



## Staff Report

March 21, 2022 Council Workshop Meeting

Watershed Alliance of Southwest Washington Grant Agreement

Presenter: Steve Wall, Public Works Director

Time Estimate: 10 minutes

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**BACKGROUND:** The City is currently in the process of completing a Lake Management Plan to investigate causes and develop both short- and long-term strategies to improve water quality. Additionally, the City has a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) stormwater permit issued by the State that has certain requirements the City is obligated to perform. The mission of the Watershed Alliance of Southwest Washington ("Alliance") is to "...educate and engage community members to be active stewards of southwest Washington's natural legacy, with a focus on creeks, lakes, and other water bodies. [They] educate children and adults, while giving them hands on opportunities to participate in the restoration and protection of waterways." In short, the mission of the Alliance directly aligns with some of the City's goals and objectives of improving the water quality within Lacamas, Round and Fallen Leaf Lakes and also aligns with the requirements of the City's NPDES Permit. RCW 35.21.278 allows cities to contract with community service organizations (including non-profits) to complete a limited amount of public improvements.

**SUMMARY:** The City and the Alliance have been discussing our common goals and individual work efforts over the last few months. Over this time, staff has come to understand and realize the potential benefits that partnering with the Alliance could have on the City's short-term efforts to help improve water quality in the Lacamas Watershed and to meet our stormwater permit requirements. City and Alliance staff and have worked together to draft the attached "Grant Agreement". Per the Agreement, the City would fund the Alliance to provide approximately \$30,000 worth of work to supplement the City's own efforts, including:

- Completion of a project located southwest of the Everett Street and Leadbetter Road intersection to use volunteers to clear invasive species, prepare the soil and plant approximately 1,500 plants. This project will directly benefit the Lacamas Lake Watershed and will be a visible example of the benefits of restoration projects in the community.
- Providing assistance to City staff and volunteers to expand upon the Lacamas Lake Clean-Up Day. Examples of assistance include volunteer coordination, preparation of stormwater education materials, and on-the-ground support the day of the event.
- Developing a multi-year long clearing and planting plan for a large area between the Washougal River and the Washougal River Greenway Trail located west of Yale Street.

The Alliance has extensive experience working on their own and with other cities in the County in completing this type of work and can develop materials and organize volunteers much more efficiently than City staff would be able to. The goal of this contract with the Alliance is to “begin small” with the tasks identified, and if the partnership works as envisioned, potentially expand the scope of work and overall partnership to assist the City with additional volunteer, education and outreach related tasks that align with the Alliance’s mission.

**EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS:**

What are the desired results and outcomes for this agenda item?

Creation of a partnership with the Watershed Alliance of Southwest Washington, a non-profit organization, to assist the City in efficiently completing volunteer events and education and outreach opportunities with the goal of improving and protecting the various water bodies throughout the City.

What’s the data? What does the data tell us?

The Alliance regularly coordinates and holds volunteer events to complete invasive species removal and replanting with native species, whereas the City is not experienced or efficient in these types of efforts.

How have communities been engaged? Are there opportunities to expand engagement?

Part of the purpose of the Agreement with the Alliance is to encourage community engagement and complete projects that will benefit local neighborhoods and the nearby water bodies.

Who will benefit from, or be burdened by this agenda item?

Citizens and visitors alike will benefit from a partnership with the Alliance and improvements to the various watersheds.

What are the strategies to mitigate any unintended consequences?

Staff is proposing that we step slowly into the partnership and has worked with the Alliance to start small to ensure the City has sufficient funding to support the agreement and to confirm that the agreement is of benefit to both parties.

Does this agenda item have a differential impact on underserved populations, people living with disabilities, and/or communities of color? Please provide available data to illustrate this impact.

N/A

Will this agenda item improve ADA accessibilities for people with disabilities?

N/A

What potential hurdles exists in implementing this proposal (include both operational and political)?

Staff does not anticipate any hurdles in implementing this proposal.

How will you ensure accountabilities, communicate, and evaluate results?

The Alliance is required to submit quarterly reports per the Agreement. Additionally, the Agreement includes conducting annual review meetings to ensure that expectations on for both parties are being met.

How does this item support a comprehensive plan goal, policy or other adopted resolution?

This item supports the City's NPDES Permit requirements, Lake Management Plan development efforts and multiple Comprehensive Plan Goals.

**BUDGET IMPACT:** Staff is proposing to use \$35,000 from the City's Stormwater Fund to support these efforts. It is envisioned a portion of the \$300,000 allocated in the Stormwater Fund to the Lake Management Plan will be used to complete the activities as the work is considered a "short-term strategy" to improve water quality.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Staff is proposing to include this Agreement and Scope of Work with the Watershed Alliance of Southwest Washington on the April 4, 2022 Consent Agenda for Council's consideration.