Alliance for a Healthy South Sound (AHSS) Executive Committee Meeting
September 23, 2015, 2:00 – 4:00 pm
LOTT Clean Water Alliance
500 Adams Street NE
Olympia, WA 98501

Executive Committee Members:
Jeff Dickison, Squaxin Island Tribe
Justin Hall, Nisqually River Council
Councilmember Connie Ladenburg, Pierce County
Commissioner Randy Neatherlin, Mason County
David Troutt, Nisqually Tribe

Additional Attendees:
John Bolender, Mason Conservation District
Scott Brewer, Hood Canal Coordinating Council
Daniel Einstein, DERT
Haley Harguth, Hood Canal Coordinating Council
Constance Ibsen, Lower Hood Canal Watershed Coalition
Tom Kantz, Pierce County
Jeff Parsons, PSP
Sue Patnude, DERT
Sheida Sahandy, PSP
Al Schmauder, Chambers-Clover Watershed Council
Chris Schutz, Pierce County SWM
Stephanie Suter, PSP
Jim Wilcox, Wilcox Farms, PSP Leadership Council
Cindy Wilson, Thurston County
Dan Wrye, Pierce County SWM/ECB Representative, South Puget Sound

Meeting Summary

I. AHSS Administrative Updates

- The Executive Committee approved the July meeting minutes.
- Tom Kantz (Pierce County), provided a summary of the September 15 Council meeting.

II. PSP Legislative and Organizational Updates

Jeff Parsons, PSP Legislative Policy Director, provided a legislative update including budget highlights (operating, capital, and transportation), policy highlights, lessons learned, future opportunities, and next steps.

Executive Committee Discussion:

- Mr. Troutt noted that, overall, the legislative outcomes did not end up in a worse place because many partners worked together to educate people and advocate for programs. Jim Wilcox's involvement in particular made a significant difference.

PSP Director Sheida Sahandy updated the Executive Committee on the status of the Action Agenda for Puget Sound, PSP organizational changes, and legislative activity:

- Action Agenda for Puget Sound: The solicitation request for NTA proposals was circulated earlier in the week. On 9/23 EPA issues its RFP for the three Strategic Initiative Teams (SITs). The amount of direct funding available for LIOs is unknown.
- PSP has been encouraging EPA to develop details around NEP funding and timing; PSP circulated a conceptual model but EPA has not yet provided feedback. PSP will forward any LIO comments to EPA.
- PSP Organizational Structure: PSP is developing a conceptual model of its various boards to determine how each board should be working, its respective value, and how the boards should work together.
- PSP is gathering feedback on whether and how the authorizing statute for PSP could or should be changed (e.g., LIO representation on the ECB). If pursued, suggested revisions would be forwarded to the governor's office in September 2016 for the 2017 legislative session.
- The State of the Sound report will be released this fall in various versions, depending on the audience.
- PSP is attempting to change expectations that Puget Sound recovery work will be complete by 2020; instead the conversation is around recovery targets.
- The Puget Sound federal legislative caucus released a federal Puget Sound recovery bill that would place Puget Sound under the Clean Water Act as a water body of national significance.

III. South Sound Near Term Actions

AHSS will follow on PSP's request for NTAs with its own NTA request. Elizabeth McManus requested Executive Committee feedback on whether to make a narrower or broader request for proposed NTAs from South Sound partners.

Executive Committee Discussion:

- Fundamentally the PSP Vital Signs are a public relations tool, not scientifically or technically defensible objectives.
- The NTAs must be measurable in order to demonstrate success.
- A key question is whether AHSS wants to endorse NTAs that do not fit within any of the three Strategic Initiatives.
- The NTA and Action Agenda system is flawed; the Action Agenda becomes obsolete the moment it is printed because it is based on plans rather than strategies.
- Since the amount of available direct funding is not known, one option is to advance a small number of focused projects with discreet deliverables tied to various levels of funding.
- One possible course of action is to issue a broad call for NTAs but stipulate that only a select few will move forward. A pre-screening process managed by the Technical Team would provide an early sense of the types of proposals that are likely to be submitted.

Next Steps:

- The Technical Team will vet initial NTA submittals prior to Executive Committee review.
- The Executive Committee will make decisions on which NTA submittals should move forward for a full proposal during the November 18th Executive Committee meeting (six weeks before the NTAs are due to PSP).

VI. Other Topics of Interest

- Mr. Troutt stated for the record that community forest initiatives have been mischaracterized during Executive Committee meetings. Community forest initiatives are highly important to habitat recovery and have been broadly recognized as such. These projects also have high potential to contribute to Puget Sound recovery.

VIII. Go-Around

- The Thurston Regional Planning Council recently requested a grant endorsement from AHSS. However, because the request did not follow AHSS grant endorsement procedures (and therefore was not reviewed by the Technical Team), the Executive Committee declined to approve the request.
- During previous meetings the Executive Committee discussed whether to respond to the RFP for the Strategic Initiative Teams. As noted previously, it would be difficult for a single LIO to claim Puget Sound-wide expertise – a prerequisite for any potential applicant.
- Meeting participants noted several upcoming events (Shelton Oysterfest, Nisqually Watershed Festival, Stormwater Education).

[Meeting adjourned]