Ron Wierenga for Pete Capell, Brian Carlson, Carl Dugger, Nancy Ellifrit, Lisa Faubion, Martin Hudson, Don Jacobs, David Judd, Gary Kokstis, Thom McConathy, Chris Hathaway for Debra Marriott, James Meyer, Dave Howard for Iloba Odum, Larry Paulson, Randy Phillips, Doug Quinn, Bruce Wiseman, Victor Ehrlich

Partnership members absent:

Clark Martin, Lee McCallister, Jane VanDyke, Vernon Veysey

Public Information Committee:

Loretta Callahan, Maureen Chan-Hefflin, Jeanne Lawson, Amanda Garcia-Snell

In the audience:

Dvija Michael Bertish, Patty Boyden, Dick Carroll, Dick Chandlee, Nancy Chandlee, Vinton Erickson, Jacquelin Edwards, Anne Friesz, Annette Griffy, Tim Kraft, Curt Loop, Bob Moser, Traci Nolan, Lenora Oftedahl

Committee Business

Jeanne began the meeting by introducing new partnership member Lisa Faubion of the Department of Natural Resources her alternate will be Anne Friesz.

Nancy updated the group with statistics related to bird watching in Washington.

Jeanne also asked for members to mention any agency grants that they might be aware of that would be applicable for the VLWP.

05/18/05 Meeting Minutes

Corrections are

- Pg 11, 4th paragraph last sentence should read, "publish the map" not "develop the trail"

Public Comment

- Jacquelin Edwards – wanted to follow-up about uses of the lake, she let the group know that there are educational classes conducted by the schools, WDFW, kayaking groups and Northwest Discoveries held at the lake. Many of these groups use the ramp that is near Felida Moorage. She also asked what is in the water that is being pumped out of the field in the north part of the moorage into Lake River and if this has been addressed. What is coming out of the soil into the water? She also
- Dick Chandlee – that was a pumping station that was installed in the 1960s so that Shillapoo lake could be drained into lake River for farming and it is perfectly good soil, in his opinion
- Tom McConathy mentioned that the area is being used differently now, it is part of the DFWW Shillapoo Lake project. They are pumping water into the area. Jacqueline's concern about the water quality of the water coming out of the WDFW area in relation to the excavation and oxidization of the soils. He asked Carl Dugger if he had any information about that area. He did not.
- Randy Phillips mentioned that the Health Department began sampling for blue-green algae. On May 3rd they had low levels but later on June 6th they had levels of one hundred thousand which is their cut-off for a swim advisory. They sampled again on June 13th but did not have the result back yet, but it is possible that there could be a swim advisory as early as next week. This is the earliest into the season, compared to the last three years since testing began, that they have seen this level, which is unusual for this time of year.
- David Judd clarified that the warning is for no water contact, it does not mean that the lake is closed. The recommendation is that people do not swim or play or have full water contact.
- Randy mentioned that blue-green algae toxins can be fatal to humans and some animals as well.
- Thom McConathy mentioned that the testing just measures the levels of the blue-green algae rather than the actual presence of the toxins themselves. In some ways this is a problem, in the same way that we are dealing with fecal coli form. There is a new school of thought within the academic community that we should be looking at specific pathogens rather than benign forms either fecal coli form or blue-green algae. The new equipment to do that is available but the labs are fighting it. It is a controversial thing. His group was trying to address this when the state was re-doing the standards for water quality.
- Randy clarified that the blue-green algae in Vancouver Lake is the species that form toxins but they are actually not testing for toxins. The reason for this is similar to what Thom said as well as reporting time and liability. They felt that this is probably a more conservative but perhaps a better way of going about it. It is the same way that the World Health Organization recommends, some groups suggest other ways, and there isn't a clear standard.

Presentations

Port of Vancouver Future – Larry Paulson, Port of Vancouver – handout attached

Larry began by explaining that the purpose of his presentation, on the Port of Vancouver's plans for the future, is to give the VLWP a context of what the Port would like to see, or are at least discussing what they would like to see, happen over the next five to ten years. The types of plans that he will be showing are the types of things that they believe are relevant to the Port to look to develop. As well as things they are considering in their NEPA process which has begun and is scheduled to be complete in 2007. This is the start of a very long process and there will much opportunity for groups and individuals to participate as they progress.

He then provided a brief history, mission statement and a description of the Port and Port lines of business. The Port is comprised of both marine and industrial facilities. He also provided a breakdown of property taxes within the Port district and a description of past capital improvements. The Port anticipates that upon development of the Rufener property, they will have about 100 acres of light industrial and 160 acres of habitat and mitigation. All of this information, in more detail, is on the handout.

Larry described the economic impacts of the Port. He explained that businesses lease the property from the Port and an excise tax is charged to tenants and returned to the overall tax base. He provided estimations of jobs and revenue related to Port business. He also described the community impacts of the Port. This included a breakdown of taxes charged to Port tenants. All of this information, in more detail, in on the handout.

He provided a list of commission decisions that have impacted Port development. He clarified that the CRANE settlement in 2003 required that the property north of the flushing channel be set aside for mitigation and habitat creation. The property south of the flushing channel will be used for industrial development. He gave detail regarding the Columbia Gateway and the Rufener properties which total about 1370 acres. The Port anticipates that about 500 acres will be used for development and the rest will be used for mitigation and habitat. The acquisition of these properties had the potential to double current Port operations. Larry then showed aerial photos of the area with the working concept pans overlaid. He also showed an aerial photo of the newly acquired Rufener property and gave brief clarifications of future plans for both photos. All of this information, in more detail, is in the handout.

He then explained that when discussing Port development it is important to mention transportation. So much of the Port's activities relates to the movement of cargo or products. Transportation includes river, road and rail. Regarding the river issue, the Columbia River channel deepening is scheduled to begin in less than 10 days. Although the Port is looking at additional road, rail is a key issue for increasing industrial development at the Port. He then showed a slide with the respective rail car counts for each of the Port's tenants and a Washington State Rail map with main line corridors. He also provided some key points concerning

expected cargo and container cargo growth. He explained some of the problems and limitations with the Port's current rail configuration. He suggested that these issues could be alleviated with further development. One of the significant problems for rail and the PoV is that there is only one access going into and out of the Port. It is called the 'hilltrack' and it is near the train depot and the bridge. When there is a train going into or out of the hilltrack it blocks all traffic going north, south, east and west. He also provided a list of the consequences of rail constraints from the Port's perspective. All of this information, in more detail, is included in the handout.

Larry then described the reasons for why the Port is interested in further development. These reasons are included in the handout. One of the reasons is current and potential funding. This includes; federal funding in the form of grants for rail and road development, state funding to look at environmental and impact issues, local funding also to look at environmental and impact issues, railroad funding, and customers/tenants that are currently being sought for property occupation by 2010. This is included, in more detail, in the handout. This concluded Larry's presentation.

Thom asked for clarification about the percentage of waterborne trade growth, which is 65%.

Gary asked about the use of and impact on the water quality of Vancouver Lake in relation to the Port's anticipated development. Larry clarified that he did not see how it could impact the water quality of lake. However, potential locations of rail access into the Port include going around the eastside of the Lake and one of the alternatives in the NEPA process suggests going around the westside of the lake.

Carl explained that mentioned that spillage from rail cars could impact the water quality regardless of the route that the rail cars take. He suggested that each car that goes into the sensitive area could be inspected for spillage and those that do not meet standards not be allowed to enter. This would reduce fertilizer, petroleum and other toxic material spills. Larry reiterated that most of the current cargo is wheat and therefore not as concerning.

Jeanne reminded the group that the intent of the Port's presentation is meant to provide the VLWP with a base of information and provide input to them about concerns, such as spillage. The presentation was not intended to be a forum for the VLWP to debate the Port's future plans.

Thom asked if the Port is committed to clean-up and redevelopment of existing brownfield sites before new development of greenfield sites. Larry clarified that there are no empty warehouse facilities for redevelopment, the Port facilities are currently 100% leased. In regards to the brownfield issue, he mentioned that the

Port has redeveloped the former Port Vancouver Plywood facility and it is mostly being leased.

Thom also asked how the Port derived the number of estimated jobs that would result from future development. Larry explained that the Port commissioned an economic analysis by John Martin and Associates which he would make available.

Gary asked that if the Port does not anticipate any negative impact on the Lake, then what do they see as the positives to the lake environment and the use of it. Larry clarified that it will impact use if rail is put through there. If that is the choice, based on the final recommendations of the process, they will look at mitigation and ensure that potentially impacted habitat is mitigated. However, he does not think that use of the lake will be impacted because there will have to be adequate access.

Nancy asked about how the Port was going to cross through state land by Lake River. Larry clarified that he does not anticipate that this process will be easy. However there is a right of way that WDOT has most of the way to Lake River. Larry fully expects that there will be much more discussion on the route that would work best.

Thom mentioned that he finds it problematic that the Port seems to be only interested in developing lands that are within the marine environment. He feels that many of the new businesses that are going to be located on the Rufener property can be located in areas that are less environmentally sensitive. He asked for answers from the Port in response to this issue. Larry mentioned that he feels that the Port needs to be located near water in order to be successful. This is also the last sizeable tract of waterfront property in Vancouver. Land use of the Gateway property has to be marine-related by ordinance. Jeanne asked that this issue be postponed until it can be further understood how this question is related to the VLWP. Thom asked for further explanation on why the Port needs to be tied to water. Larry answered that the Port is tied to water. If they don't do something regarding rail and transportation of cargo they will, in time, face significant congestion problems and the inability to handle even the business they handle now. Secondly, the Port does need to look to the future in terms of marine cargo. Thirdly, they have been willing to work with other communities and governmental agencies. There needs to be the coming together of governmental organizations if that is where they are going to go. There are other locations where industry can and should be placed but the Port also feels that they need to preserve what they have there and the opportunity for future marine development.

Bruce mentioned that it is important to keep in mind that there are two other ports districts in the county. The Port of Ridgefield is one of them and they are working on the upland portion of the I-5 corridor.

David mentioned that there will be a lot of opportunities to comment on the Ports plan. He asked Larry for a timeline to help the VLWP figure out how these two processes collide. Larry mentioned that this is the leading edge of the NEPA process; they will begin to scope the NEPA process in August. There will be open houses and community discussions between that time and the end of the NEPA process which is scheduled for 2007. David mentioned that it seems like there is time to integrate the plans for the Lake with the Ports plans.

Jeanne clarified that she wants members to be aware of the Port's plan but the VLWP is not the proper forum for determining the right or wrong of their plan.

Brian also wanted to mention that he would like to know more about mitigation properties and the plans for those properties as those are more relevant to the VLWP process. The restoration potential of the non-developed properties is very important to the VLWP process. Larry mentioned that they are discussing about 750 acres (net) of mitigation and restoration property which allows for real opportunities.

Review of Committee Questions –Ron Wierenga & Patty Boyden, hand-out attached

A technical committee was formed to address the questions that were asked by VLWP members and the public throughout the Partnership meetings to date. Ron began by mentioning that the technical committee met and reviewed the list of questions that has been compiled from each meeting. There were 95 questions which ranged from fairly simple to very complex questions concerning hydrology of the lake. They grouped the questions into categories and identified any questions that could be answered at that moment with the available information. The majority of the questions could not be answered without further research and information gathering. Ron then explained some of the categories that questions were put into. They are biological, community involvement, general technical, hydrology, program, water quality, and questions that were not addressed by the technical committee. A detailed description of these categories and a list of the questions with indication of which category they fit into is in the handout.

Jeanne explained that the question handouts were given to the group so that the VLWP could take it home, review it to make sure that the categories are appropriate, nothing was left out, and that the general trends are encompassed.

- Patty also explained some of the categories that the questions were put into. She also mentioned that hydrology and water quality are the overriding themes, followed by wildlife/fish and general technical questions.

Brian asked if the questions are from gaps in the data. Jeanne answered that we will come back to talk about this.

Thom mentioned that a general engineering solution consists of five steps. They are; do assessments, establish goals, and make a plan to achieve those goals, implement the plan, and monitor to see if the plan met the goals. He feels that this seems like an appropriate way to organize the questions themes. If the group was to follow an engineering process; biological, hydrology and water quality questions would go into the bin of assessment; community involvement questions would be part of establishing goals; and the program and general technical questions would be part of preparation to establish a plan. With this in mind, the first step is to conduct an assessment.

Based on Patty's requests, Jeanne asked the group to review the questions and the general trends related to the questions. She asked them to look for these following five points;

- Does the organization of the questions work?
- Are the right questions in the right category?
- Are there any questions that are missing from the list?
- Which questions have been mostly answered?
 - Can these questions be removed form the list?
- Which questions need to be answered in order to develop a vision?

Gary asked who is going to answer the questions. Jeanne explained that the technical committee who is trying to deal with the questions includes Patty, Ron, Victor, Jeroen, and Brian. Kyle Martin has also offered to help and the Corps may also be involved. Gary's concern is that we need to be planning ahead in order to have resources available to answer the questions that need to be answered.

Thom mentioned that process can drive this in ways that would not be workable. It is important that the goals are bought into by the community and all of the stakeholders. He feels that we need more assessment before we can do any planning or say that we have a solution. Jeanne clarified that the future steps include identifying information needed to establish potential alternative futures for the lake area, establishing these futures and then taking them out for a large public discussion once the alternatives have been narrowed down to what is viable.

James Meyer mentioned that the group needs to have a discussion about what data is needed to develop a vision. He feels that there is a general range of alternatives that are viable.

Carl asked if the group has ever identified a list of the problems. Jeanne explained that the intent was for the presentations to raise the problems that the group needs to deal with but that a formal list of problems has not been developed. Carl would like a list of problems to be developed.

Alternative Futures of Lake Area – VLWP

Jeanne clarified that the group will identify possible alternative although the group knows what many of the problems are with the Lake, the ultimate problem is what does the community as a whole want for the watershed.

Thom mentioned that another way to characterize what the possible futures are is to build upon past areas of community consensus. He gave an example of past community consensus regarding habitat. The community wants to see the area not all developed for industry but would also like to see recreational and habitat concerns respected within the futures. He suggested that it be characterized in an EOIS by stating that the community would like to see possible futures with high recreational, high industrial and high habitat. This would allow for the community to identify problems that they could project that would be generated by each of the alternatives. This could be used to decide where to collect data.

Jeanne reiterated that one possibility is to structure the alternative futures by looking at which combinations programmatic and improvements that accomplish each of these goals.

Nancy mentioned that this could bring a little action.

Jeanne asked the group to think about what some of the pieces that might be part of the different alternative futures packages. The group identified these components;

- Restoration
- Smaller, deeper, more sustainable lake
- Reduction of blue-green algae
- More effective flushing channel
- Economic costs vs. benefits to the community
- Year-round recreational destination

Don asked to revisit what the goal of the VLWP is in order to know how to provide input. Jeanne clarified that the VLWP is to work toward consensus on a long term vision for the lake and the watershed and for direction on how to move forward in achieving that visions, first and foremost in developing consensus on the watershed vision. Don asked if that includes getting input from other groups that are not involved in the VLWP. Jeanne explained that it is better to go to the public once this group narrows the possibilities down to viable alternative visions.

Martin asked about the VLWP definition of consensus. Jeanne clarified that consensus is something that the group recognizes as viable for the community as a whole. He asked about the possibility of comparing the alternatives to a “do nothing” approach. Jeanne mentioned that this is part of the identification of the problem that Carl had mentioned earlier.

Public Comment

Dvija Michael Bertish – Feels that the following information is missing:

- What relationship does this group have to its members
- What work product is going to come out the group'
- To whom will recommendations be made
- What is the formal agreement

This group has been described as a loose consortium and he would like to know where the members get their commitment points and from what agencies or what groups and where does the commitment come in. Given that this is a lot of expense, administration, time and resources that are being expended. Where does the group hope to go with this process? He feels that it seems like it is a stepping stone to getting to the visions.

Jacqueline Edwards – Feels that the challenge for the group is to figure out how to deliver it to the public in a shortened form that they can understand. She agrees with Thom that they do not want to drop the ball again. She also suggested that the group hire professionals who know how to get the presentation out to the public.

Bob Moser – He can see every problem of the lake solved by achieving the “year-round recreation” goal. Then it is a matter of assigning responsibility. He also mentioned that the flushing channel is extremely dirty.

Nancy Chandlee – Mentioned that her visions is that there would someday be a boat house on the Lake that would serve elite rowers, beginning rowers, high school teams, kayakers, canoers and a broad spectrum of non-motorized water craft.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held Wednesday, July 20th, 2005 from 4:00pm to 6:30pm. The location will be confirmed and sent out via email meeting notice. The focus of the next meeting will be to discuss the measures of success and the next steps of the partnership.