

Snohomish-Stillaguamish LIO Implementation Committee Meeting Summary

Thursday, February 25, 2016

1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Drewel Building, Conference Rm. 6A02

LIO-IC Members

Bill Blake, City of Arlington, Stillaguamish Watershed Council
Bob Landles, Stillaguamish Clean Water Advisory Board
Chrys Bertolotto, WSU Snohomish-Camano ECO Net
Daryl Williams, Tulalip Tribes Natural Resources
Elise Gronewald, Port of Everett
Gregg Farris, Snohomish County Surface Water Mgmt.
Jacqueline Reid, Snohomish County Planning & Development Services
Kirk Lakey, Snohomish Basin Salmon Recovery Forum
Matt Baerwalde, Snoqualmie Tribe
Monte Marti, Snohomish Conservation District
Perry Falcone, Snoqualmie Watershed Forum
Rodney Pond, Sound Salmon Solutions
Tom Hoban, Snohomish County MRC
Valerie Streeter, Tulalip Tribes Planning

Participants

Dan Calvert, PSP Ecosystem Recovery Coordinator
Morgan Ruff, Tulalip Tribes
Ralph Svrjcek, Department of Ecology
Steve Rice, Snohomish Health District
Tim Miller, Snoqualmie Tribe
Tom Stiger, Port of Everett

LIO Support Staff and Anchor QEA

Ann Bylin, Snohomish County Surface Water Management
Beth Liddell, Snohomish County Surface Water Management
Mary Hurner, Snohomish County Surface Water Management, Senior Planner/Interim Coordinator
Kit Crump, Snohomish County Surface Water Management/ Stillaguamish Basin Co-Lead Entity
Tracy Drury, Anchor QEA, Principal
Lynn Turner, Anchor QEA
Vivian Erickson, Anchor QEA

Welcome, Introductions, Public Comment

Bill Blake opened the meeting, and introductions followed.
There were no members of the public present.

LIO 5-Year Ecosystem Recovery Planning Process

After conducting interviews with the qualified consultants on the Public Works Department on-call list, Mary Hurner stated that the County has contracted with Anchor QEA to assist the LIO in completing the Long Term Ecosystem Recovery Plan. She introduced the Anchor QEA team: Tracy Drury, Principal; Lynn Turner, Environmental Planner; and Vivian Erickson, Environmental Planner and Facilitator. Tracy stated that Paul

Schlenger, of Confluence Environmental Company, and Abby Hook, of Hook Environmental, would also be retained for specific facets of the project. The Anchor QEA team's roles will include:

- Gathering information/expectations from Puget Sound Partnership (PSP)
- Facilitating Implementation Committee (IC) and Executive Committee (EC) decisions
- Technical assistance with Open Standards and Miradi
- Information synthesis and text refinement for the Long-Term Ecosystem Recovery Plan

Tracy stated that Anchor QEA began work on the project by creating a transparent development process that incorporates PSP guidance and deadlines. The Anchor QEA work plan for completing the Plan includes a stepped decision-making process (please refer to handouts *Plan Development Timeline* and *LIO Coordination, Review, and Decision Points*):

- LIO Support Staff and Anchor QEA gather information and expectations from PSP
- IC meeting discussions and/or IC subcommittees develop PSP components (depending on item)
- LIO IC Steering Committee develops components from IC into text for Long-Term Ecosystem Recovery Plan
- IC and/or EC reviews (depending on item)
- EC approval votes

The process of establishing LIO subcommittees was initiated during the February 25 meeting, and will continue over email in the coming weeks, in order to be able to divide into subcommittees and work at the March 14 IC meeting. It is anticipated the role of the subcommittees will not require additional time commitment outside the planned IC meetings. Committee members expressed interest in participating through conference call options, and Mary stated that they would try to provide that option when possible. ***For those who planned to reach out to others in their organizations for subcommittee interest, please do so as soon as possible and email Mary with the results.***

A Steering Committee will be established in the future to develop components from the IC and subcommittees into text for the Long-Term Ecosystem Recovery Plan. This group will likely include representation from each of the subcommittees, each watershed, each tribe, the Executive Committee and potentially a few members-at-large, along with Support Staff and Anchor QEA. ***If you are interested in participating on the Steering Committee, please email Mary.***

Dan Calvert noted that the Snohomish-Stillaguamish LIO is the only LIO with a specific number of Vital Signs in its contract with PSP. He stated that the LIO will not be required to work on all 18 Vital Signs; the LIO has the option to drop some, or to add some. Dan added that PSP will provide information on human well-being Vital Signs soon.

The group began a brainstorming discussion related to a vision statement and temporal scope for the Plan. This input will be developed into preliminary statements for the group to consider at the next meeting.

Review SITTs Comments and LIO Response

Kit briefly summarized the LIO Support Team response's to the comments received from the SITTs on the 10/8 Draft Early Elements document. For those who wanted to know specifically what comments were made and how they were responded to, Kit recommended a close look at the nine page handout in the meeting packet, "SITTs Comments – Snohomish-Stillaguamish LIO Response."

Generally, Kit stated that the SITTs comments fell into the following categories:

- Request that we clarify the process and rationale for decisions we made on Vital Signs, Pressures and Stressors
- Request that we explain the opportunities and constraints to habitat protection and restoration in the estuary

- Request that we explain why “shellfish beds” or “marine water quality” are not included in our initial list of six Vital Signs (*They will likely be included in the long term recovery planning effort.*)
- Request that we add specific estuary targets in both basins (*We added these for both basins.*)
- Request that we explain why we did not further rank tier 1 pressures (*At this point they are all equal, but that may change as we add new Vital Signs.*)
- Request for an explanation of the lack of summer low flow recovery approaches (*This is a new threat to our area, but we will likely have to develop recovery approaches for this Vital Sign. Currently the local low flow data and science doesn't indicate the same “low summer flow” problem as the PSP characterization.*)
- Other requests that were beyond the scope/resources of our LIO; such as acres of shellfish beds needed to reach harvest status and the relative role of voluntary efforts versus NPDES Phase II efforts in water quality remediation efforts

Final NTA Submittals

Mary went over a spreadsheet handout that tracked NTAs from pre-proposal stage to full proposals submitted by their owners to PSP by the 2/3 deadline. She stated that altogether the Snohomish-Stillaguamish LIO had 41 NTAs submitted through the LIO and one submitted through the SFB/PSAR process – a total of 42. Out of those 42 NTAs, two NTAs were identified as on-going programs and five (one deemed an on-going program, plus four others) were rated as “Tier 3 proposals” (lowest category). Not counting those six proposals that became disqualified and the regional proposal, the LIO has 35 NTAs moving forward for inclusion in the 2016 Action Agenda. [NOTE: Updated information as of 3/1/2016 shows that the LIO has 37 NTAs moving forward: 36 submitted through the LIO and one submitted through the SRF/PSAR process. LIO Support Staff will keep the IC and EC informed if anything changes.]

Mary updated the Committee on other recently-received news from PSP, as follows:

- Regarding NTAs: Each NTA had to choose a main Strategic Initiative, which means that all NTAs going forward will be on one of three lists – Habitat, Stormwater or Shellfish. The SITTs will be ranking the NTAs within these three categories, and the three ranked lists will be issued on March 11th.
- Regarding Permanent Strategic Initiative (SI) teams: The permanent SI teams are now being developed; they are the long term replacements for the SITTs. The SI Leads will make the ultimate decision for NEP funds, based on the recommendation of the SI Teams. The SI Teams will do a more detailed budget review for those NTAs being considered for their funding plan.
- Funding: Some changes in the original funding plan have taken place since we began our planning process last summer. Now, instead of the LIOs receiving some direct funding, each Strategic Initiative category will receive \$5 million. At the point when the EPA funding is distributed, it will be distributed by Strategic Initiative category only, not by LIO. LIO direct funding has yet to be determined. SI Teams will develop a funding plan list for NEP funds, which will be informed by the SITT ranking, but no one should expect the SI Teams to strictly fund down the list.
- The significance of the ranked lists, to be issued on March 11th: The SITT list is a recovery plan list, not a funding plan list. NEP funding is just one funding source. The SITT-ranked lists will influence funding from the EPA to support the NTA. Over the long term, these rankings could impact future funding decision making from additional pools of money.

Committee members engaged in a spirited discussion that focused on the difficulties they experienced when submitting their NTAs and the implications of the altered funding strategy. ***In order to accurately capture their feedback, members were encouraged to send their comments directly to Mary via e-mail.*** The IC agreed that comments should be compiled and forwarded to PSP and the EPA to help improve the process for future NTA solicitations, and to the Executive Committee, to provide information as most Executive Committee members did not experience submitting NTAs.

Dan Calvert stated that Peter Murchie of the EPA and Sheida Sahandy of PSP want to attend meetings in different LIOs to get a sense of how the NTA and Ecosystem Recovery planning process is working. Members agreed that it would be good for them to attend the Executive Committee meeting on March 31, when IC feedback could be presented.

On-going Business

Election of LIO IC Chair and Alternate: Bill Blake suggested changing the leadership structure of the IC from one that consists of a Chair and Alternate to one that features Co-Chairs – one from each watershed. Committee members generally reacted positively to Bill's suggestion. Bill was asked if he would agree to stay on as Chair, and he stated his preference in serving as Co-chair, representing the Stillaguamish watershed and having more flexibility with regard to his work schedule.

Both Valerie Streeter and Perry Falcone agreed that they might be interested in serving as Co-Chairs representing the Snohomish Basin. The discussion was tabled until the next meeting.

Bylaws and Committee Membership: Mary stated that the Bylaws require the LIO Committees to annually revisit the applicability of the Bylaws. It was noted that the 2015 version of the Bylaws presented did not incorporate the latest additions to the Implementation Committee: positions for STORM (Stormwater Outreach for Regional Municipalities) and for WSU Extension. A corrected version will be re-submitted to committee members.

Bill stated that it is helpful for organizations to receive a letter from the LIO, stating the purpose of the committee, the role of the representative and the meeting schedule for the year. That way, their managers will better understand the level of commitment and time required before making a commitment. The LIO Coordinator has done this in the past, and it can be scheduled again.

There was a brief discussion regarding whether the IC should recommend that the Executive Committee expand its membership to include an NGO representative. Committee members decided to postpone a decision on this item until the Long-Term Ecosystem Recovery Plan is developed and it becomes clearer what would make sense for the Executive Committee.

LIO Evaluation Results: Mary expressed appreciation to Committee members for completing the survey, and for their thoughtful comments. Committee members were encouraged to review the survey results. The Executive Committee is presently completing the survey. Results from both committees will be distributed and discussed in greater detail at a future Steering Committee meeting.

Next Steps

- March 3rd LIO Coordinators meeting: Focus will be on techniques and tools for prioritizing Vital Signs.
- By March 5th: Committee members should e-mail Mary directly if they are interested in participating on the Steering Committee or want to provide comments on the NTA submittal process. Comments on this process will be communicated to the EPA and PSP at their March 15th meeting by LIO representatives.
- March 14th IC meeting: Members will continue to discuss possible changes to the leadership structure of the committee. Subcommittees will review potential Vital Signs for inclusion in the Long-Term Ecosystem Recovery Plan. The IC will also work on drafting a vision statement and establishing a temporal scope for the Plan.