CAPITOL LAKE – DESCHUTES ESTUARY

Long-Term Management Project Environmental Impact Statement

Meeting Summary

Date: June 5, 2019 **Time:** 6:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Location: 1500 Jefferson St., Olympia, WA **Topic:** Community Sounding Board Meeting

Meeting Participants

Community Sounding Board Members in Attendance

- Sandy Cashman
- John DeMeyer
- Joel Hansen
- Clara Hard
- Bob Holman (alternate)
- Ali Johnson
- Doug Mah
- Alanna Matteson
- Allen Miller
- Cory Miller
- Jack Mongin
- Gretchen Nicholas
- Kathi Rafferty
- Steve Shanewise
- Nancy Stevenson
- Robyn Wagoner
- Jenny Wilson
- Bill Yake
- Bruce York
- Nancy Zabel

Community Sounding Board Members not in Attendance

- Jeanette Lafoon
- David Nicandri
- Emmett O'Connell
- Drew Phillips
- Alicia Rose
- Bob Wubbena (primary)

Department of Enterprise Services

- Carrie Martin
- Bill Frare

EIS Project Team Consultants

- Tessa Gardner-Brown, Floyd|Snider
- Karmen Martin, ESA
- Ray Outlaw, EnviroIssues

Facilitator

- Susan Hayman, EnviroIssues

Others/Members of the Public

- Joel Carlson, Sierra Club

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Opening Comments and Review of Agenda

Susan Hayman, facilitator, welcomed the Community Sounding Board (CSB) members and introduced her role as the neutral facilitator.

Bill Frare, Assistant Director for Facility Professional Services and the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Responsible Official, welcomed the participants to the second CSB meeting. He explained the importance of maintaining a process that stakeholders and members of the community are involved in. Enterprise Services' commitment is to be very transparent throughout this process. A key goal is to identify a preferred alternative at the end of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process and in doing so Enterprise Services wants to make sure everyone understands the criteria and process used.

Carrie Martin, Project Manager, thanked the group for attending and expressed excitement for tonight's discussions on recreation.

Susan reviewed the meeting agenda and the previously agreed upon operating guidelines.

Susan led a round of introductions, noting that Tamalyn Ramsey notified Enterprise Services that she would not be able to continue participation; Gretchen Nicholas joined as her replacement.

The presentation for this meeting is available on the project website.

Update: Measurable Evaluation Process Step 1

Tessa Gardner-Brown provided a brief update on the Measurable Evaluation Process (MEP) that was presented at the last meeting (see graphic in presentation). Step 1 helps the EIS Project Team review all available alternatives, concepts, and variations of alternatives, and develop the range of alternatives before developing conceptual designs and beginning technical analysis . The EIS Project Team has begun this work and it will continue through much of 2019. The EIS Project team will report out on progress near the end of Step 1 and there will be another opportunity for discussion with this group in Step 2.

Tessa explained that technical and regulatory feasibility comparisons were changed based on feedback from the last meeting. All components (technical, regulatory, economic and environmental) will be compared relative to other components that could be implemented to meet the project goal. The preliminary plan was to consider technical and regulatory components independently.

Tessa noted that although this process seeks to optimize the "action" alternatives (Managed Lake; Estuary; Hybrid); the EIS will include a No Action Alternative. The purpose of the No Action Alternative is to serve as the baseline to compare all other alternatives. The EIS Project Team is developing assumptions for the No Action Alternative representing the mostly likely outcome if other alternatives are not implemented.

Tessa assured the CSB that the EIS Project Team will keep then posted as they move through this process. We anticipate another update at the end of 2019.

CSB Question: When are we going to start weeding out some of the different alternatives and variations? For example, the type of wall used in a hybrid scenario.

This is a perfect example of what Step 1 is intended to do. The EIS Project Team is looking at that and other project components now against technical, regulatory, economic and sustainability criteria to select the component that best meets project goals. The MEP will allow us to eliminate options, but we have to look at everything carefully.

CSB Question: When will the CSB see what the alternatives look like?

The EIS Project Team will provide an update when Step 1 is nearing completion, likely in late 2019.

Methodology and Fieldwork Approach

Tessa explained the EIS Project Team is developing methodologies for different resources to provide a level of analysis that distinguishes impacts between various alternatives. In an EIS it is not necessary or even appropriate to figure out every detail for a project with multiple alternatives. However, we need to "know enough" to compare alternatives and describe them in the EIS.

Carrie explained that stakeholders have expressed a need to have methodologies reviewed by third parties. Enterprise Services heard that feedback and is incorporating a third-party review of three methodologies (water quality, hydrodynamics and sediment transport modeling, and economics) to ensure they meet industry and scientific best practices and adequately support the analyses.

Enterprise Services received recommendations from various work groups and solicited 3rd party reviewers. The review of the water resources methodology is complete and included good, productive feedback. The EIS Project Team is now revising the water resources methodology memo and it will be posted on the project website when it is complete.

Enterprise Services is working to contract with the other reviewers, with reviews expected to occur at the end of June or early July. Once those methodologies are finalized, they will also be

posted on the project website. Carrie said she believes this process is making the analysis better. The same reviewers will review discipline reports when they are drafted in 2020.

CSB Question: Who conducted the water quality review?

Dr. Raymond Timm from Seattle, with a background in water quality and fisheries; he worked for King County for a period of time.

CSB question: Why did you choose those methodologies over others? What about those was controversial?

There were questions about the science of water quality in the past, such as the Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs). Enterprise Services wants the best final product. These are the most technical sections of the EIS, and are areas of potential significant impact. In designing the EIS process and developing a preferred alternative, it is important to mitigate and avoid any risks.

CSB question: Is the third-party reviewer going to review the methodology or the past work that has been done? Are you doing some water quality sampling? What about sediment transport?

Yes. The EIS Project Team will conduct water quality sampling and building a new sediment model.

CSB question: Will you do field sampling to feed into the sediment model?

No. The model relies on a sediment rating curve that looks at how much sediment is moving through the system in a statistical analysis. The EIS Project Team will be sampling sediment for a different reason and sediment characteristics can be evaluated.

CSB comment: Getting water quality samples as early as possible will allow you to make good decisions, sampling is an area that is going to be challenging. If you want to avoid challenges in the future, then having more data to validate model results will be important.

CSB comment: It is very prudent to seek out experts in these areas. It would be valuable if you post the information about how the experts were chosen.

Tessa introduced Karmen Martin, who helped provide an overview of EIS methodologies, see presentation for reference.

Water Quality Methodology

The goal of the water quality analysis is to compare water quality conditions under the various alternatives. There is a wealth of good data for Capitol Lake, Budd Inlet and Deschutes River that

will be compiled and reviewed to understand trends and potential issues. The EIS Project Team determined that it should collect new water quality samples in Capitol Lake to update existing data and confirm existing conditions against historic trends. These will occur monthly between May and October 2019. For the lake alternative, the team will evaluate different approaches to active lake management because the goal is to improve water quality to meet state/federal standards and to support recreational goals.

For the estuary and hybrid alternatives, the team will review existing data for validity and use it to represent water quality under an estuary scenario.

The analysis will allow the EIS Project Team to compare alternatives; however, it is not necessary to understand every detail of water quality to evaluate how it might change across the very-different options.

Hydrodynamics and Sediment Transport Modeling

The goal for hydrodynamics and sediment transport is to compare alternatives through numerical modeling to understand:

- Maximum water surface elevations
- Maximum water velocity
- Areas of erosion
- Areas of sediment deposition

The model will help the team understand:

- How high/low the water would be
- How the water would move through the system
- Areas of sediment erosion
- Where that sediment would be deposited

There are some existing studies that will be evaluated and this model will improve upon those, increasing higher spatial resolution in several areas.

Some challenges to numerical modeling include:

- Different sizes of sediment
- Uncertainty in long-term morphology
- Difference in the alternatives

The model will look at the area from Tumwater Falls to outer Budd Inlet and will include things like bathymetry, flow from the river, tides in Budd Inlet, and water levels at the dam.

Economics

The goal for economics is to understand potential economic effects of the alternatives compared to the No Action Alternative. The EIS Project Team includes an economist who is developing the methodology. Although not required for the EIS, the economic analysis is responsive to stakeholder concerns and is part of the project direction from the Legislature.

The economic analysis will build on the work of other disciplines and consider four categories of impacts (positive and negative):

- Potential impacts to economic activity downstream
- Potential impacts to downtown Olympia
- Potential impacts to recreation activity
- Potential impacts to ecosystem services

Wetlands and Vegetation

The wetlands and vegetation analysis will help compare alternatives – to understand how potential changes in the system under the alternatives would change wetland and vegetation community types. There is a lot of good data and information available, including from federal, state and local agency sources that will be used.

Existing data will be supplemented with focused field reconnaissance to verify existing data and document any unmapped wetlands or vegetation communities. These data will help develop an existing conditions map and categorize and classify wetlands and land cover types.

The analysis will be informed by:

- Topographic and bathymetry data
- Conceptual design and modeling of the alternatives
- Tidal range information and assumptions
- Assumptions on salinity levels
- Other design information prepared by the engineering team

The analysis will look at short and long-term changes, but the focus is always on supporting a comparative analysis of alternatives. Impacts will be qualitatively assessed for their relative magnitude as positive, negative, or neutral.

Fish and Wildlife

There is a large number of fish and wildlife species documented or associated with the habitats in the project area. The analysis will focus on groups of species and in some cases indicator species that are representative of specific habitats. Special attention will be given to federally listed species, such as Puget Sound Chinook Salmon and Southern Resident Killer Whale. There is a lot of good data and information from various federal, state and local agencies and tribes on habitats and species in the project area, which the team will be using.

The analysis will help the team understand and compare the potential impacts and benefits of the proposed alternatives. This will be done by estimating the type, extent, and magnitude of habitat change relative to existing conditions and correlating those changes to the specific life history and habitat requirements of the species and groups of species evaluated.

To support this analysis, the team will prepare general habitat zone maps based on predicted changes in elevations and contours under the conceptual designs of the alternatives. The impact assessment will describe spatial effects (e.g. the loss or gain of specific habitat type) as well as temporal effects (e.g. how long will it take for each habitat to reach some level of relative stability).

Land Use, Shoreline Use, and Recreation

The land use, shoreline use, and recreation analysis starts with a good understanding of existing uses. Data sources include GIS data, policy and planning documents, and land and shoreline use regulations associated with the City of Olympia, City of Tumwater, Port of Olympia, and Thurston County. We will supplement this with data collected through a park user survey regarding recreation use of the study area.

Evaluation of land and shoreline use impacts will focus on any change in expected use patterns or intensity that might affect existing or planned land uses. This will inform the recreation and economics analyses. Evaluation of recreation impacts will focus on changes to the types of recreational available and the quality of the experience.

CSB question: In sediment modeling and water level projections are you considering the changes caused by climate change, such as increased rainfall, aberrations in snowmelt, and changes in sediment transport?

Yes, we will use sea-level rise projections developed by regional science panels and also changes in flow conditions.

CSB question: Is water quality modeling including factors that cause water bodies to be listed on the 303d list (under the Clean Water Act)?

We want to understand the existing conditions, including factors that cause a 303(d) listing, because the goal is to improve water quality to meet state/federal standards.

CSB question: How do you evaluate bacteria concentrations, nutrient cycling, or diurnal changes in dissolved Oxygen without 24-hour monitoring?

Some of this will be answered in the Water Quality Methodology Memorandum.

CSB comment: With water quality testing, it is critical that you conduct in-water testing not only in the lake but at the falls and in Budd Inlet, monthly for at least a year. In land use, make sure you are factoring in the Wilder and White plans. Economics needs to look at the costs of dredging in the lake vs. Budd Inlet.

CSB question: How are New Zealand mudsnails addressed?

There will be a separate section in the EIS for invasive and nuisance species.

CSB question: Are some species more important from a management perspective?

Yes, protected species will be considered more important.

CSB question: Are you thinking about managing the availability of groundwater?

We are looking at what type of water might go into the reflecting pool under the hybrid as part of the MEP. It would feed into the water resources analysis.

In closing, and because it was time to move on, Susan asked how many people would like more detailed discussions in the future about methodology. Less than half of the attendees indicated an interest in this.

Recreation Uses: Past, Current and Future

Susan described a breakout group format to discuss past, current, and future recreation uses. CSB members broke into three, facilitated groups. The facilitators prompted each of four questions and recorded responses on flip charts. The CSB then reconvened and shared responses collectively. Questions and summarized responses are included below. The summarized responses are intended to generally describe the discussion but do not reflect consensus on any specific topic.

How are you/your family using Capitol Lake and the surrounding parks (from Tumwater Fills to Priest Point Park)?

- Salmon viewing at the locks and Tumwater Falls
- Walking, socializing, running, biking around the lake
- Bird and wildlife watching and photography (birds, otters) from Budd Inlet to Tumwater Falls
- Historical Park – community meetings, picnics, playground

- Heritage Park (referred to by some at the meeting as "the Amphitheatre") – concerts, plays, frisbee, football, kites
- Marathon Park – meetings, social gatherings
- Deschutes Parkway – biking, walking
- Tumwater Falls – "special place", picnics, gatherings, outings, view of falls
- Lunch breaks
- Pulling invasive plants and planting native species (private land adjacent to the project area)
- Budd Inlet – hiking along water and wildlife watching, recreational boating, including small sailing vessels, canoes, kayaks, etc.
- Bat detection
- Events such as Lakefair, Recreational Boating Festival, Harbor Days
- Organized competitive and non-competitive running
- Native youth camp
- Places to take visitors

In summary, the project area is still used in many ways but anecdotally the amount of use has declined somewhat due to the use restrictions for Capitol Lake. It remains a community center and a place to take visitors (for some), but it does not necessarily reflect on the community in the positive ways it once did.

For those of you that used Capitol Lake in the past (before uses were restricted on the lake), how did you/your family use the lake then?

- Swimming
- Environmental science merit badge
- Wade into lake
- Fishing
- Kayaking
- Canoeing
- Sailing and sailing lessons
- Boating, including model boats
- Hydroplane races
- First job at swimming concession stand
- Reflect and enjoy Olympia
- Community center

Former uses of Capitol Lake were wide ranging. Those CSB members with a history of former uses reflected positively on this time, and others remembered the transition period where water quality and ecological conditions declined.

If the currently restricted water-based uses were restored under a long-term management option, would this change your use of the waterbody?

- Commercial and economic opportunities like rentals or concessions (e.g. ice cream or beer boat)
- Allow dogs to swim in the lake
- Dependent on conditions like water quality and impacts to habitat and wildlife
- Education and interpretive opportunities
- Kayak, and paddle boating
- Sailing and sailing lessons
- Picnics
- Recreational fishing
- Revitalize downtown
- Swimming
- Volunteer opportunities
- Bird and wildlife observations
- Potential Brewery revitalization
- Potential to positively change bird and bat populations and diversity (question)

There was general agreement that restoring water-based uses would positively impact current uses of the lake like hiking, biking, or wildlife viewing. Additional activities would benefit the downtown and bring more activity and vitality to the downtown, and would likely increase frequency of use over existing conditions.

If Capitol Lake was restored to an estuary or hybrid, shorelines would change (incl. vegetation, distance from trails to water, etc.). How would these changes affect your use of the project area?

- Boardwalks similar to Nisqually, bridges into the estuary would be important
- Depend on how often the waterbody would have water
- Depend on how it would affect recreational boating in Budd Inlet
- Kayaking or canoeing in the basin during high tides

- More, better walking, running, trails
- Observe environmental transition from fresh to saltwater
- Potential increase in undesirable species (e.g. mosquitos)
- Resume fishing
- More diversity of bird and wildlife species; increased wildlife viewing and photography
- Increased opportunities for environmental/conservation-oriented interpretive activities
- Tidal variation would create varying effects
- Use river to access Budd Inlet
- Visit more often, and bring guests from out of town to enjoy the natural environment
- The low tide smell would be a negative effect

Many members suggested the project area would become a more dynamic space that is more interesting ecologically. Others asked what the area would look or smell like, noting this is important when thinking about how the space would be used. Some wondered if other areas (Mud Bay, East Bay, Nisqually) are good examples of what an estuary may look like. Some members noted that boardwalks would be particularly important to getting closer to and over the water.

A key interest was accessibility in terms of getting in, on, over, or around the water. Others questioned if the Olympia Yacht Club could continue to function.

CSB question: Can we view some historical photos at a future meeting to get an idea of what an estuary could look like?

The group discussed a variety of resources for historical photos. **The EIS Project Team will consider this for a future meeting.**

Public Comment

Susan provided an opportunity for observers to provide public comment. No attendees wished to provide public comment (note: one written comment form was submitted).

Next Meeting

Tessa explained that the EIS Project Team wants to be sure this group is convened around opportunities for meaningful conversation. Being mindful of work ahead and summer schedules, the next opportunity to meet and provide meaningful input is in the fall timeframe. Because this could be a long time between meetings, the Enterprise Services is planning to host a conference call to provide a project update and answer questions. This would not be a formal input

opportunity, but more of an optional opportunity to stay current with the project. The call is tentatively planned for Sept. 19 from 6 to 7 p.m. More information will be forthcoming.

CSB question: Could it include visuals, like a webinar? Can it be recorded?

We will consider both of these options.

Closing Remarks

Carrie thanked the group for attending and the great discussion.

Adjournment

Susan adjourned the meeting at 8:45 p.m.