

**Alliance for a Healthy South Sound Executive Committee Meeting Summary
September 5th, 2012, 2-4 at the Nisqually Wildlife Refuge**

Executive Committee Attendees

Commissioner Sandra Romero – Thurston County

Commissioner Lynda Ring-Erickson – Mason County

David Troutt – Nisqually Tribe

Executive Pat McCarthy – represented by Dan Wrye – Pierce County

Guest speakers

Ann Sweeney – Office of Financial Management

David Palazzi – DNR Aquatic Reserves

Tom Kantz – Pierce County /Council workgroup

Review of the scope of OFM planning - Ann Sweeney

A handout on the budget proviso for OFM was reviewed. The scope for OFM is a temporary assignment to complete a report. A consulting firm (BERK) was hired to help prepare the report. The report has three components, the first being the island's legal status, decision making processes, identifying gaps etc. The second component is consulting with interested parties, including non-profits, private citizens, the tribes, agencies and so on. The third component is to recommend a long range planning process to determine how the island could be used in the future. The report doesn't say what should happen but offers options for the planning process.

The link for long range planning – McNeil Comments are being accepted at www.ofm.wa.gov through Sept 10th.

There was a general discussion about the legal status of McNeil Island. The current status is that in 2011 the prison closed and the state became out of compliance with the federal agencies on the 30% deed. The state is now trying to determine what it wants to do with the island and how it might fit under the public benefit conveyances. Depending on the state's determination of how they would like to use some, or all, of the island. It would then move through the federal surplus identification and formal disposition process.

The map of McNeil island provided by OFM was reviewed. Management responsibility of infrastructure resides with department of corrections, with passive management and patrols happening through fish and wildlife. The deed for WDFW does include Pitt and Gertrude islands – that is the harbor seal sanctuary. And cameras from WDFW monitor that area regularly. Management is still split but most of that is now Department of Social and Health Services. DSHS isn't funded with the same resources as DOC. No other residences are in use – they are all boarded up without utilities (keys in possession of DOC). Someone checks about once every other week and there are regular DSHS patrols. The parcels are legally defined but are not in many cases, ideal or sensible so, they can be potentially re-defined. Restrictions in the wildlife deed are the same as in the correctional deed. Public access reads that access is limited to personnel (in both deeds). Archaeology and Historic restrictions reads the same. In terms of easements (not exactly an easement) there's an allowance for the Navy and a couple of other

federal access points. Except for parcels 1 and 17 those deeds/restrictions apply. There are very few roads and any access has to be tied to a business purpose. For example, fish and wildlife are looking to opening fish passage at Luhr beach. Assuming that project is approved then GA has to approve, so both state and feds agree. Any change has to be agreed upon by state and federal government.

General Administration letter talking about 30% non-compliance requires minimal maintenance but does not give a time line for coming into compliance. Also requires things like avoiding water intrusion and the marine shop, such that certain infrastructure can hold its value – just daily operations. There's been no discussion from the wildlife end that they want to absolve their responsibility. The federal government has allowed this opportunity for the state to determine what else could be done through a public benefit conveyance. 30% deed is not in compliance, but a lot of the infrastructure that supports that 30% is in the other 70%. Even looking at the whole island there is a bigger picture and a lot of different interests.

The Alliance Executive Committee expressed interest, particularly, in the tribal view. It's important to be informed and sensitive to that view relating to what's best for the future of this area and respectful of long term cultural activities, and to consider that in terms of moving forward with next steps.

OFM is interested in hearing from the Alliance in terms of the future of the island, and any basic recommendations. We know there are some gaps in what we know and that's something we hope to bring to the fore in our report. It's an initial phase of what will be a multi-phase planning process, trying to look at the process holistically. Specifically:

What are your ideas for the future?

What else do you need to know?

How would you like to be involved?

The timing for the Oct 1 report deadline is tied to funding requests that need to go into the State budget.

Dan Wrye, representing Pierce County - Executive McCarthy, asked that several points be made on her behalf:

- Pierce County does not support continued use of correction facilities for the island
- Pierce County does support the wildlife conservation function – that it may be time to plant a seed with the congressional delegation to get support, or national parks or monuments, to make it some kind of park or refuge that would include limited public access.

OFM can put these recommendations on the record in a formal (on the record) way or informal.

David Troutt suggested that long range planning should include the Alliance, which is organized and dedicated to the overall sustainability of South Puget Sound. He further suggested that a vision and goals for the island be established prior to determination of ownership. He pointed out that the notion

of a national park does have implications to treaty rights, but that the goal may have a shared vision. He indicated that the Alliance needs to be involved in the development of that plan for McNeil Island. And there needs, too, to be a stronger – government to government – conversation about the future of the island with the tribe.

Commissioner Ring-Erickson pointed out that there was a remarkable lack of sensitivity that happened at the outset of McNeil use and requested that she would like to see OFM provide a better understanding of that history and tribal use as a place to start. She also expressed concern about the historic and abandoned infrastructure that may not be documented as well as concern over what may be sitting, undocumented, in the ground on the island.

Commissioner Romero reminded everyone to be cognizant that there is a lot at stake in terms of the expense involved with the existing new special commitment facility.

Ann Sweeney stated that OFM will not make the draft form of the report will available to the public, but that it will be published on the OFM website and legislative website.

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David Palazzi spoke about McNeil in relation to the Marine Aquatic Reserve.

DNR has no ownership on the island – however, it was recently determined that the tidelands around the island do revert to DNR ownership. Some are still associated with the upland fish and wildlife property, but 80%, roughly, reverted to the state when DOC left.

The DNR map of the Aquatic Reserve was presented

Some tideland is still managed by DFW, but roughly 80% is managed by DNR. That large percentage appears to have reverted to DNR for management. Commercial geoduck tracts are there too. Pitt island has not been mapped. It is managed by DFW so, speculation is that the tidelands are also managed by DFW.

DNR are on the team of state agencies working with OFM is to promote public access and use of renewable resources. DNR is interested in promoting the public access, as much as possible, as well as use of renewable resources and habitat protection. They want to promote traditional uses – and promote the conservation of the reserve habitat. The tidelands would have been included in the aquatic reserve if we had known that we have management of the tidelands. DNR will need to be responsive to a lot of people and interests, but is interested in the possibility of including those tidelands into the aquatic reserve. DNR has shared interests and goals with the Alliance on the issue of McNeil Island's future.

A DNR map of monitoring sites on the island was discussed. In implementing the monitoring plan, DNR provided the Nisqually tribe with 200K for salmonid and forage fish monitoring expanding to north side of Anderson and 6 or 7 spots on McNeil. During the first season, juvenile salmonids and sand lance and

sand dollars have been found as well as some Olympia oyster populations. The shellfish beds are very productive (which the tribes would be very interested in beginning to use).

Alliance Executive Committee members suggested looking at inclusion of the shoreline of McNeil in the aquatic reserve as an upfront discussion – a baseline discussion. DNR suggested that this could be a possibility but recognized the need to be sensitive about jumping out ahead of the legislature, and letting OFM complete their process.

Update on the Alliance Council

Council met on August 29th. Ron Sims presented the Puget Sound Champions – first annual awards for this program. The Council is working on developing a regional sustainability plan – and they want to come up with a mission and vision for that plan. Currently RFPs that request the endorsement of the LIOs are anticipated at the end of October. The Alliance is in position to be able to rank projects requesting endorsement through the Council workgroup.

Overview of the Lead Entity Strategy as a Template for the Recovery Implementation Strategy for the South Sound - Tom Kantz. Targets that are relevant (additional or modifying) for the South Sound would be identified and then a brief historical and trends would be developed. That would be followed by identifying the types of actions that would address those impairments, looking at the hot spots, though some will have a broader range. Certain stressors will be more focused than other. Interim actions would be expanded to one-pager sheets that flesh out the actions and summarize how far towards recovery implementation will get us. When the Alliance does provide endorsement for grants that should help in making determinations and rankings.

It will be a combination of specific and general, policy and projects. The primary purpose of the strategy is not only to lay out the individual projects, but also to give us a path forward. This strategy is a good template because PSP is very familiar with it and the strategy has been very useful and successful in supporting the Lead Entity work. It focuses our efforts and it is also brief and readable and concise. It's NOT a comprehensive planning doc. It's a working doc. Not written by scientists for scientists. It's by restoration workers for restoration works. The Salmon Recovery LE has an agreed upon allotment formula – similar to a block grant – that the watersheds can count on. This is a very successful model. Creating a South Sound ecosystem recovery strategy that's based on those Lead Entity strategies provides a tool to approach the PSP in terms of advocating for block grants for South Sound regional projects.

We're going to have some actions that are in conflict with regional goals. For example – Nisqually is dedicated to the recovery of ESA Chinook stock, but there is fishery competition. Are we going to tackle those difficult issues? We need a process for determining priorities and a process of resolving conflict. Potentially, those issues can be brought out in the strategy, and acknowledged, to give us a starting place. *The Executive Committee suggested identifying some of those areas where there are potential policy collisions and providing potential options for review of those topics.*

Adjourn.