

**Nisqually Reach and Henderson Inlet Shellfish Protection Districts
Combined Stakeholder Committee
Meeting Notes September 20, 2016**

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

Guests: Kathleen Whalen (Thurston Conservation District)
Mary Middleton (Pacific Shellfish Institute)
Jean Snyder (WDOH)
Derek King (Puget Sound Restoration Fund)

County Staff: Allison Osterberg (SPD Coordinator - Long Range Planning)
Jane Mountjoy-Venning (Environmental Health)

1. Administrative

- The committee approved the agenda
- The committee approved the draft, July 19, 2016 meeting notes
- Margaret Homerding will replace Robert Johanson as the representative from the Nisqually Tribe

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. The fund balance was \$322,227 at the start of 2016, and projects applying for funds next year total \$268,720. A part of the annual funds typically remain unspent each year. This, plus annual interest incurred for the fund, ensures that on the whole the balance continues to increase.

A member asked whether the Conservation District ever uses the funds for other projects that come up during the year. They do not feel comfortable doing that, since such expenditures would not go through the normal review process.

- Applicants to the Shellfish Protection Fund each gave a presentation on their projects – detailed information on the proposals can be found in the 2017 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. The request is slightly greater this year, because EH did not have enough funding to meet demand in 2016.

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- A member asked whether the funding can be used to connect to sewer lines – no, if there is a full failure of the septic system, and if they are within 200 ft of an existing sewer line, there are other funding options, such as the Craft 3 low interest loans. This program funds minor repairs.
- Although the septic rebate program ran out of funding, they also had some left over, because what was left was just not enough to cover an additional project
- 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 297 residents. Lacey has a Homeowners Association Academy on October 1 that would be a possible outreach opportunity. Members want to make sure the date of the watershed tour in 2017 does not conflict with other major watershed events. Members would like to see the results of evaluations to show effectiveness of program over the long term.
- TCD – Shoreline Workshops. TCD has identified a need for shoreline education, and will hold 3 targeted workshops and provide technical assistance to 9 landowners, such as meeting with geotechnical or engineering consultants, with low impact plans or designs for 3-4.
 - Geotech consultants are expensive – is there any type of guarantee that landowners have to do what they recommend? Will do some follow-up.
 - Meeting notices are targeted to specific neighborhoods through direct mailings and through working with HOAs and on social media.
 - They are coordinating with the stormwater stewards.
- TCD – Engaging Landowners in SPDs. Want to increase awareness about existing programs provided by the CD – will hold series of workshops to provide education, such as Horses for Clean Water, targeting horse owners. Also promote the Farmlink program that identifies fallow land that could be used for agriculture and educate new and future farmers on best practices.
- 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. Plan to develop 4 farm plans in 2017. The cost share averages \$5,000 per landowner – this can include manure storage solutions, or managing gutter and downspout runoff.
 - Cost shares are available to tenants, if they have permission from the landowner.

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- 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. Focus is on expanding program to Nisqually, with sites on McAllister.
 - Part of the students’ homework assignment is to do water quality sampling and compare their results with professional results. They are usually very close.
 - Members wanted to know about long-term impacts of education – SS Green has had former students come back as interns, because they remember the program very vividly.
 - Although the program is also run in Pierce County, the Thurston County funds are focused on Thurston County students.
- Pacific Shellfish Institute – Conducting field trips and 5 90-minute workshops around water quality issues. Targeting a general audience with a lecture-style series. Note to be aware of other events – lots of events go on in the spring.
- Puget Sound Restoration Fund – Community Shellfish Farm. This project will support the 8 shellfish experience work parties at the Henderson Inlet Shellfish Farm, facilitate education events and shellfish gardening workshop, and continue the oyster give-away program. In 2017, PSRF is expanding the number of students they are connecting with at Nisqually Reach.
- Committee members would like to get more information out about the successes of the programs funded.
- **The committee agreed to recommend the 2017 Shellfish Protection Fund Work Program for approval by the Board of County Commissioners.**

3. **Updates:**

- **WDOH:** Water quality in Nisqually Reach looks great, including stations 234 and 224 in McAllister Creek. The area around 251 could be upgraded following a shoreline survey, which is scheduled for next year. The marina will be evaluated against DOH’s definition of a marina. Henderson will be changing from a conditional classification, with some areas upgraded and some downgraded to prohibited – October 22. Station 189 is showing higher bacteria numbers along the eastern shoreline. TC Environmental Health staff have been following up on issues in Dobbs Creek as they have time and resources available. The Fishtrap area is being evaluated for classification and will likely be approved.

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- ***City of Lacey:*** Lacey is hiring a new Americorps position. They are nearly finished with their LID code update, and have been working with Thurston County on conducting outreach about septic systems in the city limits.
- ***Nisqually Tribe:*** As noted above, Margaret is the new manager of the farm, which has now been reorganized so that it falls under the Natural Resources department. This will change the mission of the farm to focus on treaty rights and ecosystem services. The Nisqually Tribe is paying to run high-resolution pictography in the watershed.
- ***Puget Sound Restoration Fund:*** Coming out of their lull, and work parties and sales will start up again in November.