

**THURSTON COUNTY
STORM AND SURFACE WATER ADVISORY BOARD MEETING**

**July 20th, 2023
Meeting Summary**

Representative	Representing	Present (P) Not Present (NP) Excused (E)
Jake Wager (Chair)	At Large	P
Edward O'Brien	At Large	P
Britt Nederhood	District 3	P
Nancy Winters	At Large	P
David Hartley (Vice Chair)	District 1	P
Zahid Chaudhry	District 3	NP
Phyllis Farrell	District 1	P
Daniel Vlad	District 2	P

Staff:

Larry Schaffner, Nicole Ross, Corey Bennett, Kelsey Crane, Miriam Villacian

Introductions/Process/Correspondence (Jake Wager, Chair)

Introductions made. Kelsey provides background to her role in Community Planning and Economic Development.

Public Comment

No public comment.

Amendments to the Agenda (Jake Wager, Chair)

No amendments to the agenda.

Meeting Summaries (Jake Wager, Chair)

For the May 18th Meeting Summary:

Ed suggested under the Agricultural and Forestry Nonpoint Pollution agenda topic, where it has Nora and Ashley, that the word “respectively” should be added to indicate which subjects they each were addressing. Ed also notes that the word “non-regulated” should be changed to “non-regulatory” in the first and second paragraphs. On the fifth line, change “they” to “Ashley” for clarification.

Nancy noted on the last page on the third from the bottom bullet, typo should be corrected from “SPLAS” to “SPLASH.”

Motion by Jake to adopt the May 18th meeting summary as amended.

Seconded by David.

Motion carried.

For the June 9th Retreat Meeting Summary:

No amendments cited.

Motion by Jake to adopt the June 9th meeting summary as written.

Seconded by David.

Motion carried.

Outreach Program Overview & SSWAB’s Involvement (Miriam Villacian & Kelsey Crane)

Kelsey described the social marketing and began with audience research based on the specifics of that audience. That research reveals information including barriers that could keep audiences from adopting the behavior you’re promoting and motivators that audiences would see as a benefit to them. Then you can test your campaign or your product and tweak it based on your audience’s feedback.

Research shows focusing on one behavior and/or one audience per campaign is more effective. Nudging is a popular behavior change tool. Long-term evaluation from start to finish is important to evaluate a campaign’s success in meeting objectives.

Plain Talk is a statewide mandate that includes simplifying acronyms and other jargon to help make outreach efforts accessible to various communities and demographics.

The outreach toolkit includes newsletters, emails, flyers, websites, and events.

Miriam continued onto an overview of the collaborative partnerships and programs. Efforts include:

- Marine Creature Monday providing a way people can get up and close with sea creatures.
- Stream Bug Monitoring, an indicator of stream health, provides a way for people to learn about their local streams.
- Salmon Stewards, where volunteers at salmon viewing locations, share information about salmon, answer questions, and convey how people can help keep waters clean.
- Lectures and field trips have included activities such as mushroom walks, kayaking, and lectures on climate change.
- *Puget Sound Starts Here* is a regional campaign where jurisdictions collaborate on marketing making ads more affordable and streamlining messaging.

These programs act as a gateway to get people learning and talking about stormwater.

Kelsey discussed the *Go Green Yard Care* program. The County's municipal stormwater permit requires a behavior change program. This program focuses on both lawn and yard care.

Pet Waste program gives out free pet waste stations in an effort to keep pet waste out of stormwater systems.

Developed one-pagers and other forms of marketing associated with the Drainage Manual updates, outreach support for stormwater capital projects, and online training programs.

Events intersecting with stormwater include the Thurston County Fair, McLane Trail Maintenance, Harvest Festival, Healthy Yard Demo Days, and the Nisqually Watershed Festival.

This year, the County Fair will include an interactive pollinator garden that allows visitors to explore native plants and experience an interpretive walkthrough where they can learn about the importance of native plants and trees to stormwater.

Miriam explained how staff can best support SSWAB by providing outreach updates, working with subcommittees, providing an outreach toolkit, marketing, speaking notes, etc. She then invited SSWAB members to discuss and make suggestions.

Jake mentioned SSWAB members going out to engage homeowners' associations (HOAs) and asked about a comprehensive list of HOA's from Miriam.

Nancy mentioned SSWAB meeting with people in the area to help them understand stormwater.

David suggested an information session for stormwater capital improvement projects. One of the reasons David joined SSWAB involved a Boston Harbor project that had terrible outreach. He wonders if it's a staffing but noted that once Miriam became involved with the project things improved. Ed clarified if there is an identified stormwater management problem, community engagement should occur before the solution is decided upon. Miriam noted that it depends on the project location and how many people it affects. Miriam is working with Public Works to streamline the outreach approach.

Ed suggested creating a list of all the educational opportunities to provide to HOAs and compiling a list of HOAs and their locations within the County. He would like to reach out to them to educate, make connections, and get their feedback.

Phyllis shared that the County is looking at tree policies and asks if County staff are involved in that policy making. Dana Bowers is the staff lead and Larry has had conversations with her on this. Phyllis wants Dana to come to address SSWAB on this topic.

Miriam inquired how SSWAB can help staff, including suggestions on areas SSWAB see where the County's efforts can improve.

Nancy asked for an example for where the County targeted an audience and evaluated program effectiveness for the long-term. Kelsey cites the Go Green Lawn Care program. First in 2014, they partnered with Snohomish County to conduct audience research and to hire a contractor that put together a report. Program participant got an application survey about their current lawn care practices. Under the current program, participants must use certain lawn care practices but does not bar people from joining who already have adopted the desired practices. This allows staff to evaluate data on who has already been using the products and who to target for additional information.

Nancy asked what is needed for the County Fair. Kelsey said they don't need much support to conduct outreach in recognition that many people are coming to the fair with education not high on attendee's list. Nevertheless, it's important to have those booths available given the volume of community that attends the fair. This year staff is partnering with several organizations to amplify the message. This includes noxious weeds, free tree program, and the Carbon Sequestration Foundation.

Phyllis asked how they targeted audiences and how much is spent on the pet waste program? Miriam said targeting occurs on a neighborhood scale through surveys and participation also occurs by-word-of-mouth. Participating neighborhoods note a 75% reduction in pet waste. No funding is allocated for resupplying pet waste station bags. Funding goes for supplying the pet waste disposal stations, with individual HOAs expected to cover the cost of resupplying the bags.

Phyllis also asked if there are any potential plans for catastrophic storm events based on the flooding happening in Vermont and Pennsylvania. Jake said, based on his experience there are emergency response plans. Kelsey and Miriam had a meeting with Emergency Management where this came up.

David asked about the organizational structure of storm and surface water program in Thurston County. What is *Stream Team* and the difference between that and the Stormwater program? Miriam explained *Stream Team* is the outward facing brand of the education and outreach program and is interjurisdictional whereas the other stormwater program education and outreach campaigns are Thurston County only. Each jurisdiction has a representative for the *Stream Team* and the outcomes and resources are spread across all jurisdictions. The utility's eight Community Planning staff do water monitoring (i.e., physical), permit and program coordination, and education and outreach. Britt notes that social media is not an easy way to reach out to elderly people. Miriam and Kelsey note that they send out newsletters in print and provide them at public places. Kelsey asked if they have suggestions to further reach out to elderly people.

In response to Ed's inquiry regarding Stormwater Outreach for Regional Municipalities, it is explained that this network consists of education and outreach professionals in the Puget Sound region.

Ed asked about *helping to write the drainage manual*: what is the audience? The outreach focuses on the manual's updates. Miriam translates the manual into plain talk. Miriam works directly with engineers to facilitate that. Kelsey also runs online stormwater training. Ed also asks about training for low impact development. Do programs exist for encouraging existing

homes to implement low impact techniques? Kelsey said it is a big piece of the stormwater course which includes modules that train on the maintenance of those systems.

Daniel asked how to find out about the online stormwater course. Kelsey will send information to Larry to forward to SSWAB members.

SSWAB Retreat Report (*Jake Wager, Chair*)

Jake opened the SSWAB's discussion regarding the draft retreat report.

Phyllis liked having Commissioner Mejia present and thinks it would be helpful to invite other Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) members to the meeting to share and keep stormwater issues in the forefront of the BoCC's mind.

Ed, Britt, Daniel, and Nancy have no comments regarding the retreat report.

David noted some typos and will forward those on to Larry.

Larry had suggestions for SSWAB to consider. At the bottom of page 2, regarding SSWAB turnover, this is a reoccurring theme and ongoing challenge. Jake noted it's a new challenge for this SSWAB. On the top of page 3, the report explains COVID compounded the slowdown in the learning curve for new members. Larry explained there was a slow learning curve pre-pandemic. Jake said not having in-person meetings impacted his ability to be brought up to speed. Larry says it's not uncommon to hear from SSWAB members that it took a full three-year term to be informed and feel effective, while even new members are engaged without the experience.

Larry inquired as to the audience for this report. Jake said it could be anybody. Larry noted when the reports say *Board*, to avoid confusion, specify whether this refers to BoCC or SSWAB.

Phyllis appreciated staff participation and use of maps and wants to note it in the report. Larry explained that he and others worked with GeoData staff to inform the generation of the maps.

Nancy asked about the future structure of SSWAB given the upcoming addition of two new commissioner districts. Larry explained that the Commissioners are discussing this, with the focus currently on the Planning Commission's structure.

Motion by David to accept Larry's edit to acknowledge GeoData staff in the report.

Seconded by Ed.

Motion approved to adopt amended retreat report.

BoCC Briefing Preparation (*Jake Wager*)

Jake and David discussed the draft briefing materials with Larry and asked SSWAB member if they have any suggested changes.

Nancy noted that in the past they've reported on their metrics. It was pointed out that metrics are mentioned in the *year in review* and included as *Attachment C*. Jake said they are targeting fifteen minutes for their discussion and wants to focus on the year in review and the year moving forward. However, he will make a point to highlight the metrics in the presentation.

Ed asked if they would make any qualitative comments on how the metrics work. Jake says he doesn't feel qualified to go into that.

David called to SSWAB's attention that we have no specific new recommendations this year and wants to confirm this reflects the agreement of the SSWAB. Nancy asked about the Thurston County Comprehensive Plan revision coming up. She saw a lot of nebulousness and little focus on how the BoCC needs to look at the issue of utility rates and whether they are on par with other cities and municipalities. Larry noted that will be part of the upcoming Storm and Surface Water Comprehensive Study. David suggested it's too early for SSWAB to go to the BoCC to bring utility rates up with the Commissioners, but it could be helpful to foreshadow SSWAB bringing up future recommendations. Larry suggested that they should note SSWAB's interest in being actively engaged in the Comprehensive Planning process.

David noted we should convey that SSWAB wants involvement in the Storm and Surface Water Comprehensive Study as well as the County's Comprehensive Planning process. David asked if there has been a formal connection between the Storm and Surface Water Comprehensive Study contractor and the County comprehensive planning process. Miriam, who works on outreach for the Comprehensive Plan update, said they are in the very early stages of the process and reaching out to the community for feedback. Next year a grant will be issued to fund contractor assistance for the update. The Thurston County Comprehensive Plan is expected to be finalized in 2025.

The Storm and Surface Water Utility charter was created in 1989, pre-permit, and there has been a discussion of revisiting the existing charter as part of the Storm and Surface Water Comprehensive Study.

Phyllis asked if coordination takes place between jurisdictions and regarding consistency in terms of stormwater practices and goals. For the jurisdiction's Comprehensive Plan, each jurisdiction has to come up with their own Comprehensive Plan and land use requirements. The state decides the content that must be included, so they are consistent in that respect.

Larry suggested SSWAB has an agenda item to invite Maya Teeple to come and describe the County's Comprehensive Planning process and solicit from SSWAB how they would like to be involved in that process.

Jake suggested that this would be helpful to include this item in the November meeting.

Larry asked clarifying questions on sections of the draft briefing. What does *PCIP* mean? No one knows what it means. SSWAB agrees to strike PCIP from the record.

Larry recalled the SSWAB discussion that involve more than just *residences* in collaborations with other interest groups. SSWAB agrees to clarify it and add *industry and businesses*.

Larry also asked if *Attachment D* is necessary regarding retreat outcomes given that they are summarized earlier in the briefing narrative? Jake said it would be helpful to include the key outcomes as an attachment so the BoCC doesn't have to sort through the entire report. Nancy sought clarification on whether Jake was referring to the retreat report or the outcomes. Jake clarified he was just referring to the findings that Ed summarized for SSWAB (i.e., pages 4 & 5 of the retreat report). Other SSWAB members concur.

Motion by Ed to approve these amendments to the briefing materials and presentation.

Seconded by Britt

Approved.

SSWAB General Discussion (SSWAB Members)

David shared that he serves on the Boston Harbor Utility Advisory Committee that meets from 3:30 - 5:00pm on Tuesdays. David asked if holding an earlier SSWAB meeting would be advantageous. Larry suggested considering the schedules of future SSWAB members who may work during the day.

Corey noted another monthly meeting occurs in the same room as SSWAB until 5:30pm. Phyllis said another meeting she participates in ends at 6:00pm. Nancy noted that this may need to be addressed once the new additional commissioners are seated.

Larry said in response to Nancy that the County has reached out to other jurisdictions who recently went through redistricting to gather lessons learned. One of the lessons shared is to have plans in place for the composition of advisory boards and commissions prior the seating of the added commissioners.

Phyllis noted that with redistricting her SSWAB represented district will change and asks how many others will experience this change. Currently SSWAB consists of two members from each commissioner district and three at large positions. Maintaining a two members per district representation with five districts would be challenging. Larry notes BoCC are aware of the challenges in maintaining full SSWAB seats as well as its other advisory bodies.

David noted that if even one person cannot accommodate a meeting time change, he would rather not address or change anything to avoid creating difficulty for other SSWAB members.

Jake suggested suspending this discussion for later when we have more clarity on SSWAB's future composition.

David shared that a project to replace the public boat ramp in Boston Harbor led by the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW). David was upset to learn there is no stormwater treatment retrofit associated with this project. Supposedly DFW didn't follow County's

permitting requirements and did not coordinate with the County. David wants the County to have a policy to look for opportunities to team up with another jurisdiction or entity to find opportunities to improve stormwater and coordination, including in private development.

Miriam noted that in capital projects, Public Works uses a metric relating to coordinating with preexisting projects which factors into a project's priority ranking. David feels DWF probably dropped the ball but it's his understanding that Public Works has had a meeting with DWF regarding this.

Larry mentioned topics for on the calendar for next meeting including the outcome of the BoCC Briefing, the Utility Fiscal Report, and SSWAB chair elections.

Jake noted, while it isn't an agenda item, a watershed management agreement between Tumwater, Lacey, Yelm and a sovereign nation occurred. Is there a city staff synopsis? Can it be circulated? Larry will research.

Larry shared that the Department of Ecology expects to release the municipal stormwater permit public review draft for the 2024 reissuance in August. Ed suggested having a discussion of the draft permit during the September meeting. Jake said to pencil that in for that meeting.

Jake inquired whether SSWAB would be open to holding an additional SSWAB meeting in October given the number of key areas identified during the retreat.

Nancy suggested Ed serve in her place on the agenda subcommittee in her absence. Jake said they would invite a third member for the agenda subcommittee to serve in her absence.

Adjourn

Move by Britt to adjourn.

Seconded by Jake.

Motion pass.