

## Meeting Summary

**Subject:** Deschutes Watershed Stakeholder Workgroup Meeting #4

**Date/Time:** June 2, 2016, 11-1PM

**Location:** Thurston Regional Planning Council office  
2424 Heritage Court SW, Suite A  
Olympia, Wash. 98502

**Attending:** Michael Burnham, Michael Ambroggi, Veena Tabbutt — Thurston Regional Planning Council; Charissa Waters, Pat Allen, Allison Osterberg — Thurston County; Amy Hatch-Winecka; Katrina Van Every; Adrienne Blackburn; Greg Schundler; Lisa Dennis-Perez; Martin McCallum; Jon Pettit; Gretta “Lou” Guethlein; Caitlin Guthrie; Darric Lowery; Adam Stillman; Lydia Wagner; Theresa Nation; Scott Steltzner; Julie Keough.

Osterberg kicked off the meeting with an overview of the agenda and summary the project’s progress to date. She noted that the workgroup is slated to meet a final time, in July (date TBD).

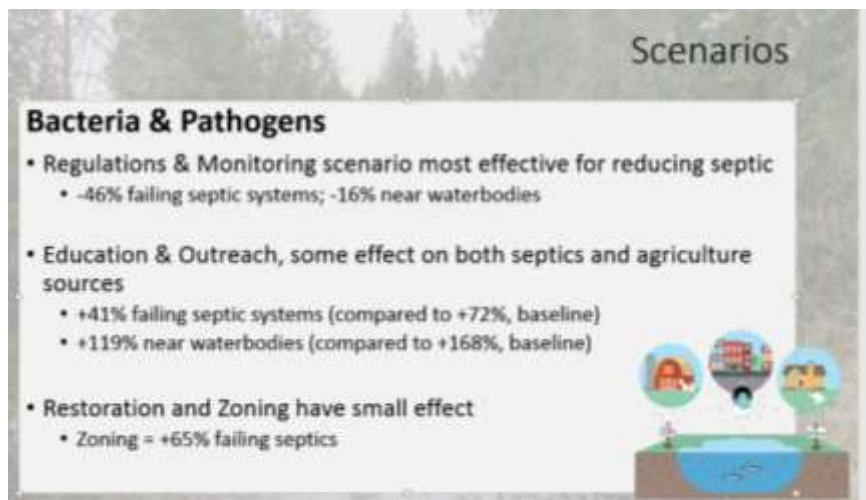
In the meantime, the project team will host a community workshop – June 30, 6-8PM, at Thurston County’s Tilley Road complex – for the general public to learn about and comment on the project and the scenarios considered by the workgroup.

Osterberg then began a presentation that described the Scenario Development Report, as well as project team’s methodology for developing draft scenarios and incorporating the workgroup’s input (*See SharePoint for presentation and scenario report*).

As Osterberg discussed the scenarios, workgroup members made comments and raised questions:

Pettit questioned the 2015 septic failure rate – 14 percent – on page 25 of the Scenario Development report. Osterberg said the figure was the failure rate amid the Henderson Inlet area prior to a mandatory septic-management program. The figure was 23 percent amid the Nisqually area. The estimates in the scenario, she explained, also factor in tests of septic failure amid other areas where Thurston County has performed tests.

Stillman suggested creating a countywide rain barrel program -- similar to one in Pierce County – to help capture stormwater runoff.



Guthrie asked whether there is the intent to increase Conservation Futures funding or reallocate existing Transfer of Development Rights funds. ... Osterberg said both; the County needs to prioritize.

Stelzner asked whether the project team considered retiring water rights. Osterberg said this could be included in the scenarios (*see table below*).

Pettit said constraining growth via zoning would raise land and housing costs in rural areas, thus reducing housing affordability.

Pettit also said he does not support a mandatory septic inspection program because he contended that Environmental Health data he's seen do not indicate a significant level of septic system failure.

Van Every asked whether the septic scenario included Rainier. Tabbutt said it does.

Wagner said a mandatory regulatory mechanism – such as a septic inspection program – may ultimately be needed to reduce septic pollution.

Schundler said that if a mandatory program were created, Thurston County should model it after “best practices” used by other jurisdictions. Osterberg replied that such a program would likely include rebates for low-income residents.



Stillman asked whether gravel is considered an impervious surface. Osterberg replied that it is, per Thurston County's stormwater drainage manual and the Ecology Department's definitions.

Following Osterberg's presentation, Waters recapped feedback the workgroup provided at its previous meetings about the various scenarios (*See Deschutes Workgroup Scenario Feedback summary document on SharePoint*).

Tausch asked what constitutes a failing septic system. Wagner cited a system with a broken pump as an example. Osterberg said other examples include leaking storage tanks and back-ups.

Following Waters' presentation, Tabbutt focused the workgroup's attention on a poster printed with each scenario and associated action. She asked the workgroup to indicate its degree of support for each action. For each action, Tabbutt indicated support as either "All," "Split," or "None" (*See table below*).

| Scenario                   | Category              | Action  | Support |       |      | Workgroup Comments  |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|---|---------|-------|------|---|
|                            |                       |   | All     | Split | None |   |
| Education & Outreach       | Watershed Stewardship | <b>Action 1:</b> Increase investment in time and funding for education and outreach on watershed issues         | X       |       |      | Create community reporting hotline to report issues. ... Thurston County should utilize the state Department of Ecology's ERTS for reporting watershed issues.  |
|                            | Farm Plans            | <b>Action 2:</b> Work with the Conservation District to increase number of farm plans                           | X       |       |      | Farm plans are voluntary ... This would require an increase of funding for the Conservation District. ... Use online tools -- rather than print -- to reduce costs.   |
|                            | Septic Inspections    | <b>Action 3:</b> Expand septic system operation and maintenance education and outreach program                  | X       |       |      | Providing per capital water use data to ratepayers would be useful ... Need better water use coordination and information-sharing between jurisdictions   |
|                            | Water Conservation    | <b>Action 4:</b> Increase water conservation outreach and education, as well as incentives during drought years | X       |       |      | Education and outreach activities should be spread amongst all scenarios. ... Not everyone has a computer, so online outreach should supplement print and in-person outreach tools. ... Use the appropriate tools for the appropriate audience.     |
| Restoration & Conservation | Restoration           | <b>Action 5:</b> Increase funding and incentives for habitat and riparian restoration                           | X       |       |      | Educating landowners is an essential part of restoration, but professionals should be doing the actual restoration activities to ensure they are done correctly. ... Funding should be made available in RCO style --- tap into existing resources. |
|                            |                       | <b>Action 6:</b> Assess opportunities for and implement   | X       |       |      | No comments   |

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|                    |                                       | stormwater retrofit projects  |   |   |  |  |
|                    | Conservation                          | <b>Action 7:</b> Include more lands in the Purchase of Development Rights and Transfer of Development Rights programs and more funding for acquisition of lands through county programs                           | X |   |  | Make sure Thurston County is following appropriate RCWs ... There is limited conservation futures funding, so there is concern over how it will be allocated. ... Changes are necessary to increase demand and make the program more functional.   |
|                    |                                       | <b>Action 8:</b> Identify and fund wildlife corridors linking existing conservation areas   | X |   |  | Some workgroup members questioned whether this ties directly to improving water quality. ... Perhaps look for contiguous areas where there is maximum benefit. ... Perhaps replace the word "fund" with "link" and add the word "recreation" alongside "conservation."   |
| Zoning Regulations | Bacteria & Pathogens in Surface Water | <b>Action 9:</b> Rezone parcels currently zoned Rural Residential/ Resource (RRR) one dwelling unit per five acres (1/5) to Rural (R) one unit per 20 acres (1/20) in areas with nonporous soils near waterbodies |   | X |  | One workgroup contended that the data presented make a weak case that this will improve water quality; the workgroup member also feared zoning changes would increase rural housing and land costs. Some workgroup members disagreed with these arguments. ... It was suggested that the County could rezone land to make it more desirable for TDR. |
|                    | Sediment & Erosion                    | <b>Action 10:</b> Rezone parcels currently zoned RRR 1/5 to R 1/20 in areas   |   | X |  | Workgroup members echoed the arguments for Action 9. ... One workgroup member posited that the CAO already adequately limits development amid steep slopes.  |

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|                         |                           | with steep slopes near waterbodies  |   |   |  |   |
|                         | Nutrients & Algae Blooms  | <b>Action 11:</b> Rezone parcels currently zoned RRR 1/5 to R 1/20 in Lake Lawrence, McIntosh and Offut Lake basins   |   | X |  | There was debate whether the County should rezone amid both basins on just one. |
| Development Regulations | Impervious Surface Limits | <b>Action 12:</b> Action 12 Reduce limits for parcels in Lake Lawrence, McIntosh Lake and Offut Lake basins currently zoned RRR 1/5, reduce impervious surface limits to: • 5% for lots larger than 5 acres; • 60% or 10,000 square feet (whichever is less) for parcels smaller than 5 acres | X |   |  | No comments; all support  |
|                         |                           | <b>Action 13:</b> For remaining parcels, reduce limits to that typical of new developments (10% for lots 2.5+ acres and 60% for lots less than 2.5 acres  | X |   |  | No comments; all support  |
|                         | Septic Inspection         | <b>Action 14:</b> County implements a mandatory septic system operation   |   | X |  | There should be a guarantee to offset program costs for low-income people.      |

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|       |                      | and maintenance program  |    |   |   |   |
|       | Water Use Monitoring | <b>Action 15:</b> Require water meters be installed for all new surface and groundwater uses in the Deschutes watershed, including permit exempt wells |    | X |   | Some workgroup members suggested that reporting be required so as to make this program stronger. ... One workgroup member questioned whether this would improve water quality. ... Others noted that water withdrawals do affect water availability and quality, so metering would be effective. ... There should be data usage support as part of this effort. |
| Other | Wastewater Treatment | <b>Action 16:</b> The City of Rainier installs a wastewater treatment plant  | NA |   |   | This decision should be left up to the City of Rainier, the workgroup agreed.   |
|       | Monitoring           | <b>Action 17:</b> Increased water quality monitoring in Offut and McIntosh lakes   | X  |   |   | No comments; all support  |
|       | Zoning               | <b>Action 18:</b> Downzone areas near cold-water thermal refugia   |    | X |   | Support was split. ... One workgroup member doubted this would do more than existing regulations to support water quality.  |
|       | Forests              | <b>Action 19:</b> Write a letter to State regarding forest practices   |    |   | X | The consensus of the workgroup was that it didn't have adequate information about forest impacts on water quality to write a letter to the State, per a workgroup member's suggestion.  |
|       | Water                | <b>Action 20:</b> Purchase and retire water rights   | X  |   |   | No comments; all support  |