



**Alliance for a Healthy South Sound (AHSS) Executive Committee Meeting  
February 24, 2016, 2:00 – 4:00 pm  
LOTT Cleanwater Alliance**

**Executive Committee Members:**

Commissioner Bud Blake, Thurston County  
Jeff Dickison, Squaxin Island Tribe  
Justin Hall, Nisqually River Council  
Commissioner Randy Neatherlin, Mason County  
David Troutt, Nisqually Tribe

**Additional Attendees:**

Laura Blackmore, PSP  
John Bolender,  
Tom Kantz, Pierce County  
Chris Schutz, Pierce County SWM  
Sheida Sahandy, PSP  
Stephanie Suter, PSP  
Jim Wilcox, Wilcox Farms

**Meeting Summary**

**I. AHSS Administrative Updates**

- The second annual Puget Sound “Day on the Hill” is scheduled for February 29 – March 2. Dan Wrye will be attending.
- Justin Hall provided an update on recent AHSS Council activities:
  - Alex Smith left Port of Olympia and Tom Kantz is the new AHSS Council vice-chair.
- John Bolender has agreed to be the AHSS alternate ECB representative.
- Ross Strategic will circulate the draft thank you letter to Councilmember Ladenburg for Executive Committee members’ signatures.

**II. 2016 Action Agenda Update and NTA Process**

**Key Points From Discussion with EPA and PSP:**

- EPA and PSP acknowledged that they have heard concerns about the process this year and want to better understand them. The short time available this year and the newness of the process make everything more difficult. Process difficulties and frustration were emphasized by Alliance Executive Committee members and members of the Alliance Technical Team and Council.
- EPA reiterated their commitment to the new funding model and to using the model to support direct funding (i.e., without further competition) of high-priority Puget Sound recovery projects.
- EPA indicated that the content of the three strategic initiative / lead organization areas (stormwater, habitat, and shellfish) can be refined through adaptive management over time. If needed, new lead areas could be added. This adding a new lead area would be a high bar, but the flexibility to do it is there if it is needed.
- EPA indicated that capacity funding for LIOs (\$75K / year) is expected to continue and acknowledged that they are also hear the Alliance ask for funding for implementation of local projects.



- Currently, there is no set aside funding for locally-identified priority projects or process for directing funding to locally identified priorities in the NEP money that will be distributed through the new lead organizations for shellfish, habitat, and stormwater.
  - EPA believes that funding will naturally flow to locally identified projects as projects are prioritized at the Puget Sound scale into consolidated (all local and regional projects) lists of priorities in each strategic initiative area.
  - This was very troubling and frustrating to the Alliance Executive Committee. Alliance Executive Committee members emphasized that reliably and predictably directing at least a portion of NEP money to locally identified priorities is the critical part of the request LIOs and the NWIFC made in comments on the funding model, and critical to continued relevance and success of LIOs.
  - Alliance Executive Committee members asked when the decision was made to abandon the effort, described in March 2015, to direct a portion of NEP money to locally identified priorities and why there was no discussion with LIOs as part of that decision making. This question was not answered.
  - EPA expressed openness to understanding more about what it would take to satisfy this need and to discussing it in the context of (1) the EPA grant for management conference support, the RFP for that will be out very soon; (2) future years of funding under the stormwater, shellfish, habitat lead organization grants; and (3) other options.
- Alliance Executive Committee members emphasized the need to get started with some amount of NEP funding to locally-identified priorities this year, even if the amount is small, and to quickly begin conversations about how to improve funding for locally-identified priorities in future years. Clearly those conversations must begin now if we expect a different outcome next year. There is no longer an intention to have a single fiscal agent for new lead organization grants. The details of this were not discussed.
- EPA emphasized that LIOs should work through the management conference to raise their concerns and questions; Peter also expressed openness to hearing these concerns directly, e.g., at the March EPA/LIO meeting or in other ways.

### III. Other Topics of Interest and Meeting Wrap Up

- The AHSS LIO coordinators are drafting an agenda for the Executive Committee retreat on April 1 and will contact Executive Committee members for feedback.
- The AHSS LIO coordinators will contact the other Puget Sound LIOs to relay the key points from the conversation with PSP and EPA.
- PSP will release ranked NTA lists for each strategic initiative on March 11. These lists will be added to the draft 2016 Action Agenda for public comment.
- The AHSS LIO coordinators will work with other Puget Sound LIOs to convene a LIO leadership meeting.

[Meeting adjourned]