

Bradford Island Community Involvement Program

Community Involvement Committee (CIC)

Meeting Summary

Monday, September 18, 2006

6:00 – 7:30 PM

**Skamania County Courthouse Annex Building
Stevenson, Washington**

CIC Members Present: Tom Jermann, City of North Bonneville; Scott McEwen, Lower Columbia River Estuary Partnership; Peggy Bryan, Skamania County Economic Development Council; Diana Ross, Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area; Rachael Pecore, Columbia Riverkeeper; Ryan Sudbury, Nez Perce Tribe

CIC Members Not Present: Ralph Heggard, Mayor, City of Cascade Locks; Paul Pearce, Skamania County Commissioner; Lynne Kononen, Cascade Locks Planning Commission

Project Team Members Present: Mark Dasso, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; Mike McAleer, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; Bob Schwarz, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality; John Hoey, Jones & Stokes; Melinda Posner, Jones & Stokes

Audience: Jim Mahar, Brian McCavitt, Frank Salber, Mary Repar

Welcome and Introductions

The meeting facilitator, John Hoey of Jones & Stokes, thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and asked the members to introduce themselves.

Project Update

Mark Dasso gave a status update of the investigation and clean-up process at Bradford Island. The Remedial Investigation (RI) work plan is being developed and the Corps has been conducting field work at the Bradford Island site. The objective of the RI is to determine existing risks to human health and the environment at Bradford Island. The RI work plan will be complete in three to four months. The Non-Time Critical Removal (Early Action) in-water dredging will be conducted in October 2007, rather than February 2007 as originally planned. Conditions in October are more conducive to doing the in-water work effectively and safely (i.e., lower flows, slower currents). The Technical Advisory Group unanimously agreed to delay the in-water work to take advantage of these

conditions. The 95 percent design for the Early Action is posted on the Bradford Island Web site. With the delay of the in-water work, the Corps has additional funds available to conduct other clean-up activities at Bradford Island. The “bulb slope” is one option for clean-up. The Corps’ technical staff are considering the options on how to best use the additional available funds.

Questions: A CIC member asked whether the public will have an opportunity to comment on the 95 percent design for the in-water work. Mark answered that the 95 percent design includes technical engineering details that are not subject to public input. The larger Bradford Island clean-up feasibility study is not complete, but will require additional public outreach. The Engineering Evaluation and Cost Analysis (EE/CA) was published for 30-day review earlier this year to solicit comments on the proposed in-water dredging work. Another CIC member asked why the in-water work was not being done in October 2006. Mark answered that the dredging work involves permitting and contracting that require advance planning; October 2006 is too early to get the necessary permits (including Endangered Species Act review) and to award the construction contracts. A CIC member responded that although it is frustrating to wait for the bureaucratic process, they want assurances that Bradford Island is cleaned up correctly when it’s done (it’s better to do it right the first time).

John reminded the committee of the CIC Roles and Responsibilities document, which outlines the purpose of the committee: to assist the Corps in the community outreach process by serving as a conduit to the community and the particular interest groups they represent. The CIC is intended to guide community outreach activities throughout the duration of the Bradford Island investigation and clean-up, not just in the Early Action phase. John reviewed the written answers to the questions that were generated at the July 17th CIC meeting, and asked if there were any additional clarifying questions from the committee. These questions will serve as a base for an ongoing Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document that can be utilized during community outreach activities. These questions are available at:

<https://www.nwp.usace.army.mil/issues/bradford/docs/cicquestions071706.pdf>

The Corps has set up a page on the Bradford Island Web site for the CIC that includes all meeting agendas, meeting minutes, the Community Involvement Plan, and other relevant documents. The general Bradford Island Web site also has a lot of other useful information. CIC members should bookmark this site and forward it on to others that may be interested.

The CIC Web page address is:

<https://www.nwp.usace.army.mil/issues/bradford/cic.asp>

The general Bradford Island Web site is:

<https://www.nwp.usace.army.mil/issues/bradford/home.asp>

Discussion of Community Involvement Activities

John led a discussion of potential community involvement activities for the Bradford Island project. The Community Involvement Plan included short-term Phase I (Fall 2006) and longer-term Phase II (2007 and beyond) activities. John handed out a list of potential activities and materials that are included in Jones & Stokes' contract and could be done by the end of 2006, including fact sheets, public notices, community displays, and public meetings.

Below are some of the comments made by CIC members during this discussion:

- Small posters would work better than larger graphic display boards. They are mobile and can be distributed electronically. Posters should include simple text, a few colors, a map and a timeline. Electronic files should be kept under 5 MB for easy e-mail distribution and printing.
- The primary issue is public health – the risk to people eating contaminated fish. The in-water dredging project is too specific (people don't want to know the engineering details) – focus on the bigger issues (contamination, risks, etc.).
- The public will care most about environmental concerns, public health concerns, and the bigger investigation and clean-up (not just the in-water work).
- This project is just the beginning of cleaning up the Columbia River. This clean-up is an opportunity to educate wider populations about the larger problem.
- How much risk will remain after the in-water work is done? How large is the contamination problem compared with other problems in the Columbia River? The Bradford Island project should be described in the broader context of the larger Columbia River ecosystem.
- The principal stakeholders are fish consumers – the key messages should target this population. The tribes consume salmon, sturgeon, and lamprey. The public health risks should also be communicated to the elderly, the immune-deficient, and pregnant women.
- The Corps should not wait until the public health risks are fully analyzed before communicating the potential risks to the public.
- The Corps should advertise a phone number to call – “if you think you are at risk, call _____.”

- Legal notices in the newspaper are usually small and ineffective. The Corps should use press releases and paid advertisements.
- Public meetings on this type of topic are generally not well attended. The Corps should leverage other meetings, conferences, and events (such as fishing clinics held every year in the summer months).
- Communications materials should be published in Spanish, Russian, and for native Southeast Asians. Materials in other languages should be posted at locations where fishing populations might see them, including grocery stores, hardware stores, launch sites, tribal “in lieu” sites (even if the materials only include a warning about what fish not to eat).
- What is the primary message the Corps wants to convey? If the message is “don’t eat fish”, those populations that catch and eat fish from the river regularly won’t listen.
- The Corps needs to work with the state agencies to issue fish advisories.
- The primary message should be about the Bradford Island project (the public health risks, not the engineering details); the next level of information should be about fish consumption and the associated risks; the next level should be about the broader issue of contamination in the Columbia River ecosystem.
- The Bradford Island Web site should be easy to use, but also needs to have sufficient information for those who are looking for it.
- The first Bradford Island fact sheet contained a good level of detail. The next fact sheet should include some additional detail – some could be used in a poster also.
- The state’s economic concerns related to public health risks may limit the amount of information that can be communicated at this time without having fully analyzed the public health risks.

Wrap-up

The committee decided to continue this discussion at the next CIC meeting. John will coordinate the next meeting date with the committee. The focus of this meeting will be to identify the key messages for community outreach. These key messages will be used to develop communication materials that can be distributed in various ways and translated into several languages.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 PM.