



Clean Water Advisory Committee

April 17, 2025

Committee Members in Attendance: Lynn Bahrych, Jenny DeGroot, Bob Eagan, Vicki Heater, Ann Jarrell, Richard Locke, Laura Pitts, Melissa Rohde, Kimbal Sundberg,
Ex-officio, County support staff, and members of public: Shauna Barrows, Angela Broderick, Sophia Cassam, Pauline Chiquet, Tyler Davis, Susan Eshelman, Kelly Hamilton, Kari McVeigh, Kendra Smith

(pre-meeting chatter about IT, using Teams from phones, potential security updates)

9:03 AM **Convene Meeting** *Kim Sundberg*

9:04 AM **Public Comment** *none*

9:05 AM **Business Operations**

- Approve April 17th Agenda

In most recent draft that Tyler sent yesterday, the title of the committee is correct at the top

- Approve February 20th Minutes

Kim notes that the title at the top of the minutes needs to be changed to full committee name.

Lynn moves to approve the minutes with that change, Vicki seconds, minutes are approved

9:06 AM **Staff & Agency Updates**

- Environmental Stewardship

Kendra Smith

On staffing, today we'll post the engineering tech position to replace Krista. We've discussed duties around that job; we want to move the services of stormwater review back into Planning Dept. There are some inefficiencies having it outside of planning functions. Meanwhile, the position will include what it has covered like street sweeping and offering technical assistance on drainage issues. We'll give more updates soon
Lynn: any updates about the vacuum-assisted streetsweeper purchase that would pick up more toxins?
Kendra: they're called regenerative air sweepers –the Town had issues maintaining their sweeper, so we need to make alternative arrangements. We'd like a small electric one and we're keeping our eyes out for grants
Kim: on moving stormwater review back to Planning, Stormwater review is about moving water, keeping it clean, a lot of environmental issues aside from just sizing culverts. How will this get integrated? Now septic reviews are done by Health dept. and we don't have much involvement. How will County address environmental issues and expedite permitting? Why doesn't Environmental stewardship take on most of the environmental-related issues – we have a cadre of people with expertise on the environment
Kendra: that could be for a broader discussion. Now they've externalized regular plan review with a consultant firm. There should be efficiency gains. You're suggesting a re-analysis and we could look at that
Kari: we're lacking leadership in the Planning Dept., we're working to find a director of the DCD. It makes sense for the Health Dept. to do septic, but until we get stronger leadership in Planning, we won't be able to rethink this. Once we get through comp plan process it's clear we'll need to add resources to the Planning Dept.

Rick L.: People are on Lopez are angry with the Planning Dept. They've got some PR and community-building work to do. They're angry certain things take so long and seem to be poorly understood

Kari: we're all aware of the issues with CDC; we need to get leadership in and improvements are being made

9:21 AM • Ecology

Kelly Hamilton

WA State declared drought in Yakima and Kittitas Counties, advisories in several other central counties.

<https://ecology.wa.gov/water-shorelines/water-supply/water-availability/statewide-conditions/drought-response>

Jenny: and Kelly are you no longer our Water Master?

Kelly: correct, now it's Jeff Cederbaum. I've taken a temporary two-year position elsewhere in Ecology

Jenny: for salmon recovery and clean water we've been trying to lease or purchase water for Cascade Creek. Recently Olga water users wanted to lease some water through WA Water Trust and that grant can't move forward because of water laws. We've used emergency water for salmon projects in the past, can you clarify?

Kelly: Jeff will be meeting with Water Trust next week. There's been some lack of information about what water is perfected under that right and what can be put into Trust. In the Trust water rights program, there needs to be some reduction in use to put it into Trust. Olga will be using as much water as they have historically so there's no reduction to put into use to provide additional water to the Creek. Even though they're not using their whole water right, because they've never used that full allotment and then reduced it.

Lynn: there are some water rights holders not using full allotment, then is there risk of relinquishment?

Kelly: municipal systems are exempt from relinquishment if they remain in good standing. And a lot of these water rights were adjudicated but based on what we call 'pumps and pipes'. The court gave them a certificate not for their perfected quantity, but for their system capacity. So, it's unclear here what's been perfected.

Jenny: if Olga moves to using water from Doe Bay, how will that affect what they're able to use?

Kelly: they'd need to apply for a change to move the water right to a new location further upstream- more of an impact because taking it out earlier, there would be less water in that section between Doe Bay and Olga

Jenny: that would be potentially problematic because it would affect where overflow was released, not directly into the creek. Hopefully our committee can remain notified as you Ecology works with Doe Bay and Olga.

Vicki: if they dealt with infrastructure, may save a lot of water since historically water loss was up to 50%

ACTION: move this to next Surface water committee meeting and invite the water master Jeff Cederbaum? We just need to know the most efficient way to negotiate to protect salmon there and have a designated flow for Cascade Creek, the adjudicated amount isn't enough for salmon at certain times

Kelly: Jeff unfortunately has standing committee meetings that conflict with these full group meetings

Kim: Tyler, maybe we can schedule that at a time when we could have this technical discussion with Ecology

Tyler: Maybe June 12th, not regular meeting time because of Juneteenth, I'll work with Ecology to schedule

9:39AM • Health

Vicki Heater

Kyle got a response from USGS – they are about to publish data from the model they've been working on. The draft report is 75% complete, they're very close to publishing the recharge model. It's good news, they're making progress and communicating with us. I'll try to keep communication going with Kyle so I can continue to report on how it's proceeding. Kyle also said we need to have someone in leadership over the CDC.

Kim: we hoped for this report for the water element. Is there anything that would change recommendations?

Vicki: I'm sorry we don't have enough information yet. But I don't think it'll have any magic answers

9:45AM **New Business**

• 2026-2027 Clean Water Work Plan

Tyler Davis

Kendra: for the County, we go through a biennial budget process which starts in June. Wanted to get a sense of what folks want from utility, beyond what's in the comp plan. Helpful to have this discussion early

-Tyler shares screen showing current 2024-2025 Strategic Workplan

Tyler: We've discussed this in previous meetings, you approved this workplan. Kendra has color coded each item showing progress – green is on track, yellow is a little behind, red is far behind. The red items are mostly in out-years or there are roadblocks. Three projects on Lopez – Kendra will update on stormwater at the Village – but the others are just exploratory until we secure funds. A lot of stormwater issues are delayed.

- Kendra shares draft of 2026-2027 Strategic Workplan

Kendra discusses issues with funding and money coming through NOAA, especially salmon recovery funds. Going forward, consider what information we need for each watershed and groundwater supply basins so we can better communicate to public. Susan is working on updating the GIS with most accurate information. I added metering/groundwater analysis – that'll involve collaboration with the Health dept. Added VSP contract management that has moved to our department. Kendra discusses some issues with Lopez Village stormwater management. Also, Deer Harbor Village stormwater (that's in the CIP but Roads has backed out), this is marked as 'red' for the time being. There's a notation for more 'environmental reviews and inspections'.

Rick: I'm very willing to talk about clean water capture on Lopez, I'd love to connect with you about that
Kendra

ACTION: Kendra will send Rick some timing options to meet up

Tyler: if members have more ideas they can email to Kendra or me or bring to June CWAC meeting

Kendra: this is an iterative process, but if I have good response, I'll know what to bring to Council in June

Kim: about watershed planning element, that's great but where will funding will come from? It seems water issues are mostly about having enough groundwater. Bob shows we have plenty, but it's always about how much can get out and if not getting enough, need more storage or to use less water. Some issues are seasonal. Need to get information out to public and people wanting to buy property here, need to tailor expectations.

Kendra: we could add an education line item and come up with some materials to raise awareness

Rick: there should be a section called 'best practices' or management, there's a body of experience available

Lynn: if we're going to let folks know we have enough groundwater for everyone, need to combine with an educational program that emphasizes conservation. Shouldn't give an unreal sense of abundance

ACTION: Kendra will add an education line item about best practices, conservation – coordinate with Health

10:05 AM • Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP)

Pauline Chiquet

VSP coordinator, Pauline presents a high-level overview of the VSP with focus on water-related issues – the program as a whole and how we implement and monitor. State subcontracts management of the VSP to the Conservation District (CD). It's meant to be incentive-based to engage in actions that protect critical areas.

Timeline: VSP established in 2011 and SJC opts in. In 2018 local community members formed a workplan and centered CD as the technical service provider. In 2020 submitted first five-year report, leading to new workplan. Critical areas across the state: wetlands, critical aquifer recharge areas, frequently flooded areas, geologically hazardous areas, and fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas. All of SJC is considered a critical aquifer recharge area which makes the whole county a VSP parcel which means automatic enrollment in VSP.

Implementation – the workplan is guiding document. Focus on a few key points;

-wetland, stream, and critical aquifer recharge goals – protect, enhance, maintain, prevent degradation

Wanted to discuss this in particular with this group, e.g. wetland restoration, livestock exclusion fencing, water catchment systems, riparian zone enhancements, and habitat generation. When a landowner engages in these activities we track it. Pauline shares data for best management practices (BMP's), since 2020.

-Stream Visual Assessment Protocols (SVAP), this is a proxy for water quality sampling

-Another tool in use is the Wetland Rating System (WRS), more thorough/robust than SVAP, goal is to type wetlands (category 1-4). Collect samples every five years, currently establishing baselines for monitoring

-High Resolution Change Detection (HRCDD) to look at loss of tree cover, a metric for habitat loss/gain.

Pauline will share presentation that links to various documents and VSP workplans

QUESTIONS

Kim: I was on the work group developing the VSP plan, we discussed monitoring water quality. VSP was meant to monitor water quality above and below parcels. But are you monitoring stream flow?

Pauline: no and that's a great question – it can be so variable throughout the year

Vicki: there are some major VSP projects not included in the CWAC CIP, they're doing a great job

Pauline: as a CD we pull grant-funding from various places, some directly related to riparian. But the VSP has its own set of capital funding – a big opportunity to leverage funds, new biennium in July, hope to take on more

Jenny: How do you get individuals to work with you, recruit for monitoring?

Pauline: for monitoring, we proactively do outreach using maps. Word of mouth is effective strategy

10:28 AM Beaver Dam Analog @ False Bay Creek

Shauna Barrows

We're considering a beaver dam analog along False Bay Creek (shares map). Existing channel runs along property line. We want to encourage natural meander, increased filtration and better water quality. Now it's all reed canary grass. We're interested in mimicking what we've done upstream on Emmerling with positive results, reducing speed of flow. I'd love to install two more dams along that ditched section of creek. Working with CD and using riparian restoration funding. Presenting today to let you know we're moving forward with this project, you're aware of planting that's happened east of here and we hope to increase dispersal of water throughout that area. Monitoring program in collaboration with Spring Street science class. They've already been helping with Emmerling creek and willing to expand to this area as well, it would be nice to have more datapoints along the stream. Beaver dam analogs (BDA) are porous structures, meant to disperse the water

ACTION: Shauna can follow up by sharing more maps and images

QUESTIONS

Rick: as the water disperses, does it all go on Land Bank land?

Shauna: yes as well as SJ Preservation Trust land, working for approval on that

- Kim asks about pond to the south, and the interaction with Greg Black's cattle

Shauna: it's a process, no one has expressed concern about effects of analog on farming. Negotiation with Greg Black is all going on with SJPT. We're not concerned about impacts of this project, relatively small. With regards to that pond, we thought opportunity to positively affect fish habitat made this project timely.

Tyler: SJPT did install an exclusion fence that should be keeping cattle out of stream

Jenny: since lower Zylstra is a priority for salmon preservation, just want to ask that we protect the environment while doing work. Do you have an HPA? June is a time when salmon could be piled up in one area

Shauna: existing HPA is a fish enhancement project, Beth seems unconcerned about existing permits for the BDA work. This section of creek is almost entirely reed canary grass across the stream corridor by June. But there are contingencies in HPA for presence of fish and Beth will survey to clarify fish habitat within the area of the BDA. It'll be 30' long and 2-3' wide. But actual stream channel is about 6' wide.

Jenny: when digging up areas to stabilize plants, need to consider fish when putting sediment into channel

10:43AM **Comp Plan Update**

• Status Update

Sophia Cassam

With water element, Council wanted to see policies pared down and redundancies removed. Kendra took a crack at that and whole CWAC worked on draft, passed along recommendations to consultants. Now working on version with those updates; it'll go to planning commission next month. Additional questions or input? -with overall comp plan update, Sophia shares slide with timeline. Now we're in 'planning commission and council initial review'. Then a version 2 and contract with consultant ends in June. At end of summer hope to hold planning commission hearing with all the draft elements and maps, and work toward adoption in October. This is the time to make tweaks and changes to the draft while we still have consultants on board.

Kim: some wording in the policy wasn't quite right, did that get fixed?

Tyler: referring to issue raised by Ann via email about well capacity and Bob's response? We can dive into that, as well as Rick's question about fire safety. Let's clarify if we need to make any wording changes

Ann: wording seemed to indicate individual wells had to have some certain huge amount, it was confusing.

Bob felt ok about it, I just didn't understand the context involving subdivisions. But Bob explained it

-in section two, in reference to flow requirements with the heading "...individual wells..."

Vicki: this section in the water element reflects what's in County code now. It's a cautionary approach because resources are variable. This is a way to try to ensure there would be enough capacity in the long term.

Bob: I'll add that those production tests required for new tax parcels also require monitoring to make sure they're not impacting neighboring wells. It's a stringent and expensive test to accomplish that goal

Tyler: so is it ok as written?

Ann: I have no problem with it. But it sounds more regulatory; is that appropriate for the comp plan?

Sophia: we avoid that in general but since this text is already in the adopted element I think it's ok to leave it.

Kendra: I'd ask Kyle, I think this is from the previous version and associated with Health dept work.

ACTION: Sophia will check with Kyle on this point

Tyler: and Rick brought up questions of fire safety, where does water come from for that and how delivered?

Should that be addressed here or is it elsewhere?

Sophia: thanks, I looked for that language- it's not mentioned elsewhere in other elements (nothing about fire suppression, just impacts on climate change). I don't think that's in there. It could be a good idea to talk to

Brendan Cowan from DEM (Dept of emergency services) to see if there are other County documents that cover that which the comp plan should point to? I could see that language going in the water element

Kendra: I thought that would go into Natural Hazards Mitigation plan. Like having a hazardous debris management program. Just a plan to ensure we maintain enough water in summer to respond to fire.

Kim: there's an inter-agency fire management plan every year between Fire Marshal, DNR and any other responding departments. They have helicopters, also some designated ponds with installations for water extraction. The Fire Marshal has all that mapped. Kim lists out some other requirements for fire suppression if building a home for identifying water source/ capacity that'll supply that system. Those resources are all identified, but not sure that needs to be in the comp plan other than referenced.

-more discussion of regulations based on size of building, i.e. sprinkler systems, to stop spread of fire

ACTION: Sophia will start with Brendan & then also check with Fire Marshal

Vicki: there's a new draft of a community wildfire protection plan out for review now, great information there, it's on the CD website <https://www.sanjuanislandscd.org/wildfire-preparedness>

-Rick brings up some of the actual capacity on Lopez. Back to discussion of subdivision allotment, does that include fire suppression? we're not well organized to meet all obligations. Maybe this is a discussion for a different group. Questions about capacity for helicopters to pick up water, plans for multiple-house fires.

Rick: density is changing in Lopez village, some multi-family units etc. Let's discuss more at a future meeting