

Technical Group Members Present:

Jessi Belston	Port of Vancouver
Joy Polston-Barnes	WA Department of Natural Resources
Tim Rymer	WA Department of Fish and Wildlife
Jeff Schnabel	Clark County Public Works
Ron Wierenga	Clark County Public Works

Project Management Team:

Phil Trask	PC Trask & Associates, Inc.
Sabrina Litton	PC Trask & Associates, Inc.

General Tech Group Meeting Business and Member Announcements

Phil Trask welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order. Ron Wierenga provided an update on the WSU biological work mentioning that they have completed field work and are now working on data analysis. He recently received a quarterly report and is looking forward to hearing more from them. Ron noted that it will be interesting to see WSU's year long water quality data compared with past summertime-only data collected by the County's volunteer monitors.

Ron also reported that the Corps is finished with their bathymetry work and acknowledged the Sailing Club for allowing them access to the lake. It was pointed out that this bathymetry effort is also helpful on a larger Columbia River scale as the Estuary Partnership is compiling bathymetry data for the entire estuary and would be interested in closing this current data gap.

Phil provided an update on recent legislative lobbying efforts. He told the group that he and Ron had been to Olympia earlier in the month to meet with Representatives Fromhold and Moeller and Senator Pridemore. He said that he felt the trip went well and that several of the legislators were already familiar with the project. Phil told the group to stay tuned as the state budget is released in upcoming weeks because it is not out of the question that Vancouver Lake could receive funding for technical work. Phil discussed that this supplemental budget year lobbying effort was a foot in the door. He and Sabrina are working on a more comprehensive funding strategy for the Partnership concurrently with the technical strategy development. For successful research and future implementation, it will be imperative to develop additional funding sources other than the Steering Group member contributions.

Discussion of Question Matrix survey results

A compilation of matrix responses was handed out to the group. The 1-5 scores for each question were averaged and each table was sorted by the "significance to scientific basis" column. An arbitrary line was drawn across each table roughly half way down the list of questions to illustrate a coarse sorting of the technical questions. While the sorting process pushed some questions towards the top of the list, and others downwards, it will require more effort to sort the questions. The group should review the table and have an open discussion about their comments and results.

Table 1

Ron noted that seeing people's comments was interesting and important. It helped give perspective on where their answer was coming from. He also mentioned that he thought it was interesting how the biological questions sorted themselves with algae being a primary question followed closely by habitat and fish. He described that as this process matures, relationships between questions will become more important such as foodweb interactions and how algae, fish and habitat influence each other.

Tim mentioned that if one works on water quality you often have many other things follow suit, such as fish.

It was noted that question Bio-12 was not clear. The question describes distributions changing through time but its unclear what timescale is being discussed. Year to year changes are very different than 10 year time scales. Discussion ensued about how time scale could be defined, what is relevant for Vancouver Lake? Often the data is spotty or only shows extreme values. How does one know when you have an "average"? Jeff described that he saw current activities at Vancouver Lake as part of establishing a baseline. Trend analysis over whatever timescale will come later as the Partnership tries to determine if its actions are successful.

Discussion then turned to the lumping, splitting and associating questions. How could this be done? Maybe the group could take a second pass at the matrix and proof their scores and comments noting where they thought questions could be associated to make better sense, and which needed to be split further.

One member pointed out that the more aspects of an issue the group could bring together when developing a funding proposal, the more likely it will succeed. An example would be threatened and endangered species; while the question might not have ranked high on a list of technical priorities, we know that they exist in the lowlands and it is something that shouldn't be forgotten about when applying for funding from state or federal agencies. It is something that could push a project higher on a funding list.

Invasives are another topic to remember. Tim mentioned that at a recent training, people were learning about invasive invertebrates, (which he noted weren't on the question list). Its something the Partnership should be aware of because if they become prevalent in the Vancouver Lake system, it could mean new and challenging issues. Ron also pointed out that when he was fish sampling with Ecology a few years back, they came across a small shrimp that he had never seen before. It would be very interesting to look at invertebrates because it is unclear what species are in Vancouver Lake at this time.

The group agreed that when the Partnership begins to consider management alternative implementation, risk will need to be addressed, in addition to the effects on/of invasives and endangered species.

Table 2

Discussion began on water quality/quantity table. It was pointed out that most of the tributaries to Vancouver Lake currently have or have had some level of gauging. Ron thinks it wouldn't be too difficult to compile/analyze this data and gain a better understanding of their contributions. It was pointed out that the influence of a tributary such as Salmon Creek could have a big influence on the Lake at certain times of the year. The group agreed that what comes in with tributary flow would be an important thing to understand and water movement will tie in very closely with water quality. The Corps will hopefully be able to shed some light on hydraulic processes with the bathymetry data and its incorporation into their 2D model. Another member pointed out that when it comes to water temperature at Vancouver Lake the group will need to be realistic about what can be accomplished. Columbia temperatures are known and continue to increase earlier and for longer periods of time.

Table 3

Tech group members struggled through Table 3 of the questions matrix: Water and Sediment Quality questions. It was felt that many of the questions overlapped or weren't specific enough. Many members thought that for an actual hydrologic study, many elements could be combined. It was agreed that this was true, however, if a complete hydrologic study costs \$400,000 for example, and only \$100,000 is available from a funding source, the Partnership will need to know which parts to implement first.

Discussion continued on the influence of the Willamette River to Vancouver Lake water quality. Ron said that he has often asked knowledgeable people about this topic but never received a complete answer. Sabrina said she felt like it had been anecdotally answered by presenters to the Partnership throughout the year, while others said that a negative influence can't be completely ruled out. Sabrina asked about who to ask to get a definitive answer on this topic. No one was sure.

Wrap-Up

Phil discussed next steps for the questions matrix. He asked if the attendees would be willing to revisit the compiled matrix handed out to them today, digest it further, and double check their scores and comments to make sure they are satisfied with them. If they think certain questions should be linked together, make a note of that. Remember that no questions will be lost in this process. All of the questions on this list are important to the Partnership and there needs to be a transparent process as to why a question would be considered more urgent than another. Through this process, energy will be focused on identifying the most critical questions for the Partnership to answer and a rationale for why others aren't being addressed right away.

It was decided that the group would be able to revise scores by March 14th and could plan to meet again at the end of the month. Phil thanked everyone for coming and for their valuable input into this process.