

Nisqually Reach Septic System Operation & Maintenance Project

Advisory Committee

July 20, 2010

Meeting Notes

6:30 – 7:00 [Critical Areas Ordinance Update Presentation to Shellfish Protection District ... for Shellfish Protection Districts Committee](#)

7:00 – 7:15 Nisqually Reach Advisory Committee Meeting

1. Discussed the shellfish newsletter
 - a. Provides a summary of action and activities that have been taken.
 - b. Includes description of water quality improvements
2. Staff will send out an email with the link to the Nisqually risk based project.

7:15 – 7:45 Reviewed pages 1 & 2 of Draft Proposal

1. Number of systems within the draft boundary: 8,554 parcels including developed and undeveloped within the proposed boundaries. After removing undeveloped and sewerred properties, there are about 4000 properties in the program area as the current boundary is delineated.
 - a. This boundary would be adopted by the Board of Health as a marine recovery area.
 - b. Discussed the properties along the Nisqually River that currently are not included in the draft program.
 - a. Asked how many systems are in the area; are they a problem?
 - b. Nisqually River fecal bacteria water quality data does not indicate elevated levels.
 - c. Comment was made to add these properties at a later time when they become a problem.
 - d. There are few septic system problems in the area according to a septic contractor. He indicated that soils in the area are sandy and are excellent soils for treatment.
 - e. Could wait until we hear from the public on whether to add these properties? Will prepare to identify which properties are on tribal land and answers to any other questions that may be asked.
 - f. Need to accurately map the streams (hydro layer)

2. Name of the area: Nisqually Reach Watershed Protection Area
Committee had no objections
3. Discussed the current county evaluation of septic systems.
Appendix B of draft: committee had no objections
 - a. Ranking
 - b. Frequency
 - c. High and low risk systems.
 - e. System types
 - f. Range of points – remove “every other year”; should only be every year or every 3 years.
4. Certified providers – no objections
 - a. No professional provider has become certified to do the dye testing
 - b. Env Health O&M staff now run the pumper program; have established a positive relationship with the pumpers.
 - c. Pumpers now entering pump data electronically.
5. Compliance / violations – no objections
 - a. Failing systems – must be repaired
 - b. If someone doesn't maintain an operational certificate
 - a. No permits will be issued on the property until the operational certificate is renewed.
 - b. About 15% of the Henderson Watershed Protection Area systems are non-compliant
 - c. Discussed the notification schedule
 - d. If someone has pumped their system within one year prior to the program beginning it will count as an inspection.
6. Incentives –
 - a. Many are now taking the training during the second cycle of the Henderson program after having had a professional do the work in the first cycle.
 - b. County has developed a consumer's tip sheet to help system owners make better consumer decisions.
 - c. County maintains a list of certified pumpers.
 - d. For 2010 there will be 18-20 certification workshops, down from 42 per year during the Henderson first cycle
 - e. The county is getting more people that sign up and don't show up...
 - f. Senior and disabled persons in the Nisqually watershed are 135 property owners.
 - g. What cannot be funded with the program fees are:
 - i. Riser rebate
 - ii. Low income grant program.

7. Additional features:

- a. Sunset clause: no objections; since it's in the Henderson why not be consistent.
- b. 5-year evaluation: no objections
- c. Adaptive management: no objections

8:00 – 8:45 Budget discussion ... pages 3 & 4 of Draft Proposal

1. Givens / assumptions / lessons learned:

- a. Operational certificates go with the system not the parcel.
- b. The Henderson approach of a per parcel billing system turned out not to cover the cost of the program elements due to unforeseen conditions, i.e. multiple systems on a property.
- c. Currently in Nisqually, approximately 200 high risk systems and 4,165 low risk systems.
- d. There are 13 large parcels with multiple systems – almost 500 mobile home / RV sites total.
- e. 145 properties owners are in the senior/disabled tax exemption program. These folks would not pay the annual fee.
- f. The first 3-years of the program has a higher program cost. After that time program costs go down.

2. How do you set up a fee structure to consider the variability in program costs?

- a. Discussed charging for the certification workshops to reduce program costs.
 - i. Concern that fewer would take the class.
 - ii. Concern that the people that take the class are better system owners and reduce the program overhead costs.
 - iii. Group decided not to charge any fees for the training workshops.
- b. Concern that fees to mobile home parks may be too high for the economic status of the residents.
- c. Asked for staff to take what they heard tonight and come back with a proposal. Gather more information about the real financial impact to the mobile home park owners.
- d. Asked to estimate the program costs for mobile home parks.

8:45 – 9:00 What's next?

- 1. Staff has requested a Board of Health briefing for September to update the Board on the progress of this Advisory Committee.
- 2. Public workshops will likely be held late Fall to early 2011.
- 3. Skip August and September and meet next in October.