

**Assignment #3: Collective Impact Model and Process Map of Save a Beautiful Lake  
Program in 1974**

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## **Organizational Roles in the Capitol Lake Deschutes Estuary Project**

An organization is a structured group of individuals or entities working together to achieve shared goals through collaboration, coordination, and defined roles. It operates as a system where resources, expertise, and responsibilities are strategically allocated to address specific objectives, often influenced by its mission and the context in which it operates. For instance, in the Capitol Lake Deschutes Estuary project organizations such as the Washington State Department of Enterprise Services serve as the lead agency, managing the environmental review process and overseeing long-term strategies. The Squaxin Island Tribe focuses on habitat restoration and the preservation of native species. While municipalities like Olympia and Tumwater contribute by maintaining infrastructure and funding specific components, such as boardwalks. These organizations collaborate by pooling resources and sharing expertise to achieve common objectives like environmental restoration, regulatory compliance, and community engagement.

## **Historical Context and Environmental Challenges**

Since the 5th Avenue Dam's construction, approximately 35,000 cubic yards of sediment have been deposited annually in Capitol Lake, creating increasingly shallow conditions. Concerns about water quality emerged in the 1970s due to excessive aquatic plant growth, algal blooms, and poor water clarity caused by high nutrient levels. By 1985, these issues led to the permanent closure of the lake's swimming beach. This affected the stakeholders and rights holders significantly because it took a toll on their community, interests, and financial stability. Invasive species have compounded the problem, with 15 known aquatic invasive species present,

including the New Zealand mudsnail. Its discovery in 2009 resulted in the closure of the lake to public use, further diminishing its ecological and recreational value to stakeholders and rights holders.

However, since the 1970s, numerous initiatives have been undertaken to address sediment and water quality issues in Capitol Lake, including the Save a Beautiful Lake Program in 1974, the formation of the Capitol Lake Restoration Committee in the 1980s, and the Capitol Lake Adaptive Management Plan (CLAMP) Steering Committee in the 1990s. These efforts laid the groundwork for the current estuary restoration project by fostering adaptive management and stakeholder involvement. These persistent issues necessitated a long-term management strategy to restore the lake's environmental health and community accessibility.

### **Stakeholder and Rightsholder Engagement Collaborative Roles and Responsibilities**

The Capitol Lake Deschutes Estuary project is a comprehensive environmental restoration initiative aimed at addressing decades of sediment buildup, water quality degradation, and invasive species proliferation following the construction of the 5th Avenue Dam in 1951. The project has relied on structured collaboration among various organizations, including government agencies, local jurisdictions, and tribal representatives. Transparent engagement processes and clearly defined responsibilities have been central to its progress. Workgroups such as the Executive, Technical, and Funding and Governance Work Groups met regularly from 2018 to 2020, bringing together expertise to support technical analyses and guide the final version of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Stakeholders include:

- The *Squaxin Island Tribe*, leading habitat restoration and the reintroduction of native species. Environmental stewardship and cultural respect are central, collaboration with the Squaxin Island Tribe ensures Indigenous knowledge is honored.
- The *Department of Enterprise Services*, overseeing the EIS and long-term management strategies under the Washington State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA).
- The *City of Olympia*, tasked with maintaining infrastructure like the new 5th Avenue Bridge.
- The *City of Tumwater*, responsible for funding South Basin boardwalks.
- The *Port of Olympia*, managing dredging operations in vessel berths.
- The *Departments of Ecology, Fish and Wildlife, and Natural Resources* provide technical and regulatory expertise, ensuring compliance and environmental sustainability.
- *Public engagement* through forums and comment periods has been a priority, ensuring transparency and democracy.

The project ensures fair representation and benefit-sharing among all stakeholders.

Efforts to improve public access, manage invasive species, and fund restoration are designed to benefit urban, suburban, and marginalized communities alike. Cost-sharing across organizations ensures that no single entity bears an undue burden.

### **Key Lessons for Public Servants**

The Capitol Lake Deschutes Estuary project offers valuable lessons for managing complex, multi-stakeholder initiatives:

- Collaborative Governance: Engaging diverse organizations fosters trust and aligns objectives. Structured workgroups can facilitate dialogue and reduce conflicts.

- Transparency: Open communication and proactive public engagement build credibility and strengthen public trust.
- Integration of Cultural Contexts: Including Indigenous knowledge ensures respect for cultural and historical perspectives in environmental restoration.
- Equity in Decision-Making: Ensuring fair representation and resource allocation among all communities fosters inclusivity and shared benefits.

### **Conclusion**

Even though there was no focus on a specific moment in time during this project, the majority of my research was based on the Save a Beautiful Lake Program during 1974. I wanted to research the organizational processes that stakeholders and rights holders go through when proposing a program, and my visual aid will help bring it all together. But, the Capitol Lake Deschutes Estuary project is a compelling example of how collaboration can drive meaningful solutions to complex environmental challenges. Through transparent governance, shared responsibilities, and the integration of specialized expertise, the initiative fosters trust, accountability, and innovation. In its approach to restoring ecological balance, improving water quality, invasive species management, and enhancing public access, the Capitol Lake Deschutes Estuary project serves as a model for future initiatives. It highlights the importance of long-term vision, adaptive management, and collaborative governance in achieving sustainable solutions. Moreover, the project exemplifies how the principles of democracy, ethics, and equity can guide sustainable environmental management. Democratic values are evident in the inclusive decision-making processes that prioritize stakeholder engagement and public input, ensuring that a range of voices influence key outcomes. Ethical commitments are reflected in the project's dedication to environmental stewardship, cultural respect, and the incorporation of Indigenous

knowledge, particularly through the contributions of the Squaxin Island Tribe. Equity remains a central pillar, as the project ensures fair distribution of benefits, responsibilities, and opportunities across all communities impacted by the restoration efforts.

## Sources

Attachment 23: Capitol Lake. (October, 2022).

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