

Alliance for a Healthy South Sound (AHSS) Executive Committee Meeting
January 27, 2016, 9:00 – 10:30 am
Via Conference Call

Executive Committee Members:

Commissioner Bud Blake, Thurston County
Justin Hall, Nisqually River Council
Executive McCarthy, Pierce County
Commissioner Randy Neatherlin, Mason County
Councilmember Derek Young, Pierce County
Council

Additional Attendees:

Tom Kantz, Pierce County
Chris Schutz, Pierce County SWM
Stephanie Suter, PSP
Merita Trohimovich, City of Tacoma
Jim Wilcox, Wilcox Farms
Dan Wrye, Pierce County SWM/ECB
Representative, South Puget Sound

Meeting Summary

I. AHSS Administrative Updates

Ecosystem Coordination Board Meeting Highlights:

- Councilmember Will Hall, Shoreline, is the new ECB Chair. Dave Herrera from the Skokomish Tribe continues as Vice-Chair. The ECB discussed ideas for improving its effectiveness and potential changes to the ECB statute.
- The National Estuary Program (NEP) allocation for Puget Sound will be approximately \$28 million. US EPA has yet to announce how this funding will be divided among tribes, Strategic Initiative leads, and LIOs. Scheduling for a joint PSP-EPA-LIO meeting is underway to discuss this.

2016 Legislative Session:

- There is currently a bill (SB 6287) in the state legislature that appears to respond to WDFW promulgating updated rules on hydraulic project approvals (HPA). A group of counties, led by Pierce County and including Thurston and Mason County, supports legislation to restrict jurisdiction of HPA to the ordinary high-water mark. From a biological perspective this does not make sense – it is counterproductive to salmon recovery since a number of ecosystem features exist outside of the ordinary high water mark but are critical to protecting aquatic life.

II. AHSS 2016 Goals and Priorities

Elizabeth reviewed the summary of AHSS 2016 goals and priorities (attachment distributed to Executive Committee prior to call), including regular quarterly reporting on NTAs and draft South Sound Strategy.

Executive Committee Discussion:

- The work outlined for AHSS is almost exclusively confined to PSP required activities and does not include other South Sound interests and priorities.

III. Update on South Sound Near Term Actions

The AHSS Technical Team worked with project sponsors to prepare NTAs for submittal to PSP (summary document distributed to Executive Committee prior to call). The Strategic Initiative Transition Teams (SITTs) reviewed the NTAs and sorted them into three categories, depending on level of revision needed for final submittal. Project sponsors are working on revisions as needed; some project sponsors may choose to drop out of consideration. After final NTAs are submitted, the SITTs will review all NTAs at the Puget Sound scale. In early January, PSP forwarded AHSS approximately 120 “regional” NTA proposals. PSP asked for review of these proposals but the AHSS Technical Team felt that given constrained time and resources they were unable to provide a comprehensive review. The Technical Team composed a message to PSP outlining issues with the regional NTA review (copy of message distributed to Executive Committee prior to call).

Executive Committee Discussion:

- LIO and Regional NTAs should not be put into a single, prioritized list of projects for funding consideration.
- AHSS needs to continue to forward the argument that all state agency proposals have not been vetted locally and in many cases are not appropriate for funding because they do not address LIO priorities. Furthermore, funding for LIO projects is constrained by the three Strategic Initiatives, which do not necessarily align with AHSS priorities.
- Staff from AHSS member organizations should review proposed NTA projects and offer assistance to project sponsors if appropriate; spreading the work around might accomplish more, given the short turnaround time.

Next Steps:

- Pierce County (Dan Wrye) will draft and circulate a letter outlining AHSS concerns about mixing local and regional NTAs, and suggested steps to ensure that local priorities receive fair funding consideration.

IV: South Sound Strategy

The AHSS Technical Team is continuing its work on the South Sound Strategy. The goal of the strategy development effort is to serve the locally derived needs of the South Sound and create a suite of objectives expressed at the South Sound inlet and watershed scale. The first draft of the strategy is due in mid-April. A draft working outline was circulated with the Executive Committee. AHSS Council will also be involved in reviewing South Sound Strategy materials.

V. Other Topics of Interest

- Commissioner Neatherlin suggested that the Executive Committee have a briefing on both sides of the Capitol Lake issue at an upcoming meeting.

[Meeting adjourned]