



Clean Water Advisory Committee

October 19, 2023

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

Ex-officio, County support staff, and members of public: Tyler Davis, Kyle Dodd, Dean Dougherty, Kelly Hamilton, Jolyn Leslie, Laura Pitts, Cindy Wolf

9:05 AM **Convene meeting** *Kimbal Sundberg*

9:06 AM **Public Comment** *none*

9:07 AM **Business Operations**

Approve October 19th agenda: no objections, the agenda is approved. Approve August 17th Minutes: Jenny asks for a clarification. Lynn moves to approve with Jenny's change, Judy seconds. The August minutes are approved.

9:08 AM **Staff & Agency Updates**

Ecology Update

Kelly Hamilton

Kelly is WRIA 1 and 2 Water Master, that's the lead compliance staff in Nooksak and San Juan County water basins. Review Water Master duties. Kelly also works with Parks Department and Jenny on Cascade Creek.

Contact information: kelly.hamilton@ecy.wa.gov desk phone, 360-255-4385, work cell 360-706-3924

9:10 AM Environmental Stewardship *Tyler Davis*

-we're planting at Fishtrap Creek following Public Works putting in culvert, that'll happen in November most likely

-on Lopez, there'll be planting at Farmers Market bioswale first week of November, after noxious weeds removal

-and also, a few of us are managing the Destination Management Plan, collecting feedback, deadline is Oct. 31st.

link to the plan, [San Juan Islands Destination Management Plan | Engage San Juan County \(sanjuancountywa.gov\)](#)

9:13 AM Health Update *Kyle Dodd*

Update on Hannah Heights PFAS contamination: checked with Paul Hart, volunteer water system Point of contact. They secured emergency system USDA grant. Their options are to drill new well about a mile east, second option would be to filter out PFAS, third option is desalination. They're still hauling from FH and using bottled water.

Jolyn: Hannah Heights applying for State Revolving fund (SRF) loan, we've received their planning document

Judy: have we found any other contamination in the islands as testing continues?

Jolyn: not that I'm aware of. Hannah Heights #2 well may also have some levels (that's a separate system), but not required to test so we don't have those results. Don't know how many County systems have tested.

Kim: this has come up in elections for the fire chief, does anyone have more information about that?

Kyle: Paul indicated that Hannah Heights approached Fire Department and they don't accept responsibility

Jolyn: a couple other updates from Dept. of Health,

- I've taken another job here at Dept. of Health but still filling in on San Juan County duties. My replacement should start November 16th, hopefully we can introduce her at next CWAC meeting

- there's a secondary standard for manganese in our regulations but EPA has a different level, now we're developing a program to address discrepancies. No requirement yet to treat

-this is prime time of year to get SRF loans, low interest loans for water system and infrastructure upgrades. Application period ends November 30th

Q: do we have problems with manganese in our wells on islands?

Kyle: we do have some levels, it's a secondary contaminant

Vicki: there are quite a few periodic occurrences, does that need to be part of the constituents to test for?

ACTION ITEM: Kyle made a note to follow up on manganese and see if we need to revise our process.

ACTION ITEM: Jolyn will share a copy of Health issue paper on this when it's publicly available.

Kim: can that be done administratively to add manganese as a testing requirement?

Kyle: it would be a code change

Jolyn: we're still in process of finalizing the program, we will have more specific direction for water systems

9:26 AM **False Bay Creek Restoration**

False Bay Creek Restoration: Next Phase & Ecology Grant App

Tyler Davis

Last week submitted this application with Ecology for more False Bay Creek restoration (Tyler shares screen)

The application is focused on Lower Zylstra Lake, mostly Land Bank land and some SJPT. Focused on habitat restoration on upper part of lower reservoir, just over 18 acres. On lower part it's a wider swath where historical flow is starting to re-form, so, we're focused on that area as water course changes. This was a big ask, \$273K

9:30 AM San Juan Preservation Trust (SJPT) Update

Dean Dougherty

The stream corridor has changed recently. now there's water on southern stretch of the creek, some wetland.

Judy: when do you anticipate putting in fencing and how wide will the area be? (Tyler shows map)

Dean: It's a 100' corridor from that new channel. It'll happen sometime next year. With planting last year, we had to do a lot of watering with the dry spring. We were able to pump water from the creek.

Kim: Will the creek entering False Bay Creek from Patty's Pond be fenced? It's good fish habitat. Fencing there shouldn't be disregarded

Dean: that's SJPT property, cattle don't get in much, eventually that should all be fenced.

- discussion of funding for remainder of work, Ecology grant won't cover fencing, that money can come from SJPT

Kim: how will cattle be watered once they're fenced out of the creek?

Dean: there's already water access in their field

Judy: what's happening with the dam?

Kim: I think Land Bank wants to maintain status quo for now.

Tyler: there are still some water rights questions but it's a key focus, we'll continue to discuss with various parties

9:40 AM **Subcommittee updates**

(Surfacewater Subcommittee did not meet in September)

Groundwater Subcommittee

Kyle Dodd

We met October 5th, had a good discussion on 3 points:

- the Destination Management Plan, we plan to submit comments as a subcommittee
- conversation about water availability and County aquifers

- and the Lopez Groundwater Monitoring Network and the draft trend report

1. Destination Management Plan, some concerns. Current visitor numbers, what those mean for County resources. We need to look at peak use and plan for that. Any plan like this needs to focus heavily on education around limited water quantity and on water conservation, to educate visitors.

2. Looking at water availability, largest systems in County have a surfacewater component so they can better handle growth and tourism. That's Friday Harbor, Roche Harbor, Eastsound and East Orcas. Kyle will check in with these large systems routinely to see how they made it through the tourist season with added growth. Friday Harbor water system raised concerns about the hauled water and what that'll mean for their system plan. They need to look at if and how they want to continue that practice. Stay tuned for more about that. Aside from those big sources, other sources that use fractured bedrock wells have limited storage. They recharge during wet season and draw down during dry season. Need to encourage users to monitor and manage that use.

We have current studies, expect the USGS draft anytime now, need to add some discussion about water balance.

- some discussion of East Orcas plans submitted to DOH, they have Doe Bay & Eastsound, not Olga yet.

Vicki: Regarding water resources and the Destination Plan. My concern is with the section that discusses resource use (both water and sewer systems), it's very short and states that technology will solve these issues. It's on page 44. We must design for peak use, it'll be a huge capacity. The language in that section was dismissive of this.

Jolyn: We don't review that plan. In the water system plans, they need to account for peak demand, providing historical usage data from past several years. We look at actual metered water usage as well as source capacity. We ask for background data supporting expected demand. Our approvals last for 6-10 years. County also needs to review to ensure it's consistent. All these plans required to be available to the public (usually on websites)

Judy: should surfacewater subcommittee meet to look at the Destination Management plan?

Kim: yes, I've looked at. Deadline is at the end of this month but we may want to submit joint comments

We were in a drought this past year and need to get a handle on idea of converting the surfacewater to groundwater. Should we convert the water flowing through a watershed and continue to stress it out? In addition to tourism during peak demand. Trucked water was originally just for emergencies, now becoming operational.

Kyle: that's the point of reaching out to larger water sources. They've been dealing with this level of tourism since Covid, how are they managing now? Are they seeing wells not refilling? We're gathering those data

Cindy: reminder that the Destination Management plan is still just a draft. We're trying to figure out where it fits in with other reports. CWAC can comment on water, but it might be premature. This is an initial public draft, next it'll go through internal process, then Tribal consultation and at least one more public comment period. This plan is not an instrument to address either water usage, those issues will be addressed in the Comprehensive Plan

Kim: so focus our water availability concern comments on the general nexus with tourism and not on specifics

Vicki: I took away that this plan is advocating for a lot of money for tourism infrastructure. It looks like a final document, not a review draft. If this is actually an initial stage of this plan then there will be reviews by this committee and other committees, it feels like that process has been skipped. The end of this month is the last opportunity to make comments. We'll come up with a direct statement that it needs to include water availability/

Ann: We fought hard to address water availability but also water conservation education for tourists, not just locals. This is the ideal time because it's getting a lot of press, people are focused on it. They may have public comment process in future, but it may not get the same attention. This is a good time to insert our concerns

ACTION ITEM: surfacewater subcommittee will draft comments and circulate.

Cindy: so, schedule a special meeting? I'm concerned for Open Meeting issues if you do this by document-share

ACTION ITEM: will investigate Open Meeting issues regarding CWAC comments

Lynn: The groundwater subcommittee has a draft comment letter in circulation.

Cindy: do we need to have another training in Open Public Meetings act? members need to be aware of liabilities

The link to review is at the end of these minutes. As a reminder, although the State does not require compliance to the OPMA for strictly advisory committees, San Juan County Code does require compliance. Official comments must be approved by the full CWAC.

Vicki: we weren't a quorum. We can share comments with the rest of the group to review

Kyle: I'll talk about North Lopez at the next meeting. We continue to look at that network, now we have a draft report, shows a slow trend of increasing chlorides. I'll present at the next meeting when the report is final

ACTION ITEM: Kyle will circulate that report once it's finalized

Kelly: [Submit and view Condition Monitoring Observer Reports \(CMOR\) | Drought Impacts Toolkit \(unl.edu\)](#)

You can use the Condition Monitoring Observer Reports system to report drought-related conditions and impacts.

10:19 AM **Ongoing Business Discussion & Updates**

• Cascade Creek Salmonid Update

Tyler Davis on behalf of Jenny DeGroot

No chinook observed this fall. Should seek funding sources to help with leak maintenance on the lines there.

10:22 AM • Olga Water Supply Update

Tyler on behalf of Paul Groeninger

Paul from Olga couldn't join today. The Olga Water Board met, opening discussion with WA Water Trust, Jason from the Trust may visit in November. Intertie with Doe Bay is moving slowly but starting to look at costs

Kelly: several months ago, we had Rosario turn off their diversion because water wasn't making it to Cascade Lake. They've now fixed that and turned it back on to lower rate than what they're authorized to take.

ACTION: Kelly will get more details regarding how diversion ditch was fixed and how much water they're taking

10:23 AM • False Bay Creek Water Quality Study

Judy Meyer

A student from NEU is doing some analysis, could present at our December meeting. They think stable isotope data suggests Ulva is getting nutrients from marine environment, but I still want to look harder at data

- Yes, there's interest in a presentation to the main committee, probably a half hour

ACTION: Judy will try to schedule it, maybe Wendel can make it too

• At least 2-3 people can't make it on December 21st. December 14th could work for most. Let's plan on that

10:29 AM • SJC Clean Water CIP Update

Tyler Davis

The CIP was presented to Council. Tyler shows spreadsheet as it looked when CWAC approved it. The Council did not approve it because there were concerns about how rates would change from previous year. Table shows rates proposed to County, they requested additional work be done including how to get no rate increase. New revised CIP with a couple of projects struck from it with the justification that Roads would fund those projects. Also adjusting some numbers for more conservative estimates. Those changes made rates decrease, but still some significant increases. Tyler reviews more details about how rates were calculated. Now returning to CWAC to request approval for this new revised CIP so we can resubmit to Council with changes.

Judy: the Lopez tide gates are off completely or postponed? how does that link with Roads?

Tyler: off of our CIP completely with justification that it will be funded by Roads. The tide gates are under Roads.

Vicki: why is Roads no longer paying into this CIP?

Tyler: I'll need to let Kendra speak on this when she's back. But the Roads levy didn't pass, they're tight on their funding. They can take some of the work back into their department rather than contribute \$200K into ours

Vicki: it's obvious County roads are a huge component in stormwater issues, of course they need to pay to help with those problems. Vicki points out the issues for those on outer islands – paying from taxes, less direct benefit

Kim: recall the reason SJI had a lower rate is because the town of FH was taking care of a lot of stormwater issues but the County is taking care of issues in Lopez village and Eastsound. If that discrepancy no longer exists, County wouldn't need to spend that money. With respect to Utility assessments for outer island property owners, many use ferry served islands for services and resources

Cindy: Comments on the relationship between Roads and Clean water from this committee would be useful for Council. As for outer islands, in other jurisdiction in the state, clean water utility not run by neighborhood (even in other jurisdictions made up of islands), everyone in county boundaries pays the same rate. We devote a lot of administrative time to this. Maybe we need to discuss this system at some point within this utility.

Tyler shares screens with regional rates: SJ County current rates are already very low relative to others in the state, even new rates would be at low end compared with other counties and municipalities.

Kim: any objection to the revised CIP?

Judy: Roads is no longer contributing but a major source for stormwater. So, I support with questions about that.

Proposed amendment: approve revised Clean Water Utility CIP with concern that Roads is no longer contributing to this CIP, given that roads are a major source of stormwater that this utility needs to address

MOTION: to approve the revised CIP with Judy's proposed amendment comment

Vicki I second that, but do we have a quorum now that Jenny and Ann have left early? YES, there's still a quorum

- All approve, the motion passes

10:53 AM **New Business Discussion**

First Flush Data Summary – Krista Davis will present about this in December

10:54 AM **SRFB Riparian Funding**

Tyler

Davis

There will be some incoming funds via SRFB in the 2024 grant ground process earmarked specifically for riparian work. Details still forthcoming, but around \$400K. Sam Whitridge will likely come to December meeting with more information, so start thinking about how to apply these funds, specific projects around riparian restoration

10:56 AM **Committee Housekeeping**

- Member Recruitment Updates (Vacant Seats: San Juan Position 4, Orcas Position 5, Lopez/Shaw Positions 11, 12)

We're still recruiting, one position each on San Juan and Orcas and two positions on Lopez

Next full CWAC meeting planned for December 14th. Please review the MRC link regarding open meetings, <https://mrsc.org/explore-topics/legal/open-government/open-public-meetings-act>

10:57 AM **Adjourn Meeting**