



Clean Water Advisory Committee

December 14, 2023

Committee Members in Attendance: Anne Jarrell, Kimbal Sundberg, Bob Egan, Jenny DeGroot, Cathi Winnings, Kyle Dodd, Lynn Bahrych, Vicki Heater

Ex-officio, County support staff, and members of public: Tyler Davis, Sam Buck, Jolyn Leslie, Raquel Callans, Cindy Wolf, Dave Checkley, Kendra Smith, Sam Whitridge, Krista Davis

9:04 AM **Welcome** *Kim Sundberg*

9:05 AM **Public Comment** *none*

9:06 AM **Business Operations**

- Approve December 14th Agenda
- Approve October 19th Minutes
 - Motion to approve: Kendra Smith
 - No objections. Minutes Approved

9:07 AM **Staff & Agency Updates**

- **Ecology Update**

Buck Smith

- Continue to work with Hannah Heights (water system that has contamination) on San Juan Island. Paul Hart still looking to locate new well for system on neighbor property. Standing by.
- Tugboat "El Capitan" that sank at West Sound marina last month, fuel pumped in 2020. Minor sheening. Coast guard opened trust fund, all keeping eye on it. Meeting today at 9:30 to discuss what to do with it (State or Feds will take charge). Hopefully get it out of water soon.
- Orcas Transfer Station incident: Operator using mechanical device to compact trash, small pop/explosion. Gas was released, operator felt sick/faint. Called Fire Department and Department of Ecology. Suited up in level B, found container. All are okay. Kendra confirmed all are okay. Some sort of chemical reaction between hand warmer product and thinner/wood preservative related item. Press release on County website. Kendra

shared reminder that thinner products are considered hazardous waste and should be separated out of trash.

- Kimbal question: What is the process for declaring counties in West Wad drought condition. (12 counties classified as drought but not San Juan County.) Buck answer: By statute, if an area is expected to have 75% or less of normal water supply and undue hardship, then declared drought. SJC did not meet “undue hardship category this year. Kimbal question: Explain undue hardship? A lot of increased water hauling, dry wells, low ponds reported during period. What do you get if you get a drought declaration through State? Buck answer: If drought is declared, you will know. You can submit an application for drought emergency relief (change to water right or issue a new water right). 15 day period to do it, from time it comes in the door to the time they issue it. If governmental entity, funding also available for things like emergency wells, etc, but not available to individuals. Kimbal voiced concerns about drought issues and motioned to discuss it during Comp Plan. Buck: Undue hardship is not defined in statute, just have to make a decision

- Environmental Stewardship

Kendra Smith

- County budget passed on 12th of this week. CIP approved. 9 projects listed in CIP for this year, will be getting out rate adjustments, roughly set to \$100-120 a month. A little more balanced than years past between islands. Will have out for April (sent as part of tax statements even though fee assessment)
- Continue to work on planting projects. More planned for Winter.
- Kimbal question: Did you get the push back on the fee structure for CIP? Kendra answer: We went with initial one presented. Did review and revise and made some revisions (Roads indicated they would take care of some), got approved second time. No public feedback.

- Health

Raquel Callans

- Jolyn phasing out, Raquel taking place. Enjoyed being on committee. Bittersweet to leave SJC and enjoyed time here. Passing baton to Raquel.
- Raquel: Been in private sector as Engineer in Whatcom County and serving SJC. Started here Nov 1st as Regional Engineer.
- Planning side: Town submitted water system plan. Health returned comments to plan. Approved Eastsound User Association Water System plan. Continuing work with Doe Bay in interest to serve Olga.
- Jolyn: Waiting on EPA to issue draft Lead and Copper Rule Improvements (LCRI). Just released draft, currently in comment period time. Main goals: Helps protect children from exposure to lead. Proposed to be reduced from 15 micrograms per leader down to 10. Also intended to help disadvantaged communities more. Other part is Lead Service

Line Inventory, due for all systems by October 2024. Providing technical assistance. Going to be rolled out to 25 largest municipalities in state, then focus on small systems.

- Vicki Heater question: Eastsound taking over management of Doe Bay, Olga, and Rosario. What are the plans? Jolyn answer: Yes, they're taking over (already have taken over). Independent governing bodies still at those systems (Eastsound not doing overall governance) and water association boards. Eastsound has contracts in place with said entities for operation of systems. Eastsound has to update SMA plan by next year. Unique thing with Eastsound (FH already has same approval) for systems over 1000 connections, have category called "Unspecified". Eastsound has adequate supply for next 10 years, and has over 1000 connections, meaning they have approval to grow in accordance with their approved plan.
- Vicki Heater: Huge change. Significant meaning for adjudicated water rights in area because there is a potential to look at system as a single entity. Has been a goal for decades. Still in formative phases, but worth paying attention to and supporting. Leslie: On that note, both Olga and Doe Bay have historically had high rates leakage (In some cases have calculated 40% leakage). Doe Bay only reads service meters twice a year. Trying to figure out capacity to allow this to happen. Source metering is confusing and don't really have meters on outlet of big storage tank. Have brought leakage numbers down over last couple of years, but has been really bad. Vicki: Eastsound now has state of the art metering with remote reading to monitor pipes at all times. Jolyn: Doe Bay open to something like that.
- Jenny question: Leakage problem and how much water is being taken out of Mountain Lake, what is the plan? Jolyn answer: No requirement at DOH level. Metering is source, not at point of diversion (where it comes into plant) Buck: Way law is written, need to concentrate on metering the larger users (more than one cubic foot per second in the fish critical basins. SJC not one of those) Will talk to management about monitoring with meter. Would be nice to figure out how to save leakage water. Challenging to get new pipe in over hillside. Suggested to see if Jolyn has DOH funding to help. Jolyn: Not sure if they do. Part of why Olga agreed to be supplied by Doe Bay was because of risk of transmission line. (Storm of winter 2020 wiped out roads and had severe impacts, now even more cognizant of future impacts). Olga plant is older, Doe Bay just replaced in 2015/16. Jenny: Has heard that water level is quite low at Mountain Lake. Kimbal: Salmon recovery or someone else has funded Peter to put in monitoring system, Peter couldn't get it to work.
- Bob: Feels easy in his world (cost wise and others) to put in monitoring device at pipeline for Doe Bay. Wants to give context to Jolyn comments on management for Doe Bay/Olga/Rosario: Eastsound is a contract operate, only manage operations of systems, don't control it. Sold memberships to Doe Bay/Olga/Rosario mainly for legal standpoint to not charge taxes for services. Still unclear what memberships allow as far as being on the board with Eastsound, upheaval lately but starting to get things smoothed out. Time

will tell whether is is sustainable or not. Personal opinion is that neither Olga nor Doe Bay would give up boards to manage the system.

- Jolyn: Washington Water still owns system. After Roy retired, Joel went to Eastsound. Brought people up from Gig Harbor to run plant, in some cases did not go well. When WA Water discovered no other option, they hired Eastsound. Joel came back to operate plant, with Eastsound not WA Water. Still owned by WA Water but has heard they are trying to find buyer.

9:33 **Cindy has to step out at 10am.** Floor opened for Council questions. No questions. Glad budget is done!

9:35 AM **October Meeting Action Items & Updates**

- **Manganese Testing**

Raquel Callans

- Able to get public version of Manganese Initiative. Health Advisory Level since 2003. Using health levels to be proactive with systems with high manganese. (.3 for children and infants, 1.0 milligrams per liter for adults) Can forward along information. Open for questions
- Vicki: Manganese is common constituent in island water. Shocking change in standards. Required testing for iron and manganese, but mainly for plumbing not health risk. Really significant and there is going to be a ton of water quality data.
- Jolyn: There is a secondary standard for manganese, about aesthetic issues (discoloration), .05 milligrams per liter. (Health impacts: .3 impacts for infants and children under 3. 1.0 milligrams per liter for adults) Samples collected from water systems required at entry point of distribution, if collected raw (before treatment) results look higher than they actually are. Making change because manganese tends to collect in the system and can compound. Levels become higher as they sit, when there is a disruption/flow reversal it can be released. Also a harbor for things like lead and arsenic that combine to manganese. Has been highlighted more as health impact over last couple of years instead of just aesthetic (discoloration) issue. Right now: Public notification to customers if at levels. No requirement yet to install treatment. Chance that some time in future it might become a federal level health standard (MCL).

- **Rosario diversion Update**

Kelly Hamilton

- No update

- **False Bay Creek water quality presentation update**

Kimbal Sundberg

- 2-year study University of WA and Labs did on date on nutrients and water quality parameters to find how much of watershed is being transported to False Bay biological reserve. Draft is done, both Judy and Kimbal have looked at it. Feel it is kind of long and

convoluted. Turned over to another grad student from University in Maine (can't remember which one), disconnect with people who collected data and those writing report. Feel they can put together a report for next meeting in January for anyone interested in the study. Tyler will get word out before meeting assuming presentation is ready.

9:45 AM **Subcommittee Updates**

- **Groundwater Subcommittee**

Kyle Dodd

- Ongoing USGS report: Report 2/3 complete as of Nov 7. Expected courtesy review by end of January. Group was working on Puget Sound basin wide recharge model using the soil water balance (model used for us) and waiting on that to be finished. Taking longer than expected, but on radar.
- Lopez ground water monitoring network: Annual basis to do a field visit to 8 wells on Lopez and collect data from data loggers as well as take water sample results. Occurred last week in November. Consultant working on compiling data from probes and groundwater quality. Should be done by first of year.
- Expanded scope of work with consultant on north Lopez groundwater monitoring network, looking into trends. Received draft support in September. Provided comments back to them in October. Waiting for finalized report. Essentially over 15 years of data collection on Lopez, finding slow increase on chloride (4-12 milligrams per liter). Not at point of emergency, monitoring to not get to emergency level.
- Hannah Heights: Will have another update with Paul tomorrow, meet routinely. 3 grant loan applications into State Department of Health and a grant application to USDA Rural Development. Both have long lead times. Still trying to find neighboring property willing to explore drilling a well.
- Groundwater subcommittee met Nov. 16. Dan Burke (general manager from Eastsound) gave 2023 annual report. Great to hear that groundwater production has decreased since 2017. Due to water being sold decreasing during this same time period. Remote monitors finding leaks and alerting customers real time. Really encourages with managerial and financial control that Eastsound is providing to other water systems. Eastsound is currently servicing about 70% of Orcas population, provides capacity and sustainability. Last takeaway from presentation: Using remote read meters and remote read groundwater monitoring probes. Looking to use for our groundwater monitoring and potential for expanding to use for other wells around county.
- Respect to Manganese initiative: Will review at local level to see how best to incorporate into individual water availability review as well as Group B water systems.
- Cindy question: 70% using Eastsound water system? Households on Orcas, or of water systems being administered? Kyle answer: Yes, stat given by Dan. 70% of population served directly by Eastsound or by water system in contract with Eastsound. Cindy

wonders about accuracy of statistic with well usage on Orcas. Kyle: That's something separate, hasn't flushed that part out yet. Jolyn suggests percent of population (Olga, Doe Bay, Rosario, Eastbound) is majority of population. Cindy says there are many single-family wells and wondering what data it is based on. Kyle said it can be fact checked back through Dan. Vicki: Main water systems on Orcas are surface water systems, even though Eastsound gets about 50% of water from well field. Jolyn: It is a very unique situation and good is so many ways. Other parts of state, small systems are struggling to keep certified operators. The model Eastsound has (8-9 operators to move around and all cross trained in each system) not common in other parts of state.

- **Surfacewater Committee**

Kimbal Sundberg

- Met Nov 16, 6 members present. Met about Crow Valley work (stream that flows into west sound) as far as restoration and potential of removing obstructions, and streamside repair work. Cascade Creek situation with salmon and cutthroats, juveniles still present in stream. As of Nov 16 no adult spawners present. Jenny reported no Fall spawners this year. Coho juveniles still in creek. No chinook or coho spawners this year.
- EDNA sampling. Technique for pumping water 5 gal out of creek then putting through filter an analysis for DNA of various fish and other wildlife. Interest in getting comprehensive program. Still don't have identified funding to do sampling, but possible in next couple of years.
- Discussion on dry Fishtrap creek. Dam constructed in 80s or 90s. Controls most of water that flows down creek. Dry conditions this year caused dry stream. Public Works put in new culvert for blow out a few years back, concerned no water going through new culvert. Water right and impoundment right up there, water not being released reliably. Ongoing issue for over a decade with ecology, owners, fish and wildlife, etc.
- Started discussion for water element for comprehensive plan, will discuss later today (Drought preparedness)
- Destination Management Plan: Issues with vacation rentals (lack of information and date on how much water being used and how it affects tourism). How it affects population and tourism water use.

10:03 AM **Ongoing Business**

- **Fishtrap Creek Flow**

Jenny DeGroot

- Felt Kimbal gave great update. Saw flow, what is supposed to come down is not coming down. Didn't collect actual data, just took photos and video. Most water still seems to be going to Skull Creek (supposed to use culvert for majority of water to go to Fish trap creek). Recommendation was above 2.5 CFS of water diverted to Skull Creek. Not sure if ecology has some point will check on flows. Kelly unaware of issues in creek. Buck said will put heads together with Kelly and manager and see what can be done. Jenny:

Daughter still owns property. Discussion of waiting as he is quite old. New owner at base of Fishtrap creek very interested in salmon recovery work, plantings could occur. Returning flow to creek is primary need. Culverts have been resolved (9ft culvert) so flooding concern fixed. Kendra: You can drive a truck and a moose through there.

- **Bayhead Culvert update**

Kendra Smith

- Blew out same year as Cormorant. Project bid and accepted. Posted notice of project 6 weeks prior to start, community not pleased with timing of notice and that there was a drive around option around Dolphin Bay and back to ferry terminal (roughly 10-mile diversion). Project suspended and back to drawing board. (All occurred while Kendra was away, so didn't have opportunity to weigh in.) Turned project over to Public Works in January of that year. Now back to Environmental Stewardship to go through with public involvement and engagement.
 - Key things: Have taken look at alternative of not closing road fully (bypass). Has to be done in road right-of-way without condemnation. Requires excavation of about 4000 cubic yards (400 dump trucks) which doubles prices of replacement. Have drawn it up and run cost estimate numbers, will share when visit with community about tradeoffs and challenges of this particular site. Similar to West Beach culvert. Soil conditions like jelly, shoring virtually impossible which is why we need to excavate (20-25 feet down). Community concerned that part of Dolphin Bay Rd is gravel, on TIP for gravel road conversion. Could make situation of defining options more palatable. Trying to strike balance between fact that culvert needs to be replaced to standards, and that soil conditions are challenging to work with. Goal is to have community conversations this spring and early summer, get to resolution, finish design, and be ready to bid and go to construction for 2025. FEMA funding extension request put in by state in April, should know by July if extension is granted for next two years. Roads department looking at same system up at LaPorte.
- Kimbal question: Is main cost driver fish passage considerations or storm water considerations or combo of both? Kendra answer: Case of culverts that are deep below road grade and steep, fish passage requirements is much larger size culvert. Big part of cost. Sloppy soils and other issues dictate what type of culvert is needed. Don't know how to address broader issue on anything over 1% slope for fish passage.
- Kimbal: Feels there should be a feedback loop back to DFW, with practicality of what you can do. Asked if there are any fish we care about in Bay Head Creek. Kendra: Yes. Beth had taken photos of cutthroat trout in pool just below (June 6th?) Have confirmed with them 3 times, Fish and Wildlife perspective is we need to replace culvert to fish standards. Would like to have conversation with Fish and Wildlife about setting priorities for culverts in this county (In this case we have FEMA money, but in other instances we don't, don't have local money, and not doing to have salmon recovery money.) Kimbal

offered if Kendra sends anything, he has a meeting this afternoon with the HPA Advisory he is on and can bring up local issues at the end of the meeting.

- Kimbal: Concerns about how county can afford this. Kendra: Originally was \$855k. But with concerns of public for access, adds another \$6-700 thousand. Significant issue. Has nothing written but said he can share what she just shared.
- Bob question: Are culverts downstream passable or not, and are they taken into account? Kendra answer: They don't consider existing artificial barriers as a constraint to requirement. Flexibility for natural barrier (i.e. giant waterfall) to not require passage. Pretty forthright in requirements. Long battle with tribes and others to open systems as much as possible to save species. Jenny glad it was brought up and completely understands cost.
- Kimbal offered to take "general beef" to the group. Problem is asking for fish passage at all flow conditions, but our streams down have water all year. Under what conditions are you trying to get fish passage through? Kendra: In this case is at a 5.5% slope. Slopes are fundamental rub. Need to be strategic when moving through the watershed. Currently Roads is looking at strategies of slip lining possible culverts instead of replacing. Currently approach to some when risk of failure is high but cost is also high.

10:27 AM **New Business Discussion**

- **Trucked water trends and 2024 strategy** *Denice Kulseth, Town of Friday Harbor*

- Kendra: Stepped back from this a bit because of County and Town conversation about resolving water
- Kimbal: Issue of trucked water to fill dry wells (water comes from Trout Lake, has become go to source for island water problems) Is this going to be a growing issue, is it an issue under control? Kendra: Would like to have situation get worked out with Town before we address. Kyle: Water haulers not filling dry wells, they are filling reservoirs under strict orders from town. Increase since April due to Hannah Heights water system failure. Still hauling and will be for foreseeable future. Town concerns being addressed by Council and PA office.
- Kimbal question: How much of water is going to needs of emergency? Wants to see data from Town. Kendra: Once conversation with Town is resolved, can talk more about comp plan update. Wanted to mention Climate element of comp plan, acknowledging drought scenarios and implications of broader water. Feedback on tourism plan and water capacity of interest to public. All on the agenda for the coming year.
- Bob curious about whether Fairgrounds is within service area boundaries of Town watershed. Kyle: They are a connection outside of town. Not in town limits but of a connection that Town serves. Bob: Feels if Fairgrounds is within service boundaries, becomes issue of just putting house in order and paying whatever membership fees.

With municipal code, there is a requirement to serve within service area. Raquel: Working with Kyle as they review the town's water system plan.

- Vicki: Hoping for broader discussion with Denise, Jesse, Raquel on town water service plan. What they are projecting for their capacity and service growth. Eastsound capacity? Service capacity they have? Hauled water and data. Would like to hear from Town. Kendra: That can be arranged going forward.
- Kendra: Comp Plan revisited for adoption in 2025. Homework assignment: Look at what has recently been adopted and what needs to be considered? Going to have to update FEMA hazard mitigation plan and what ties into climate element and drought strategy.
- Kimbal: Suggests work sessions for next year. Groundwater. Surfacewater. Never saw copy of approved water element from last plan, get out to look at? Still don't have water meter systems, that he knows of. Group B systems data? Systems having real problems. Town of FH used to have website for levels of Trout Lake. Would like to get up to speed on plans for future. Kendra: Can talk to them about that for beginning of next year. Kyle: It has been gone through thoroughly recently, but agrees there are areas that can be expanded.
- Kendra: Working closely with Sophia on weaving in elements that public can get mind around. Will have update hopefully in next month.

- **First Flush Data Summary**

Krista Davis

- Schedule conflict. Bumped to next meeting. Kendra not sure how much data was able to be gathered.

- **Comprehensive Plan Water Element**

Kendra Smith

- Working with Cascadia consulting group (did greenhouse gas inventory and were lead on developing climate element guidance document). Elements of climate overlap (sea level rise and implications in both drinking water and septic systems). When reading, tag in comp plan with leaf and breeze that indicate climate. Will be visiting with you all to sort out how to best communicate, primarily deep elements (Sea level rise, drought, wildfire, forest health more in realm of Conservation District. Things like heat dome, tsunamis, earthquake risk in Hazard Mitigation/Emergency response realm)
- Expected to have timeline and outline of a public participate process end of January/beginning of February.
- Vicki question: Is forest health on Conservation District work plan? Paul needs to be made aware. Figure out how to fund work. Cathi: First coordination meeting later today for community wildfire protection plan. Kendra: Not going to reinvent wheel. Hoping what they come up with around issue will address issue. Forgot to mention: Severe storm erosion, debris management, and flooding also in their wheelhouse, along with drought and water supply. Not sure who covers smoke.

- Kimbal question: Is comp plan update well-funded and is it centered in community development? Kendra answer: Comp Plan well-funded. Council asked team to take on new climate element piece. Should be receiving \$300,000 grant from commerce to address specific piece.
- Kimbal: Suggested DCD liaison for work sessions for continuity between departments and committee. Kendra: Noted that Kyle is part of the interim DCD leadership team (DCD Director)
- Cathi: Puget Sound NEP mailing list, Stormwater Strategic Initiative just announced an RFP

- **SRFB Riparian Funding**

Sam Whitridge

- Just sent out info on RFP releases: Climate resilience and stormwater parks
- Update on new riparian funding: This year state through climate commitment act and via natural climate solutions account just shy of \$24 million available around state for riparian projects. RCO elected to allocate funds through regular allocation formula. Based on formula, \$9 million will go to Puget Sound partnership, about \$485 thousand to San Juan County. Kicks off early in new year with requests for proposals, one-page letters due February 16, full applications due April 17. Wrap up not until summer. Eligible project type: Acquisition (50% or less of uplands included), Riparian (fresh water, marine, estuary), Riparian planting projects, invasive species, riparian site stewardship, allowance for instream restoration, assessment and inventory projects. No match requirement if specifically riparian funded. Can carry money over to 2025 or give to another salmon recovery entity around state. Encourages all to bring projects forward.

11:00 AM **Committee Housekeeping**

- **2024 Meeting Schedule Confirmation**

- Regular Meetings – Third Thursday of Even Months
 - February 15th, April 18th, June 20th, August 15th, October 17th (consider 12th?)
- Subcommittee Meetings – Third Thursday of Odd Months
 - January 18th, March 21st, May 16th, July 18th, September 19th, November 21st

- **Member Recruitment**

- Vacant seats remaining include:
 - San Juan Position 4
 - Orcas Position 5
 - Lopez/Shaw positions 11 and 12

11:02 AM **Adjourn Meeting**