



## June 15, 2011 VLWP 36<sup>th</sup> Meeting Summary

The thirty sixth meeting of the Vancouver Lake Watershed Partnership was held on Wednesday, June 15, 2011 from 4:00 – 6:00 pm at the Port of Vancouver Administrative Offices.

### Attendance:

#### Member Present

Jacqueline Edwards  
Nancy Ellifrit  
Gary Kokstis  
Thom McConathy  
Brian Carlson  
Patty Boyden  
Kevin Gray  
Chris Hathaway  
Jane Kleiner  
Iloba Odum  
Bruce Wiseman

#### Member Seat

Citizen  
Citizen  
Citizen  
Citizen  
City of Vancouver Public Works  
Port of Vancouver  
Clark County Dept. of Environmental Services  
Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership (alt. for Debrah Marriot)  
Vancouver-Clark Parks and Rec. (alt. for Pete Mayer)  
Washington Dept. of Ecology  
Port of Ridgefield

#### Other Agency Members Present:

Andrew Ness  
Randy Mueller  
Jeff Schnabel  
Annette Griffy  
Dorie Sutton  
Rob Guttridge  
Jerry Oliver

#### Association:

Port of Vancouver  
Port of Ridgefield  
Clark County Department of Environmental Services  
City of Vancouver  
City of Vancouver  
Clark County  
Port of Vancouver

#### Public in Attendance:

Gary Bock  
Lehman Holder  
Jennifer Nelson  
Anita Roberts  
Vancouver Watershed Council  
Sierra Club  
Citizen  
Vancouver Lake Crew

#### Project Management Team:

Phil Trask  
Eileen Stone  
PC Trask & Associates, Inc.  
PC Trask & Associates, Inc.

**Not in Attendance:**

**Member**

Don Jacobs  
Eric LaBrant  
Jim Meyer  
Jane Van Dyke  
Vernon Veysey  
Aaron Henderson  
George Medina  
Anne Friesz  
Todd Welker  
Doug Quinn

**Member Seat**

Citizen  
Fruit Valley Neighborhood  
Citizen  
Citizen  
Citizen  
Clark Public Health  
US Army Corps of Engineers  
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife  
WA Dept. of Natural Resources  
Clark Public Utilities

**Opening of Meeting/Agenda Review**

Phil opened the meeting and welcomed all attendees. He asked if there were additions or comments to the agenda to which there were none.

**Public comment**

Lehman Holder thanked Jeff Schnabel and Kevin Gray for their recent presentation to the Sierra Club on the Partnership. Lehman commented that it was a well-informed presentation for the group. Phil introduced Jane Kleiner as Jeroen Kok's replacement on the Partnership.

**Outreach**

Eileen presented an overview of the September 17<sup>th</sup> Vancouver Lake litter clean up and volunteer thank you event. The Outreach Event committee met on June 6<sup>th</sup> for early planning. The event will be in partnership with the Vancouver Watersheds Council and SOLV. The group will also ask the Vancouver Lake Sailing Club and Vancouver Lake Crew if they would like to assist in removal of litter on the water's edge that cannot be reached by foot.

Questions were raised about the event:

- Is insurance coverage by SOLV, or does the group needs to have coverage? Eileen will check with SOLV.
- What does SOLV provide for the cleanup? Eileen clarified that involvement from SOLV for the event includes, planning information (training), publicity assistance, trash bags, and a small grant for publicity materials.
- Clarification was requested regarding the planned removal of in-water hazards. Jeff Schnabel is coordinating with the Sherriff's Department on this. It will be for the removal of boating/safety hazards, not for the removal of potential habitat (e.g., large wood). If possible, the sheriff's office will conduct the removal on September 17<sup>th</sup>. If water is too low at that time, it will serve as a time to investigate hazards for later removal.

## Funding Strategy

Eileen presented a framework for development of a Partnership funding strategy. The goal of the funding strategy is to have a strategic approach to funding key Partnership efforts. Funding options will vary over time as the Partnership moves through different phases towards implementation of a management plan.

The Partnership is currently in the diagnostic phase, which includes research, outreach, narrowing down of management alternatives, and early actions (e.g., litter cleanup). The funding partners have been critical to this phase and there are fewer outside funding sources available at this stage.

The Partnership will be moving into the feasibility phase, in which we will study the feasibility of alternatives, develop a management plan, and can implement interim/enhancement actions (e.g., wetland restoration). This stage is characterized by a higher funding need. There are also more funding sources available for on-the-ground work.

Next will be the implementation phase: designing a project, getting it on the ground. Funding goals will depend on the management plan. This could be incremental implementation or large project implementation. This stage will have the largest funding need. Our current work towards this end is in relationship building/outreach.

Three major Partnership planning documents are integral to the funding strategy, as each shapes the purpose of fundraising and appropriate strategies:

- Technical Foundation: outlines baseline knowledge and issues; identifies and prioritizes research;
- Outreach Plan: tool to build understanding and support among stakeholders: critical for funding & implementation success;
- Algal Management Techniques: Identifies potential techniques used in other lakes as they relate to Vancouver Lake; updates will narrow techniques: technical, social, & financial feasibility. This report is a pre-cursor to management alternatives.

The Partnership's capacity and resources help determine which funding sources to target: our existing resources are the Project Management Team, Agency Staff Members, Citizen Members, and Interested Citizens. Within this are the Steering Group, Technical Group and Public Information Officers.

Things to consider in Partnership organization: currently we have our mixed government & citizen group with an Intergovernmental Agreement. A non-profit group or taxing district, or combination of each could be formed. The Partnership will need to examine the pros and cons of each as we develop the funding strategy.

Eileen closed the presentation with an invitation for comments at the meeting or afterwards, and asked individuals who are interested in helping develop the funding strategy to let her know. The floor was opened to questions and comments.

Thom asked about the mention of algal control. The strategy should not be solely focused on algal control. In the long term algae is not the only problem, there are other issues. The focus should be broadened to include fecal coliform, turbidity, macrophytes, and habitat for fisheries; all need to be looked at for restoration of the lake.

Thom believes the Partnership should examine forming a government entity for the lake. Such an entity was discussed when the Partnership was first formed and has been looked at, but it hasn't moved forward. The steering group has been generous, but the formation of such an entity can provide a stronger tool for stable

funding. Forming such a governmental entity doesn't need to wait until we are at the end. Thom recommends looking at Chesapeake Bay group which has been developing their bay plan and project funding for a long time.

Kevin commented that a new governmental entity is a strategy to consider but we want to approach such a strategy carefully as a group to ensure success. Forming a governmental entity would require legislative funding. We also need to be careful about the size of the entity in that if a large project requires bonding capacity we may cut ourselves out of having bonding capacity from the County or City.

Brian sees possibility in the formation of a separate governmental entity, but the debate might be on the timing: not if, but when – possibly during design? At this point the strength of the Partnership is in the individual strengths everyone brings to the table for development of lake management alternatives. Ultimately there will need to be a governmental entity so authority can be assigned for implementation success.

The potential formation of a separate governmental entity should be identified within the funding strategy.

There was discussion of the reference to “Algal Management Techniques” in the presentation. This document was an overview of what might work for controlling cyanobacteria blooms and what has worked around the world. It is to be revised with more in-depth analysis the end of this year. Changing the report title to Lake Management Strategies could address any perception that the document is too narrowly focused. We need to be careful with defining the document however, and not be overly broad.

Phil asked for a show of hands for who is interested in being part of the group developing the funding strategy. Jane, Thom, Brian, and Jeff are all interested.

### **Outreach efforts**

Eileen mentioned the upcoming REI Outdoor Festival at Vancouver Lake Park on July 10th. The Partnership will have a table at the event. A sign up sheet was passed around for those interested in volunteering at the festival.

Kevin will be giving a brief presentation to the Neighborhood Associations Council of Clark County on the second Monday in July. The presentation will be brief due to the group's tight agenda, but it will be a good introduction/update to the neighborhood groups.

Thom commented that the Kiwanis Club may be a good addition to our list for outreach presentations.

Kevin asked for a brief summary of Partnership outreach activities so far this year. There have been presentations to the Salmon Creek Watershed Council, Sierra Club and Audubon Society (joint), as well as Partnership presence at the Alder Creek Paddle Festival at the end of April. Andrew was present at the Felida Neighborhood Association meeting. Felida only had time for a mention of the Partnership and requested circulation of the new Partnership bookmark. Andrew will represent the Partnership at the Felida Neighborhood's July 4<sup>th</sup> parade and will be delivering the full presentation of the Partnership to the Hazel Dell Neighborhood Association in July. Also in July is the REI Outdoor Festival mentioned earlier.

Thom will be conducting a series of four walks with Clark College in and around Vancouver Lake: Burnt Bridge Creek, Salmon Creek, Vancouver Lake Old Growth Ash, and the Flushing Channel.

## **Project Manager Update**

Phil noted that with the outreach presentations outlined above we are on schedule with the calendar proposed in the outreach plan through this summer.

### Fish Surveys and Vancouver Lake

Earlier this spring we had the opportunity to have juvenile salmonid sampling in the lake through work of the Corps of Engineers Portland District conducted by the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL). The work uses acoustic transmitters and receiving systems (termed JSATS) to track fish migration downriver. In conversations with PNNL and the Corps we were able to have acoustic nodes placed at the flushing channel, inside the lake near the flushing channel, inside the lake at Lake River and in Lake River near Ridgefield. This work would give us information about the use of Vancouver Lake by larger juvenile salmonids. The JSATS nodes were placed in Vancouver Lake in early May and unfortunately the acoustic nodes need to be removed this Friday as the main research, regarding fish migration through the dams during various controlled water levels, has been cancelled for the year due to high water flow. The last date that they tagged fish was May 31.

The equipment and analysis was being donated by the Corps and PNNL, but unfortunately we won't have much data. There will be some information, but the first fish migrating down river are the larger of the juveniles that are taggable, which typically swim downriver with little side channel/lake usage. The smaller contingent of taggable- juveniles had not started their migration prior to cancelling the tagging of fish for the study. It is the smaller fish that are more likely to use side channels (and lakes).

We are hoping to conduct the study next year, but of all juveniles, it is still only larger juveniles that can handle the acoustic tags; it will not tell us about all juveniles even with a full length JSATS study.

The question was raised about keeping the nodes in the lake to get more data on fish migrating down river or to track fish as they return up river. The last date of releasing tagged fish upriver was May 31. PNNL staff needs to pull all nodes for their study this week and all of the tagged fish should have passed Vancouver Lake by this time. Keeping the nodes in place for the return of the fish wouldn't be feasible as unlike PIT tags which do not have batteries, the batteries on the acoustic tags run out within 30 days.

Jeff asked about CREST staff seining for fish as part of their study at Buckmire Slough. Phil explained to the group that this fish seining is a study that is separate from the node work. Due to timing and high water, this study also didn't work out for this year. The permit will be in place for next year so we are hopeful that we will get information next year for Vancouver Lake as the study would likely include the area surrounding Buckmire Slough.

Jacquelin Edwards commented that with the high water she has seen carp jumping out of Lake River as well as small fish in some of the shallow areas. Jacquelin enjoyed talking with the JSATS researchers and getting an explanation of their work.

Gary mentioned there is no typical year for the lake: each year is different. We should expect the lake to be 2-4 ft higher this August than it was last August. He is seeing blue-green algae right now.

### Photo overview of Vancouver Lake

Phil gave an overview of photos of Vancouver Lake from the helicopter trip PC Trask staff took over the Columbia River and Vancouver Lake on June 3<sup>rd</sup>. It was good to see the area under such high water conditions. It was very different from earlier flights during lower water conditions.

### **Technical Group Update**

The Technical Group has not met recently, but Eileen provided information on technical work at the lake. Eileen spoke with Rich Sheibley of USGS. Unfortunately USGS staff was not able to come down this week for sampling and therefore are not available for an update for the group. They will be available in September if we move the planned September meeting up one week to September 14<sup>th</sup>.

The group voted to move September meeting to September 14<sup>th</sup> in order to get an update from the USGS on their research. Eileen will be sure to confirm with USGS and then notify everyone of the September meeting date.

Eileen gave an overview of USGS work so far. They have conducted most of their sampling during rain events. They were able to collect ground water samples to study separately from the lake water. Rich commented that the Sailing Club has been very helpful for them to do work from the Club docks. There has also been good coordination between USGS and WSU. We will hear more details from Rich in September.

Gretchen Rollwagen-Bollens gave Eileen an update to share with the group as well. The WSUV Aquatic Research Lab has one year of grant funds to continue investigation of plankton dynamics and toxin analyses in Vancouver Lake for the 2011 summer bloom period.

WSUV Sciences was awarded a separate grant from Murdock Charitable Trust that includes a data "sonde" which was installed Tuesday on the Sailing Club dock to continuously measure a range of water quality parameters (temperature, turbidity, nutrients) as well as concentrations of chlorophyll and phycocyanin (a pigment found only in cyanobacteria) near the surface in Vancouver Lake.

The Murdock Charitable Trust also awarded a "Partners in Science" Fellowship to a science teacher at Camas High School, and to the Aquatic Ecology Lab at WSUV, to support two summers of the teacher's time to conduct research on Vancouver Lake with the Lab. The teacher also plans to integrate her research into her curriculum by having her AP Environmental Science classes focus on harmful algal blooms and Vancouver Lake in particular.

Research by lab staff on the plankton in Vancouver Lake is in press and being submitted to two prestigious scientific journals as well.

Gary mentioned that if WSUV staff will need more access via the Sailing Club to check in with the club.

### **Outreach Update**

Jacquelin and Eileen gave an update on a recent meeting with Port archivist Matt Oftedahl and Andrew Ness where they shared lake history information from the historical museum and the Port archives. Thom commented that the Oregon Historical Society apparently has thousands of entries of documents and photographs, some of which are family albums. It would be interesting to have a student work on this. Possibly a call into the Columbian could result in someone to compile some of the historical information regarding development and other activities around the lake.

### **General Partnership Announcements**

Randy Mueller distributed a handout and spoke about the Port of Ridgefield's proposal to dredge the mouth of Lake River in order to increase safe navigation between the Columbia River and Ridgefield. The mouth of Lake River was last dredged in the 1980s.

The city of Ridgefield is looking at economic development. Recreational boating could be beneficial economically but access could be hazardous to those who aren't familiar with the area unless the proposed dredging occurs. Randy also commented that reducing obstruction to flow may benefit Vancouver Lake. Permitting requirements and funding are still ahead for the project. For funding the port is considering either a congressional request or a dredging levy for simple voter approval. The project will consist of the major dredging of the mouth as well as regular maintenance dredging.

There was a question on quality of the sediments and if there are any contaminants. Sediment sampling is a prerequisite of the permitting process. It has not been conducted yet.

Randy asked the group to contact the Port of Ridgefield if there were any questions about the project.

**Next Steps/Close**

With no further announcements, Phil thanked everyone for coming and brought the meeting to a close.

**Next meetings:**

Steering Group: Wednesday July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2011 at 3:30 pm.  
Partnership: Wednesday September 14<sup>th</sup>, 4-6pm ***Note change from regular date.***

All meetings are at the Port of Vancouver offices.