

Alliance for a Healthy South Sound (AHSS) Council Meeting
March 17, 2015, 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm
LOTT Clean Water Alliance, Boardroom
500 Adams Street NE, Olympia, WA

Participants

Jesse Barham, City of Olympia
John Bolender, Mason County Conservation District
Marian Berejikian, West Sound Watersheds Council
Cindy Callahan, Tacoma PC Health Dept
Chris Ellings, Nisqually Tribe
Karla Fowler, LOTT
Justin Hall, Nisqually River Foundation
Amy Hatch-Winecka, WRIA 13 & 14 Lead Entity Coordinator at Thurston and Mason Conservation Districts
Bob Holman, CLIPA
Tom Kantz, Pierce County
Neil McClanahan, City of Tumwater

Brad Murphy, Thurston County
Sue Patnude, DERT
Debbie Riley, Mason County Public Health
Joe Roush, City of Olympia
Al Schmauder, Chambers-Clover Watershed Council
Alex Smith, Port of Olympia
Scott Steltzner, Squaxin Island Tribe
Stephanie Suter, PSP
Lydia Wagner, Ecology

Meeting Coordination:

Elizabeth McManus, Ross Strategic
Andy Chinn, Ross Strategic

Meeting Summary

I. Council Administrative Items

January Meeting Summary

- Council members approved the January 2015 meeting summary, which will be posted to the AHSS website.

Council Chair Position

- AHSS Council members voted to re-elect Justin Hall as Council Chair, and Alex Smith as Council Vice-Chair. Justin and Alex will continue in their roles until January 2017.

NEP Grant Applications

- Applications for NEP grant funding are due April 20. Organizations seeking AHSS grant endorsement should follow the procedure outlined on the AHSS website:
<http://www.healthysouthsound.org/resources/>

II. EPA Funding Model Decision

US EPA met with interested parties on March 10 to provide details on a new federal funding model for Puget Sound. The model does not address all of the issues that LIOs and tribes raised, but it does move toward more significant engagement with local entities and local actions.

The model envisions a competitive process to select three “strategic initiative leads”; one each for shellfish, habitat, and stormwater. The model emphasizes that PSP is responsible for upgrading the Action Agenda to a more narrowly focused and prioritized plan. EPA’s desire is to provide funding to LIOs beginning sometime during summer 2015 to support local recovery planning processes.

Meeting participants provided the following comments:

- Several participants at the March 10 meeting asked if the state agencies currently serving as lead organizations could be considered as strategic initiative leads, and EPA responded that this was possible. This is troubling, as it would not represent a significant change from the status quo.
- The criteria for selecting the strategic initiative leads have yet to be determined.
- If local recovery planning involves ESA-listed species, the plans will have to go through NMFS and USFWS review and approval. If a plan has federal agency approval it is helpful.

III. South Sound Multi-Species Strategy

Tom Kantz provided background and next steps on the South Sound multi-species strategy. The AHSS Council developed an interim priority list several years ago, followed by a process by which the priorities became NTAs for the Action Agenda. However, development of the NTAs did not follow any particular strategy or guiding document. The South Sound Technical Team has been considering how to develop a strategy without producing a long document that no one will read. One of the processes that has been successful in identifying, direct funding, and implementing actions is the salmon recovery process. The Washington State RCO provides guidance for Lead Entities to develop a salmon recovery strategy, which is used on an annual basis. The strategy is regularly reviewed and updated, includes technical guidance for prioritizing projects, and includes a citizen’s advisory committee to consider the socio-economic aspects of projects.

The Technical Team is using the salmon recovery process as a template for a South Sound prioritization strategy. The Team is developing information sheets that list the status of the Puget Sound “vital signs” in South Sound, as well as specific geographic descriptions of South Sound. Because these materials take significant time and resources to develop, the Technical Team had considered applying for NEP grant funding to finish its work. However, if EPA provides funding to the LIOs for strategy work it may not be necessary to apply for an NEP grant.

The AHSS workplan includes two deliverables due to PSP: A South Sound ecosystem pressures assessment and a process to prioritize South Sound NTAs. The Technical Team believes the pressures

assessment is fairly straightforward and can be developed without a major commitment of time and resources. The NTA prioritization process will be accomplished through the South Sound strategy.

Meeting participants provided the following comments:

- The pressures assessment is most important when it is incorporated into the local recovery strategy and used to prioritize actions.
- Some of the information in the pressures assessment is overly-specific and what is more important is setting an overall tone for South Puget Sound recovery.
- As part of the regional recovery strategy development, Council members could use upcoming meetings to review the logic model and associated actions for each of the strategic initiatives.

Next Steps:

- The Technical Team will continue to work on materials related to the pressures assessment and NTA prioritization and will circulate them for Council feedback when ready.

IV. Capitol Land Trust

Laurence Reeves from Capitol Land Trust provided a presentation on CLT's work in and around the Oakland Bay watershed. Oakland Bay watershed supports a significant number of salmon and bird species, as well as local jobs, but is threatened by declining water quality, fisheries, and loss of habitat.

CLT completed its first Oakland Bay project in 2005 with the conservation of [Oakland Bay County Park](#). This was followed by the [Twin Rivers Ranch Preserve](#) in 2010 and [Sunset Bluffs](#) in 2012.

CLT is currently working with Squaxin Island Tribe on the former Bayshore Golf course and surrounding salt marsh. The project will protect about 4,000 feet of marine shoreline, 27 acres of marine salt marsh estuary, the lower part of John's Creek, and John's Creek delta. The project will also retire approximately 200 acre feet of surface water rights originally used for irrigating the golf course; this water right will be returned to the state water bank for instream flows.

A copy of Mr. Reeves's presentation is available at <http://www.healthysouthsound.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/oakland-bay-ahss-presentation.pptx>

[Meeting adjourned at 4:00 pm]

Next meeting: Tuesday, May 19 2:00 – 4:00 pm