

Alliance for a Healthy South Sound (AHSS) Executive Committee Meeting
June 25, 2014, 2:00 – 4:00 pm
Pierce County Surface Water Management
2702 S 42nd St. Suite 201
Tacoma, WA 98409

Executive Committee Members:

Jeff Dickson, Squaxin Island Tribe
Justin Hall, Nisqually River Foundation
Councilmember Ladenburg, Pierce County
Executive McCarthy, Pierce County
Commissioner Neatherlin, Mason County
David Troutt, Nisqually Tribe

Additional Attendees:

Laura Blackmore, Cascadia Consulting
John Bolender, Mason Conservation District
Jennifer Joly, Pierce County
Tom Kantz, Pierce County SWM
Keri Rooney, Pierce County
Sheida Sahandy, PSP
Al Schmauder, Chambers Clover WS Council
Chris Schutz, Pierce County SWM
Stephanie Suter, PSP
Cynthia Wilson, Thurston County
Dan Wrye, Pierce County SWM/ECB
Representative, South Puget Sound

Introduction

Executive Committee members discussed adoption of a memoriam for Nisqually Tribal leader Billy Frank, Jr. David Troutt remarked that Mr. Frank was an amazing individual who will be sorely missed every day. He was supportive of AHSS's work, supportive of the PSP, and generally supportive of getting things done. In particular Mr. Frank was always supportive of getting things done more quickly in South Sound. Mr. Frank's challenge to all of us was – and remains – to make a difference.

Executive McCarthy motioned to adopt the resolution in memoriam of Bill Frank, Jr. The resolution was adopted.

Discussion with Sheida Sahandy, Puget Sound Partnership Executive Director

Director Sahandy thanked the Executive Committee for its work. She then discussed her background and outlined her vision for the PSP. Director Sahandy is interested in bringing the most value to the system, given the number of partners working on Puget Sound recovery. Governor Inslee is interested in greater focus on actions and outcomes, and feels that PSP is "spread too thin". Director Sahandy believes that PSP should organize based on the "backbone" agency model, which has been more commonly deployed among social service agencies. This model acts as a force multiplier to obtain funding and advocate for legislation and policy that makes sense for Puget Sound recovery, rather than implementing projects. This would take PSP out of certain activities in which it has been involved in the past, by defining PSP's key roles and transitioning away from those activities that do not correspond with these roles. Director Sahandy is also working on structural changes to PSP that will help the Partnership be less process-oriented and more outcome-oriented.

In the short term, PSP recently received NTA's from the nine LIOs and incorporated these into the 2014 Action Agenda. The current NTAs represent a good balance between local and regional actions. Longer term, PSP is seeking better NTA prioritization as well as good measurement of whether investments are working. PSP is also aiming for more granular understanding of pressures, to scientifically substantiate recovery efforts.

Director Sahandy noted that LIOs are critical for Puget Sound recovery, as the local level is where action occurs. As a backbone organization, PSP requires systems that work at the local level, and an integrating function for everything to work. The difficulty lies in creating systems that do not add layers of process and/or administration.

Director Sahandy commented that PSP and EPA have been working together over the last several months to discuss NEP funding issues, such as multiple competitive applications and deadlines. PSP and EPA have developed several potential ways to address these concerns and will circulate them with the LIOs for feedback. PSP and EPA looked closely at salmon recovery funding as a potential model for Puget Sound recovery funding. PSP is scheduled to meet with EPA during the week of July 14 to discuss the draft funding models. AHSS provided several letters to PSP with funding model descriptions, and PSP has used this information to inform its discussions with EPA. One aspect of AHSS's model that EPA had an issue with was a legislative proposal to direct-fund block grant style, without a competitive process.

Following Director Sahandy's remarks, AHSS Executive Committee Members provided the following comments and questions:

- There is an inherent problem in the Lead Organization model because LOs are also the funders. This is why AHSS recommended moving the funding process through the RCO, to make it non-competitive.
- The process of developing a funding model appears to rely on PSP and EPA developing a concept and then seeking reactions from groups like AHSS. However, AHSS provided input previously in the form of its own recommended model. Pursuing a model independently leads to a loss of trust between local organizations and PSP/EPA, and it would be preferable to create opportunities to engage with AHSS and other local organizations as funding models are developed.
- PSP needs a steady hand at the wheel; it is a young agency but already has its fourth Director. There are serious concerns about the LO model, that it does not work for Puget Sound recovery. AHSS's interest is making a difference in Puget Sound, so the Executive Committee developed a funding model that was then presented to EPA. EPA's need for competitive funding is a red herring: Puget Sound funding *has* competition, at the local project level. The competition does not necessarily have to be between LIOs. EPA also claims that tribes do not support the SRFB process, and the Treaty Rights at Risk initiative likewise does not support the process: this is completely incorrect. The issue is whether regulatory programs are in place to prevent habitat loss, while projects are ongoing. AHSS suggests an all-day meeting with LIOs to land on a proposal that makes sense for PSP to bring to EPA.
- PSP takes a significant amount of funding "off the top" before the funding is moved out anywhere else. The AHSS's funding proposals never went anywhere because PSP did not want to subject itself to the type of scrutiny that might result in reduced funding. The state's own audit of PSP notes that there are significant concerns about potentially bypassing PSP. PSP has

failed to empower organizations such as AHSS to create deliverables and will continue to fail until such empowerment occurs. The Hood Canal Coordinating Council (HCCC) is set up differently than AHSS, with more funding and with a list of priority projects that can be bid on.

- PSP misrepresented AHSS's funding model proposal and worked against AHSS during the 2013 legislative session. Director Sahandy was not at PSP at the time; however trust between PSP and AHSS has been damaged.
- Other examples of regional organizations that deal with issues of geographic equity include PSRC and Sound Transit. These organizations could be looked at as models for PSP.

Adoption of AHSS Near Term Actions into the 2014 Action Agenda Update

Tom Kantz provided an update on AHSS NTAs. In May, the PSP Leadership Council adopted the 2014 Action Agenda. During November and December of 2013, LIO Coordinator Gabby Byrne approached technical staff in South Sound to request local actions. From this list, county and PSP staff looked at interim priorities and flagged NTAs that could make progress in the 2013-2014 time frame. Potential project sponsors were approached to determine who could take on projects from a subset of the interim list. The Executive Committee approved the list, which was submitted to PSP in late March/early April 2014. During the public comment period, three public comments were submitted on the Deschutes Estuary NTA; the Squaxin Island tribe responded to these comments, as NTA owner.

The NTAs were forwarded to the ECB for discussion, and to the Leadership Council for adoption; the NTAs are currently under 30 day EPA review as is the entire 2014 Action Agenda. The Executive Committee previously requested quarterly updates on NTA progress; these updates will begin in October or December. The Executive Committee also requested a presentation on several NTAs, to increase familiarity.

Regarding the McNeil Island NTA: OFM interviewed for a scope of work that OFM is developing as part of the long term comprehensive plan for McNeil Island. The current status of that work is unknown (see list of action items at the end of this summary).

The AHSS Council will be discussing the Deschutes Estuary NTA during its July 17th meeting.

- Squaxin Island tribe has indicated to DES that it is not interested in engaging in a process convened by the Ruckelshaus Center. However, the tribe is a long-term supporter of Deschutes Estuary restoration.

South Sound Monitoring & Adaptive Management Project: Phase I Results

Laura Blackmore from Cascadia Consulting provided a presentation on the South Sound Monitoring and Adaptive Management project. The project's overall purpose is to create and maintain an adaptive management system for salmon recovery in Puget Sound. In the South Sound, the South Sound multi-species strategy is the basis for salmon recovery activities.

Results from Phase 1 of the project include:

1. A framework for adaptive management

2. A draft list of prioritized habitat and implementation indicators
3. A refined and more specific logic chain that explains how you'll get to results
4. A tool to more effectively communicate results
5. Gap analysis (a roadmap for future work)

Other benefits of the project include a re-engagement with the South Sound chapter written ten years ago, and collaboration between watersheds through Miradi share. Intermediate project results provide an ability to look across watersheds using a common language and tool, and identify regional gaps. Future regional work will feature regional monitoring priorities, guidance on condition bins, guidance on setting goals, and desired future status.

Future watershed work will include pressure prioritization, enhanced viability of work, creation of conceptual models, gap filling, creation of monitoring plans, and reporting.

Future South Sound work will require a technical and policy structure for plan oversight, followed by a monitoring plan and strategy updates.

Following Ms. Blackmore's remarks, AHSS Executive Committee Members provided the following comments and questions:

- AHSS has a policy group and a technical group but the South Sound Salmon Recovery Chapter does not have a lead entity; the work is divided between the five local entities. The borders of these entities do not follow the AHSS boundaries.
- The Council or Executive Committee are both potential candidates for the role of consolidated lead entity for South Sound salmon recovery.

Potential Topics for Upcoming Executive Committee Meetings

- In-lieu-of fees to generate revenue to help fund AHSS (HCCC has offered to provide background and their experience with this model).
- Nisqually tribe's plans for shoreline protection, restoration, and enhancement.
- NTA updates on actions that have been accomplished and activities underway.
- AHSS 2015 workplan.

Action Items

- Dan Wrye will draft a letter to OFM requesting information on the status of the McNeil Island long term comprehensive plan.
- Ross Strategic will coordinate Executive Committee signatures on the above-mentioned letter.
- Ross Strategic will coordinate scheduling an Executive Committee meeting in September, possibly to be convened on the Nisqually Tribe's research vessel.
- Ross Strategic will work with PSP on logistics for a meeting of all LIOs.