

**OSS Management Plan  
Meeting Notes  
January 9, 2014**

**Attendance:**

| <b>Committee Members</b>  |                                     |   |                                     |
|---|-------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| Name and Affiliation  | Present?                            | Name and Affiliation                          | Present?                            |
| Max Buldis – Shellfish Grower                                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Dennis McVey – City of Rainier Council Member | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 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                                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Lynn Schneider - DOH                          | <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"/> |
| Roger Max – Scatter Creek area resident                         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |   |                                     |

Facilitator: Linda Hofstad  
Note Taker: Cissy Fontenot

Linda Hofstad called the meeting to order at 3 pm

**Approve Meeting Notes:**

- Meeting notes from December 5, 2013 were approved
- Lynn Schneider pointed out that she was left off of the committee members attending.

**Finalizing Vision Statement:**

The Final Version of the Vision Statement was discussed

- It was suggested that we change the sequence of the wording in the section “Draft for 1-8-14 meeting” to read in proper sequence; design, permitted, built, operated, maintained or abandoned.
- *Art will make these changes. The Vision Statement is final.*

**Draft recommendations from December 5<sup>th</sup> meeting**

Linda reminded members that these worksheets are to be used for designing the recommendations to be taken to the BOH.

The worksheet for “Operations and Maintenance Program” was discussed:

- Preliminary recommendations were taken from last month’s presentation and committee member comments.
- These recommendations and others are preliminary and will be reviewed before going into a draft Plan.
- Final recommendations will be in the draft Plan that goes to BOH?
- It was proposed that the most qualified committee person for each particular subject draft the recommendation.

**Preliminary recommendations:** What is the committee’s intent and why?

**1) Reconsider sending out reminder notices to all OSS owners in county:**

- Why: To remind homeowners to care for their OSS
- Dennis suggested mailings to all county OSS owners

**2) Align program fees between HWP and NRWPA to cover expenses:**

- Why: Intent is to make sure program fees cover costs, and consistent between programs.
- Currently grants and other funds supplement Henderson.

**3) Expand use of on-line services:**

- Why: Increase efficiencies. And make information more accessible to the public

**4) Continuing education for OSS professionals & certified owners:**

- This subject will be discussed at a future meeting.

**5) Increase QA/QC inspections:**

- Why: To achieve the 10% inspection target to verify accuracy and completeness in reporting .

**6) OSS permitting system that is independent of tax parcel numbers:**

- Why: Tax Parcel numbers change and sometimes more than one legal lot is linked to an existing tax parcel number. Relying solely on tax parcel numbers can result in errors. The current system requires additional time and effort. It would be more efficient if we had a more accurate and reliable system to track septic systems and legal lots.

**7) Wiring standards for pump chambers need to be changed:**

- Why: To remove wires from the corrosive environment and to improve system reliability and operation
- Wiring in pump chambers and the problems that come about when electrical junctions are in the pump chamber

*Additional suggestions or recommendations to be sent to Linda, Art or Sue*

**Lawrence Sullivan, Environmental Health Specialist II**, made a presentation entitled “Thurston County Surface Water Quality & Sensitive Areas” which provides an overview of the County’s surface water quality conditions as it relates to septic systems.

Following are highlights from the presentation:

**Shellfish growing areas** are monitored by Washington State Department of Health (DoH). In 2013 the DoH 2013 Early Warning System found:

**Eld Inlet Growing Area**

- 3 Stations CONCERNED due to water quality

**Henderson Inlet Growing Area**

- 4 Stations THREATENED due to water quality
- 4 Stations CONCERNED due to water quality

**Nisqually Reach Growing Area**

- 4 Stations THREATENED due to water quality
- 4 Stations CONCERNED due to water quality

**Nisqually Shoreline Sanitary Survey Results:**

- Over 20% of the on-site sewage systems along the shoreline were defined as potential sources of pollution. High bacteria levels in a stream draining to the shoreline.
- High bacteria levels in 23 shoreline discharges.
- High bacteria levels near mouth of McAllister Creek.

RCW 90.72.045 requires County to respond to shellfish downgrades:

- Create “Shellfish Protection District”
- Establish a program to improve water quality
- Led to creation of Henderson and Nisqually shellfish districts

Water quality in Henderson improved from 2005 – 2012 increasing sized of approved harvesting area.

**The following areas were listed in 2008 plan as potential sensitive areas:**

**Eld**

- 9 out of 25 marine sampling sites have a worsening trend in fecal coliform levels
- Downgraded in the 1980’s
- Intensive grant funded effort in 1980’s-90’s – 16% failure rate
- Upgraded in 1998 (450 acres)
- Currently conducting another intensive grant funded investigation
- Comprehensive shoreline dye testing was done 17 years ago. Recent voluntary effort – 38% participation). Results still show OSS problems. Out of 15 dye tested along this shoreline 1 out of 4 failing.

**Totten**

- All stations currently meeting shellfish water quality standards
- Burns & Pierre Creeks have improved
- Grant funded investigations in the 90's
- Previous dye studies found a 14% failure rate. Significant shellfish harvesting area – a big problem if water quality declines

**Budd**

- 24 dwellings/shoreline mile
- No shellfish growing area
- Important recreational area
- Water Clean Up Plan under development

**Lakes**

- 10 Lakes sampled in 2013
- Sampled because they have public access, high recreational use and/or are drinking water supply lakes
- 8 out of 10 Lakes eutrophic for Chlorophyll

**Summit Lake**

- Drinking water source
- 1992-1997 Sanitary Survey
  - 17% Failures (57 failing / 330 tested)
  - 11% Suspect (36 dye present but no high enough bacteria count / 330 tested)
- 2014 Conditions???
  - a systematic evaluation of the septic systems surrounding the lake has not been done in over fifteen years

**2013 Blue Green Algae Toxin Advisories**

- Long Lake
- Lawrence Lake
- Pattison Lake
- Lake St Clair

**Ward Lake 2012 Lake Closure**

- High fecal coliform levels
- County beach closure
- Health Officer closed lake - 8/31 to 9/18
- Cause undetermined

**Rivers**

Fecal Coliform & nutrient related listings:

- 90 countywide
- 49 in UGA

TMDLs for Henderson and Deschutes identify septic system pollution sources

**Woodland** (largest creek in Henderson)

- On-site sewage systems in the Woodland Creek basin have mandatory septic system operation and maintenance inspections on a regular basis
- The Woodland Creek Estates neighborhood has been sewered
- Multiple studies note fecal coliform & nitrate problems
- TMDL called for 93% reduction fecal coliform loading

**Deschutes**

- Deschutes TMDL found high surface nutrient concentrations associated with onsite systems

**South Sound Dissolved Oxygen Study**

- Thurston County watersheds add nitrogen to South Puget Sound
- Study summarizes stream health
- Translates complicated water quality data into a 0 to 100 score
- Thurston County streams averaged 73 in 2012- Fair

**Ambient Streams**

- 39 streams and rivers monitored in 2013
  - Collect baseline data
  - Identify problems
  - Track trends over time
- Water Quality Index Developed by Dept. of Ecology
  - Summarizes stream health
  - Translates complicated WQ data into a 0 to 100 score
  - Thurston County streams averaged 73 in 2012- Fair

The Power Point is available on our website at:

<http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/health/ehomp/docs/WaterQualityPresentation010914.pdf>

**Discussion:****Sensitive Areas – Surface Water**

The 2008 plan recommended that Henderson and Nisqually be designated as Marine Recovery Areas (MRA) and that Eld inlet be evaluated further for consideration as an MRA.

The plan identified Summit Lake as another area that should be evaluated as a possible sensitive area where special septic system standards would apply. The plan recommended the creation of a Sensitive Area Workgroup that would evaluate other potential sensitive areas.

**Why was Eld listed as a possible area?**

Extensive work was done in Eld in response to shellfish harvesting downgrades in the 1980's. Dozens of failing septic systems were found and corrected; improvements were made to animal keeping practices on some

farms; and additional actions took place. County efforts in Eld have been minimal since then due to a lack of resources. Water quality has started to decline and some shellfish harvesting areas are threatened. Environmental Health recently got a grant to inventory septic systems and respond to water quality problems.

- The question was asked why was the Sensitive Area Workgroup not formed?

Staff response: The inability to complete this project was due to the lack of financial resources. The goal was to identify other areas where septic systems are contributing factors and focus on those issues.

- What happens at the Time of Transfer?

Staff response: The OSS is evaluated and the purchaser is made aware of any problems.

By doing this problems get fixed, but repair of problem is not a requirement. If the system is reported as failing, the failure is reported and a dedicated compliance officer will respond.

### **Committee Member Comments Regarding Sensitive Areas**

- ❖ Summit Lake stands out as an area where septic systems could pose a large public health risk.
- ❖ There were comments about how OSS owners should pay for O&M related services and activities. One committee member said that a “single payer” system where every OSS owner is charged would be best. Another committee member disagreed with that approach. It was acknowledged that financing will be a separate topic for another meeting.
- ❖ Recommended convening a Sensitive Areas Work Group
- ❖ A reminder to identify areas where septic systems are THE water quality problem vs. other sources. The updated Plan is about septic system management.

### **Review Assignments/Next Meeting Items:**

Topic will be sensitive Areas and Ground Water Issues  
Suggested Reading Section 22

### **Important Notes:**

Email Art with recommendations

Next Meeting: February 6, 2014, 3-5 pm in Room 107

**Meeting concluded at 5:05 pm**