

SCATTER CREEK AQUIFER - SEPTIC SYSTEM MANAGEMENT PROJECT

Preliminary Recommendations Feedback Summary

TOTAL RESPONSES: 55 individuals

TIME PERIOD: Gathered between September 9, 2014 through 4:00 pm October 1, 2014

VIEW OF RECOMMENDATIONS ON A SCALE OF 1-7

- 1 = Not strong enough to protect drinking water
- 4 = Just right
- 7 = Too strong or restrictive for the situation

RECOMMENDATION AREA	AVERAGE SCORE ^		Number of people selecting the response option							
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NA
Zoning and Well Siting	5.0		1	1	2	23	9	4	14	1
Septic	4.9		1	1	5	20	7	5	14	2
Data and Monitoring	4.9		0	2	5	22	5	3	16	2
Education, Outreach & Community Input	4.6		1	2	7	25	6	0	13	1
Funding	5.2		2	2	3	17	3	7	19	2

^ Average = All scores added together then divided by the number of responses.

NA = No answer provided by individual.

Scatter Creek Aquifer Project:

Comments received from Recommendations to Protect Drinking Water in Scatter Creek Aquifer Survey

- Type that is regular is from written comments included in the feedback form as of 4:00 pm Oct 1, 2014
- *Type in italic is from staff notes taken during verbal comments at the community workshop on 9/30/14.*

Hard to judge. Seems like a lot of money.

Re Well Siting: A good idea, but could lead to some potentially severe restrictions on folks wanting to subdivide.

Education: focus should be broader, not just new home owners.

Funding: I'm willing to pay something, but again, it would depend on the amount. And if homeowners are paying you would want a lot of accountability that what you're doing is making a difference.

Thanks for all your hard work!

Education: Provide more information, prefer email.

Funding: Why not use current wells? I would appreciate mine being tested.

Recommendations is a choice of word here vice regulation; I take that to mean just that a recommendation - no legal basis to pursue if not used. Requiring and placing in a recommendation appears to me just that... no basis in law.. and how you do this is beyond me with most land plots already developed? Am watching this closely and will monitor and be there.

There is no discussion of animals. I had the experience of a dairy farmer in the middle of a rain storm in the fall dumping tens of thousands of gallons of waste that fouled a class b system. That may not happen today but it can. Also a important note is what is happening to animal use and is it going down and house in volume to human use and toxicity? If it is going down is human waste critical? I am for clean water but is this just another County Commissioner anti rural development ruse? Rochester not near the safe limits and Tenino was well below limits and now has a sewer system.

General - everyone in the Scatter Creek Aquifer Area should be or, I believe, is concerned about water quality. I, for one, and I think most of us applaud the committee for their efforts. I certainly do not agree with some of their findings or with some of the statements made by individual members but the information they have acquired is invaluable.

Mostly I believe most of us are very concerned about bureaucratic decisions being made by individuals who have preconceived ideas on what is best for all. I am not all convinced whatever the committee recommends will be even considered by the decision makers. I sincerely hope I am wrong but everything I hear in speeches or have read in the paper has me deeply worried. I understand at least one of the original members has even walked out and resigned based on the exact same concerns.

1. Well Siting A. These things, by my understanding of existing ordinances, are already being done except the 100' radius and what information do you have that says this is not adequate. I also hesitate giving more power to people who I am not at all sure have had adequate training or education.

2. Septic Recommendations A. I do not see how anyone could argue with these recommendations EXCEPT where certain individuals will misinterpret this recommendation to make further ordinances that enforce "provide incentives", "educate", "work in partnership with". We do not need more ordinances!

3. Data & Monitoring A. Is this necessary, or are you just adding additional work on an already over worked staff?

4. Education, etc. A. Same comment as #3. If not adding to an already overworked staff, how would you fund all this additional work?

5. Funding A. I am opposed to raising any fees but mostly I am opposed to "federal" grants. As we all know, even federal money comes from us taxpayers. If we want any of the recommendations to be and if there is any cost to them, WE as a county should pay for them.

CONCLUSION

WE do not want untrained individuals, whether elected or appointed to make these seriously affecting to us decisions! Add the words "engineers" or "fully trained in the appropriate disciplines" to your recommendations to the "powers that be" and you will have full support from us.

Thurston County has created a land monopoly with the land use rules currently in place. In 1996 I talked to the County about an above ground sewage treatment system for my proposed manufacturing facility in rural Thurston County and was told it could not be used even though it was designed to produce cleaner out flow than an in ground septic system. Because of zoning and other regulation a \$600,000.00 facility was not built and in 2000 12 people lost their jobs. "If you are not directly or indirectly producing what you consume you are a Parasite."

Too much government control Just another way to get more tax dollars.

What about the sewer line running along I-5, can anyone hook up to it?

Need to monitor or enforce illegal septic systems - there appears to be several "RV" style homes on lots that are lived in. These show up in the county and to date I have never observed a septic system installed or black/gray water removed (in my area).

Well siting - strongly disagree with "giving regulators more authority..."

Septic - Is Health Dept willing?

Data & Monitoring - What "staff" are you referring to? Who? I recommend Volunteers.

Education - Good ideas - too expensive to hire - Recommend Volunteer Citizens

Funding - Too expensive! Would result in increased taxes. Use Citizen Volunteers!

Do not raise taxes and fees. Make other cuts.

Well Siting #2: Making such a shape change may not take into consideration the cone of influence created by a well pump, thus accomplishing nothing helpful as a result of such change.

Well Siting #3: Well site inspections are already required. During short or long plat or large lot subdivisions property inspection and evaluation processes already exist. Any such "new" regulatory authority is redundant.
Septic #4: See above components as they apply here as well.

Monitoring #1: All monitoring presently available through state and feds should be checked before embarking on a new data and monitoring program.

Monitoring #3: this info is available on line at DOH already through Sentry.

Funding: Group A and B systems operated by investor owned companies are already taxed through an annual fee which should cover their participation.

I forgot to mention in the online survey that I'm excited to know there may be greater acceptance of composting toilets in the future. Do you know yet what the recommendations will be for dealing with the compost? I've heard some of them don't really create a finished, garden-safe compost.

Regarding well siting recommendations, we assume that these apply to new development and construction, and that existing wells/septics would not fall under these regulations. Regarding funding, we have been charged stormwater fees for years, yet in our location we have never had any stormwater issues. We assume that the same is true for many of our neighbors, so there should be excess money in that fund that could be used for this project without charging septic fees.

If nitrogen levels are decreasing and trending lower, you've won. You don't need more regulation.

This is just another way for Thurston County to extract more money and impose more regulation on it's citizens. We pay enough money to our water company and have already paid for septic systems to be installed. We don't need septic fees or more fees on private wells. Thurston County has taken enough property rights away from its citizens as it is, this is also an avenue to put meters on private wells which is very invasive, if we wanted this we'd live in the city. The bottom line is this is another scam by this corrupt county government and the thieves that run it.

Great work committee! How will ongoing monitoring and deeper well drilling be funded?

Apparently fees were not unanimous as reported in info. Ask Weaver. Septic Recommendations: None talk about except to provide funding. I test my group B well. The results go to the county not to state no extra staff needed. Use stormwater fees, water quality is part of NPDES permit. Scientific exploration at the cost of the citizens Just looking until you get a problem.

I want to thank all the members of the committee for their dedication to completing this study. I was apprehensive initially about the result and costs but am very pleased with your conclusion!

Worst Case Scenario won't happen. Mazama Pocket Gopher ruling will stifle a lot of residential housing possibilities in our area. That means less housing/less need for septic/less contribution to the aquifer, less possible pollutants into Scatter Creek Aquifer. Encourage responsible property ownership, but if there isn't a problem, don't fixate on a non-problem. We have fewer agricultural farms in the area so less pollution of course. Let's not over regulate everything.

Interest of County to generate tax \$\$\$ isn't necessary in this area. We appreciate the time & effort the Citizens Committee has put in & recommending no additional money needed.

What about sedimentation now filling up Scatter Creek as a result of closing the fish hatcheries by the freeway or reduced water flow in the creek?

No TAXES added!!!

If it's not broken don't fix it

We pay enough taxes & fees. Our property values are down due to Prairie ordinance. The restrictions only allow the tribe to develop. No new restrictions.

Water is important to all of us it is not the gov't trying to take away your water. They just want to know if it is safe.

Stop!

Concerned about issues being compartmentalized: agriculture, on-site, zoning are not being looked at together. When do we and decision makers get a holistic view?

Question: Will there be changes to water rights? Answer: Committee did not consider water rights.

Pleased to see that the model does not show a problem. Use the water quality data that is being collected by public water systems. Don't need to tax septic systems to do additional monitoring or duplicate with county sampling.

Pharmaceuticals getting into the water is a problem. Tenino Police Department has a drop-off bin to collect, don't flush them down the toilet.

Agriculture says he needs to add nitrogen to his soil.

Question: We talked about the Tenino Wastewater Treatment Plant, what about the Grand Mound Wastewater Treatment Plant? Answer: It discharges to the Chehalis River, not to groundwater, so should not be a drinking water concern.

Thank you to the Committee for its conclusions that didn't require us to over-regulate. Glad the recommendations do not include new fees and regulations. Single biggest point source is the Tenino Wastewater Treatment Plant. No way septic systems could have as big an impact as Tenino Wastewater Treatment Plant. It needs to be addressed, it is not being adequately tested. The county recently increased stormwater fees for monitoring, no reason to charge more for monitoring that is already going on.

In the 1980s agriculture was a problem, especially applying manure near wellheads. After that was fixed nitrogen decreased. Question: She asked us to clarify what the health effects of too much nitrogen in the water was. Answer: It effects infant and their ability of hemoglobin to carry oxygen in the blood stream – often called blue-baby syndrome.

Also suggested that the county change the private well sampling instructions to suggest that water be collected from the tap closest to the well, not from the kitchen or bathroom. Really appreciate that the county has water sample pick-up available at ROOF locally.

Like to remind people that everyone's actions can affect the groundwater and their neighbor's well. One reason why everyone needs to take care of their septic system. A septic system is like adopting a pet, it needs to be taken care of in order to protect the water.

Question: What kind of impact does Great Wolf Lodge and other businesses like the new Starbucks have on the aquifer? Answer: They are on the Grand Mound Wastewater Treatment System, which discharges into the Chehalis River, so their wastewater should not impact the aquifer.

Does not compute – there is ongoing monitoring by water systems, there is no need to do more. There is no problem, no need to raise fees to take care of a non-problem.

Important to pay attention and be involved to keep regulation at bay.

Wanted to let everyone know about the Rochester Facebook site, Rochester What A Great Place to Live. Getting harder and harder to get announcements into the paper, good way to get word out.

Is there a way to vote out this study? It's too much. We need permits for septic, wells, etc. It is our private property.

Was on the committee, clarify several points. The Onsite Sewage Management Plan Committee was different from the Scatter Creek Aquifer Committee. The aquifer has plenty of water for residential uses, the county does not address water rights, the state does – you will be able to have your wells. There are only about 400 more homes possible, so we are all going to get to enjoy our rural property, septic & wells. The study was good news.

Being on the committee was a very educational process. I came from a city in another area where you could not drink the water – only bottled water. I don't think that is likely here, but you should never think that it could not happen. I learned how important good stewardship was. It has changed my practices.

I was on both committees. The proposed fee for septic systems is because there are places in the county that do not have good water, or have problems. The fee was a compromise, agreed upon unanimously, to address conditions throughout the county.

Question: Seems like there is a lot of overlap on monitoring. Does the county coordinate with each other?

Answer: Yes, the health department and resource stewardship department work closely together around monitoring and water issues.