

Alliance for a Healthy South Sound (AHSS) Executive Committee Meeting
December 12, 2014, 8:30 – 10:30 am
Mason County Public Works
100 Public Works Drive West
Shelton, WA

Executive Committee Members:

Jeff Dickison, Squaxin Island Tribe
Justin Hall, Nisqually River Foundation
Councilmember Ladenburg, Pierce County
Executive McCarthy, Pierce County
Commissioner Neatherlin, Mason County

Additional Attendees:

John Bolender, Mason Conservation District
Tom Kantz, Pierce County SWM
Al Schmauder, Chambers-Clover WS Council
Chris Schutz, Pierce County SWM
Stephanie Suter, PSP
Charissa Waters, Whatcom County
Dan Wrye, Pierce County SWM/ECB
Representative, South Puget Sound

Meeting Summary

I. Input on EPA Puget Sound Funding Model

Dan Wrye provided a [timeline](#) of activities related to input on the EPA NEP funding model, beginning with South Sound's initial 2010 letter to EPA expressing concern and offering process improvements. Dan also presented his summary analysis of all public input received by EPA on the FY16 funding model (page 3 of the document linked above). EPA received 16 letters, some of which were signed by multiple organizations. In addition, many of the signatory organizations are comprised of multiple other organizations. When viewed through this lens, the majority of regional organizations support the NWIFC/LIO proposed model, regional allocations, and providing the majority of funding to local projects.

PSP's letter to EPA does not specifically endorse any of the funding models but urges EPA to give "strong consideration" to the NWIFC/LIO model. During the PSP Leadership Council meeting on 12/10, Rick Parkin from US EPA repeatedly noted EPA's interest in PSP's implementation strategies.

- Jeff Dickison noted that there is significant work to be done and AHSS should align itself to contribute to that work. In separate meetings, EPA insists it is not committed to any particular funding model; the Agency's biggest concern is the current backlog of unspent funds. For programs like NEP, a shift in the political party in power does not generally mean more or less funding but could mean shifts in regional funding. Given a funding backlog, a reasonable argument could be made that Puget Sound does not need additional resources.

Next Steps:

- During discussions with the LIOs and NWIFC, Dan developed some minor revisions to the "desired attributes" document. The Executive Committee approved the redline/strikeout changes to the document for use by Dan and Elizabeth as a basis for further discussion with NWIFC and the other LIOs. The Executive Committee also confirmed that direct regional allocation is one of the minimum attributes necessary for AHSS to support a funding model.

- Dan and Elizabeth will continue to work with other LIOs and with NWIFC on the EPA NEP funding model.

II. WSAC Coastal Counties Caucus Legislative Priorities

Brynn Brady, Ceiba Consulting (under contract to WSAC), provided an overview of the legislative priorities for Washington's Coastal Counties Caucus. The legislative proposals cover topics including water infrastructure funding, coastal restoration, septic program funding, oil transportation, non-point toxics reduction, and Puget Sound recovery. Descriptions of each topic are included in the [handout](#) provided by Brynn.

- Jeff Dickison noted that the PSP website now has a link to the report on watershed groups as requested in the legislative proviso. Among several recommendations in the report on structural changes to PSP is a proposal to have the LIOs codified in statute. There is potential for this proposal to gain traction during the upcoming legislative session. Another recommendation in the report is to strengthen the role of the Ecosystem Coordination Board.
 - PSP is waiting for Senator Ranker's response to the proviso report.

III. Update on AHSS Council Activities

Justin Hall, AHSS Council Chair, reported on the November Council meeting. Among other items, the Council heard an update on significant South Sound projects by the Squaxin Island Tribe, and a presentation on shellfish health, status, and threats from Bill Dewey of Taylor Shellfish.

IV. Puget Sound Funding Sources

Chris Schutz summarized available South Sound funding sources as compiled by Laura Spencer at Ross Strategic. Chris noted the information in the document is subject to change and does not include grant opportunities at the county level.

Executive Committee members discussed how best to use the compilation document:

- Jeff Dickison noted that some of the funding sources in the document are subject to purely competitive processes but others are fully engaged (e.g., the Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery Fund, which is accessible by the state and tribes).
- Executive McCarthy suggested comparing the list of funding sources with South Sound projects to determine if any projects currently on the list are suitable for a grant application.

V. Executive Committee Administrative Items

Executive Committee Chair and Co-Chair

- Executive McCarthy stepped down as Chair of the Executive Committee, having completed her term (plus additional time) as stipulated in the organization's bylaws. Commissioner Neatherlin took over as Chair. Jeff Dickison was named Vice-Chair.

September Meeting Summary

- The Executive Committee approved the draft September meeting summary.

State Budget Reductions – South Sound Impacts

- In June, Governor Inslee asked state agencies to consider the impact of a 15% budget reduction for the 2015-2017 budget cycle. WDFW's potential budget reduction measures include closure of the Minter Creek fish hatchery in Carr Inlet and the Coulter Creek satellite fish facility. Closure of these facilities would have a significant impact on South Puget Sound. Squaxin Island Tribe suggested that AHSS send an official letter to the state regarding this proposal.

AHSS Website

- The website is live and is regularly updated. A few sections are still under construction.

NTA Financial Reporting to PSP

- AHSS Coordinators circulated a status summary for the South Sound NTAs, as reported to PSP. The next reporting will occur in early January 2015.

Future Executive Committee Meeting Topics

- Al Schmauder suggested future meetings should include discussion of the economic aspects of South Sound recovery.

VI. Summary of Action Items

- Dan Wrye and Elizabeth McManus will work with the LIOs and NWIFC to articulate the vision for EPA NEP funding.
- Jeff Dickison will circulate details of WDFW's proposed closure of Minter Creek hatchery and Coulter Creek satellite facility.
- Randy will circulate the letter from the Hood Canal Coordinating Council (HCCC) on WDFW's proposed facility closures.
- AHSS Coordinators will post the September meeting summary to the website.