



Clean Water Advisory Committee

March 17, 2022

Committee Members in Attendance: Lynn Bahrych, Jenny DeGroot, Kyle Dodd, Bob Eagan, Vicki Heater, Ann Jarrell, Judy Meyer, Laura Jo Severson, Kimbal Sundberg

Ex-officio, County support staff, and members of public: Paul Andersson, Erin Halcomb, Steve Krueger, Jolyn Leslie, Byron Rot, Buck Smith, Kendra Smith, Sam Whitridge, Cathy Winings, Cindy Wolf

8:39 AM Welcome and Coast Salish Acknowledgement *Kim Sundberg*

Let us acknowledge we reside on the ancestral lands and waters of the Coast Salish people who have called this place home since time immemorial and let us honor inherent, aboriginal and treaty rights that have been passed down from generation to generation.

8:40 AM Approval of November 2021 and January 2022 meeting *Kim Sundberg*

No objections or edits. Both minutes are approved.

8:41 AM Agency Updates *Buck Smith, Jolyn Leslie*

Buck: still under Inslee's drought declaration from last July, monitoring water supply statewide (in the 80-90% range). Michelle Curtis is currently processing applications in SJ County for water rights, good time to apply. Jolyn: SRF funding from bipartisan infrastructure law. Also money for "pre-construction loans". Some discussion of issues from lead/copper in pipes. Not good for small projects under \$30K, not worth the time and effort

https://doh.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2022-03/331-685_2.pdf

8:49 AM Public Comments *none*

8:50 AM Orcas and San Juan Island culvert updates *Kendra Smith*

Fishtrap needed extra work around the bypass road that will impact the permit, so some modification in permit language. There will be a 10-12 week lead time on box culverts, plan to bid in September and build next summer. Same for Bayhead on Orcas – got Geotech data back in January, soft soils not very load-bearing, so changing the design back to originally the proposed box culvert (rather than an open arch).

We received emergency HPA for Laporte, just upstream of Killebrew on Bayhead – will work to design that (probably a box culvert also). A box culvert is more expensive but easier/less costly to put in.

8:58 AM Groundwater update *Kyle Dodd*

Kyle: subcommittee didn't meet last month but we plan to meet in April. Updates:

-annual groundwater monitoring network on North Lopez reported slight increase in chlorides in some wells.

-USGS study is ongoing. We're in touch, will discuss early results at subcommittee, share with CWAC in May

-Health is working on surface water issues in Westcott Bay and Squaw Bay. Detected higher than normal fecal coliform results last fall, following up with more samples, some pollution identification and correction. Plan to continue sampling through April, then reassess. Some livestock access to creek, planned fencing to eliminate it.

Kendra: are they accounting for climate impacts (i.e. intense rainfall and drought)

Kyle: that's part of the recharge information. I can bring that up and see how it's addressed in the model

Kim: about the septic inspection program, has it suffered under covid?

ACTION ITEM: Kyle can pull together some numbers for septic inspections for next meeting in May

Kendra: in terms of those samplings, were those summertime? Could it have been from boats pumping out?

Kyle: it's a possibility, but dilution occurs fairly rapidly with tidal fluctuations. Marine water quality is still good, it's the surface water drainages that came up in shoreline sampling

9:07 AM Environmental inspection updates

Steve Krueger

ACTION ITEM: Please let Steve know what's most of interest to the group, he can be contacted via email.

- Still working with community, the contractors – letting them know what type of inspections we'll be doing, aim to get smart hub up and running by April. Have also been looking at code language surrounding storm water.

Also responding to private complaints – now people are mostly calling about drainage issues.

Kendra: problems come up when people have things on their site that aren't in their plan. Trying to work on the process so we can catch things on the front end. And then make sure they did what they planned to do.

Lynn, Cindy, Judy: Great work, this is so important, thank you

Kendra: we also hope to map stream layers (seeking funding), Friends of SJ's plans to map estuary wetlands

Jenny: With contractors, is there an incentive for them? Like a green seal of approval for their business?

Cindy: We need to establish a floor for behavior and then carrots for incentive, first need to meet a minimum

Kendra: and unfortunately, sometimes will still need the stick. Sometimes these sites will be on Agricultural property, under VSP program, grey area – some limitations but still some conversations that can happen.

Paul: there are still regulatory backstops required. The County being the regulatory entity should keep those. Irrigation ponds/water retention will become a more pressing issue. Need to educate landowners on permits

8:57 AM Stormwater design/construction information

Kendra Smith

1. **Lopez Farmers market:** a conveyance project. analysis of climate impacts, recommendation to excavate a ditch as a bioswale; it won't meet Ecology's standards but doing our best given site constraints

2. **Weeks wetland:** that's all the drainage for the Village at bottom of Lopez road, it's an open field – we have a drainage ditch. We've done cultural resources and wetland analysis. With sea level rise site will likely be too low to sustain a facility there. We're discussing with Ecology, we only had a design grant there

3. **Prune Alley:** on Orcas, construction has started. We have 8 water quality treatment boxes. Site is tight, need to keep inside road right-of-way. Water from curb/gutter will go through boxes on way to East Sound.

4. **Market to Madrona** water quality: Island market on Orcas, there's an old bioswale by market – takes runoff from market rooftop. Limited space. We're proposing intensive treatment, sediment-trapping manhole with water separator. Water will funnel through a mainline catch-basin before funnel through prune alley. We'll rehab the bioswale, it'll be more attractive and function like a raingarden. Water quality facilities don't manage for bacteria. Need to encourage people to pick up dog poop and not dump things in drain system, we also do catch basin and line cleaning that helps with that in early September before big rains come through.

Kyle: We can do dye testing to track pollutants in stormwater and we have done so in the past

Kendra: we also have some cement pipes, infiltration is possible from groundwater.

Kim: There are some places in the past where businesses have hooked up septic directly to stormwater

Kendra: this Prune Alley project will go a far way toward eliminating that

9:41 AM Salmon Recovery Chapter update – Freshwater

Sam Whitridge

- Puget Sound Chinook Recovery plan published in 2007, San Juan completed our regional chapter in 2005 and that has been guiding salmon recovery work. We started updating it in 2020, some support from PS partnership. Original chapter had major data gaps on freshwater. We incorporated new targets and strategies. Freshwater goals and targets still somewhat qualitative because there are still data gaps. Freshwater habitat areas: instream flow, riparian, fish accessibility, water quality, invasive species, regulatory.

Sam shows map showing eight basins on San Juan and Orcas – current priority watersheds identified in the plan. More research needed in other areas to expand beyond these. This map is in the plan itself.

Specific strategies in the plan include Restoration of streamside buffers, Protect Uplands, etc. Restore and Protect stream flows specifically in False Bay and Cascade Creek, Reduce impact of artificial ponds etc.

Major Data Gaps Identified: e.g., fish surveys needed in watersheds with coastal cutthroat trout.

This plan is available on County Salmon Recovery website, both nearshore and freshwater components.

- This is a big year for salmon funding, just kicked off grant process. Received 12 letters of interest from sponsors, mostly in nearshore area. A few focused on local creeks that will move on to full application:

-Cascade Creek from Land Bank, design/build/restoration in lower reaches of cascade creek

-Garrison Creek riparian restoration

-Stream& Culvert mapping & prioritization update proposal, this was a data gap identified in plan process

Kendra: MRC has approved the plan; we're forwarding it to Council to review for approval April 5th

Cindy: I look forward to hearing about the marine freshwater interface and balance of choosing projects

Kim: I'd like to see how all this will integrate into county in a better way. It seems like salmon recovery is a satellite that doesn't get considered in planning. Hope county embraces plan, include in permitting decisions

Kendra: it's on our radar to do code updates on the regulatory side as well

Cindy: with Steve added there's more checks and balances, hope to see a shift in paradigm for permitting

Judy: can we have David come talk to us at our main meeting? We can share our concerns and show support

ACTION ITEM: Kendra will set that up

Vicki: maps are difficult, especially wetlands and marshes. Improvements with LIDAR etc.

Kendra: we are discussing a flyover for this winter, needs to be during the leaf-off season, aerals in Jan/Feb.

Maybe we can coordinate with Friends of San Juans for planned mapping of streams and estuaries.

Sam: in terms of salt marsh mapping, the Friends' proposal was submitted, that project will move forward

Steve: doing eDNA in some streams. LiDAR won't tell us about fish use, need eDNA or some other method

Jenny: understanding a stream is flowing regardless of whether fish are currently in it is still important

Kendra: it's important to improve those maps to be able to say, 'we know water flows here in the wintertime'

- Lynn cites example in which DNR mapped a wetland but the landowner didn't indicate on shoreline, County claimed didn't know. We have data, detailed soil maps, maybe we can layer some together and save some time

Kim: can we get Steve some fish-sampling equipment so he can find that out when he's in the field?

Jenny: some populations may be very small. eDNA can find out if it's fish-bearing, not if it's cutthroat trout

Kendra: we definitely plan to use eDNA and markers. Curious about amphids and reptiles too.

10:13 AM Surface Water subcommittee update – Zylstra

Kim/Erin

Meeting monthly on Zylstra and False Bay Creek issues. Land Bank has the property around Zylstra preserve, SJ Preservation Trust has adjacent Red Mill farm. Two senior water rights, Reservoir, and Irrigation. We've made progress with strategy to resolve water rights. Also, discussion of planting strategy for creek and lakeshore.

Restoration of riparian: progress with fencing cattle out of parts of creek, plans to extend fence along San Juan Valley creek as well. Land Bank plans some planting in summer to improve riparian zone and water quality.

Zylstra gets over 70°F in summer, hyper-eutrophic, problems with toxic algae. We found a Conservation District watershed plan from 2002; we were already following most of the objectives/recommendations in that plan.

Byron: at a future meeting I can go into detail by property owner of what we're considering and look at maps.

Kendra: harmful algal blooms will likely materialize around the county as climate heats up. Important to develop strategies not just here but other heated ponds, especially seasonal not created by any surface stream

Judy: also need to consider floating solar panels, reduces temperature and evaporation

10:29 AM Adjourn meeting. Next full meeting in May