

# Water Resources Healthy Lakes Program



## Lake Management District

### Administrative Rules

These administrative rules provide the framework for how Thurston County will engage and manage communities who are ratepayers of an approved Lake Management District (LMD).

In forming an LMD, rather than a lake association or special district, the County and community have elected to form a County-managed program under the provisions of RCW 36.61. In furtherance of the LMD program, the County will maintain staff to serve as technical experts regarding lake management activities. County staff receive professional training and development and are responsible for adhering to County policies and procedures, state and federal regulations and standards, and for managing all lake programs to achieve alignment with industry best practices and greater County initiatives and guiding principles.

While the provisions of RCW 36.61 do not identify the need for community representation, Thurston County encourages the participation of LMD ratepayers in a County-managed advisory committee. The purpose of the committee is to provide valuable information and input to County staff for the development of short and long-term management strategies. Responsibility for daily operational activities and administrative functions of the LMD resides with County staff.

### Advisory Committee Elections

Should the community wish to have ongoing representation, the advisory committee would be managed by the County as follows:

- The advisory committee shall consist of five (5) ratepayers elected from within the LMD boundaries, as well as representatives for public property as outlined below.
- Elections shall be a simple ballot method distributed via a special mailing to ratepayers and administered by Thurston County staff.
- In electing advisory committee members, each parcel included in the LMD boundary shall have one vote per dwelling unit. Undeveloped parcels shall have one vote per parcel.
- Publicly owned properties (if applicable) shall have a single representative serve on the advisory committee, who will be appointed by the public agency.
- Advisory committees serve in an advisory capacity, and do not have decision making authority under RCW 36.61.
- Elections will be conducted within 90 days of formation of an LMD. Initial advisory committees will serve for an approximate two-year term, ending on December 31st. Subsequent elections will be administered by Thurston County during November of the calendar year preceding the expiration of current terms.
- Advisory committee members shall be elected by a straight majority vote and shall serve without compensation for the duration of the term.
- A vacancy arising during the term of a advisory committee member shall be filled by special election according to the same provisions set forth above for regular elections. A advisory committee member elected to fill a vacancy shall serve for the full balance of the term for which their predecessor was elected.

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## Frequency of Meetings

The advisory committee shall meet at a frequency determined by Thurston County with input from the community, with the purpose of providing information and input to the County for short and long-term management strategy development. At a minimum, the advisory committee shall meet on a quarterly basis.

## Thurston County Roles and Responsibilities

- Administer the LMD under the provisions of RCW 36.61.
- Serve as technical experts regarding all lake management activities, ensuring best management practices and sound lake management decision making.
- Ensure the adherence to all state and federal regulations, and all County approved policies and procedures. Staff will ensure lake management activities are in alignment with greater County initiatives and guiding principles.
- Develop and implement short and long-term lake management work plans and strategies.
- Administer procurement and management of all contractors and professional services needed to carry out the work plan of the LMD.
- Report annually to the Storm and Surface Water Utility (SSWU) to ensure work plans and messaging align with and support the goals of the utility. Ensure reports are submitted to support SSWU fee reductions as available.
- Act as the point of contact for communicating with contractors and field experts, including state and federal agencies.
- Manage financial activities and responsibilities in alignment with generally accepted accounting principles and County financial policies and procedures, applied consistently throughout the Public Works department.
- Provide quarterly financial reports.
- Maintain an advisory committee, comprised of community elected ratepayers. Manage elections per the process outlined.
- Create and distribute meeting schedules and agendas as needed to support annual work plans and solicit constructive feedback on short and long-term goals and objectives.
- Serve as facilitator at all advisory committee meetings.

## Advisory Committee Roles and Responsibilities

- Actively engage with County staff during advisory committee meetings to provide input and information to assist the staff with shaping short and long-term programs and management strategies that are consistent with the lake management goals outlined by the community.
- Act as a liaison between County staff and LMD community members.
- Support County staff in achieving alignment between LMD goals and work plans with all Board approved policies and plans, including the County's Integrated Pest Management Policy, Shoreline Management Program, and the Thurston County Stormwater Management Program.
- Communicate with County designated staff, not directly with County managed consultants, contractors or regulatory agency personnel unless prearranged by County staff.
- Represent and communicate as a member of the LMD advisory committee, not as an agent of Thurston County.
- Engagement in prohibited activities may result in suspension of work plan elements and/or removal from the advisory committee.

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## **Annual and Long-Range Work Plan Development**

Upon formation of a County-managed advisory committee, the committee will assist County staff in developing a proposed 1-year and 5-year work plan. The work plans will take into consideration the goals of the community, as well as the alignment of those goals with other County-managed water quality programs.

Once a draft work plan is established, County staff will evaluate the staffing needs required to adequately meet the obligations of the draft work plan. The advisory committee may recommend the reduction of work plan components to align with available staffing resources or reduce staffing costs, when appropriate.

Work plans will be evaluated, discussed, and revised as needed on an annual basis and input from the advisory committee will be submitted to County staff by July of the preceding year. The County, in its sole discretion, may deny or delay additions to annual work plans if staffing resources are not available to carry out designated activities. In addition, the County will evaluate advisory committee recommendations for work plan reductions but may implement work plan elements to preserve water quality or meet state or federal standards or regulations.

LMD budgets will be developed per best financial management practices and in alignment with County processes. The advisory committee will be engaged to provide feedback during the budget process, at times that align with the County's approved budget development schedule.

## **Integrated Aquatic Vegetation Management Plans (IAVMP)**

IAVMPs are required, at the expense of the LMD, prior to the implementation of any vegetation management activities that involve herbicides. Work plans may include staff support of applying for grant support of IAVMPS, or for contributing to the writing of the plan when appropriate. All IAVMPs must adhere to the County's Integrated Pest Management (IPM) policy.

## **Stormwater Fee Reduction**

Per current Thurston County Code, Chapter 15.06.040 (D), ratepayers of LMDs are eligible to receive a storm and surface water fee reduction of fifty percent or the amount of the charge from the district, whichever is less, provided the LMD is actively engaged in projects and programs which have water quality improvement as a primary goal and align with County water quality goals and messaging. To qualify for the fee reduction, annual work plans must be submitted to the SSWU and discussed prior to July of the year preceding the work plan implementation. Based upon the water quality improvement goals and messaging proposed in draft work plans, the County will either accept the work plan as meeting the requirements of the fee reduction criteria or will recommend an enhanced program to meet the intent of the code language.

Additionally, LMDs must submit an annual report by February 28th to the Storm and Surface Water Utility, summarizing work plan efforts that were conducted during the previous calendar year to meet the obligations outlined.

