



Clean Water Advisory Committee

August 21, 2025

Committee Members in Attendance: Jenny DeGroot, Bob Eagan, Ann Jarrell, Richard Locke, Judy Meyer, Kimbal Sundberg

Ex-officio, County support staff, and members of public: Raquel Callans, Krista Chavez, Tyler Davis, Susan Eshelman, Kelly Hamilton, Jay Huckins, Kari McVeigh, Ethan Schmidt, Kendra Smith

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

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

9:05 AM **Business Operations**

- Approve August 21st Agenda, no additions or objections, agenda approved
- Approve June 12th Minutes.

MOTION: No edits, Judy moves to approve the minutes, Richard seconds, the minutes are approved.

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

- Environmental Stewardship *Kendra Smith*

Yesterday the PSP (Puget Sound Partnership) Leadership Council was here. We asked that they participate with us in trying to find new revenue streams. Representative Ramel was also here. One question was about the stormwater utility and how far can we go in funding for *receiving* water, i.e. can we use utility funding for marine support work? Most funding for the marine program will go away by 2027, so we're looking at options. We changed the methodology of the service fee from per parcel (which can be considered a tax), but it's a service fee and the service is water management that's impacted by impervious cover, so the code refers to amount of impervious cover per ESU (Equivalent Surface Units). That refers to the amount of building footprint/paved area. There are some public works and Land Banks properties, plus the fairgrounds, that have not been paying the utility fee. We're doing an audit this year for all the ESU's we haven't been charging since 2018. That way, we hope to keep the rate the same. We still need to do that analysis.

Susan: ESU refers to any structure that changes the natural course of water across the landscape

Kim: what about incentivizing, like with farmers. Can we use this program to say you have this amount of time to exclude livestock from these waterways after which time we begin charging utility fee for polluting stream?

Kendra: we'd need to investigate the legality of that. We couple some of our capital riparian projects around the VSP, so those two programs work together to prioritize the same streams. We should have that conversation with the CD; the CD should be leaning on the Dept. of Ecology to bring those into compliance. -some discussion of a past issue on Lopez in which Ecology was called in to move livestock to protect a creek and another instance on SJI in which Ecology wouldn't require rancher to exclude cattle from False Bay Creek.

Kelly: You can report an environmental issue online here, <https://ecology.wa.gov/footer-pages/report-an-environmental-issue/statewide-reporting-form-erts>

Tyler: We'll have a new staff member next week, a stormwater engineering tech, splitting time between Clean Water and Solid Waste, replacing position left by Krista. He'll catch up with stormwater review, catch basin cleaning – getting that program up and running again. You'll meet him at the next meeting

Susan: and we have a new intern here, Jay Huckins, really helped a lot at the Fair, helping with ESU work. Last weekend we technically had our first flush. It's tricky getting timing of sample to the lab prior to the weekend. There are ongoing issues with getting coliform samples analyzed before they go bad. We'll be prepared for another sample in the next big rain. We take samples from the ferry terminals, this time just at SJI. We had no one stationed at Orcas; we need a staffer on Lopez who can grab that sample. But the loading on Lopez isn't nearly as high as Orcas and SJI. We sample run-off from the road, it's not marine sampling.

Richard: I volunteer to collect Lopez samples when no county staff are available.

Comp plan update: Kendra is in touch with Sophia, everything's moving along. Under the capital facilities section, Kendra updated old language about the stormwater utility. Expect plan to go to Council in October.

Kari: I believe Council will see another version in September/ October and the final in December.

9:25 AM • SJC Health

Ethan Schmidt

Kyle Dodd resigned as Director to take the Captain position for the Fire Department; we're accepting applications to fill the H&CS Director position. Last meeting the CWAC requested sewage design application numbers. The total number of applications we've received are about 91 repair designs, down from about 102 last year. And for design approvals, 107 total (72 new, 35 repair). Last year we had approved 140 total. For installation permits, we've issued 35, (8 repair, 27 are new installs). Last year we had issued 53 through Aug 21 of 2024. For certificates of water availability applications, we are at 58 total. Through this date last year, we were at 84 total so we're down on those.

If you have other specific requests about permitting, let me know and I'll try to get that for next meeting.

Rick: what do those numbers tell us? Is there any clear story?

Ethan: you'd need to look back further to determine trend vs. natural variability.

Rick: every one of those Certificates represent how many gallons/month of water usage on average?

Bob: Eastsound averages 100-120 gallons per day, something like 3K gallons/month. Can consider it as water out/water in, if these are on-site septic systems then water is going back into the ground.

Ethan: also need to look at usage, if it's a second home that's less annual use.

Kim: also depends on irrigation which can consume some 80% of water usage during summer months.

Judy: how did people decide they needed repairs? What triggered those applications?

Ethan: Mainly through septic inspections. If there's a failing septic report, we send a series of notifications that usually initiates that repair process. Some failures can be addressed without the repair application process.

Judy: anything from USGS?

Ethan: a few minor edits and they'll send the report out for external peer review at the end of the week.

Kim: we'd appreciate you summarizing those numbers monthly. Could you graph that for the last five years?

ACTION: Ethan can provide figures depicting the last five years of H&CS water and septic approvals; looking for trends.

Ethan: I told Tyler I'd coordinate the groundwater subcommittee. I'll look to committee members for guidance.

Tyler: who here is on that subcommittee?

Kendra: Rick, Ann, Bob, and Vicki Raquel attends when possible.

Raquel: I'm part of that, I tried to attend when they happened.

- Ethan will be gone in September from 8-27th. Mark Tompkins will be the main point of contact in his absence. He can pass things along to William Patterson if it's in his wheelhouse.

Tyler: who will coordinate a groundwater subcommittee meeting in your absence next month?

Ethan: I can check with Mark, but one of the CWAC members may be best.

Kendra: the subcommittee will want to meet when the USGS report comes in. But as we talk about integrated water resources management, must consider our data needs and a planning process.

The integrated water resource management program is updating our water planning; historically stormwater, drinking water, etc. have been separate and plans have different dates, data etc. We want to consolidate and have a forward-looking forecast about water management to address climate impacts and be strategic.

Question about if we can bring marine work into that, so at this point it's about the freshwater systems. That'll come up by 2027 when we lose funding for that program. Can it be a part of it or a separate marine utility?

Kim: there are dozens of boats on a given summer day in a low-flushing area like Fisherman Bay. I want to know what data are being collected about nearshore coliform now that the San Juans are a no-discharge zone.

Rick: many boats don't even know about discharge in marine waters and they're here for several days.

- As to sampling stormwater, I can go out and capture water and seal it and send it to you.

ACTION: Kendra: you're recruited! We'll get you the jars and show you how to do it

Kendra: The integrated water resource management program will be a group effort, some funding from PSP through the stormwater SIL. We may rely on Angela Broadrick, she's running the water round table meeting

Ann: will there be any feedback to this committee from that round table?

Kendra: absolutely – water, transportation, housing and energy are the four big topics that keep coming up as needing more discussion as we consider drafting the climate action plan.

Kim: we'll have that as an agenda item on the October minutes, hopefully by then we'll be able to talk about the USGS report and the Comp plan and then look at implementing policies from the comp plan into 2026

9:49 AM • WA DOH

Raquel Callans

I'm the regional engineer for SJC. We have funding now for emerging contaminants that'll be going away – if you know of systems with elevated levels of PFAS or manganese, please let us know so we can get help going.

Many smaller systems in the San Juans can't complete all the testing requirements, but right now we have some funding assistance for that. I'd like to at least start the conversation open ended. Krista and I are working hard for consolidation of water systems, allocating resources to bring water systems together. Fish Bay and a couple on Orcas are pursuing that. SJC agreed to pursue an island-wide consolidation study so we're hoping to keep that moving. If you can tell us what the project/story is, we can help you find funding

Krista: Our drinking water state revolving fund team is traveling around the State doing full-day presentations and question/answer sessions. If you're interested in that let me know; several remaining sessions you can attend virtually, Scroll down to the bottom for the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund road show dates:

<https://doh.wa.gov/community-and-environment/drinking-water/odw-newsletter>

-some discussion of what these low-interest loans can be used for, infrastructure projects etc.

Kendra: with climate risk, consolidation can build some resiliency. Especially if there's money currently available. We know some neighborhoods will have some problems with sea level rise. So, tapping into a group B etc. is a good solution and should plan to start the process of now, can take several years

Raquel: in the community, spread the word that there's funding to help, we have a form you can use to sign a system up. Free technical assistance link at the top of our DWSRF webpage: <https://doh.wa.gov/community-and-environment/drinking-water/water-system-assistance/drinking-water-state-revolving-fund-dwsrf>

And we also have a map showing where all the systems are. The County map also shows that. San Juan County Water Systems Map:

<https://sjcgis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=62bd6364501b482a89b1399c6cebd71e>

The funding is for Group A systems, or for two group B's combining to become a Group A. Certain types of funding available for certain types of systems, trying to get as many SJC systems lined up as possible.

Rick: is it possible this low-interest loan system will become unavailable?

Krista: it'll become unavailable in 2027 and the fund is shrinking; applications must be in by Nov 2026

Raquel: we've had changes with Office of Drinking Water, some structural changes, your voices are strong from the County

Krista: we've adjusted the ways we fee water systems; these will be updated. I can provide a link to that draft language, comment period has ended and we're reviewing those now Office of Drinking Water fee updates:

<https://doh.wa.gov/community-and-environment/drinking-water/regulation-and-compliance/rules/office-drinking-water-fee-rulemaking>

Kim: Doe Bay/Olga consolidation on Orcas. For years, issues with keeping enough water in Cascade creek; efforts to tighten up infrastructure and support consolidation would also help salmon that spawn in that creek. These upstream water systems are pulling out way more water from the stream than using for potable water.

Raquel: Doe Bay, Olga, Rosario water system and State Park are all very active projects in our queue. Progress in the consolidation direction is being made but slowly. The Eastsound consolidation study includes many components, Ecology is heavily looped in to reviewing water rights. It's a comprehensive and active review

Judy: has the Hannah Heights issue been resolved?

Raquel: they're still trucking in water; progress is being made slowly

Kari: that's coming to Council, we'll be authorizing the ability to trench in the right-of-way to connect to the new well system. Time is of the essence because they'll run out of funding to help pay for trucked in water.

But meanwhile, they've reduced their water consumption by 40%. Once you get into that level of conservation, you can maintain it for a long time. One community member said, it's amazing what you can do with grey water. They're not just complaining – they've worked to make themselves resilient.

- Ethan: 44 connections in the Hannah Heights neighborhood, out of 51 total approved for the system

Rick: that's amazing, the CWAC should take note of that reduction – 40%!

Raquel: the cost of hauled water is a strong motivator

10:11 AM • Ecology

Kelly Hamilton

No updates from Ecology. Feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions.

10:12 AM **Subcommittee Updates**

There were no subcommittee meetings in July, those will resume in September

Kim: Was there any follow up about the 6PPD grant discussed in the last Surface Water subcommittee? A grant from Ecology for testing for tire chemical in receiving waters that is toxic to salmon? We thought we could partner with Anacortes and look at ferry terminals

Applications need to be submitted by fall. Link to application is in minutes from that meeting

ACTION: we'll add that to Susan's list

10:13 AM **New Business**

• 2026-2031 CIP

Tyler Davis

Tyler shares screen with spreadsheet. Progress being made on SJ1 with False Bay, Garrison and Lower Zylstra.

On Orcas, wrapping up the Bayhead/Killebrew culvert replacement over the coming couple of months. That was a big project that'll fall off the CIP in the start of 2026 (just some minor wrap-up). The Market Street

stormwater treatment was added back on; that's shovel ready for the next year. Then on Lopez, slow progress

so far but for the coming year – Hummel Creek and Davis Bay, and the Lopez Village stormwater distribution

- discussion about the work on Lopez, Friends of SJ's has funding for Richardson marsh and a hydrogeologist familiar with Lopez. There are sea water intrusion issues, need water at Mud Bay Public Works facility

- Community meetings planned on Lopez to discuss implications of seawater rise, risk factors, and various funding sources available to help with water and sewage. Funding will include that planning and outreach

Kendra: many homes are in 100-year-flood plain and many septic systems will need to be moved.

Tyler: the VSP Ag program is new here, it's now being moved into the Clean Water utility, the funding is from the State on a biennium from July 2025-June 2027. In previous biennium's it was in different departments.

Funding will be awarded for cost-share for capital projects, it'll be variable from year to year depending on

what projects are awarded funding. The CD manages the VSP and makes those awards. The County charges a small amount for administering the funds. The CD is like the service provider

Kendra provides some explanation of why funds are being processed in this way, use of grant funding etc.

Process: CWAC approves CIP, then it goes into County's capital improvement program which Council approves, likely in October. Before that Tyler or Kendra will present this to council, including how it influences the rate.

Bob: is the Deer Harbor project still in the works as far as organizing traffic patterns and parking for Waldron?

Kendra discusses collaborating with Public Works; need proper treatment for water into the Deer Harbor

Bob: on Market Street, Tyler mentioned there's some easement to work out? I presume that's all private land

Kendra: Market isn't a public street but functions as one and plumbing is old. The Market is supportive. We'll get an easement and manage that. Just like the ferries, the markets are a hot spot for people coming and going

Judy: in years past, I thought we looked at fees by island?

Kendra: correct – still need to work on the ESU's for the fee basis. But our number this year will be slightly lower and we've added the VSP which is grant-based, so I'm confident we won't need to adjust the rate.

Judy: so, we're not voting on the rate but on the proposed use of funds

Kendra: by code, that's all the CWAC required to do. We just share the rates for transparency's sake

Kim: in the past, we have approved changes in the CIP due to adaptive management

MOTION: Call the question, should the CWAC approve this six-year CIP?

Judy moves to approve it, Rick seconds. All in favor – none opposed. Motion passes

10:44 AM **Housekeeping**

- CWAC membership update

Tyler Davis

- Vacant Seats remaining include:

District 1 (San Juan) Position 1, District 2 (Orcas) Position 5, and District 3 (Lopez/Shaw) Positions 10 & 12

We've lost Lynn and Mellissa, due to various reasons. Now committee is down to seven. Judy, Vicki and Kim will be terming out next June. Need to look for those willing to join, and those willing to step in as chair and vice-chair by December to maintain continuity. We need representatives from all islands. Laura Pitts left and will be replaced by another CD representative. Please encourage qualified friends and colleagues to apply!

- Some discussion of other systems it would be helpful to have engaged/represented. Benefits of involvement

10:50 AM **Adjourn meeting**