

**Technical Working Group Steering Committee
Pebble Project**

Minutes for January 30, 2008

Atwood Building Room 1420

Minutes taken by Charlotte MacCay (Bristol)

Present:

Doug Limpinsel (NOAA)

Phil Brna (USFWS)

Leroy Phillips (USACE)

Diane Soderlund (EPA)

Mike Daigneault (DNR-OHMP)

Andrea Meyer (DNR)

Tom Crafford (DNR)

Tom Brookover (ADF&G)

Bud Rice (NPS)

Mike Smith (PLP)

Charlotte MacCay (Bristol)

Agenda

- Tom Crafford incorporated various topics into an agenda.
- The agenda was approved.

Data Issues

Baseline Study Design Information

- Technical Working Groups (TWGs) should be provided with study plans that provide a high level of scientific defensibility (“best science”) with:
 - Clear objectives
 - Statistical design
 - Sampling methods
 - Analytical tests and methods
- No formal responses have been received to previous formal comments and suggestions. It is important to know how suggestions were or were not incorporated.
- Written responses are forthcoming from Pebble Limited Partnership (PLP), they have taken longer to prepare than anticipated. At some meetings, the draft answers to related written comments were read to the members.
- PLP is willing to provide study design information.
- TWG members would like to see a synopsis of all work that has been conducted, and what type of data has been collected over the years for each discipline.

Data

The term ‘data’ can have different meanings and should be used clearly. It can mean raw data, e.g. a list of measurements collected via scientific sampling, or convey a broader sense of project level information such as study objectives, design, methods and results. Note – the broader sense is used for the purposes of these minutes.

- The public may already be aware that PLP has not supplied resource agencies with detailed study plans or results.
- PLP could present some data on screen at the TWG meetings.
 - Many members desire hard copy data that they can take with them and contemplate.
 - Information or data shown only on screen cannot be taken back to the agency for review by other agency experts.
- Agencies appreciate that it is PLP's right, and it is appropriate, to keep data private until it is fully reviewed and ready for release. However, without data available to the technical experts, the effectiveness of the TWGs is minimized. It may be better to postpone TWG meetings until such time as PLP is ready to release data.
- TWG members need a full picture.
- Study designs, for studies that extend over time, are usually adjusted based on previous results. It's important to share data or other information that has led to changes in study design over the years.
- PLP is ready to share meteorology, hydrology and some surface water data at this time.
- PLP has been requesting that TWG members explain what data they would like to see and how they would like it presented, and then PLP will determine if that is data that is ready to release.
- It will become the responsibility of the TWG leads to end the meeting with a summation of all the information that the group requires for the next meeting to be meaningful. When that data is made available, a meeting date will be set. This can include information and data from a variety of sources as well as from PLP.

Structure/Constitution of TWGs

Initial Meetings

- Many members are not inclined to continue their participation, unless there is more information and data available at the meetings.
- There is a lot of concern over the process considering that most disciplines have only had one meeting to date.
- Initial meetings have been an opportunity to educate some TWG members; there is a wide range of familiarity with the project. It was also a chance to introduce the Study Plans, so the TWG could begin to embrace their issues. The meetings did evolve into meaningful discussions.
- Agencies have to balance the highest use of their resources, and ensure the meetings are meaningful if they are going to participate at this time.

Official member status

- Some of the leads are actually guests and not listed members of the TWG.
- TWG membership should be adjusted accordingly.
- It is important that agency personnel remain as leads. PLP may be able to supply personnel to act as a lead, but does not feel it would be appropriate.
- It's more important for the leads to be able to manage the team and keep a discussion on track, rather than have the most expertise on the subject.

- Since state agencies are reimbursed for participation by their personnel, some felt it would be more appropriate for the extra work load of being a lead to be taken up by a state agency, instead of a federal agency.
- The Fish TWG, Aquatic Organism TWG, and the Marine TWG have not assigned leads yet. The Baseline Multi-media Trace Elements TWG had not yet met, so they also have not yet assigned a lead.
- The Alaska Department of Natural Resources (ADNR) and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) need to discuss appointments of leads to TWGs where needed.
- A facilitator may be necessary for some TWGs that have many members and are difficult to keep on track.

Preparedness

- It was reported that many members at the initial TWG meetings had not done any preparation for the meeting (this may relate, in part, to the introductory nature of the initial meetings)
- Some agency personnel indicated they will not likely have time to do a lot of preparation for these meetings.
- Agencies may wish to consider bringing on more expertise for some groups, particularly geochemistry and aquatic organisms. The U.S. Geologic Survey (USGS) will be approached again regarding participation; they have considerable expertise on these subjects. Tom Crafford will follow up on this.

Function

- Hydrology/Instream Flow will be an independent sub-group of the Fish TWG.
- Marine Wildlife TWG will be a new independent TWG to address marine birds and mammals.
- Aquatic Habitat TWG will be renamed Aquatic Organisms (not fish) TWG.
- Hydrology/Instream Flow will be renamed Hydrology TWG.

Action Items

- **A new contact list will be distributed with the correct TWG titles and updated membership.**
- **Prior to subsequent meetings, a synopsis of all work done to date for that discipline will be prepared and distributed.**
- **Data requests made at the previous meetings will be fulfilled to the extent possible and distributed.**
- **Tom Crafford will contact USGS about participation particularly in geochemistry.**
- **ADNR and ADF&G will discuss leads for those groups who have not established a lead.**