



# CAPITOL LAKE — DESCHUTES ESTUARY

Long-Term Management Project Environmental Impact Statement

## Meeting Notes Summary

**Date:** June 6, 2019

**Time:** 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.

**Location:** 1500 Jefferson St., Olympia, WA

**Topic:** Executive Work Group Meeting

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### Meeting Participants

#### *Work Group Members*

- Jeff Dickison, Squaxin Island Tribe
- Gary Edwards, Thurston County
- Pete Kmet, City of Tumwater
- Chris Liu, Department of Enterprise Services
- Cynthia Pratt, LOTT Board Member
- E.J. Zita, Port of Olympia
- Cheryl Selby, City of Olympia

#### *Department of Enterprise Services*

- Carrie Martin

#### *EIS Facilitators/Consultants*

- Tessa Gardner-Brown, Floyd|Snider
- Jessi Massingale, Floyd|Snider
- Ray Outlaw, Envirolssues

#### *Observers*

- Bob Holman, CLIPA
- John DeMeyer, OYC
- Sue Patnude, DERT
- Steve Shanewise, DELI
- Wendy Steffensen, LOTT
- Susan Bergen, DES

### Meeting Notes Summary

Jessi welcomed Executive Work Group (EWG) members to the meeting and noted the plan to continue on a quarterly meeting schedule, taking into account holidays, vacations, and work progression on the EIS. If scheduling allows, the EWG meeting is purposefully held after the Community Sounding Board meeting in order to share the feedback received. The next Technical Work Group (TWG) and Funding and Governance Work Group (FGWG) meetings will be held on

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June 7, and some of the items on the agenda will be areas where those groups interconnect with the EWG.

## *Community Sounding Board Update*

Ray updated the group on the second Community Sounding Board (CSB) meeting, held on June 5. There were two primary agenda items:

- Update on project status and analysis methodologies.
- Small group discussions around how people would use the space – how they've used it in the past, how they use it now, how they would use it if it remains a lake but with access to the water, how they would use it if converted into an estuary or hybrid. The small groups then reported back to the whole group.

During the discussion of the estuary, people had basic questions about what it would look like, smell like—they needed to be able to imagine the space in order to understand how they'd use it. This drove home the value of visual simulations.

Jessi reviewed the four recreation questions and asked for initial thoughts and responses but also encouraged EWG members to email responses if they wanted time to think about it. One of the key goals of the project is to optimize use of this resource, so there is meaning in these basic questions. Responses will be tied into a recreational use survey.

- How are you/your family using Capitol Lake and the surrounding parks (parks from Tumwater Falls to Priest Point Park)?
  - CSB responses: Some CSB members said they don't use the area anymore because of restricted access to the water body. Some use it moderately often. Walking around the lake is still a big draw, but frequency of use has declined since closure. The basin is used for bird and wildlife watching. Salmon viewing at Fifth Avenue or Tumwater Falls is a popular use. Budd Inlet is used for all types of boating. Participants described the nature of the space as a community center – a place to take friends or family from out of town and for community events such as Lake Fair. A theme heard throughout the CSB discussion was that they use Capitol Lake and the parks for some activities, but they don't use it for others, because they can't anymore.
  - EWG responses: Current use includes walking, walking the dogs, watching kids learning to ride bikes on the trails, wildlife viewing, watching salmon at the base of the falls. The historical park area is popular—the Tumwater picnic shelter is especially popular at this time of year. The area serves as a community hub for special events: Harbor Days, Wooden Boat Festival, Lake Fair, Opening Day, starting and ending spot for fun runs in community, fireworks for Lake Fair. Even

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---

with limited uses, it is our iconic central park. Use partly depends on where you live; if you live locally in Olympia, you use it more. The falls is a draw because it feels more wild.

- For those of you that used Capitol Lake in the past, before the uses were restricted, how did you/your family use the lake?
  - CSB responses: The lake was used actively for fishing/boating. Children learned how to swim in the lake, and it was used for hydro races. Use was more frequent when the water body was open. People saw different uses for each basin.
  - EWG responses: We'd take kids to gravel bars below the falls to look for artifacts. There were always people fishing off the platform next to I-5. Kayaking before the snails contaminated the water.
- If the currently restricted water-based uses were restored under a long-term management alternative, would this change your current use of the water body?
  - CSB responses: Use might be more frequent if restored. It would be more of a draw to take out-of-town folks. There might be economic opportunities—a snack stand near the swimming area or canoe/kayak rentals. In general, the group had lots of energy around what they could do if the lake were again accessible.
  - EWG responses: Some members said their current use wouldn't change. Others would fish, kayak or canoe, walk out on the gravel bars of an estuary.
- If Capitol Lake was restored to an estuary or hybrid, the shorelines would change. Would you anticipate those changes would affect the use of the project area?
  - CSB responses: The concept of a boardwalk was a big takeaway. Getting on, in, and to the water was an interest. People thought it would be a more dynamic system and more visually pleasing in terms of wildlife, with more diversity and animals. The habitat should be maintained.
  - EWG responses: A greater diversity of birds and wildlife would draw people there more frequently. The eventual vegetation die-off with the change to saltwater would open up views and access to open water. Even with restricted water access now, it is a popular place to run/walk—that would continue. Before the Nisqually estuary was restored, many people worried that it wouldn't be as usable, but it's great to go down there—there's more wildlife. If it is restored, we need to be able to get out on the water with some sort of boardwalk like they have in Nisqually—that's one of the attractions, and it is also important for access.

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---

## *Measurable Evaluation Process*

Tessa provided an update on the Measurable Evaluation Process. The consultant team is actively working on the first step: to look at the different alternatives and concept variations to develop the alternatives that will be analyzed in the EIS. The team is reviewing all proposals, with the goal of putting forth an optimized version of the managed lake, the estuary, and the hybrid. When we next meet, we will bring forward the optimized alternatives. The EIS is also required to include a no action alternative. It provides a baseline, and the consultant group is working to develop reasonable assumptions under no action.

The CSB and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, who participated in the last TWG meeting, provided two tangible pieces of feedback:

- Using the evaluation criteria, the team should take a relative look at the specific components of an option rather than look at each option independently. Each component would be given a high/med/low rating, stacked against regulatory and technical feasibility, and assigned a color. This approach allows the team to easily which components fared the strongest across all criteria, and those components would be put together as the optimized version.

*EWG: Does the optimized alternative carry forward any of this step one screening?* Evaluation starts fresh in the EIS and is taken through technical analysis and review for benefits and impacts. Best components of each one get to move forward.

*EWG: When you talk about Corps of Engineers, are you talking the Army? Are they a TWG member?* They are not a standing TWG member, but they are an ad hoc member and resource for when we encounter something under their jurisdiction, especially around permitting. They can also provide us access to a wealth of existing information.

*EWG: Wasn't this pulled off the Corps of Engineer's list for restoration prioritization/funding? Could we get back on that list?* It was pulled off the restoration list, but the folks we work with are from the regulatory branch.

*EWG: How many people from your firm are working on this project?* A team of firms is working together on this project, because there is a large range of disciplines, and the alternatives are very different. Team members include ESA, EnviroIssues, Herrera, Moffatt & Nichol, ECONorthwest, and others.

## *Third-Party Review*

Carrie provided an update on third-party review. There are three areas slated for review: water quality, hydrodynamics and sediment transport modeling, and economics. The purpose of the

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---

third-party review is to ensure the analyses are conducted using best practices and to ensure we have a reasonable level of analysis to support a comparison of alternatives.

- **Water quality:** An expert was selected in the first half of May, and the team is currently revising the methodology memorandum, which will be posted to the website when completed.
- **Modeling and Economics:** Selection is complete, and we're currently working on contracting. The economics review is anticipated to happen the second half of June, and modeling in late June or early July. As these are completed, they will be posted to website.

Carrie thanked the EWG for their recommendations and for assistance with screening and selection.

*EWG: Thurston County wants to ensure all information is considered and recommends analysis of upper Deschutes as well as lower Deschutes, taking into account affects of fertilizers used by the timber industry. This seems like a data gap. A typical harvest runs about 40 years, with three applications during that time. It has been in practice only for the last 50 years, and there is now lots of algae on the Deschutes. We need to a healthy flow into the estuary. We don't have a nitrogen baseline, because the practices have been going on longer than we've been looking at water quality.*

*EWG: I share your concern with pollutants affecting water quality. Another thing I've learned from marine biologists at the college is that a huge factor in algae blooms is temperature. Global warming is an issue.*

Practices on the upper Deschutes is a piece of the puzzle. The technical team is drawing from existing studies, including a review of TMDL work. The purpose of the EIS is to understand existing conditions and how existing conditions would change based on implementation of alternatives. Collaborating with other agencies who have oversight on other plans is an important step. We've been coordinating with Ecology to understand current conditions, optimize water quality sampling, and understand Ecology's TMDL process.

*EWG: In terms of sediment, controlling what goes on in the system means controlling what goes on in the river basin. We should identify reaches of the river where large amounts of sediment come from—it's cheaper to control up there than pick it up once it's been flushed down to bay.*

Fertilizer inputs, sediment inputs, and septic are all parts of the picture. Maybe a future meeting could include a briefing of TMDL work and how they identify sources and address control.

Tessa confirmed that she will take this feedback to the technical leads.

# Meeting Notes Summary

**Date:** June 6, 2019

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**Topic:** Executive Work Group Meeting

---

## *EIS Technical Analyses and Coordination Update*

### **Fieldwork Update:**

Carrie provided an update on coordination with Ecology on the oil spill cleanup, which affects when we can get out on lake for fieldwork. The first sampling was completed at the end of May. We are continuing to work with Ecology this month, in hopes for the bathymetry survey in July. We've reached out to Ecology GIS folks, modeling, spill response folks to mine data.

Ecology has agreed to move up their sampling from a station in Budd Inlet so that we could include this additional data. Monthly sampling is scheduled for July to October. Lake sampling occurs May to October.

*EWG: How can we test the water during spill response?*

Ecology is nearing cleanup of the spill. Sampling parameters have a different focus than for the PCBs involved in cleanup; this distinction in analytes allows us to sample for water quality independent of the spill. The PCBs don't have an appreciable affect on temperature, pH, and nutrients.

*EWG: What about the Percival Creek sewage spill? How do you take that into consideration when testing?*

We ensure water quality leads understand there has been this sewage spill. They will look at it against long-term trends. They will qualify that as part of the data set.

*EWG: How much is the lake contributing to the nutrient level organically coming out of the dam into lower Budd Inlet? As part of the sampling, are you trying to quantify the river and Percival Creek in terms of what's coming into the lake and what's coming out of the dam to get a sense of what that dynamic is?*

We consider the water quality mass balance alongside an understanding of the lake levels and the Budd Inlet station relative to past conditions and what Ecology's modeling has predicted them to be. This allows us some assessment. The team will be looking at different inputs to understand water quality.

### **Funding and Governance Work Group (FGWG) Update:**

On a parallel path, we are working with ECONorthwest to develop a process map to depict and describe milestones and outline a process to FGWG members for how we will collectively develop a funding and governance model for the preferred alternative. They are developing a draft framework that could be applicable to all alternatives, and the final framework to be tied to preferred alternatives.

We would like to coordinate a joint work group meeting with the EWG and FGWG in September to focus on this framework—for a shared understanding of where we start and what our

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---

milestones are. We would then hold the next EWG meeting in November to bring forward optimized alternatives and update progress on methodologies and technical analysis. We will provide the meeting summary from tomorrow's FGWG meeting.

*EWG: Once FGWG approves this roadmap, will this be incorporated into our larger roadmap? The strength of the roadmap is being able to show on one piece of paper the activities that happen in a defined period of time—a placeholder would be helpful for taking back to our city councils.*

While there is synergy in the major milestones, we were originally thinking this would be an addendum. However, we could fit in some squares for funding and governance and update the roadmap as we do for calling out meeting topics.

In the September joint meeting, let's include a topic: what is the frequency of updates and presentations to the boards/councils?

*EWG: Is the FGWG road map available online?*

Not yet. The FGWG will first review it tomorrow, but we will send it out with the slides for EWG review.

## ***Technical Work Group Methodology Review***

The approach for technical analysis will be reviewed in detail in the June 7 TWG meeting. In addition to the water quality methodology and economic methodology, the team is working on hydrodynamic and sediment transport modeling; land use, shorelines, and recreation; wetlands and vegetation; fish and wildlife.

The EIS is not a project implementation study; its level of analysis is at a conceptual design level, where we need sufficient information to support a comparative evaluation of impacts between the alternatives but not necessarily understand every level of detail. Work must be sufficient to support conclusions about proposed mitigation measures to determine if they would feasibly and adequately mitigate the impacts. SEPA specifically states that an EIS should be a concise and readable document. The EIS is not required to include all information conceivably relevant to a proposal. EIS analysis helps to support permit review, but it is often expected and understood that additional information will be required and developed during permitting and design. When a preferred alternative is identified, further analysis and study is expected.

*EWG: Because federal permits will be required, are you still going to do NEPA in addition to SEPA?*

An environmental review under NEPA is required before federal permits can be issued, so NEPA will be concurrent with the federal permitting process for preferred alternatives. But to the extent we can be forward-compliant, we are keeping NEPA in mind. A benefit of having ad hoc participation from USACE and DAHP is having access to folks who communicate what would be required for NEPA.

# Meeting Notes Summary

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---

*EWG: All the information may not be included? Who makes determination about what's relevant and what's not?*

This determination is made between technical team and agency—in this case, Enterprise Services. Ultimately, an EIS is a disclosure document that allows lead agencies and decision makers to make an informed decision. Its purpose is to help them compare the alternatives, so the determined level of analysis is to support the comparison. Document is to be readable, concise, useful, limited to the effected environment, and no longer than necessary.

*EWG: How are disputes resolved?*

By convening work groups and receiving input early on, we hopefully avoid potential disputes. Enterprise Services has administrative guidelines for implementation of SEPA, so there are probably specific guidelines for dispute resolution.

The methodology framework across topics is to gain the best understanding of current conditions from existing resources. The foundation is to mine existing data, building out to compare benefits and impacts of alternatives.

## *Example: Overview of Hydrodynamic and Sediment Transport Modeling:*

Tessa provided an overview of sediment transport. They are developing draft methodology and moving to third-party review. Following third-party review, it will be online for purposes of transparency for those who want to understand how we're taking on this technical work.

- Alternatives will be compared using numerical modeling, because water and sediment is important to understand under any alternative. The team is building a model to help us understand and answer specific questions applicable across the board:
  - How high or low is the water under current conditions and potential future conditions, taking into consideration future sea level rise and varying inputs under future forecasted scenarios?
  - How does the water move through the system?
  - What are areas of erosion?
  - In areas of erosion, where is the sediment being deposited? This will help us understand potential areas of impact – areas of special focus for mitigation.
- Model will use and improve on past studies.
- Model will address forecasts and different sizes of sediment – south basin mostly cobble, downstream more sand and silt and clay—to exemplifying differences in alternatives, how systems behave differently. Model will look at area from Tumwater

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---

Falls to outer Budd Inlet and is constructed to consider bathymetry and flow from river into basin, tides from Budd Inlet, and water levels at the dam.

- Modeling visuals convey information quickly and act as a platform for decision making and other technical analyses.

*EWG: You mentioned sea level rise—is that still being considered now that we’ve adopted our sea level rise plan for the city? The city and LOTT have three stages of possible options to deal with sea level rise; Port has said they need to develop that level of understanding for the Port as well.*

Yes. We will see if our lead can speak to that tomorrow. We’re working to understand our projections alongside those of the city’s plan the best we can.

*EWG: When you talk about outer Budd Inlet, what’s the transect? How far north does that extend?*

Just south of Gull Harbor.

*EWG: You’re only measuring the lake itself—not the contours of the lower Budd?*

We have some existing bathymetry from the Port (2016) and USACE (2018) for the navigation channel. But no new survey is planned for the EIS.

*EWG: In the modeling, sediment erosion, deposition, characterization is two-dimensional, but are the actual inputs and data three dimensional? Do we have elevations and data, including ultimate elevations of the accumulations?*

That’s correct. The Port did work as part of their Budd Inlet coordination with Ecology and used geochronology cores to estimate sedimentation rates for a couple of the berth areas. We have that additional data. In the Phase 1 process, as requested by the EWG, we are also thinking about sediment control structures, where you can divert and change sediment flow and deposition. The modeling effort is working to understand what changes make a meaningful difference in blanket presence and measurable thickness.

*EWG: Is this data publicly available?*

The methodology will be publicly available on the web site after third-party review. The USGS work is currently available. We will send a link or attachment to save you hunting for that.

*EWG: When you take into consideration sea level rise portion, will you look at past 50 years and estimated change for next 50? What do you have in mind? A projection?*

We would use projections that were adopted through the joint planning process done here locally through UW. It will be clear what scenario is ultimately used for the EIS.

# Meeting Notes Summary

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---

*EWG note:* The National Academy of Sciences just published a study recommending that planners use the high-end estimates.

## ***Next Meeting***

The joint FGWG and EWG meeting is slated for mid-September: September 13 looks best for the group present, with September 16 and 17 as alternates. Might have to do a Doodle Poll, depending on the FGWG response.

We will send a Doodle Poll for the EWG November meeting.

Feedback has been to provide meeting materials in advance. Any other feedback?

## ***Public Comment***

Will you look at greenhouse gas emissions? Methane release? Something to consider. Dams, reservoirs, lakes produce.

Do you have any idea of what an estuary would have looked like historically? Pre-European settlement. That visualization is important.

For your studies here, what do you expect the opening to be? Historically 2,000-3,000 feet, but that's not realistic today. Ecology has been looking at 500-600 feet.

The design team is evaluating that now, including the origin of different widths in past.

## ***Adjourn***

Jessi thanked the group for taking the time to meet and noted that additional input could be sent to Carrie, Jessi, or Tessa.