

**Nisqually Reach and Henderson Inlet Shellfish Protection Districts
Combined Stakeholder Committee
DRAFT Meeting Notes October 3, 2017**

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

Guests: Sarah Moorehead, Nora White (Thurston Conservation District)
Jean Snyder (WDOH)
Derek King (Puget Sound Restoration Fund)
Chris Montague-Breakwell (Ecology)

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

1. Administrative

- The committee approved the agenda with one change
- The committee approved the draft July 18, 2017, meeting notes
- The committee discussed moving their scheduled meeting on November 21 (which is the week of Thanksgiving) to December 19.

2. Shellfish Protection Fund Applicants

- The Shellfish Protection Fund has in past years been allocated by setting aside 28% of the Conservation District's assessment to fund projects that improve water quality in the two Shellfish Protection Districts. This year, the Conservation District's countywide tax assessment is up for reauthorization before the Board of County Commissioners, and the District is proposing to change their rate structure from an assessment to a rates and fees structure. This would mean a change from a flat, per-parcel charge to a fee that is appropriated by land use category, based on the typical use of District services for that land use type. Other Conservation Districts around the state have made this change, and the intent is for the amount paid to be tied more to the services being provided. For example, agricultural lands and residential lands tend to be where the District provides the most services, so parcels with this land use would be charged the maximum amount, while forest lands typically use the District services less, so they would pay less per acre. There is a cap set at the state level, so the maximum can only be \$5 per parcel. The change will result in less funding for the District, overall.
- Although the Conservation District is proposing a change to its rates for next year, the Board of Supervisors has committed to continuing the proportional amount of the Shellfish Fund through 2018. Next year they plan to start a discussion on how to maintain the funding going forward.

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- The fund balance was \$258,548.54 at the start of 2017, and estimated revenue from the tax assessment this year is \$149,900. A part of the annual funds typically remain unspent each year, and are returned to the fund; in addition, there is annual interest incurred. There is sufficient estimated funds to cover the total requested expenditures, \$298,771.45
- Applicants to the Shellfish Protection Fund each gave a presentation on their projects – detailed information on the proposals can be found in the 2018 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 the same higher level as last year, to address higher demand in Nisqually Reach.
 - There are several hundred requests for rebates every year. The majority are now coming from the Nisqually Reach area, with fewer in Henderson.
 - Thurston Conservation District (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. In the past, this program has been focused on enrolling households, but based on the program evaluation done this year, next year they would like to focus on community-level participants. This includes reaching out to apartment complexes and elementary schools. They are requesting slightly more funding than in past years to provide more technical resources. Their goal is to reach new populations and audiences, including temporary residents and military families.
 - TCD – Shore Friendly Thurston Program. This proposal is to develop a Shore Friendly Thurston program, similar to existing programs in Mason and Pierce counties. It would expand on the District’s past work doing outreach to shoreline landowners, by providing a new webpage and educational materials, and allow for more technical assistance to landowners.
 - Members asked about targeting outreach to people cutting vegetation on their banks and dropping vegetation into the water. The District targets outreach to areas where they identify the highest need for education. Direct mailing have been successful in increasing participation.
 - A member notices people spraying herbicides. If anyone has seen particular areas of concern, they should let District staff know, and they can potentially target their outreach to that area.

- Shoreline hardening has been a focus of the program in Pierce County. The Thurston program will also address this, but is starting small in the first year. Pierce County does boat tours, so landowners can see the shore from the perspective of the water, and Kitsap has done something similar. This is an avenue that TCD will explore (see next program proposal).
- TCD – Engaging Landowners in SPDs. This program focuses on outreach in the community to make them aware of the District’s programs. They would like to hold a tour that helps people see the shoreline from the water. The District had some staff changes this year, and will not complete all deliverables from the 2017 round, so some of these tasks would be continued in 2018. This includes developing a video as one method to report back to the community and supporting new and beginning farmers.
 - WDFW, Pacific Coast Shellfish Growers Association, and the Nisqually Tribe all have boats that might be made available for a water tour.
 - The video is produced by Windowseat media and may dovetail well with outreach work being done by Ecology around Henderson Inlet.
- TCD – Technical Assistance and Conservation Planning. In 2018, the District would like to increase the number of conservation plans, restoration and planting plans completed. Some of this work will feed into the Voluntary Stewardship Program. They are requesting more funding than in the past to support the additional work needed to support the Voluntary Stewardship Program.
- TCD – Cost Share Program. Based on feedback from their community outreach, the District is planning to change their cost share rate. IN the past, it has been 75/25, with the landowner or farmer required to put up 25% of the cost of a structure. This can still be cost-prohibitive to low-income farmers, so they are proposing to change this to 85/15.
 - This program is available to operators, even if they are not the land owner, although they need to have landowner permission to install something like fencing or a manure storage facility.
 - A membered wondered if the change in the cost share structure would result in fewer projects completed, since the amount of money won’t go as far. This depends on the projects – some cost more than others, so it depends what people request cost share help to do. The change should

increase participation in the cost share program, and potentially, more projects.

- TCD – South Sound GREEN. Proposal will continue focus on getting school children connected to the beach.
 - Stephanie Bishop should talk to Tris about getting Seattle Shellfish involved.
- Pacific Shellfish Institute – staff from PSI were not present to describe their project.
- Puget Sound Restoration Fund. PSRF is requesting less than in previous rounds. In 2018, they will be focusing on restoration of the native Olympia Oyster. Their goal is to increase their volunteer base, and give them something different to be involved in, by working on bringing the native oyster back to Henderson. They need to develop a core population, so they can survive on their own.
 - Members were very pleased to hear this plan, noting that it is great for Henderson.
- **The committee agreed to recommend the 2018 Shellfish Protection Fund Work Program for approval by the Board of County Commissioners.**

3. Updates:

- **WDOH:** As discussed in previous meetings, some stations in Henderson are on thin ice. Even some stations that are passing are seeing consistently elevated bacteria levels. They are no longer seeing the big spikes in bacteria counts. This points to there being more dispersed sources of pollution. There could be a change coming to the boundary, along the east shoreline, that could affect the Nisqually Tribe's farm. Any change would be made in 2018. Members note that they see large numbers of ducks on the inlet. These populations may be recovering, but how do they affect bacteria levels? Water quality in Nisqually Reach is looking great. Shoreline surveys continue. The mouth of the Nisqually come up as failing, and this is because that area is basically freshwater.
- **Ecology.** New Ecology nonpoint staff have started. The chicken farm that was identified as a pollution source in the past has ceased production.
- **City of Lacey:** Lacey's Americorps intern is doing a survey of pet waste stations. A new station has been added at a private business – Grateful Dogs. There will be a work party at Woodland Creek on November 11.
- **Puget Sound Restoration Fund:** Derek noted that WSU is hosting a planning workshop for the Meyers Point property on November 8.