

**OSS Management Plan
Meeting Notes
March 13, 2014**

Attendance:

Committee Members			
Name and Affiliation	Present?	Name and Affiliation	Present?
Mat Buldis – Shellfish Grower	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Dennis McVey – City of Rainier Council Member	Absent
Tris Carlson – Chair of Henderson-Nisqually Shellfish Committee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Greg Moe – Realtor	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Evan Cusack – Designer, Installer and Maintenance Specialist	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Paul Morneau – Sewage System Designer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Joshua Daily – Citizen Representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Steve Petersen – Environmental Health	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Sue Davis – Environmental Health	Absent	Lynn Schneider – Department of Health	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Adam Frank – Olympia Master Builders	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Dan Smith – City of Tumwater	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
JR Inman – OSS pumping and Maintenance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Art Starry – Environmental Health	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Erica Marbet – Squaxin Tribe	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Diane Utter – City of Olympia	Absent
Roger Max – Scatter Creek area resident	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

Guests:

Jennifer Johnson, Thurston County EH Education and Outreach

Facilitator: Linda Hofstad

Note Taker: Cissy Fontenot

Linda Hofstad called the meeting to order at 3:00 pm

Approve Meeting Notes:

Meeting notes from February 6, 2014 were approved without changes and will be posted on the website.

Future meeting dates:

Brief discussion regarding upcoming meeting dates. The agenda for April 3, 2014 meeting will include a presentation on 'Septic-to-Sewer' as well as a discussion of program funding.

The date for the May meeting has been moved to May 8, 2014. At that time the committee will begin reviewing a draft plan. JR said he will miss the May 8 meeting.

The June meeting will be held on June 12, 2014.

Discussion of Sensitive Area Recommendations.

The objective of this discussion was to identify sensitive areas, rank them in order of priority and to formulate recommendations for the 2014 OSS Management Plan.

The committee has already developed two recommendations for the 2014 plan:

- 1) Designate Summit Lake as a sensitive area because many of the residents use the lake as their drinking water source.
- 2) Form a sensitive areas work group. This was recommended in the 2008 plan, however, the group was not established.

This second recommendation is a top priority for this advisory committee. The members feel strongly that the criteria and decisions for prioritizing sensitive areas is best accomplished by staff and advisory members who have the technical expertise needed to make these determinations.

However, state law does require that ... *The health officer shall develop a written plan that will **provide guidance** to the local health jurisdiction regarding development and management activities for all OSS within the jurisdiction. The plan must specify how the local health jurisdiction will, among other things... **Identify** any areas where OSS could pose an increased public health risk, including ...*

- Shellfish Protection Districts
- Shellfish Growing Areas
- Vulnerable Aquifers
- Sole Source Aquifers
- Area where nitrogen is designated as a contaminant of concern
- Others

Marine areas:

Using the following 'tool', the committee discussed how to rank each of the marine inlets and their watersheds. A 'yes' means a Marine Recovery Area (MRA) could be recommended.

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • Shellfish Growing Areas? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Marine Low Dissolved Oxygen? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Marine Fecal Coliform? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| • Nitrogen Contamination? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

The committee agreed upon the following prioritization for Marine Recovery Areas...

- 1) **Eld Inlet** and watershed – given that the data exists, establish an MRA as soon as possible.
- 2) **Totten Inlet** and watershed – because of the amount of shellfish harvested from this inlet, maintaining the water quality needs to be a priority.
- 3) **Budd Inlet** and watershed – much work is being done via the TMDL process. Need to wait for the outcome of that work before proceeding.
- 4) **Dana Passage** – no data / information has been presented about this area.

Ground water and other sensitive areas:

The next discussion was about Local Management areas and ground water concerns, i.e. *areas posing increased public health risk can be designated when the health officer determines that OSS are a significant factor contributing to concerns associated with ...* The following 'tool' was used to discuss specific areas of the county.

The committee members were hesitant to rank these areas. They believed that more information was needed and should be reviewed and ranked by county staff and technical persons. Their preference was to provide the 'tool' to the recommended Sensitive Areas Work Group. They recognized that a lot of work is under way, such as the Budd/Deschutes TMDL, the Scatter Creek project and the urban septic assessment project that needs to be used by the work group to update the table and prioritize efforts.

	Elevated nitrates in ground water		Surface water used as drinking water		Aquifer sensitive area		Sole source aquifer		Urban density		Limited OSS repair area due to previous repair	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Thurston County							X					
Grand Mound*	X				X							
Rochester	X				X							
Scatter Creek	X				X							
Yelm*					X							
Summit Lake			X									
Lake St Clair			X		X							
Allison Springs												
McAllister Springs					X							
Urban subdivisions									X		X	

- Current development is on sewer.

Thurston County's OSS Education programs:

Linda Hofstad presented details of Thurston County's septic system education program which had been compiled in cooperation with Environmental Health staff. The full report had been printed for the committee members and was available for them at the February meeting. [The full report is posted on the county website.]

Education Goal:

Proper operation and maintenance of OSS in Thurston County in order to protect the public's health as well as ground and surface water resources. Another goal should be to protect the OSS owner's investment. Education/information must reach the user.

Committee objective:

To review Thurston County's current education program and discuss what a comprehensive education program should include ... what to keep, what to add, what to discontinue.

Per state law education includes:

- Informing the OSS owner of their responsibilities
- Information about how to properly operate and maintain an OSS
- Reminding and encouraging OSS owners to do their routine inspections and maintenance
- A funding mechanism that supports the education efforts

Opportunities for education include:

- Permits, i.e. new OSS, repair OSS, time of transfer
- Operational certificates
- Classes
- Website
- Brochures
- Others

Summary of findings:

- Current program report summary
 - Estimated 70,000 OSS in county
 - 13,648 are required to have renewable operational certificates – these OSS owners are being informed of their responsibilities and are receiving information on how to operate and maintain their OSS. In addition, they are receiving reminders of the need to conduct O&M and have a legal requirement to do so.
 - 80% of OSS do not have renewable operational certificates and are not actively monitored by Thurston County – they receive only O&M recommendations when an OSS permit is issued.
 - County must inventory all 70,000 OSS: 31,570 are yet to inventory.
 - Time of transfer program is processing more than 1,000 sales per year. Many of these OSS do not require operational certificates, so this is an opportunity for education to this group of owners.
 - Failures are being found at time of ...
 - Certificate renewal / review of inspection, monitoring and pump reports
 - Property transfer
 - Repair permits for systems and tanks
 - Dye tests in marine recovery areas

- Surveys in response to DoH shellfish certification reports
 - Complaint investigation
- Notable findings from Henderson program that indicate the program is working, i.e. O&M is now occurring routinely which probably hadn't been happening given what the data shows.
 - Initial program cycle had more than 50% of tanks pumped / Second cycle the pump rate dropped in half.
 - Initial cycle had twice as many septic tanks replaced as the second cycle.
 - Twice as many failures were found using dye traces during the first three year cycle of the program as were found during the second cycle.
 - Fewer systems were completely repaired after the second cycle inspection as compared to the first inspection at the onset of the program.
 - The number of minor repairs decreased by half from first to second inspection cycle.
 - Rebates for installing risers decreased by half during the second cycle while small grants for low income owners remained constant. Many OSS owners are installing risers to make the routine inspections easier.
 - 84% of OSS in the Henderson program are current with their system inspections and maintenance. (County program is the same.)
- More than 2,000 OSS owners have attended 2-hour workshops over the last 13 years. These are general information workshops and do not certify the owner to inspect.
- Almost 2,300 OSS owners from the Henderson program have been certified to conduct their own inspections after attending a 5 ½ hour training session. A questionnaire conducted with a sample of certified Henderson homeowners found that the class attendees both learned and retained the information. Over 90% did their own inspection after attending the class and three years later at time of renewal. Two-thirds suggested a refresher would be helpful. All thought the program should be continued. It must be noted that the people responding were unaware of the program cost.
- A limited project was conducted to talk with area pumpers about education efforts. A number of pumpers definitely see providing education to their clients as part of their service.
- **What's being done elsewhere?**
 - All 12 Puget Sound counties have OSS Management Plans. The counties have different approaches. The programs that have the highest rates of compliance are those within a Marine Recovery Area or sensitive area.
 - Operation and management of OSS is not a one-time fix; it is an on-going, forever program.
 - Art will talk about other counties' programs at the April meeting.
- **Issues:**
 - Equity ...not every OSS owner in the county has the same educational opportunities or pays the same rate
 - Incentives ... how to get OSS owners to fulfill responsibility

Efficiency ... how to prioritize efforts
 Funding ... how to fund a program for Thurston County

Discussion:

- Thurston County Program review
 - Strengths
 - Time of transfer program is reaching 'new' owners
 - Able to find failures
 - Requiring OPCs get OSS to routinely do O&M
 - Weaknesses
 - Not all systems have required OPCs
 - Minor repairs don't have to be fixed at time of transfer.
 - Web site needs to be more user friendly
 - Not all septic design information is in OnlineRME
- When does an OSS owner want to learn? ...
 - When is costs
 - If OSS fails
 - Environmental ethic
- To meet the goal, what should an education program include?
 - WOSSA offered to conduct education services
- How can such a program be made 'affordable'? ... to be discussed in April

Introduction to funding needs and options:

Art spoke briefly about the April agenda item of funding. The committee will need to decide what the program should look like; what elements must be included; what elements are optional; what are funding options.

Next Meeting:

April 3rd; 3:00 – 5:00 Conference Rooms 107 A, B and C
 -Agenda will be sent out the week before the meeting

Meeting concluded at 5:02 pm