

Vancouver Lake Watershed Partnership

Steering Group Meeting Summary

Meeting date: December 20, 2006, 3:30 pm

Attendees

Executive Committee: Patty Boyden, Pete Capell, Brian Carlson

Partnership Members: Thom McConathy

Staff: Katy Brooks, Loretta Callahan, Jim Gladson, Jordan Lerner, Curt Loop, Jeanne Lawson, Kelly Skelton, Kalin Schmoltdt, Phil Trask, Ron Wierenga

Public:

TMDL project for Burnt Bridge Creek

Iloba Odum from the Dept. of Ecology is proposing a TMDL project for Burnt Bridge Creek and he contacted Jeanne seeking the support of the partnership and requested some time January 17th Partnership agenda to fill everyone in. Jeanne noted that he is not looking for funding, just support and recognition as a priority. Brian said that the Dept. of Ecology needs to attend the next Steering Group meeting on January 3rd to explain their needs and discuss how this endorsement could affect funding for other local TMDL projects that have already been assigned a higher local priority. The group agreed that this discussion needs to take place.

Thom raised an issue of transparency around this discussion, he thinks that all discussions amongst the Steering Group members should be made public and be transparent to the entire Partnership. Katy clarified that this is not the protocol of the Steering Group -- private conversations can take place, but any decisions will be transparent and be inclusive of the Partnership.

Federal Funding

Loretta said that she had received calls asking whether the project VLWP should be included on the various agencies' government affairs/lobbyist's legislative agenda. She said that she ran language by the USACE and spoke with Kelly Love at Brian Baird's office. The response was positive, that it would be good to ask about funding for the GI Study and the Section 536 Program, though the chances of receiving funding would be slim this year. If requests are to be made, they should be made early, in January or February. The group agreed that it would be worthwhile to "make the ask" with the knowledge that funding is unlikely. Patty commented that it should be each funding partner's responsibility to prioritize these requests and make them as they see fit. Loretta will put together more formalized information to present at the January 17th Partnership meeting.

Project Manager Update

Pete noted that Phil Trask and the Estuary Partnership were not yet under contract, but he is finalizing the contract and hopes to have it finished next week. Phil was in attendance and gave a short summary of his experience and education. He described his work with the Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board, with water rights issues, and his work as a private consultant working mostly on estuary projects. Pete reminded everyone that the initial contract with the EP would last six months and will involve Phil keeping on top of the technical work, coordinating the various funding partners, and creating a work plan. Pete commented that Phil will work with, and directly report to, the Steering Group and that the EP will provide administrative support in a capacity that is yet to be determined.

Corps Update

Curt said that George is out sick today and will follow up next month. He said that the PRP was finalized last week, with a recommendation to move forward.

Curt reminded the group that USACE will provide the first \$100,000, after which the costs will be shared. Curt said that Ron's tech team will be coordinating with the USACE Project Delivery Team. He said that they would pass on everything they know in January. Ron said that he would be expanding the diversity and representation of the Tech Group and it will take a couple of

months to create a technical strategy. The Corps' new team hopes to meet with the Technical Group some time in January.

Tech Group Update

Ron said that he met with Phil to tour the lake, to review data and discuss the technical needs of this project. Ron said he is still hoping to expand the representation in the Tech Group with other Partnership members to help develop their technical strategy.

Ron noted that they are actively editing the contract with WSU and it will probably be at least a month until it is approved by the county commissioners. Ron added that WSU had requested a letter of support for a grant for a study through WSU Pullman. He said he would follow up as to when they expect to hear the results.

Ron is also hoping to pull together a technical work group some time in late January but the group will probably not meet before the January 17th Partnership meeting.

Public Information Update

Loretta noted that the recent news articles have been creating more public interest and citizens have contacted her asking to be added to the email list. A few Partnership members have voiced concerns about the length of time it takes the City to post the Partnership meeting summaries on the website. Meeting summaries are not posted until they are officially adopted at the next Partnership meeting which is two months later. There was general consensus that this is an appropriate protocol but is worth revisiting with the full partnership. The primary concern was having draft, unreviewed minutes on the web site which may need significant revisions after full review by all members. Concerns were also expressed that trying to do a review and approval process by e-mail with the full partnership could be a cumbersome process. There was some discussion about possibly having Phil post updates on the website to help keep the Partnership informed of what is going on between meetings. This is also an idea that will be revisited later.

Draft Agenda for January 17th Partnership meeting (to be reviewed at the January 3 Steering Group meeting)

1. Welcome/Agenda Review
2. Partnership Business
3. Project Manager Update – Introducing Phil
4. Funding Update
5. Corp Update
6. Tech Group Update
 - Update on TMDL Process
 - Presentation on the DOE Tissue Study – *Ron will present if they are not ready.*
 - Salmon Creek Watershed presentation – *Ron will contact them again to check on availability.*