

**Nisqually Reach and Henderson Inlet Shellfish Protection Districts  
Combined Stakeholder Committee  
Meeting Notes September 15, 2015**

Members: Tris Carlson (Nisqually SPD), Kim Benedict (City of Lacey), Sue Shotwell (Nisqually Tribe),  
Mat Bulldis

Guests: Kathleen Whalen (Thurston Conservation District)  
Amy Hatch-Winecka (Thurston Conservation District)  
Sadie Gilliom (Thurston Conservation District)  
Stephanie Bishop (Thurston Conservation District)  
Mary Middleton (Pacific Shellfish Institute)  
Jean Snyder (WDOH)  
Derek King (Puget Sound Restoration Fund)  
Stephanie Zurenko (Department of Ecology)

County Staff: Jane Mountjoy-Venning (Thurston County, Environmental Health)  
Art Starry (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 May 19, 2015 meeting notes

**2. Shellfish Protection Fund Applicants**

- The Shellfish Protection Fund represents 28% of the Conservation District’s assessment, and is used to fund projects that improve water quality in the two Shellfish Protection Districts, according to the work plan. Kathy Whalen noted that estimated revenue has increased from \$140,000 to \$148,000. The fund has not been receiving much interest, and after discussion with the Conservation District’s Board, it will be moved to an account that will get a better interest rate. The projects applying for funds this year total \$224,820. A part of the annual funds typically remain unspent each year, so this should not be a problem for the long-term health of the fund.
- Applicants to the Shellfish Protection Fund each gave a presentation on their projects – detailed information on the proposals can be found in the 2016 Shellfish Protection Fund Work Program.
  - Thurston County Environmental Health Homeowner Septic Grant and Riser Rebate Program. This proposal would continue funding for two popular cost sharing programs provided by the County. Requests for assistance in Henderson are declining, but requests in Nisqually Reach are increasing, as that program gets underway.

- TCD – Clear Choices for Clean Water. This project educates watershed residents on how their behavior affects water quality, and asks them to commit to particular actions – to date they have signed up 278 residents of either Nisqually or Henderson. In 2016, they will build on work from past years, updating some of their marketing material, and will complete their evaluation of Wanschers Park. For the second year, they will organize a watershed tour in Henderson – called that Dive into Your Neighborhood Tour. People who sign up for the pledge don't receive a certification, but they do get some free items and a thank you – staff follow up to see how they are following through using a survey.
- TCD – South Sound GREEN. This project will continue to provide watershed education for students in grades 4-12, including by bringing kids out to the nearshore environment and showing them the connections between freshwater and Puget Sound. In 2016, they plan to bring more than 1,200 middle school students to Puget Sound beaches, and get students involved in water quality monitoring of streams and a restoration project in Henderson.
- TCD – Stormwater Remediation Using LID. This is the second phase of a project to install a retrofitted stormwater facility at the South Bay Grange. In 2016, funds will be used to install plants and an irrigation system in the bioretention area, as well as informational signs.
  - There might be an opportunity to connect with the Stormwater Stewards – they could use the site as a training area.
- TCD – Technical Assistance and Conservation Planning, and Cost Share Program. These two proposals would continue support for the existing programs, which help farmers develop farm plans, and remove the cost barriers from implementing best practices like fencing and manure storage. The CD is thinking of holding a workshop in 2016. Members wondered how they connect with farms in need of plans? They often get referrals through the county or Ecology, and each connection is treated as the start of a long-term relationship. The CD estimates that greater than 75% of farms that developed a plan are implementing them. They need to have a plan in place before they are eligible to apply for the cost-share program – and the cost-share is not available to new farms.
- TCD – Shoreline Technical Assistance Program. This program builds on outreach that was conducted in 2015 to the Beachcrest community to connect with other waterfront homeowners. They will hold three community shoreline workshops, provide technical assistance to shoreline residents on issues like using native vegetation to reduce erosion, and where needed, connect homeowners with geotechnical consultants.
- TCD – Water Quality Protection Through Working Lands Preservation. This program will conduct workshops, farm tours, and training to help encourage and support the new generation of farmers. The goal is to educate farmers about BMPs, connect them to markets, and build on local food movement.

- Puget Sound Restoration Fund – Community Shellfish Farm. This project will support the monthly work parties at the Henderson Inlet Shellfish Farm, facilitate education events and shellfish gardening workshop, and continue the oyster give-away program.
- Pacific Shellfish Institute – Don't Let your Pooch Poo-lute. PSI will continue outreach related to pet waste, including by reprinting their popular brochures, and hosting giveaways at more community events.
- **The committee agreed to recommend the 2016 Shellfish Protection Fund Work Program for approval by the Board of County Commissioners.**

### 3. **TRPC Shellfish Grant Request**

Allison presented a Letter of Intent from Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC) that describes a shellfish-related project they are proposing for a grant from NOAA. The project focuses on developing an ecosystem service valuation of nearshore ecosystems and an economic assessment of the shellfish industry in the South Sound. This information would be used to identify mitigation actions that could be incorporated into a climate adaptation plan. TRPC requested a letter of support from the SPD Stakeholder Committee to provide as a part of their proposal. The group agreed to provide support for the proposal, though the comments was made that despite so many projects every year, water quality is still degrading.

### 4. **Updates:**

- ***Ecology:*** Stephanie Zurenko introduced herself to the group – she has joined Ecology as one of two new people in their Nonpoint program who is working on compliance issues and will be providing more support for implementing TMDLs. She will be focusing on our watershed areas and conducts windshield surveys that are sometimes followed by more outreach.
- ***DOH:***
  - Nisqually water quality data is looking good. This fall, DOH is working on shoreline surveys in Nisqually that hopefully will lead to reclassification of some of the Prohibited areas in the northwest. Shoreline surveys are done every 10-12 years, and are due in 2017 – they take about 6 months to write up.
  - In Henderson, the picture is not so rosy – Station 188 continues to fail standards. TC Environmental Health has been doing a great job working along the shoreline, but they are some persistent sources. They are also doing more surveys in Fishtrap Loop area, and will have 30 samples by the end of the year.
  - Anyone who is interested in coming out on a survey boat and seeing how the sampling is done, should contact Jean.