

**ALLIANCE FOR A HEALTHY SOUTH SOUND
MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

***September 15, 2011, 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Commissioners Chambers, 619 Division Street, Port Orchard, WA***

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ATTENDANCE:

David Troutt (for Willie Frank)	Nisqually Tribe
Jeff Dickson (for Andy Whitener)	Squaxin Island Tribe
Pat McCarthy	Pierce County Executive
Sandra Romero	Thurston County Commissioner
Charlotte Garrido	Kitsap County Council
Lynda Ring-Erickson	Mason County Council
Stan Flemming	Pierce County Council

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Andy Haub	City of Olympia
Bob Simmons	WSU Extension – Thurston County
Chris Schutz	Pierce County
Dan Wrye	Pierce County
Doris Small	Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife
Emmett Dobey	Mason County
Jeanette Dorner	Puget Sound Partnership
Kathy Peters	Kitsap County
Keri Rooney	Pierce County
Linda Owens	Kitsap County
Martha Kongsgaard	Puget Sound Partnership
Patty Charnas	Kitsap County
Rich Doenges	Thurston County
Sue Patnude	Deschutes Estuary Restoration Team
Tom Kantz	Pierce County
Tristan Peter-Contesse	Puget Sound Partnership

Welcome and Introductions

Following introductions around the table, Commissioner Garrido welcomed everyone on behalf of Kitsap County. Commissioner Romero opened discussion with a brief review of the July 11, 2011 meeting summary, which was approved as final following a brief discussion.

Key Ecosystem Threats and Pressures in South Puget Sound

PSP Leadership Council Chair Martha Kongsgaard opened discussion with kudos to the organization, for putting in a significant amount of extra time and effort to the process of articulating key threats and pressures to South Puget Sound ecosystems. The Action Agenda – which is ultimately envisioned as a plan that will guide funding toward high priority recovery actions – is only as good as the locally-developed information that goes into it, and the AHSS

Work Group has been putting in extra hours during recent months to ensure that this happens to the maximum extent possible.

As an example of a key ecosystem pressure in Mason County, Commissioner Ring-Erickson noted that she's interested in a thoughtful conversation on how to solve the problem of septic systems/sewers in rural areas. The challenge is that many rural areas can't be put on sewers, but don't have suitable soils for septic, either. It was proposed that this issue be an agenda item for the Executive Committee's next meeting.

Concerns were raised that the key ecosystem pressures/threat statements are very general, and in their current form will not lead to specific actions that need to be taken to restore South Puget Sound. Ultimately, the list will need to be fleshed out in greater detail if the group expects to derive specific actions and strategies from it.

With the addition of a statement on the threat of climate change and another on the need to maintain public access to shorelines in the face of increasing development pressure, the Executive Committee affirmed the list of key threats/pressures for South Puget Sound.

Watershed Protection/Restoration Project Proposals

Executive Committee members opened conversation on a list of project proposals to the Lead Organization Watershed Protection/Restoration RFP, with the intent of deciding whether AHSS would support them. Concerns were expressed at the possibility of the Executive Committee simply providing a "blanket approval" to the full list of projects, as that feels contrary to the group's intent to identify regional strategies and actions of greatest importance to the recovery of South Puget Sound.

Discussion followed, with several Executive Committee members noting that the ideal situation would be to have a list of meaningful criteria on which to judge project proposals. Lacking those criteria, members felt that it wasn't possible to support some proposals while excluding others. A motion was approved and seconded to send the full list of projects forward, with AHSS support.

Concerns were expressed that the Executive Committee was not operating on the model of consensus-based decision-making, and that the group's purpose is not simply to approve everything that requires a yes/no decision. Executive Committee members agreed that the decision-making process on which Watershed Protection/Restoration project proposals to support wasn't ideal, and that a technical sub-group of the AHSS Council should develop evaluation criteria prior to holding similar conversations in the future.

Work Plan and Staff Position Description

The Executive Committee moved to consideration of the 2011-12 Work Plan and staff position description. Several members were concerned that the Coordinator's responsibilities for attending specific regional, local, and other meetings were not sufficiently clear, and asked for greater clarity in the next iteration. Thurston County and PSP staff will work to make this adjustment before the staff position description is finalized and advertised by the County in late September.

Questions were raised on the amount of money that would be available to fund an AHSS Coordinator, and clarification provided that Thurston County could not assume from verbal commitments that any amount greater than the base grant of \$75,000 would exist.

Questions were also raised on whether the AHSS Coordinator would be a contract position, or be employed as a Thurston County employee. Clarification was provided that – based on previous direction from the Work Group and Executive Committee – the job would be advertised as a “project” position (i.e. limited term) as a County employee. Clarification was also provided that although a manager in the County’s Resource Stewardship Department will sign the Coordinator’s pay slips, leave requests, etc., the Executive Committee will direct his/her day-to-day activities.

Several Executive Committee members noted that the desired mix of scientific and technical skills of the Coordinator are not sufficiently clear in the position description, as currently written. Thurston County committed to working with its Human Resources Department to ensure that a scientific/technical background is a central component of the job description.

Clarification was also provided that representatives of the Executive Committee would have the opportunity to be involved with the AHSS Coordinator hiring process. Pierce County and the Squaxin Island Tribe expressed a strong desire to be involved.

Action Agenda Public Open House

The Puget Sound Partnership will be hosting a public open house at the LOTT Clean Water Alliance on October 11, 2011, from 4:30-7:00pm. The purpose of the open house is to seek input and answer questions from the public on the 2011 Action Agenda update. Commissioner Sandra Romero will provide opening remarks, and other AHSS members are encouraged to attend and distribute the meeting announcement widely.

South Puget Sound Representative to the ECB

The Executive Committee opened conversation on nominating a South Puget Sound representative to the Ecosystem Coordination Board. Commissioner Ring-Erickson was nominated for the position, and brief discussion followed. Several members noted the importance of continuity in the South Sound ECB representative position, and pointed to Dan Wrye’s strong record as the Action Area’s current representative. Additional discussion followed, with members affirming the importance of the group’s nominee representing the South Sound Action Area rather than the specific local entity for which he/she is employed. Both nominees strongly expressed their intent to serve in that capacity.

The Executive Committee held a vote to determine AHSS’ nominee, and Dan Wrye was elected.

AHSS Coordinator Funding

The Executive Committee moved to consideration of the potential for its members to identify additional funds that would bolster the amount available to support an AHSS Coordinator. The current capacity grant from EPA is for \$75,000, which runs through June 2012.

Several members expressed the sentiment that one of AHSS’ purposes is to restructure how ecosystem recovery funding is allocated in South Puget Sound, and that the substantial amount of work that needs doing will not move forward with a small annual grant from EPA and year-to-

year contributions from Executive Committee members. Jeanette Dorner noted that in her capacity as Puget Sound Partnership's Director of Salmon and Ecosystem Recovery, she will strongly advocate for the funding necessary for South Puget Sound to implement its priorities.

A suggestion was offered that AHSS appoint a financial subcommittee, to work through initial challenges with budget allocation and strategy.

Concluding remarks revolved around the importance of appointing the full AHSS Council, particularly in light of the discussion around setting up technical and financial subcommittees to address challenges in those areas.

Summary of Key Decisions Made

Key Ecosystem Threats: With the additions proposed by members, the Executive Committee affirmed the list of key threats and pressures to South Puget Sound.

Watershed Protection/Restoration Project Proposals: The Executive Committee affirmed that all listed project proposals would receive AHSS support.

Position Description: With modifications emphasizing the importance of scientific and technical skills, the Executive Committee approved the staff position description and affirmed the hiring process as presented by Thurston County.

South Puget Sound ECB Representative: The Executive Committee nominated Dan Wrye to continue serving as the South Sound ECB representative.

Funding: Executive Committee members will continue to explore whether additional funds might be brought to the pool of money available to hire AHSS staff.

Next Meeting: Subject to final confirmation from Executive Committee members, the next meeting will be held in Mason County on November 17, 2011, from 2:00-4:00pm.