



## WASHINGTON COAST SUSTAINABLE SALMON PARTNERSHIP

### SUMMARY OF REGIONAL MEETING

**September 16, 2009**

Montesano City Hall, Montesano, WA

10 am – 4 pm

#### In attendance:

Mark Swartout, Chair, WCSSP  
Miles Batchelder, WCSSP staff  
Dana Dietz, WCSSP staff  
Bob Burkle, WDFW  
Jackie Farra, Citizen, Ocean Shores  
Dave King, WDFW  
Philip Miller, Governor's Salmon Recovery  
Office (GSRO)

#### North Pacific Coast Lead Entity Group

Rich Osborne, Lead Entity Coordinator  
Ed Bowen, Citizen At Large  
Devona Ensmenger, Wild Salmon Center

#### Quinault Lead Entity Group

John Sims, Lead Entity Coordinator

#### Grays Harbor County Lead Entity Group

Lee Napier, Lead Entity Coordinator  
Eric Delvin, The Nature Conservancy  
Kathy Greer, Surfrider Foundation  
Mark Swartout, Thurston County  
Terry Willis, Grays Harbor County

#### Pacific County Lead Entity Group

Mike Johnson, Lead Entity Coordinator  
Faith Taylor-Eldred, Pacific County

#### ILA Designated Representatives

Faith Taylor-Eldred, Pacific County  
Mark Swartout, Thurston County  
Terry Willis, Grays Harbor County

#### **UPCOMING MEETINGS:**

Wednesday, <b>October 21</b>	<b>10 am – 2 pm</b>	<b>Grays Harbor PUD, 2720 Sumner, Aberdeen</b> (corner of Myrtle & Sumner)
Wednesday, <b>November 18</b>	<b>10 am – 2 pm</b>	<b>TBD</b>
Wednesday, <b>December 16</b>	<b>10 am – 2 pm</b>	<b>TBD</b>

### **BUSINESS MEETING**

Chair Mark Swartout noted that because of the termination; on Monday, September 14th of the contract of WCSSP Director Nancy Allison by WCSSP's fiscal agent, Grays Harbor County, he thinks that the group needs to spend most of today discussing how to resolve the situation.

(Grays Harbor County Commissioner Terry Willis later clarified what she called a small distinction, which was that there was no service contract in place at the time and therefore Allison's contract was "not renewed," not "terminated".)

Swartout handed out an outline-agenda (attached) which he developed to try to help frame the discussions at this meeting.

He thought the group should first have a free flow of comments, questions and concerns, and then try to answer what he thinks are the two major questions for the organization:

(1) Grays Harbor County (GHC) is the fiscal agent for the Washington Coast Sustainable Salmon Partnership (WCSSP); does the group feel that GHC should continue in that role, or should some other fiscal agent be found?

(2) Decide what is the best way to continue leadership, directorship and staffing of the organization.

He hopes that the group can at least come to some tentative conclusions by the end of the meeting.

Grays Harbor County (GHC) Commissioner Terry Willis made a statement explaining the action it had taken on Monday, September 14, 2009, as WCSSP's fiscal agent, to not renew the contract of Director Nancy Allison. The GHC Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) checked with its legal counsel to verify that it had the legal authority to take this action.

John Sims, Rich Osborne, Ed Bowen and Devona Ensmenger expressed definite concerns about various aspects of this event:

(1) The need to salvage all the good work that has been put into creating this organization.

(2) The problems were not first brought to the attention of the WCSSP group earlier for resolution, given that Willis said that problems had begun a few months ago.

(3) A decision was made without consulting the WCSSP group first. Except for the fiscal issues, it is the larger group who observes the Director's work in all other areas of organizational concern.

(4) Trust has been undermined.

(5) Grays Harbor County should commit to consult the larger group before making any such decisions in the future. Although GHC BoCC had the legal authority to do what they did, it was questioned whether they had the right to do so given the nature of this organization and its historical decision-making. The larger group, represented by the LE Coordinators and others, were the ones who had interviewed candidates and made the final choice of Allison.

(6) Communication needs to be improved.

Also expressed was a concern about a Lead Entity (Grays Harbor) that is within a larger organization having such powers over that larger organization.

Phil Miller stated that in his view the relationship of a director and a fiscal agent is paramount to an organization, and that relationship was not well managed. He went on to say that he gives Allison and the staff excellent marks in detailed deliverables; it is performance on the two major deliverables (organizational structure/fiscal agency relationship and regional plan) that has been tentative, unfinished, less clear. He's not sure, given the age of the organization, whether the progress in organizational development is good, medium, not good. Progress on the regional plan is showing promise, but there's a long way to go. Therefore, his overall assessment is equivocal.

Devona Ensmenger and Mike Johnson both suggested that having a monthly financial report given at each Monthly Regional Meeting would be a good means to stave off problems, allowing for the larger group to weigh in with its views and decisions in such matters. Swartout pointed out that the group needs to define its role in budget decisions and develop policies and procedures for approving expenditures so that there is something to refer to when issues like, for instance, the purchase of SharePoint arise.

Additionally, it was pointed out that WCSSP should have in place a 'personnel review' procedure, so that the fiscal agent has some guidance from the group. Sims encouraged the group to establish an organizational structure, a "Board," as soon as possible so that this kind of event doesn't happen in the future.

Swartout listed five elements that he was hearing needed to be addressed today and in the near future, in concert with any decisions about fiscal agency:

- 1) SALVAGE the progress that has been made in the development of the organization and its goals;
- 2) Decide leadership and staff ROLES from this point forward, at least for the interim;
- 3) COMMUNICATION and how to improve it;
- 4) TRUST and the importance of building/rebuilding it;
- 5) PROCESS; how to improve processes within WCSSP.

### **Fiscal Agency**

Consensus seemed to be that Grays Harbor County continue as fiscal agent for WCSSP, at least until further decisions are made by WCSSP on what organizational structure to create. Commissioner Willis clarified that Grays Harbor County is willing to continue as fiscal agent with the current contract in place between RCO and GHC.

Ed Bowen wanted the issue/ option of changing fiscal agent to remain open; in particular, any decision to either permanently change or permanently keep GHC as fiscal agent would need to go back to his Lead Entity Group (NPCLE) for discussion and vote. However, for the interim, keeping GHC as fiscal agent (i.e., no change for now) and making any staffing decision needed for organizational salvage, Bowen is willing to come to consensus today if he is allowed time to caucus with the other NPCLE members present.

Sims expressed that GHC should be the fiscal agent for the short term, but that whatever organizational structure is created by the group should serve as its own fiscal agent in the long term.

Eric Delvin expressed a concern of The Nature Conservancy that any near-future change in fiscal agency would disrupt the regional planning process to which the Conservancy has devoted a lot of resources.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION: 1:00 - 1:30 pm**

*Staff persons Miles Batchelder and Dana Dietz were asked to leave the room while the group discussed and made staffing decisions required by Allison's departure.*

**Staffing**

Swartout articulated the group's decision to create an interim staffing solution to be in effect through the end of 2009. Since the long term intent has been to have a new organizational structure decided upon by the end of 2009, that new structure then will give direction on how the group wants to continue staffing the organization.

It was decided to offer Miles Batchelder the full time position of Interim Executive Director through December 31, 2009, at an hourly rate of \$38.00 per hour. Batchelder said he needed a few days to think about accepting the offer.

It was further decided to offer Dana Dietz the full time position of Interim Program Assistant through December 31, 2009 at a rate of \$25.00 per hour, with the understanding that she will continue with the Wild Salmon Center (WCS) contract for 15% of her time to assist Devona Ensmenger with the project to refine Salmon stock status data for the Region. It was clarified that if the WSC contract work ends, Dietz would be then be at 100% WCSSP. Dietz accepted this verbal offer, pending a specific contract proposal from Grays Harbor County. [Per discussion at this meeting, it was later approved by the interim executive committee that Dietz work 115%, i.e., 40 hrs/wk for WCSSP plus 6 hrs/wk for WSC.]

Staff were asked to bring to the October 21, 2009 monthly meeting a proposed restructuring of Work Plan staff responsibilities through December 30, 2009.

**Organizational Leadership**

Swartout asked for clarification of his role as Chair: does the group see him as facilitating the meetings (only), or also as some kind of decision maker between meetings? During this interim period, Osborne recommended that Swartout as Chair be given more decision-making responsibilities between monthly meetings and that an interim Executive Committee made up of the four Lead Entity Coordinators be created. Substantive financial and programmatic decisions as well as the framing of issues, etc. coming from the staff would be reviewed by Swartout; if he thinks that the Interim Executive Committee as a whole needs to discuss any item, he will convene a conference call meeting to do that. The interim executive committee would also approve each draft Agenda. Fiscal agent and

financial procedures would be maintained by the fiscal agent representative, Lee Napier, in concert with WCSSP staff. This arrangement was agreed upon by the group for a one-month period, through the October 21<sup>st</sup> monthly meeting, at which time it will be reconsidered. Swartout reminded everyone that the Interim Ground Rules are and will continue to be in effect; these Ground Rules outline a clear decision making structure for the whole group which will continue to be abided by.

### **Specific August 2009 travel reimbursement**

Concerning Allison's expenses related to attending "The Ecology of Pacific Salmonids" workshops in August, Napier related that she has already approved Allison's time for attending the workshops (in the Salary line item). She noted that Allison personally paid the conference/training fee. Napier's questions to the group were two-fold: whether to pay Allison for the time driving to the workshops under the Salary line item (not the Travel line item) and whether to approve Allison's request for reimbursement for mileage, hotel and parking for this event. For the record, Bowen said that it should have been pre-approved by the group; however, he went on to say that the group had given Allison the general task of continuing education in the area of salmonids. Osborne proposed that the group approve reimbursing Allison for hotel, parking and mileage and pay for her travel time under the Salary line item. Swartout asked if there were any objections; there were none. Grays Harbor County was asked to reimburse Allison for these expenses.

Napier wanted to make sure that the staff are aware that they need to ask for reimbursement for time spent traveling to the Time line item, not the Travel line item. In addition, if they think they should attend a conference or training that is not a specified part of their job, they need to ask for permission beforehand from the GHC BoCC.

### **Inventory Items**

The group agreed to task Batchelder and Dietz with securing WCSSP inventory items (cell phone and laptop) and office keys from Allison.

### **Regional Plan Planning Committee Report**

Batchelder gave a short report on the current status of planning for Regional Plan development, and noted that everyone had received a copy of the draft Regional Planning Framework (attached) outlining tentative, draft decisions that have been made so far by the Planning Committee. The hope is that this larger WCSSP group can approve this tentative Framework at its next, October 21<sup>st</sup> monthly meeting.

### **October 21, 2009 monthly meeting Agenda**

It was agreed that the October 21<sup>st</sup> meeting needed to be a face-to-face meeting.

It was further agreed that there be a conference call (Swartout and the four LE Coordinators) before October 21<sup>st</sup>, but after the LE Groups have met, to lay out proposed option(s) so that the larger group can quickly decide on which direction to take, at least in the near future. If the group can make a fairly quick decision at the beginning of the October 21<sup>st</sup> meeting, we can continue to move forward at that meeting, as was planned, to discuss and decide long-term organizational structure issues.

Swartout asked for Agenda Items for the October 21, 2009 monthly regional meeting. The following items were brought up:

- 1) Proposed revisions of the Work Plan and job delineations brought to the group by staff;
- 2) Revisit interim decision-making powers of Chair/Co-Chair and Interim Executive Committee decided on at monthly meeting Sept. 16<sup>th</sup>;
- 2) Financial decision-making: What is the role of the larger group in making financial decisions? How are these decisions going to be made?
- 3) A monthly WCSSP financial report;
- 4) Continuing organizational structure discussion and decision making;
- 5) Planning Committee report, including vetting the Regional Planning Framework.
- 6) Submission of the first draft of the Needs Assessment to the group by Ensmenger for the group's review so that it can be finalized by the November 2009 monthly meeting.

#### **Approval of August 2009 Meeting Summary**

Dietz suggested that the approval of the August 19, 2009 Meeting Summary be put off until WCSSP's October 21, 2009 general meeting.

#### **Adjournment**

Swartout thanked the group for dealing with a difficult situation in an effective way to secure the continuity of the organization. The meeting was adjourned by Chair Swartout.

Respectfully submitted,

Dana Dietz

Attachments: Draft discussion guide/agenda prepared by Chair Mark Swartout  
Regional Planning Framework