**Nisqually Reach and Henderson Inlet Shellfish Protection Districts**

**Combined Stakeholder Advisory Committee**

**DRAFT Meeting Notes March 21, 2023**

Members: Linsey Fields (City of Lacey), Mary Catherine McAleer

Guests: Marguerite Abplanalp (Thurston CD), Scott Chernoff (WDOH), Barbara Ann Smolko (Pierce County)

Staff: Art Starry (TCEH), Jane Mountjoy-Venning (TCEH), Tracy Hall (TCEH), Andrew Deffobis (CPED)

1. **Administrative**

* Introductions were made.
* The committee approved the agenda.
* Minutes from the January 2023 Shellfish Protection District Advisory Committee meeting were approved.

1. **Update: Nisqually Reach Shellfish Protection District Re-enactment**

* The Nisqually Shellfish Protection District expires at the end of 2023, unless the Board of County Commissioners and County Board of Health (BOH) both take action.
* TCEH staff will be briefing the BOH on April 11 at 4 PM. Staff will recommend that the program be continued, and will present options to the BOH. Options include sunsetting the program, continuing with the status quo (plus a few tweaks), or making bigger changes regarding how and when properties are visited and tested.
* Staff will also decide whether to recommend changes to the Henderson Inlet SPD at the same time.
* Discussion ensued on the details of the various options, and on rates and charges applied through the septic operations and maintenance program.
* Committee members and other participants expressed interest in attending BOH meeting in support of the District. Discussion ensued.

1. **Potential Topics for March 2023 Meeting**

* Members are encouraged to send Andrew Deffobis any potential meeting topics ahead of the May 2023 meeting. He will also send a call for agenda items ahead of the meeting.
* Linsey Fields expressed interest in a discussion of the background and status of the committee.

1. **Updates (as time allows)**

* **WA Dept. of Health** – Annual shellfish growing area reports are completed and DOH has put together the threatened areas list. There are no downgrades in Thurston County. Henderson Inlet is typically on the threatened areas list, but not this year. The only station countywide that is on the list is Station 849 in Eld Inlet. It had a 90th percentile concentration of 37.6 at the time of the annual report. Scott reviewed specific data and factors affecting this station, such as rainfall. There appears to be a correlation between rainfall and high FC levels.
* Nisqually Reach: No stations are failing, even in the prohibited areas. Comparing data to last year, there have been 3 stations with significant decreases.
* Henderson Inlet: Station 190 has previously been an areas of concern—it holds the sanitary line at the northern end of the conditionally approved area. FC levels have dropped from 30 to 21 after some high data came off the data set. Otherwise, no levels over 30 in any of the approved stations. Staff have seen decreases in the area over the last year. Comparing data to last year, there have been many changes—both increases and decreases. The prohibited areas are still failing, though the data looks better when correcting for rainfall conditions.
* DOH is working on an early warning system and state of classification reports, trying to get them out in late spring/early summer.
* **City of Lacey** – No updates.
* **Department of Ecology** – Ecology is working to fill the position vacated by Alena Reynolds. In the meantime, Hannah Coe is the contact: [hcoe461@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:hcoe461@ecy.wa.gov)
* **Thurston Conservation District** – No updates.

**Nisqually Indian Tribe** – No updates.

* **Thurston County Environmental Health** – PIC program has been started, and will have ongoing funding. Staff have been performing sanitary surveys in Totten and Eld Inlets, and following up with landowners.
* TCEH continues to work with the Pleasant Forest Camping Club. There has been a lot of turnover on the Board and their staff, but they have hired a new septic designer. Staff are anticipating a septic system design may be submitted for permit review this spring. The club is also implementing regular inspections, reporting to TCEH monthly.
* Staff are in the middle of dye test season (post rainy season). Have found at least one failing system, on Woodard Creek, and others that may be failing. Staff will follow up with landowners.
* **Pierce County** – Alliance for Healthy South Sound is hosting the Puget Sound Partnership leadership in June. Barbara Ann has been asked to prepare information on the status and trends of shellfish growing areas in the South Sound, and will work with Scott for that information.
* Pierce County received approximately $1.185 million in annual EPA funding for South Sound activities. Approximately $191,000 is set aside for Thurston Conservation District for workshops and events, BMP installation, and technical assistance/site visits.
* There are also two mini plans coming out of the funding; a communications plan and an emergency response plan to come up with a cohesive approach to managing extreme events such as heat domes and algae blooms.
* Pierce County has begun a mobile pump-out project, and has contracted with an operator for the pump-out boat. The boat offers free pump outs at busy locations in spring and summer. The program will continue in the coming years. The County is working on how to make it more regional.

1. **Adjourn**

**Next Meeting Date: May 16, 2023**