

**OSS Management Plan  
Meeting Notes  
December 5, 2013**

**Attendance:**

<b>Committee Members</b>			
Name and Affiliation	Present?	Name and Affiliation	Present?
Max Buldis – Shellfish Grower	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Roger Max – Scatter Creek area resident	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Tris Carlson – Chair of Henderson-Nisqually Shellfish Committee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Dennis McVey – City of Rainier Council Member	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Evan Cusack – Designer, Installer and Maintenance Specialist	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Greg Moe – Realtor	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Joshua Daily – Citizen Representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Paul Morneau – Sewage System Designer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Sue Davis – Environmental Health	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Steve Petersen – Environmental 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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Facilitator: Linda Hofstad

Note Taker: Cissy Fontenot

Linda Hofstad called the meeting to order at 4pm

**Introductions:**

Members introduced themselves and who they represent

**Approve Meeting Notes:**

Meeting notes from November 7, 2013 were approved

- Art noted that notes are not verbatim, but general content of what was covered and the key decisions that were made
- Members were asked to take these notes back to the people they represent and to share and discuss it with them
- Notes will be posted on the website

- The ground rules are posted to remind us what the rules are for general discussion at our meetings
- Members agreed the level of detail in the notes was adequate
- Some members suggested that the notes indicate who members represent or are affiliated with. No one objected to this suggestion.
- Tris noted identified one correction
- The notes were approved as amended

### **Committee Mission and Direction from the Board of Health:**

Art reviewed the direction he received from the Thurston County Board of Health on the mission and role of the committee:

- We are an advisory committee to the Board of Health
- We are developing/updating the 2008 OSS management plan. We will make recommendations, and the Board will decide whether to accept them
- When we developed the 2008 plan and The Board of Health adopted it with very few changes – we hope this process will be similar.
- This plan should provide guidance and direction to the department – it is not meant to be a detailed code review and revision exercise.
- Once our job is done and when the board approves it, Art's job is to work with staff to write/revise the rules to implement the plan.

### **Vision statement:**

The committee reviewed the vision statement from the 2008 plan and revisions offered by Art and Linda. Committee members asked that we replace “work” with “strive” in the second sentence and add language that says we will evaluate the effectiveness of programs as part of our review, that systems should be properly designed, permitted, installed and abandoned. Art will update the statement to address the suggestions and will send it to the committee with the agenda for the January 9<sup>th</sup> meeting.

### **Permit and Review of On-Site Sewage Systems:**

The focus of this meeting is to give the committee a better understanding of how a property owner gets a septic system, starting with the permit and installation process, and continuing through the monitoring and maintenance process.

Linda provided a form to write notes on to help process the topics that we review each month, and how to use it to help us make recommendations.

If these forms work well for this process we will provide them for each individual presentation.

Topics will be:

- Sensitive areas for surface water
- Sensitive ground water and nutrient
- Education and funding

**Steve Petersen gave a presentation on septic system basics called [Septic System 101](#).**

#### **Questions and Discussion Following Steve's Presentation:**

Q: Does state law require us to follow the O&M recommendations in *Recommended Standards and Guidance* (RS&G's) published by the Washington State Department of Health, or are they considered advice/recommendations?

A: Thurston County adopted them by reference in Article IV, however that was a local decision. Counties have discretion whether they make the make the RS&G's a regulatory requirement or use them as guidance.

Q: Who determines the standards for OSS wiring and assures that the wiring is done properly? Can the county require wiring standards that are appropriate for OSS? A committee member said that he routinely has to fix his system because the wiring junction for his pump system is subject to moisture and corrosion because it's located in his pump chamber and is not properly sealed.

A: State Department of Labor and Industries inspects the wiring. Quite often a licensed electrician will do the wiring, but he/she just has knowledge of wiring – not septic systems and how they can be wired to avoid problems. This is something we could review to decide if design standards should change to result in a better installation.

Q: How do gravity systems work? Someone made a comment that they only use a small portion of the drain field.

A: With a gravity system the effluent flows from the septic tank to the drain field via gravity. The pipe in the drain field is 4 inches in diameter and has ½" drain holes at the 5 and 7 o'clock positions. Sewage flows down the pipe and exits the first clear drain holes – typically using just a few feet of the drain field at a time. Pressure distribution systems use pumps to distribute the effluent throughout the entire drain field.

Q: How is the type of system chosen? What is treatment standard "N"?

A: Systems are selected to provide a known level of treatment. The level of treatment is determined by the site, soil depth and quality, vulnerability of the aquifer, etc. This is a state law. Sensitive sites require treatment levels that are higher. Treatment level N, is for nitrate. It can be the sole criteria used to select a system, or it can be added to another treatment level such as fecal coliform reduction.

Q: Who inspects OSS?

A: The designer is required to certify installation and turn in record drawing

- Article IV requires the county to do the inspection when it is in a marine recovery area or the designer and the installer are the same company. The rest we try to inspect at least 10% of the systems for quality assurance.

**Sue Davis gave a presentation called [Onsite Sewage System Operation & Maintenance in Thurston County](#). Findings and recommendations from the presentation are:**

**Lessons Learned:**

- First cycle is labor intensive
- More than 1 OSS per parcel
- Septic and sewer records lacking
- Under-estimated costs
- Incentives work
- Community and mobile home park OSS mgnt is time-intensive
- Pumpers adapted business practices

- Permit tracking system works, but not ideal for on-going OSS mgnt
- Tax Parcel #s change
- Dye test not needed for most streamside properties
- Need flexibility for legitimate owner life issues

What worked well:

- Billing with Property tax
- Online Reporting
- Owner/Inspector Training Improved Credibility
- Stronger Relationship with OSS Professionals
- Increased Automation
- Incentives and Financial assistance
- Dedicated Compliance Staff

What is Needed:

- Expand Use of Online Services
- Continuing Education for OSS professionals & Certified Owners
- Increase QA/QC inspections
- OSS permitting system that is independent of tax parcel numbers
- Program charge adjustment to cover expenses

**Questions and Discussion Following Sue's Presentation:**

Q: Why did the county stop sending O&M reminders to most OSS owners several years ago? That was a good program and should be resumed.

A: That program stopped in 1999 when Article IV was revised to require renewable operational certificates (permits) only for large OSS (flows greater than 3,500 gpd) and OSS that are complex (mounds, sand filters, ATU's, etc.) and OSS that serve food service establishments. From 1990 to 1999 any OSS that was installed, repaired or was sold or transferred was enrolled in the program. As part of that program they received notices and operation and maintenance reminders.

**OTHER Questions:**

Q: The *Sustainable Thurston* plan recommends “Where sewers are available, require new developments and infill lots within 300 feet of existing sewer infrastructure to be connected to them.” Is this in conflict with the county septic system regulations?

A: State law and Article IV have a standard that requires properties served by failing septic systems to connect to sewer if they are within 200 feet of sewer - subject to certain conditions. For new development we defer to the standards in the county sewerage general plan and city sewerage plans. The City of Olympia requires properties with failing septic systems to connect to sewer if they are within 300 feet of sewer. The *Sustainable Thurston* recommendation applies to new development and infill lots. While it seems quite stringent, the authors have that prerogative. Details like financing etc., need to be addressed if/when the recommendation moves forward and is considered for incorporation into our local codes.

**Meeting Wrap Up:**

Take the sheet provided by Linda and work with it reviewing the power point.

The Power Points can be viewed on the website

Next meeting we will talk about recommendations that we were unable to review at this meeting.

**Review Assignments/Next Meeting Items:**

Topic will be sensitive areas/surface water

Adopt a vision statement

**Important Notes:**

Email Art with recommendations

Next Meeting: January 9, 2014, 3-5 pm in Room 107

**Meeting concluded at 6pm**

