Vancouver Lake Watershed Partnership

Steering Group Meeting Summary
Meeting date: April 16, 2008, 3:30 pm

Steering Group Members Present:

Katy Brooks	Port of Vancouver (alternate for Patty Boyden)
Ron Wierenga	Clark County Dept. of Public Works (alternate for Pete Capell)
Loretta Callahan	City of Vancouver Dept. of Public Works (alternate for Brian Carlson)

Partnership Members Present:
Jacquelin Edwards   Citizen

Other Agency Members Present:

Jessi Belston	Port of Vancouver
Andrew Ness	Port of Vancouver

Public in attendance:

Vinton Erickson	Citizen
Dick Chandlee	Citizen

Project Management Team:

Phil Trask	PC Trask & Associates, Inc.
Mardy Tremblay	Lower Columbia River Estuary Partnership

Agenda/Discussion Topics
The project manager introduced the agenda and asked if there were any additions. There were none.

Partnership Business

Project Manager Update/ Tech Group Update

Questions Matrix
Phil told the Steering Group about recent developments with the Vancouver Lake Questions Matrix. He described how the matrix had been developed and shared with the Partnership over the past year. Recently the Technical Group has been working with the matrix and scored questions according to several categories including relevance to scientific basis. Initial scores were compiled and the results sorted to coarsely illustrate what questions might be more urgent for the Partnership than others at this time. By moving the Questions Matrix through this process, it has allowed the Partnership's questions to be evaluated in a transparent process. At this time the Technical Group has met twice to discuss the Questions Matrix. Most recently, a line was placed across each table in the questions matrix and members were asked to see if they agreed about what belonged above or below the line. While the line is arbitrary, those questions above the line are more urgent than those below the line. Next steps include further organizing the questions by linking them relative to implementation and timing, developing narrative, and associating them with potential studies.

Technical Foundation Paper
Phil told the group that he, Ron and Sabrina have begun working on a document called the Vancouver Lake Technical Foundation. In starting the document, Phil asked Ron last year to write a white paper that covered his thoughts about the Lake. From that initial white paper, Phil and Sabrina built upon it with current Partnership information and other studies conducted in the past. Earlier in April they met to further organize the paper, and develop a framework for placing technical knowledge and questions into readable chapters. The intent for developing this document is to help the Technical Group advance a technical strategy for the Partnership and Steering Group's consideration. Phil passed around a current rough draft of the document.

Currently the paper is broken into four chapters as described below:

Chapter 1: Introduction
This chapter provides background information on Vancouver Lake. It describes the character of the lake and larger watershed, and provides information on previous restoration efforts, general ownership and uses of the lake.

Chapter 2: The Watershed, Lake, Fish & Wildlife
This chapter is intended to provide context about shallow lakes in general and how Vancouver Lake fits into this broad class of lakes.

Chapter 3: Vancouver Lake Issues
This chapter talks about issues at Vancouver Lake including water quality, excess nutrients, temperature and habitat.

Chapter 4: Data Gaps
This chapter looks at data gaps with regards to physical environment (hydrology/hydraulics), biology and water/sediment quality. It describes what we know and what we don't know about Vancouver Lake. This chapter (or a new Chapter 5) will organize the questions into logical groups that form potential studies.

One member asked how the Partnership is going to tackle these issues and build a strategy given what we know about data gaps and questions that are most urgent. It's hard to ask for money until you know what your goals are. Phil said that it will be important to find a balance point between stated goals and studies that will help shape goals. He is hopeful this document will help build agreement on charting next steps.

Loretta said that she understood this was a working document and it will be good to have things written down in one place because a lot of recent work has been done. She asked Phil how he saw the document being used. Phil told them that the intended audience for the document would be the Partnership, Steering Group and Technical Group. The document would further organize and describe the technical questions, identify data gaps, and then identify and discuss implementation of new studies. Ron mentioned that this document is a way to track things. He said he, Phil and Sabrina have talked about how we use this process to identify where to start new technical work.

Loretta asked when people will be able to add comments/edits. Phil explained that the primary authors of the document will be the Technical Group and that once they have had the opportunity to comment and work with the document, it will go to the Steering Group and then the Partnership. There will be opportunities along the way to provide comments/edits. The critical path for this document is open for discussion and will be guided by the Steering Group.

Loretta expressed that she thought it was more than just a Technical Group document and that it's a good tool to be vetted. Ron noted that after the last Technical Group meeting he wasn't sure he knew whether there was agreement on what is important to the Partnership. Right now it's critical to get something together in a document and get feedback before taking it to the full Partnership.

Jessi asked if the paper will include a discussion on cost. Phil said that yes, as the paper is developed further and a chapter about potential studies is developed, a discussion on cost will be important. Loretta said she thought an executive summary would be important as this is what people read for a short synapse of the entire document. Phil agreed and mentioned that this is a living document that will evolve as more is learned. Ron said he saw this document as an entry point to get the real work started.

Andrew asked if there was a timeline that could be used in the summary. There have been some time lines for specific planning, like with the Corps studies.

Phil added that he sees two ways to fail in this process. One was to do nothing, and the other is to move too fast without agreement or understanding of what is important to the group.

It was asked if the draft document would be presented at the May Partnership meeting. Phil said that currently the document is undergoing some changes and when those are done, it is intended to go to the Technical Group. When they have had time to review and edit, it will go to the Steering Group for review. Right now it is unlikely this will be accomplished by the May Partnership meeting.

Phil noted that the Technical Foundation document will be important because it gets to the heart of asking for money. To ask for money, we need to have a strategy and clear, achievable goals for the Partnership.

Funding Strategy
Phil said that George Medina has resubmitted for the third time a congressional request for funding through a Corps General Investigation study. Loretta said she would send Phil copies of the forms for the congressional delegates that are submitted in support of the project. It is possible that the forms may need to be updated. Phil asked that the forms be sent to him and then he would touch base with staff.

Phil mentioned the possibility of getting a state agency budget line item for a habitat study. It may be possible to get the Department of Fish and Wildlife to ask for funds that would go to them for on-the-ground work.

Phil asked if it was possible to get all three lobbyists together to discuss funding strategy. It would be ideal to do a face-to-face and have a member from each Steering Group agency at the meeting. It was mentioned that it may be difficult to have one meeting due to the busy schedules of lobbyists. Ron suggested contacting the Inter Agency Committee for Outdoor Recreation for possible grant opportunities. Phil said he would contact them.

Objective Continuum
The ad-hoc group to work on the objectives continuum has not met yet due to scheduling conflicts. They will try to set up another meeting when Sabrina returns from vacation.

Corps Update
Phil spoke on behalf of the Corps and announced that they have completed a bathymetry survey of Vancouver Lake. This information is being integrated into a 2D model of the Lake. This work is supposed to be finished in May and we should see results in June. The 2D model will provide a picture of water circulation patterns in the Lake. Dick asked if the Corps had enough data for the model. Phil was unsure of the specifics on the model but said that the 2D model should be robust.

Public Information Update
Loretta and Katy reported that they are on schedule with SOLV for the Down by the Riverside clean-up event on May 17, 2008. A flyer was handed out to the group. It was noted that there will be several different opportunities to participate on that day. The notice for this event will be publicized via City email to the neighborhoods, the Fruit Valley Neighborhood Association and to the County.

Katy reported that David Judd with Vancouver/Clark Parks and Recreation is retiring.

Loretta said she had received some feedback from the public that the link to the fish library on the VLWP website was not working. There have been changes made to where the documents are stored and she is updating the VLWP website.

Next Steps/Close
Phil thanked the group for attending and closed the meeting.

Next Meetings:
Full Partnership Meeting – May 21, 2008, 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.
Steering Group Meeting – May 7, 2008, 3:30 – 5:00 p.m.

All meetings will be held at the Port of Vancouver Administrative Offices.