

**Alliance for a Healthy South Sound (AHSS) Executive Committee Meeting  
May 27, 2015  
Mason County Public Works  
100 Public Works Drive West  
Shelton, WA**

**Executive Committee Members:**

Commissioner Blake, Thurston County  
Jeff Dickson, Squaxin Island Tribe  
Councilmember Ladenburg, Pierce County  
Executive McCarthy, Pierce County  
Commissioner Neatherlin, Mason County  
Alex Smith, Port of Olympia

**Additional Attendees:**

Tom Kantz, Pierce County SWM  
Sue Patnude, DERT  
Chris Schutz, Pierce County SWM  
Stephanie Suter, PSP  
Jim Wilcox, Wilcox Farms  
Dan Wrye, Pierce County SWM/ECB  
Representative, South Puget Sound

**Meeting Summary**

*(Note: Executive Committee decisions are indicated with bold text)*

**I. AHSS Administrative Updates**

- The Executive Committee reviewed the first quarter 2015 NTA status report.
- **The Executive Committee approved the March meeting minutes.**
- PSP Updates
  - Several organizational changes at PSP are underway in conjunction with the new EPA NEP funding model. PSP is not receiving extra funding for implementation of the new model and is also facing a 10% reduction in state general fund support. As a result of this budget reduction, PSP is re-aligning staff and providing central facilitation for the Leadership Council, Science Panel, ECB, and Salmon Recovery Board. For additional information on changes at PSP, see the recent e-mail from PSP Director Sahandy.
  - Executive McCarthy and Councilmember Ladenburg noted that they jointly sent a letter to PSP in support of PSP's proposed organizational changes.
  - Jim Wilcox endorsed the professional leadership at PSP and noted that if PSP-affiliated groups plan to request funding for projects, they should ensure that the projects meet a high standard for transparency and scientific/technical grounding.
  - Executive McCarthy noted that AHSS has diligently created structures, rules, and criteria for solid decision-making and has pushed PSP to change its organizational structure. The recently announced changes are a move in the right direction.
- Ecosystem Coordination Board Update
  - During the most recent ECB meeting, PSP Director Sahandy laid out a vision for how decisions will occur under the new NEP funding model. South Sound ECB representative Dan Wrye asked PSP Legislative Director Parsons and Director Sahandy if an AHSS letter of support/identification of suggested legislative changes would be helpful.
  - Rick Parkin retired as EPA NEP Puget Sound program manager and Angela Boniface is now the acting program manager. EPA Region 10 Administrator Dennis McLaren will name a permanent replacement at some point.

- Dan Wrye's current term as ECB representative is ending and PSP will solicit nominations for the position at the end of June.
  - Commissioner Neatherlin noted that given PSP's recent organizational changes, the ECB's role is likely to grow and continuity in the ECB representative is important.
  - **Jeff Dickison motioned to nominate Dan to continue as the South Sound ECB representative. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Ladenburg. Executive Committee members voted to endorse Dan's nomination as ECB representative.**
  - Dan commented that Debbie Riley from Mason County Public Health has been the alternate ECB representative for several years and Alex Smith from Port of Olympia (AHSS Council Co-chair) has volunteered to fill this role.
- State of the Sound Update
  - Each year the LIOs are asked to provide content for the State of the Sound update: The AHSS Council suggested restoration of the golf course at Oakland Bay.
  - Jeff Dickison noted that he recently attended an implementation strategies workshop for an estuary restoration initiative and the proposed approach is highly problematic. The group in question has isolated their priorities to what they consider to be the major estuaries in Puget Sound, and in the case of South Sound, their priorities only include the Nisqually. No other estuary in South Sound would be part of that initiative, calculated in results, or eligible for funding. This has to change: There are a significant number of important estuaries that, even though they are not Chinook estuaries, they are food sources for Chinook. This emphasizes the point that smaller scale things add up on a regional scale to be quite substantial.

## II. AHSS Priorities and Direction for the Next Few Months

Elizabeth McManus reviewed the draft briefing paper on the path to direct funding, and timeline for AHSS activities over the next 9 – 15 months.

AHSS will receive an additional \$175,000 in funding through Thurston County (as fiscal agent), with an additional scope of work and deliverables. Ross Strategic can take on the additional work, or the Executive Committee could suggest another contractor or AHSS member to take it on. The first step is clear: A workplan that addresses the new scope of work and deliverables must be developed in a way that involves the Executive Committee. The workplan is due by the end of July, with the first deliverable (identification of focus areas) due by mid-August. The Technical Team has drafted a proposed approach to developing a 5 year strategic recovery plan for South Sound, including surveying local implementers and convening an all-day workshop with regional experts.

At the same time, the existing South Sound scope of work requires AHSS to submit a revised list of NTAs: AHSS must decide if any of the NTAs should change and then prioritize them.

Executive Committee Discussion:

- Jeff Dickison noted that shellfish, habitat, and stormwater are highlighted as PSP Strategic Initiatives but there are many activities that do not fall into these categories. The northern Puget Sound LIOs, for example, are concerned with oil spill prevention planning. When funding becomes available, it will not fund everything and a comprehensive South Sound recovery plan should be used as a tool for selecting AHSS's top priorities.

- Commissioner Neatherlin commented that organizations or coalitions with completed plans will be more likely to receive funding, and AHSS should incorporate a fourth category to capture activities that do not fit within the three PSP Strategic Initiatives. However, the AHSS should consider carefully whether to rank non-Strategic Initiative activities as priorities.
- Executive Committee members noted that EPA's intentions regarding funding of activities that do not fit with the PSP Strategic Initiatives are not clear.
- **Executive Committee members agreed that Thurston County should accept the additional EPA capacity funding as fiscal agent on behalf of AHSS.**
- **Executive Committee members agreed that Ross Strategic should develop a workplan, in consultation with the AHSS Technical Team, for the additional EPA capacity funding.**
- Councilmember Ladenburg noted that the amount of Executive Committee work required related to NTA prioritization and the additional capacity funding from EPA may require additional meetings and/or an all-day Executive Committee retreat.
- Commissioner Neatherlin commented that the value of surveying South Sound implementers may be diminished; because of the short time frame it will be difficult to develop and implement a survey that would provide sufficiently useful data.
- Jeff Dickson noted that organizing a single day workshop takes significant time and resources and would be difficult to accomplish given the draft deadlines from EPA.

#### **Actions**

- Ross Strategic will draft a workplan for the additional capacity funding and will schedule an Executive Committee conference call on this topic.
- Ross Strategic will look for time on Executive Committee members' calendars to schedule an all-day retreat to discuss the five year ecosystem recovery plan and NTA prioritization.

#### **III. Executive Committee Decision Making**

- Jeff Dickson commented that when Squaxin Island Tribe agrees to participate in multi-party intergovernmental processes (such as AHSS), the Tribe is always clear that it will participate if decision making is consensus-based but will not participate if decision making is through "traditional" voting practice. This is due to the Tribe's history of marginalization through processes wherein its vote was effectively overridden. As AHSS developed policies there was an impetus to develop a backup voting/decision making system in order to arrive at outcomes. Squaxin Island Tribe agreed to this system under the clear understanding that, in the event the tribe was outvoted, it would no longer participate in a system that made decisions over the Tribe's objection. There have been several instances where the Tribe has been outvoted but it has chosen to continue to participate. It is difficult to predict what type of decision would cause the Tribe to end its participation, as this depends on the Tribal Council. The Tribe does not request a change in AHSS policies or procedures; however it does request that more effort be put into consensus-based decision making.
- Commissioner Neatherlin noted that each organization that participates in coalitions such as AHSS can choose to end their participation due to disagreement on a particular decision. However, the hope is that each member puts in a good faith effort to constructively work through disagreements.
- Executive McCarthy remarked that when conflicting opinions arise, there must be room for compromise. Executive McCarthy also noted that disagreement on an issue is not the same as marginalization or lack of respect for those with a different perspective.

- Councilmember Ladenburg commented on the importance of tribal representation at AHSS and noted that certain issues are non-negotiable but others could be decided one way or the other.

#### **IV. Go-Around**

- Jennifer Joly from Pierce County is moving to Oregon. Executive McCarthy and Councilmember Neatherlin signed a certificate recognizing Jennifer's contributions to AHSS.

#### **V. Summary of Action Items and Decisions**

##### **Action Items**

- Ross Strategic will draft a workplan for the additional capacity funding and will schedule an Executive Committee conference call on this topic.
- Ross Strategic will look for time on Executive Committee members' calendars to schedule an all-day retreat to discuss the five year ecosystem recovery plan and NTA prioritization.

##### **Decisions**

- The Executive Committee approved the March meeting minutes.
- Executive Committee members voted to endorse Dan Wrye's nomination as ECB representative.
- Executive Committee members agreed that Thurston County should accept the additional EPA capacity funding as fiscal agent on behalf of AHSS.
- Executive Committee members agreed that Ross Strategic should develop a workplan, in consultation with the AHSS Technical Team, for the additional EPA capacity funding.