

General Partnership Announcements

It was announced that there would be a tree planting on Saturday, October 25th at Leverich Park sponsored by the Vancouver Watershed's Council.

Agenda/Discussion Topics

The project manager introduced the agenda and asked if there were any additions or modifications. He told the group that today's main agenda item was a discussion of the Vancouver Lake Technical Foundation document that was distributed to the Partnership in advance.

Project Manager Update

Grant Proposals

Phil told the Partnership that they are developing two grant proposals to be submitted to the Department of Ecology by the end of the month. The first is a \$250,000 Centennial Clean Water Grant within the Water Quality Assistance Program. The grant is focused on developing a nutrient budget for Vancouver Lake, setting nutrient criteria, and laying groundwork for a future Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) by Ecology. If successful, the project would help fill a large data gap for the Partnership. The chances for success are unclear in the current budget climate and competition with implementation projects is great.

Iloba asked how many grants are typically submitted. Phil said that last year 10 million dollars of competitive funding was available. Sixty-three projects were submitted and 19 were funded in whole or in part through Centennial. An initial draft list of funded projects should be released by Ecology in January 2009.

The second grant is for \$50,000 from Ecology's Freshwater Algae Program. This would be for funding continuing work with WSU Vancouver (year 3) to conduct plankton sampling and incubation experiments to estimate plankton growth and grazing rates and correlate them with environmental variables. Available funding for the grant program is around \$250,000 and four projects were funded last year. It was asked what the funding source was for the grants. Ron said it was probably partially general funds for Centennial grant and boater registration fees for the Freshwater Algae grant.

Phil thanked Partnership members that submitted letters of support for the grant applications. They are helpful and hopefully increase our chances of success. He added that there is still time to submit one if you haven't yet done so.

Tech Group Update

Ron said that since receiving presentations from the Corps and from WSU we are now at a "where do we go from here stage". The Partnership has entered into a new contract with WSU for a second year of research that will continue the intensive data collection as well as begin incubation experiments. Thom asked when we will be able to see the final report from WSU. Ron replied that he was not sure when WSU will be finished with it.

PIO Group Update

Loretta said the PIO Group have been working with Phil on a legislative one-page summary. It is nearly final and will be a great tool for communicating with legislators.

Technical Foundation Discussion

Phil described how the Vancouver Lake Technical Foundation document began last December as a white paper written by Ron describing what he knew about the Lake. Since then it has evolved into a more structured document, whose purpose is to capture the history of the Lake and lay a foundation for where the Partnership is headed technically in the future. The Technical Group has been working with the document over the past several months and the Steering Group has recently reviewed it.

Overall feedback from the Partnership on the document was positive. Thom mentioned that at a previous Technical Group meeting the group discussed the idea of having the document reviewed by an outside technical consultant to identify any gaps. Ron mentioned that the Partnership has preliminarily started down that road with USGS by beginning to talk with them about opportunities for collaboration. Thom added that it might also be a good idea to consider someone other than an agency. Brian asked if the document had gone to any of the consultants who have been attending the

Partnership meetings. He said that it is likely that if they were asked to look over the document they would be able to provide feedback.

Phil described that the Partnership is trying to develop a baseline of understanding. The Technical Foundation begins to identify the pieces and strategy needed to complete this baseline. The point at which we have reached a more complete understanding of how the system functions is still a ways out. Discussion ensued amongst the Partnership about reaching a baseline understanding. Pete added that he recognized that we don't want to study the lake to death, but we don't want to implement something that isn't going to work. Vern said that understanding the timeframe of the various pieces is very important. We need to have an understanding for when we will be able to make a decision. Brian added if you look at Chapter 5 in the Technical Foundation, there is still a lot we need to know. He also added that an executive summary might be helpful.

Andrew asked if it would be possible to separate the issues and find one or two studies to address most of them as a way of prioritization. Phil said that the Technical Group confronted this in developing the document. In the end, the issues are all related and it depends on what you lump together or split apart. Hopefully once a base level of information is reached the answers will become clearer.

It was asked if there were any priorities on what should be studied next or if funding availability will determine that. Phil replied that next steps will come from both angles. In developing the Centennial proposal for example, a nutrient budget was the way to go because it fit in with what the grant program is trying to accomplish. They will continue to move forward in this way because it's the best way the Partnership can at the moment. In thinking about this it is important to not ignore the progress we have made in 2008 and results we received from two major studies.

Patty said that for a timeline, maybe the next step is to identify what the focus areas are for the studies. Brian pointed out that the Technical Foundation does this by outlining the things the Partnership needs to know, what the status is, and what the priorities are. It was suggested that there be benchmarks on the timeline and that we should try and learn from other lakes. What have other shallow lakes done? What was successful? What was their process? Are there things we can do to learn from them? Thom said that at previous meetings there has been information about other shallow lakes and we are finding out that each one is different. Patty asked if there were other lakes that have gone from study, to implementation, to success. Phil replied that it depended on what you defined as success. If your focus is on cyanobacteria, it is a complicated issue and entities around the world are struggling with it.

Ron described one way to think about the process. He said it can be thought of a process that moves forward in three stages: diagnostic, feasibility and implementation. While we might be able to develop a timeline for the diagnostic phase, the feasibility and implementation phases could take a very long time.

A member noted that it felt like this process is putting all of our eggs in one basket. What do we do if we do not get the Centennial grant? Does the Partnership have a plan B? What other funding opportunities are available to the Partnership? Dvija mentioned EPA's Collaborative Problem Solving Grants and asked if the Partnership was eligible? EPA Region 10 has not been very active in these grants to date.

It was asked if local agency funding to the Partnership was in jeopardy. Both Patty and Brian replied that funding for Partnership activities is included in their proposed budgets.

Public Comment

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 25, 2008 - 3:30-5:00 p.m.

Full Partnership Meeting on February 18, 2009 – 4:00-6:00 p.m.