

Alliance for a Healthy South Sound (AHSS) Executive Committee Meeting
March 25, 2015, 2:00 – 4:00 pm
Thurston County Emergency Coordination Center
9521 Tilley Road SW
Olympia, WA

Executive Committee Members:

Commissioner Blake, Thurston County
Jeff Dickson, Squaxin Island Tribe
Councilmember Ladenburg, Pierce County
Executive McCarthy, Pierce County
Commissioner Neatherlin, Mason County
Alex Smith, Port of Olympia

Additional Attendees:

John Bolender, Mason Conservation District
Scott Brewer, Hood Canal Coordinating Council
Tom Kantz, Pierce County SWM
Patty Michak, Hood Canal Coordinating Council
Sherri Nehl, Thurston County
Al Schmauder, Chambers-Clover WS Council
Chris Schutz, Pierce County SWM
Stephanie Suter, PSP
Dan Wrye, Pierce County SWM/ECB
Representative, South Puget Sound

Meeting Summary

I. AHSS Administrative Updates

- The Executive Committee approved the [January meeting minutes](#).
- Alex Smith, Port of Olympia and AHSS Council Co-Chair, provided a summary of the March 17 Council meeting.
- Stephanie Suter from PSP noted that the EPA funding model will be on the agenda at the upcoming 3/27 PSP Leadership Council meeting. Jim Wilcox is the designated PSP Leadership Council representative for South Sound; AHSS Executive Committee could consider inviting Jim to an upcoming AHSS meeting.
- The Executive Committee approved the [draft resolution](#) thanking Commissioner Sandra Romero for her contribution to AHSS.

II. US EPA NEP Funding Model Proposal – Debrief and Path Forward

US EPA met with interested parties on March 10 to provide details on a new federal funding model for Puget Sound. The model does not address all of the issues that LIOs and tribes raised, but it does move toward more significant engagement with local entities and local actions.

The model envisions a competitive process to select three “strategic initiative leads”; one each for shellfish, habitat, and stormwater. The model emphasizes that PSP is responsible for upgrading the Action Agenda to a more narrowly focused and prioritized plan. EPA’s desire is to provide funding to LIOs beginning sometime during summer 2015 to support local recovery planning processes.

For next steps, the AHSS coordinators are working to keep the LIO and tribal coalition together. Several LIO coordinators will meet on 3/27 to discuss the status of local recovery plans. The 3/27 meeting will also be an opportunity to figure out how recovery actions are prioritized. For AHSS, moving forward with the South Sound strategy will have the co-benefit of advancing the work to fulfill the deliverables owed to PSP, as well as advancing progress on the local recovery strategy.

Executive Committee Discussion:

- Jeff Dickson commented that AHSS should continue to work toward coordinating LIO actions around Puget Sound as well as developing its own views of how to make this work. LIOs are the crucible of experimentation for this process, as the place where ideas and local strategies operate. Local and regional organizing are both important, however one of the problems that LIOs have experienced in previous years is the constraint of Lead Organizations (LOs). EPA's new model is responsive and has created an opening but it will be important to drive the strategic initiatives in a way that makes them responsive to - and supportive of - local agendas. For example, with the shellfish strategic initiative, AHSS and Hood Canal Coordinating Council (HCCC) could combine with Squaxin Island Tribe, Suquamish Tribe, shellfish growers (or associations), and WA DOH to lead the initiative. Jeff suggested that AHSS consider pursuing this.
 - Dan Wrye added that South Puget Sound is home to over 50% of the state's commercial shellfish harvest; adding Hood Canal, the percentage would qualify as a super-majority.
- Commissioner Neatherlin noted that as local recovery strategies are developed there could be direct funding for organizations that are well-positioned to begin work. AHSS should strive to set an example for others to follow, as this will position the AHSS to access one or more funding streams.
- Scott Brewer noted that state agencies are accustomed to a certain amount of federal funding through the NEP and there is a concern among those agencies that funding will now go directly to LIOs.

III. Hood Canal Coordinating Council In-Lieu Fee Mitigation Program

Patty Michak provided a [presentation](#) on HCCC's in-lieu fee mitigation program. The presentation covered the program's authorizing environment, goals, advantages of the ILF program versus permittee mitigation, and program coverage area. Patty also discussed project selection criteria and showed an example of a recent mitigation project in which a WASDOT credit sale was used to purchase a 17 acre wetland complex.

Executive Committee members provided the following comments and questions:

- There is a challenge in that different entities have different boundaries and jurisdictions. Thurston County, for example, has three WRIs within its borders. A project in Thurston County could be an issue for tribes depending on the basin in which the project is located, as different tribes have jurisdiction over different basins.
- Pierce County has an ILF mechanism but it does not include all of the areas encompassed by AHSS.

IV. Go-Around

- Jeff noted that Squaxin Island Tribe and Nisqually Tribe are concerned with a shoreline master plan amendment adopted by Pierce County regarding shoreline aquaculture. Tribes believe the amendment is inconsistent with treaty rights and will be working to overturn it.
 - Councilmember Ladenburg commented that the Pierce County Council has yet to vote on the amendment.

V. Summary of Action Items

- AHSS Coordinators will continue to work with other LIOs to advance LIO interests as details of the new NEP funding model for Puget Sound are developed.
- AHSS Coordinators will draft a letter to EPA on behalf of AHSS, thanking EPA for considering LIO-NWIFC interests in developing the new NEP funding model for Puget Sound and offering LIO assistance as details of the new model are developed. The letter will be delivered to EPA at the 3/27 PSP Leadership Council meeting.