

Scatter Creek Aquifer – Septic System Management Project

Purpose: To make sure water in the Scatter Creek Aquifer is safe to drink now and in the future.

Citizen's Committee Notes: November 7, 2012, 7:00-9:00 pm. *Approved 12/5/12.*
Rochester School District Board Room; 10140 Highway 12 SW, Rochester, WA 98579

Attending: Chanele Shaw, Tom Budsberg, Bruce Morgan, Marlene Hampton, Karen Deal, Lowell Deguise, Sandra Adix, Gene Weaver, Roger Max, Maureen Pretell, Art Starry (staff).
Note taker: Steve Petersen (staff). **Facilitator:** Jane Mountjoy-Venning (staff). **Excused:** Darin Holt.

Introductions

Agenda review and approval

Brief overview of project and committee role:

- Geologically Scatter Creek Aquifer is vulnerable because it is shallow, in sandy/rocky soil, and there is no deeper aquifer underneath. Water moves rapidly through the aquifer.
- We do not know if we have a problem, but we suspect we might because:
 - There have been some cases of wells with high nitrates,
 - There have been some cases of wells with bacterial contamination
 - There is a higher than usual number of water systems requiring disinfection
 - Initial modeling shows concern about aquifer contamination given build-out with current standards.
- The project will look closer at the aquifer and septic systems to address these concerns, especially about the long-term safety of drinking water from the aquifer.
- There are 4 major components to the project
 1. Groundwater monitoring for water level, nitrates, and bacteria twice a year.
 2. Groundwater modeling. The county hydrogeologist will do this with input from the committee. Details will be left for the hydrogeologist to explain.
 3. Public outreach and education: The committee will act as liaisons between the health department and the community and help strategize effective ways of gathering input to the project.
 4. Policy development and implementation: The committee will draft recommendations for the Board of Health to consider.

Committee ground rules:

- Meeting time: 1st Wednesday of the month from 6:15 to 8:15 pm. (Due to holiday, the January meeting may be moved to Jan. 9.)
- Meeting location: Rochester School District board room
- Conduct agreements:
 - Meetings will begin and end promptly. If a member is tardy, the meeting will keep going. The expectation is that the latecomer will read notes and catch up on any missed items or questions later with the facilitator.
 - If a member must miss a meeting, please contact the facilitator ahead of time, and

catch up on decisions by reading the notes and asking questions of facilitator or other members.

- Phones should be set to vibrate or turned off, and not be used during the meeting except for emergencies.
- Breaks will be informal – take one if needed.
- A note taker will take notes in view of the committee, to help assure accuracy. The committee will do a quick review of notes at the end of the meeting to be sure key points were captured.

- Visitor Input:

- Public is welcome to attend citizen committee meetings as visitors.
- Visitors will introduce themselves at the beginning of the meeting, and will sit in the visitor seating area.
- There will be a brief public comment period at the end of each meeting.

- Decision Making Process:

- Upcoming decisions will be included in the meeting agenda.
- Strive for substantial consensus.
- Both majority and minority opinions, viewpoints, concerns will be noted.
- To be clear, at times the facilitator will ask for a thumbs-up, thumbs-down indication from committee members.
- To reconsider a decision, we will follow a 2-stage process. Generally, this will be done only if something substantial has changed since the decision was made.
 1. The committee discusses and decides whether to reconsider the decision.
 2. If yes, the issue will be placed on a future agenda for discussion and decision.

- Sharing Information:

- An important role of committee members is to share information with the community and share community input with the committee. Committee members were concerned about giving accurate information due to the technical information and potential high level of concern community members may have about drinking water.
- Committee decided that the best way to give accurate information is to direct people to the project website: www.co.thurston.wa.us/health/ehsc. The health department will make up business cards with the website for committee members to hand out.
- Committee members should collect questions and comments to share with the committee and staff. Questions can be sent through the website as well. Answers will be posted on the website. A brief time at the beginning of each meeting will be devoted to this sharing.
- There will be 3 community workshops to more formally share information about the project and receive input.
- Draft notes from each meeting will be posted on the website one week following the meeting. Final notes will be posted after they are approved at the following meeting.
- Any video or other recording of the meetings or presentations will be done at the request of and on behalf of the committee for public outreach. No outside video or other recording is allowed. Speakers must give their permission to be recorded.
- If speaking to a community group on behalf of the committee, notify the committee first.

Additional perspectives/people that should be involved in the process: Chehalis tribe, City of Tenino, Grand Mound Utility

Topic outline for future meetings: Committee selected several topics for the December meeting (in bold), but did not assign all the topics to months yet. They noted that even those selected for December may take 2 meetings, and that there was a lot to cover in a year. For now, we will stick with a monthly meeting, but in the future may look at other options.

- **Groundwater basics**
- **Scatter Creek Aquifer: physical geology**
- **How and why the study area boundary was determined and is it fixed?**
- **Historical information about Scatter Creek Aquifer**
- **Health effects of contaminants of concern: nitrates, viruses, and bacteria**
- **How clean is clean?**
- Contaminant hydrogeology
- Septic system inventory
- Septic system types, i.e. nitrogen –reducing technology
- Land use: existing, permitted
- Existing regulations
- Computer modeling, aka Numerical modeling
- Modeling scenarios
- Modeling results
- Community outreach strategies
- Develop options: pros and cons
- Refine options
- Possible field trip

Wrap up

- Review any tasks/commitments & timeframe
- Review notes, capture any missing points