

**Nisqually Reach and Henderson Inlet Shellfish Protection Districts
Combined Stakeholder Committee
Meeting Notes May 19, 2015**

Members: Tris Carlson (Nisqually SPD), Peter Heide (Henderson SPD), Kim Benedict (City of Lacey),
Mat Bulldis

Guests: David Hall (Thurston Conservation District)
Kathleen Whalen (Thurston Conservation District)
Jean Snyder (WDOH)
Derek King (Puget Sound Restoration Fund)
Donovan Gray (Department of Ecology)
Scott Collyard (Department of Ecology)

County Staff: Art Starry (Thurston County, Environmental Health)
Sue Davis (Thurston County, Environmental Health)
Allison Osterberg (SPD coordinator – Thurston County, Long-Range Planning)

1. Administrative

- The committee approved the agenda
- The committee approved the draft March 17, 2015 meeting notes

2. TMDL Effectiveness Monitoring

Scott Collyard and Donovan Gray gave an update on the effectiveness monitoring that Ecology has been conducting to follow up on the Henderson Inlet TMDL now that they have completed nearly 12 months of data collection. The original TMDL focused on storm events, but the approach they have taken is broader, sampling for fecal coliform twice per month. They managed to capture nine storm events. In terms of total flow, the main contributors to the inlet are Woodard, Woodland, Dobbs, and Sleepy Creeks. All stations have exceeded the 90th percentile, mostly during major storm events. Only five stations have met the geometric mean standard, with the highest geomeans in the upper watershed. Three problem areas were identified for a closer inspection:

- Fleming Creek: gets very high hits for fecal coliform, but the overall load to Henderson is small. DNA hits indicated the source was wildlife, rather than humans. The source is likely a raccoon latrine, in part exacerbated by some homeowners who may be feeding the raccoons.
- Dobbs Creek: There are some issue near the Pleasant Forest Campground. The county is working with the Campground to upgrade its septic system; there are also some potential sources upstream of the campground from some unconfined livestock and manure application. There may need to be some messaging to the public here – the campground community may not be aware of the water quality issues in Dobbs Creek.

- Eagle Creek: possible cause is unconfined livestock

For focus areas with higher fecal loading, Ecology used probes that can pick up optical brighteners that are added to laundry detergents to make clothes brighter. If detected, it helps indicate when a fecal coliform issue has a human source, such as a leaking septic system. But they can run into problems; for example, Myers Creek indicated a high optical brightness, but no hits for fecal coliform. An area with a high total organic content could give a higher optical brightener reading, but they tested for TOC and found it was also low. Different types of detergent may not register as well as others. A committee member asked whether the county could put out a survey about what kind of laundry detergent residents use? Another asked whether the optical brightener studies were being used in other TMDL watersheds? Yes, in Walla Walla and Weaver Creek on Hood Canal.

Overall, no stations have gotten worse since TMDL, and some areas have improved. This study is only looking at bacteria levels, while much of the implementation work has focused on nutrients and habitat as well.

3. LID Code Update Process

The County is reviewing its codes to support Low Impact Development, as required by Ecology as a part of its NPDES stormwater permit. The review will propose changes to reduce new impervious surfaces, loss of native vegetation, and stormwater runoff from development. Codes that could be changed include parking requirements, native vegetation retention standards, street standards, impervious surface limits tied to zoning, and clearing and grading limits. These code updates will be completed by December 2016.

4. Updates:

- **DOH:** DOH has completed analyzing data from 2014 and is ready to issue its annual list of shellfish areas Threatened with a downgrade due to water quality.
 - Nisqually Reach only has one site that is a station of concern (709), but numbers at this site have been dropping.
 - In Henderson inlet, all the stations previously classified as threatened have dropped to “concerned.” The rainfall threshold for station 188 in the Conditionally Approved area will be lowered – this proposal is out for review and will be finalized soon.
- **Thurston Conservation District:** The CD held a Watershed Tour on May 16. They also recently completed a cost-share manure storage facility in Henderson that will help keep animal waste from being washed into streams until the drier season.
- **TC Environmental Health Dept:** The second Septic Summit was held on April 29 with elected officials from around the region present to hear some of the latest research and analysis on the issue of urban septic systems. We have combined around 17,000 septic

systems in our urban areas that contribute 3.4 million gallons of sewage each day. This helps explain why the nutrient issues in the South Sound are so high. Attendees were very engaged in discussing the problem and seemed poised to take action.

Sue Davis is retiring and this is her last SPD meeting.

- ***Puget Sound Restoration Fund:*** The shellfish farm is wrapping up its season, and held a gardening workshop for 20 people. They are working with Sound Sound GREEN to hold a tour in the upcoming week.