

# Vancouver Lake Watershed Partnership

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## **Steering Group Meeting Summary**

Meeting date: May 16, 2007, 3:30 pm

### **Attendees**

Steering Group: Patty Boyden, Brian Carlson, Ron Wierenga  
Partnership Members: George Medina, Thom McConathy, Vern Veysey  
Public: Jacquelin Edwards  
Staff: Phil Trask, Loretta Callahan, Mardy Tremblay

### **Introductions**

Phil welcomed the group and asked for a round of introductions.

### **Agenda/Discussion Topics**

Phil introduced the agenda and asked if there was a need for modifications. This agenda, while developed by Jeanne Lawson Associates, was distributed by the Mardy Tremblay of the Lower Columbia River Estuary Partnership. It marks an important transition point in terms of how information is now distributed to the Steering Group and the Vancouver Lake Watershed Partnership.

Thom said the action items left on the table at the last meeting needed to be put on this agenda and that there were uncompleted items from November. Phil said that he would review the minutes and try to identify those issues. Ron said it would be good to track which of the items are for the Steering Group and which are for the Partnership.

### **Partnership Business**

Phil began by briefly discussing the transition between Jeanne Lawson and the LCREP team and the passing of responsibility for notes and email distributions. Phil also talked about building relationships with the members through meetings and conversations to develop a better understanding of the Vancouver Lake project. A small meeting has been set up with USACE to discuss the feasibility study in terms of data needs, scope of work, timelines, and relationships to the WSU study and other on-going research. This meeting should help Phil (together with Ron) develop an initial timeline for the technical studies and show some of the relationships between them and the Partnership's work.

Patty provided a brief overview of a meeting that was held on April 26<sup>th</sup> between the USACE and the Port of Vancouver. The Port gave a description of the Port's Gateway Project development plans. The purpose of the meeting was to describe the project and to highlight studies and data that may be useful to the USACE in support of the feasibility study.

### **USACE Update**

George gave an overview of the status of the feasibility study and talked about the usefulness of the Port of Vancouver meeting on April 26<sup>th</sup>. He indicated a need for better access to existing data and also the potential for added complexities as a result of the Port's project.

Vern said he would like to see how the WSU study and the feasibility study projects line up in terms of scope, schedule and relationship to one another. Phil agreed and said that this is what he heard at the Partnership meeting on April 18th and that a first draft of this product is anticipated for the June 20<sup>th</sup> Partnership meeting. Phil said the caveat is that the WSU project has a scope, but the USACE scope has considerable uncertainty associated with it. Phil reiterated that this project is fairly complex. It's going to take this year to nail down the scope. He would be trying to get a best snapshot for now, and then drill down on the specifics.

George affirmed that what Vern was asking for was legitimate and needed. He said he is not as confident as Phil that we will have it by the next Partnership meeting. He said we are only now seeing what all the pieces are. He said he thinks it is prudent to see what all the pieces are before deciding the scope. A feasibility report usually takes about twelve (12) months. This situation is complicated with lots of variables. Also, the April 26<sup>th</sup> meeting highlighted a number of studies that can be used and good coordination with the Port might avoid duplication. He said we want to step back and get together with the technical groups to get more information and find out what other studies are going on. Patty and George agreed to improve coordination between the two organizations for data exchange.

Loretta told the group that she had met with Amanda Dobson from Congressman Baird's office. She provided Amanda with an overview of the Vancouver Lake project. Amanda wanted to know what the timeline was and how it could be sped up. Patty asked George needed help from this group to make sure they are talking to all the people who can provide information. George said if you can point us in the right direction that would be good.

George re-iterated that a local match is required with the feasibility study. USACE is covering the first \$100,000 and \$30,000 has been spent so far. After the \$100,000 is spent the project will require a 50/50 match.

Brian asked at what point we count the 50 percent match. George said after the Partnership Cooperative Agreement (PCA) is signed. Thom said we have to have an understanding and a timeline before we can advocate for more funding. Ron said he just wanted to clarify that the PCA is after the feasibility study. George replied that he thought what was being asked is "would the money being spent with the WSU apply to the feasibility study?" He responded by saying that it would have to relate directly to fish habitat because of the USACE spending authority. Brian asked more specifically about match requirements. Patty added that you would think that water quality would be part of fish habitat. George replied there is a potential for crossover--it needs to be examined.

Vern noted this was back to the list and schedule need. We need to see a list to determine what can be matched. There are data that are needed and data that would be desirable. Thom added that we need to know the difference between our expectations and the limitations of the feasibility studies. Brian said the Partnership has a vision and obviously the Corps can't pay for 50% of everything that is in the long term vision. Ron said the WSU study is an integral part of developing alternatives. Patty asked if the feasibility study local match is cash only. Some discussion occurred about the match, but it was clear that more information was needed about the conditions of match eligibility.

George said the feasibility study is based on hydraulics, dredging the flushing channel, new fish habitat. It's conceivable that USACE could come back after the feasibility study and say it can't be done. Ron added that the Partnership has been fortunate to have the Corps interested in Vancouver Lake. It will take time as we develop the technical scope. When we are done with the studies, it doesn't mean we are done with the work. Vern said he is pleased with the direction: is it fast enough? No, it's never fast enough. Jacquelin noted that it was not long ago that the USACE became involved and that it will take some time to get things moving. She sees a lot of possibilities. When we get the USACE feasibility study, we can see how it works with the Partnerships long term goals.

Thom stated the expectations of the Partnership are above the Corps expectations. In other words, the Partnership's vision is broader than the focus of USACE's mission as it relates to Vancouver Lake. Brian said there are many objectives for Vancouver Lake at this juncture and that requirements stemming from the Clean Water Act and the Endangered Species Act are critical from a legal perspective. Phil concluded that many of the objectives for recreation and water quality and fish habitat are not mutually exclusive.

### **Tech Group Update**

Phil asked Ron if there was anything else he wanted to add that had not already been discussed. There were no additions. Thom asked about the meeting with USACE. Ron said it is on the 25<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m. at the Portland District office. Thom asked if there was going to be another technical group meeting. Ron said the next technical group meeting would be scheduled after meeting with USACE.

### **Public Information Update**

Loretta said she would like to back track a little and say that Amanda is new to Congressman Baird's office. Amanda had said that Congressman Baird is looking to learn more about the Vancouver Lake project.

Loretta explained she was trying to set up a meeting between USACE and WSU to brainstorm for some ideas to bring back to the group to coordinate press releases. Thom asked if press releases could be directed to the Sunday's paper with the list of other meetings. He said the Steering Group meeting was not listed in the Sunday paper. Loretta replied that we have not been submitting the Steering Group meetings, but we have been submitting the general Partnership meetings. It was asked about getting the press release information sent to the Partnership members. Loretta said that the next time the agenda is distributed she could provide a link to any press releases.

### **Agenda for June 20th Partnership meeting**

Phil noted that we have an offer from the WA Department of Health to do a presentation. Ron added that he had spoke with Dave McBride and he could give a presentation from a statewide perspective, but likely would not talk specifically about Vancouver Lake. Brian said that it does provide some good background information, but there are other ways to get this information. Patty said it would be interesting to hear how the state coordinates with the county on human health. The group agreed to have Ron coordinate a WA Department of Health presentation.

Phil asked if there were other items for the agenda. Brian said he would like to see a presentation from the City on Burnt Bridge Creek Water Quality Monitoring Program. Brian added at some point in time, maybe not this meeting as it might be pretty full already, he would like to see the city presentation on septic tanks. Vern expressed that he thinks the health department presentation is not as important as the Burnt Bridge Creek water quality information.

1. Welcome/Agenda Review
2. Partnership Business
3. USACE Update
4. Tech Group Update
5. PIO Update
6. VLWP Workplan Discussion
7. Department of Health Presentation on Human Health (to be confirmed)
8. City Presentation on Burnt Bridge Creek Water Quality Monitoring Program
9. TENTATIVE – City Presentation on Septic Tanks
10. Next Steps

#### Upcoming meetings:

- Steering Group meeting, June 6<sup>th</sup>, 3:30 pm
- Partnership meeting, June 20<sup>th</sup>, 4:00 pm