

**Nisqually Reach and Henderson Inlet Shellfish Protection Districts
Combined Stakeholder Committee
Meeting Notes November 17, 2015**

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

Guests: David Hall (Thurston Conservation District)
Jean Snyder (WDOH)
Derek King (Puget Sound Restoration Fund)
Stephanie Zurenko (Department of Ecology)

County Staff: Jane Mountjoy-Venning (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 September 15, 2015 meeting notes

2. Advisory Group Membership & Meetings for 2016

Membership and attendance has been lagging in recent years, with some of the original members having left the group. Allison presented some options for recruiting new members. The Board of County Commissioners typically has two kinds of advisory groups: 1) a formal group where members are appointed to specific positions, with term limits, and other binding requirements; or 2) an ad-hoc group that allows open membership and is more flexible. The Advisory Group as it currently operates is somewhere in between the two – although 22 members were appointed (11 for each SPD) back when the groups were created, since the groups were combined in 2003, they do not have a policy for how members are replaced when they leave. If the group wants to operate as an ad-hoc group, they can put out a press release requesting new members; if they are a more formal group, this will need to go through the Board of Commissioners office and some additional policies would need to be formulated. Members noted that they would like to see new citizens join the group; they don't want to lose momentum. It is important to keep people engaged, because even though there have been water quality improvements, there is a risk of backsliding. They would like to preserve the representation by different interest groups that existed when the groups were first formed – this includes representation from shellfish growers, agriculture (hobby farms as well as more commercial operations), jurisdictions, environmental activists, recreational shellfish harvesters, homeowners, business interests, and other citizens. There needs to be representation from both districts – Nisqually and Henderson. The group still has the potential to be more than an ad-hoc, information sharing group, but they do not see a need to be a completely formal advisory body. This is similar to the structure of the group developed in Whatcom County.

- A decision was made to hold off on recruiting new members until early in 2016. The group will discuss criteria for membership at the January meeting, and put out a request for new members, with the hope to have them join at the March meeting.
- The group will continue to meet every other month as needed, starting in January.

3. Implementation Plan Update

In line with recruiting new members, the members discussed needed to determine what is on the plat for the group to do. A first step will be reviewing the implementation plan, which has not been updated since 2008, and revising any actions to deal with the current situation, as well as discussing the effectiveness of ongoing work. Some areas proposed for focus include:

- Addressing pollution sources from freshwater and upland areas. A lot of good work has tackled the problems associated with shoreline properties, but some persistent sources are located upstream.
- Stormwater remains a major concern
- Land use
- Septic systems – particularly as the county is considering a county-wide O&M program
- Agriculture – both large and small
- Protection and restoration of riparian areas and wetlands
- Wildlife

Members observed in the discussion with DOH and ongoing monitoring, it seems that in Henderson we have reached a plateau – the question is whether that is good enough. In some stations, it seems that water quality is going backward. The group could be a place where that plateau could be questioned – asking what aggressive measures could be taken to improve water quality even further, and to prevent losing areas due to increased contamination.

4. Updates:

- **Chair:** Stormwater is an ongoing issue for pollution. Changes related to low-impact development (LID) regulations will be big in 2016 – a lot of work to be done.
- **DOH:**
 - Nisqually Reach: Water quality is excellent. In early 2016, Laura White from DOH will start a shoreline survey for the area for the sanitary survey that is due in 2017. Laura may be able to come to present on that project at either the January or March meeting. Based on that data, they are hoping to get some of the Prohibited areas upgraded. The survey will focus on the entire growing area, including the Pierce County side.
 - Henderson Inlet: The monitoring is still seeing high fecal coliform numbers at station 188 and station 190, which is near the sanitary line is creeping up. Because they are seeing high counts in the typically drier summer months, Jean is not sure that rainfall is the most relevant indicatory condition for this area –

DOH is not sure what else would be a trigger, but it is under consideration. Any change would be brought back to this group for discussion.

- In 2016, they will have enough samples to classify the area at the northern end of Henderson (near station 825) – most likely as an approved growing area.
- Are there any watersheds that are comparable to Henderson? Not that have so much urban development in the headwaters. Areas in Kitsap County and Oakland Bay are struggling with similar issues.
- DOH received the annual report on the SPDs from the County. This report will be shared on the group’s website.
- DOH wants to recognize the cooperation and good work that have helped to make a difference in these areas.
- ***TC Environmental Health:***
 - At the request of Pierce County, staff helped pull together information for a Near Term Action for the Puget Sound Partnership’s next Action Agenda that would address implementation activities for all the Shellfish Protection Districts in South Sound. At some point, this may be connected to funding.
 - Staff are planning to conduct around 100 dye tests next year in Henderson and Nisqually – this year was the third year for the Nisqually program, so all homes have gone through one round. Are the results of the dye tests available to the public? There are some plans in the works to have them available to be looked up via the website www.onlineRME.com. At this site, you can select Thurston County records from a drop-down menu (Kitsap is the default county, since they helped to create the site) – and look up septic permit information by address or parcel number.
 - There will be upcoming meetings on the Septic Plan: December 5, 9:30-11am at the Public Health office on Lilly Rd; December 9, 6:30-8pm in Rainier. They will be discussing the proposal to extend the septic O&M program countywide and charge either a flat or tiered fee.
- ***PSRF Community Shellfish Farm:***
 - Fall rains have led to a lot of closures. A recent work party on a very rainy Saturday saw a good group of high school volunteers from North Thurston Earth Corps.
 - They would like to reconnect with veterans groups by recruiting at JBLM, even though this is outside the watershed. The group indicated that this is appropriate because lots of Thurston County residents get their information at JBLM, and may not be connected through other channels.
 - At this year’s Elliott’s Oyster New Year “Most Beautiful Oyster Competition”, the Henderson oysters won third place.
- ***Ecology:***

- Ecology nonpoint staff followed up with the suspected raccoon latrine that may be creating water quality issues in **Dobbs Creek [check location]**. Asked that a WDFW officer visit them to discuss options.
- **Thurston Conservation District:**
 - The CD received funding for two onsite stormwater management projects: one in Mud Bay and one in Henderson. Construction will happen in the Spring.
 - Phase I of the LID project on South Bay is wrapping up; Phase II will include plantings in the bioretention area, as well as a sign.
 - The 2016 Shellfish Protection Fund Work Plan is up for a decision at the December 29 TCD Board meeting
- **Lacey:**
 - Worked with TCD's Clear Choices program on evaluation of pet waste education in Lacey Parks. They found much fewer piles of dog waste this year when compared with the past event.
 - The city participated in the JBLM Day of Service and did a restoration project in Woodland Creek Park. They gave out coupons for free oysters from the Community Shellfish Farm, which were much appreciated.
 - There is a new Lacey Park opening December 31 in the watershed – Pleasant Glade Park. It is not a dog park, but dogs will be allowed, as in all Lacey parks.