



## Clean Water Advisory Committee

April 20, 2023

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

**Ex-officio, County support staff, and members of public:** Charlie Behnke, Lincoln Bormann, Krista Davis, Jolyn Leslie, Laura Pitts, Sarah Severn, Buck Smith, Kendra Smith, Sandy Taylor, Cindy Wolf

### 9:02 AM **Convene meeting**

*Kim Sundberg*

Kendra: after some consultation with Tribes, we agreed to reserve the Coast Salish Acknowledgement we've been using for meetings that involve Tribes (such as dedications in the field) and maintain its elevated meeting.

### 9:04 AM **Public Comment**

Kim: Happy to see Sandy here! We hope you'll follow through with your application to join the CWAC

Sandy: on May 26<sup>th</sup>, I'll be hosting the Lummi canoe journey, there will be a lot of activities, look for the flyer

### 9:05 AM **Business Operations**

Approve agenda – no additions or objections. All approve of the agenda.

No changes to February 16<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes. No objections, all in favor, the February minutes are approved.

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

#### **Ecology Update**

*Buck Smith*

I heard from Jenny, the Rosario diversion works was set too high. It took just 9 minutes for Rosario to resolve it

Kendra: that's great but it still sounds like some luck, someone happened to be there physically to see it

Jenny: there was a datalogger there that blew out last year, still hasn't been reinstalled. So, I check regularly.

The diversion itself was broken for a long time and has just recently been repaired. There was a little chinook salmon in Cascade creek, I sent Kim a picture, I've never seen that before. Predictions for summer look pretty hot

Buck: water levels are looking normal across the state

Judy: I thought SRFB funded a new monitoring and alert system for Cascade creek

**ACTION ITEM:** Kendra will follow up on that with Peter Guillozet

### 9:15 **Health Update**

*Jolyn Leslie*

Jolyn: I mostly want to talk about the PFAS situation, we'll save that for new business a bit later in the meeting

### 9:16 AM **Subcommittee Updates**

#### **Review of March Surface Water Subcommittee meeting**

*Judy Meyer*

We're preparing some new information for the CWAC website on water rights, aquatic life, and water quality.

We need another round of review at subcommittee level, so we'll bring those documents to the full CWAC after May.

Kim: any word from Wendel about when he'll have his false bay report done?

Judy: still waiting to get a full suite of analyses, especially for the ulva stable isotope

ACTION ITEM: Judy will follow up with Wendel about when he'll have that

#### 9:18 AM **Groundwater Subcommittee Updates**

*Vicki Heater*

Water planning with regards to current development pressures, we met USGS team about where they are now.

Kim: I wonder if we could get Health to send an alternate when Kyle's not available, he often needs to be absent

Bob: Kyle has a new employee starting in June, she grew up on Lopez

Judy: can you say more about the seawater intrusion on the south end of Lopez? Did monitoring show something?

Vicki: chloride levels have been high in S. Lopez consistently, handful of Group A systems that are careful about water use. When we set up monitoring network, focused on north end because needed to look at Lopez Village. It's a dynamic situation. Public Works wants to relocate shop there from site at Fisherman's Bay which has become too small. There's an existing building. There is concern and an idea about desalination to supply water.

9:26 AM      New Business Discussion

**Q&A regarding livestock management along False Bay Creek corridor**      *Lincoln Bormann, Land Bank Director*

Lincoln: I'm here to talk about the False Bay Creek Preserve and the Land Bank decision about its management. I provided a link to commission meeting in which Doug McCutchen presented. We deliberated, will make changes to how the property is grazed, we'll continue for one year and that's it. Our management plan for the property has expired so we're re-doing it. We'll shift property away from agricultural use toward preserve. Lessee will have one more year and then we'll have many questions to answer in redoing management plan. We look forward to your participation, we hope for Environmental Stewardship's help. We need to get a handle on what will happen with Bailer Hill Road and how the Preserve fits into that picture. And we have this property that's 10 acres to the east of the Preserve; if there were chance of trading land to get more of the wetland in the intervening property that would give us more flexibility. But more likely we'll sell it with a conservation easement limiting development.

Ann: Doug's presentation was great. I heard in that conversation that there's currently no liaison between the Land bank and CWAC. There used to be one, we'd all like to have someone from your crew in on our meetings.

Lincoln: we have a liaison to the Climate and Sustainability Group; we can do it for this group too

Vicki: What is the plan going forward dealing with flooding at Bailer Hill Road, opportunity to change hydrology?

Kendra: the plan is to elevate the road, so it'll be a higher dike, and to extend the existing 12' culvert to accommodate additional widening, add bike lane, but not increase the culvert size. It's not a capacity barrier. We've also been advised to put in a culvert further to the west. Need to pull together all the pieces for this area.

Cindy: remember, every staff person in attendance costs approx. \$100 per meeting, can be \$300-600/meeting. Need to look at who is necessary, can we maintain those communications on a less frequent basis like quarterly.

Kim: we'll consider that, we don't need county employees spending time when it's not necessary. And I also appreciated Doug's presentation, I hope that link stays active. The only thing left out was the connection to False Bay Biological Preserve, the creek stitches water together with the marine connection and marine protected area

- No objections from CWAC to Land Bank's decision. Unanimous approval and we're here to help

9:40 AM **PFAS sample results at the Hannah Heights Owners Association** *Jolyn Leslie (DOH)*

Last year, the State Board of Health put forth requirements for systems to test for PFAS, currently no actual regulation for PFAS. It's a testing and public notice requirement. The operator at Hannah Heights tested all the systems she manages. A sample came back high in March, collected another sample to verify. One week ago today, preliminary sample results were high again. There are 5 compounds in our rules for state action levels. All 5 found at Hannah heights were above state action levels (one was close to 200x state action level).

Meeting with Hannah heights Community Association last night. They tested 2 wells, well #3 was low for everything but it's low capacity, can't serve whole community in summer. The contaminated well, #2, taken offline for now. Other communities in the area could be impacted, plan to collect additional samples.

Sarah: from Hannah Heights. There's an organization called PFAS Solutions on east coast that can help with possible remediation. Dept. of Health and the County have been great, they've really rallied. We plan a well inspection. The contaminated well #2 is shut down. We have a 30K gallon storage tank supplied by well #3 that's slowly flushing through but that's not sustainable. We're looking into some other options, retaining counsel, Dept. of Ecology is engaged and looking for source (the compound signature is contaminants used in firefighting foams)

#### QUESTIONS

Judy: can you say more about solutions, is it removable with an activated carbon filter?

Jolyn: yes, there have been some treatment plants installed recently using activated carbon. One issue with that is a potential waste stream. Many are in cities with big waste sewer systems. Reverse osmosis is another option. That's a way down the road for Hannah Heights. Another option may be to find a new clean water source

Sarah: we're looking at both aspects. It's a small system, but it would be simpler to find a new clean water source

Ann: the only testing lab that tests for a panel of PFAS is in Kelso, about \$450. You mentioned 5 compounds on the list for state action levels. Can we test for just those 5 and spend less money? We've been using Edge Analytical.

Jolyn: County is looking at expanding to other areas that may have some impact. The lab in Kelso is on our approved list, accredited by Ecology. Important thing is to ensure you're using an accredited certified lab so results are defensible. And it's important to follow specific sampling instructions. The County is the lead responder on this incident, and they'll be looking at other areas. This is ongoing, we're only a week in.

Cindy: we were under impression that Dept. of Ecology is lead responder. The role defined at Council meeting was that we're coordinating and directing people to resources. Kyle is out of county now but since potential contamination is on fire dept property and it's a private water system there's limited response County can do

Jolyn: County has taken the lead on coordinating for Hannah Heights. And there is funding currently in State budget (yet to be passed) intended to be earmarked for Group B wells doing PFAS testing. If you feel you can wait, there may be help with costs. We won't know until State budget is finalized (should be later this week).

Buck: Hi Sarah, I work for Ecology in Water Resources program. I just looked up your system. You have two ground water certificates and a groundwater claim. They have attributes about where the wells should be located, if you're going to drill new wells please contact me, there may be water rights implications like the need for an application to change. Since you have a contaminated well, we can give you priority in processing

Cindy: When can we confirm if we're looking at aquifer contamination as well?

Jolyn: especially on west side of SJI, not the typical aquifer, it's fractured bedrock, not an underground reservoir. These are fissures and fractures that direct water to the well. We think groundwater travels through these fissures. Can guess where the water goes but not an actual aquifer, challenge for how far contamination goes

Kim: is my understanding that since Ecology has the lead, they're in charge of determining that?

Jolyn: Ecology doesn't regulate Group A and B wells, they're more in charge of resource contamination. mined

Judy: is there funding available for Group A wells to test?

Jolyn: no, there was money offered I mentioned at earlier meetings for early testing. Now that's been used.

Here's a link with more info about PFAS, [PFAS | Washington State Department of Health](#)

Sarah: I'm happy for people to reach out to me with further questions, [sarah@sarahsevern.com](mailto:sarah@sarahsevern.com)

Bob Eagan: Todd Krause at Northwest Water Systems Inc. is a good resource for treatment of PFAS

10:06 AM **Summary of water issues presented Agricultural Summit on March 4<sup>th</sup>** *Kendra Smith*

I was on a panel on grazing with four participants, the take home was about all the pieces in water management, waste produced by livestock and timing/loading, etc. Panelists all agreed there isn't one perfect solution. The Land Bank commission's strategy is good, helps address the dynamic with their lessee and moves the ball forward

Lynn: Kendra did a great job at the summit, "grazing in the wetlands". Site-specific planning is like the mantra of the Conservation District. Grazing at certain times can enhance some riparian aspects

Kim: unclear who's doing bacteria sampling. Disconnect between bacteria testing being done by ES and the nutrient sampling done by UW. The bacteria analysis is a hassle with 24 hour window to get it to Edge. And in the VSP, farmers are meant to be collecting samples to see how mitigation techniques work, any discussion of that?

Kendra: we didn't go into detail about that, but it is an ongoing concern. Hope that can be part of False Bay creek management plan going forward. With number of septic systems and shallow groundwater, need source control.

Kim: we need to continue to try to figure that out. Trying to reduce bacteria and nutrients but we need to figure out a happy medium before that max fecal coliform hit. We need to give folks practical ways to measure this.

Vicki: bacterial sampling is an indicator, it's a health risk to humans, but not always the best way to tell condition of a creek, salmon don't care about fecal coliform. There can also be visual inspections for health of a creek, resolving the issue of testing for fecal coliforms There are simpler methodologies, like Dissolved Oxygen (DO)

Cathi: we're just starting on a new stream protocol— it's part of VSP reporting to the County. We got a DO and temperature meter to use at all sites, and sample for macro-inverts. We plan to return to each site every 5 years. It's repeatable, it's not full water quality testing but it's useful data we can manage. We'll prioritize the 8 basins

Kim: flow measurements would be helpful too, dilution is the solution

Kendra: we also have those meters, we should touch base

Jenny: Could Youth or Islands conservation corps help take data so it could happen more often than every 5 years?

Cathi: Island Conservation Corp. is funded by AmeriCorps so must happen on public lands, we can consider that

Kendra: The other thing I have to share (shares screen) is the spreadsheet for the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) which we'll review at June meeting. Reminder/update about the projects we have going on for ES, over 27 projects, 2.6 million in work for this year. Columns represent funding available and position in timeline, and where we are in terms of managing. We're in the green on many in terms of moving them forward (review a few)

Other examples: - Kendra says more about the Tower Road cancellation, there was an idea that planned work could push plume of contamination further toward sea, decided to put a hold on that project.

- Cascade tributary at Olga Road was put in the CIP last year, County roads put a culvert above the existing one, it's a temporary fix. The question now is of how to go back and resolve so that there's proper sediment transport.

Kendra: yes, that's one of the projects I'll be following up with Peter Guillozet on, see if we need to adjust amount

This list is also available on ES website. If there are projects you think should be added, for capital construction (planning goes into the operating budget), these are delivering on the groundwork, email me if you have specifics

One reminder – these projects affect our rate structure, need to go out 6 years and anticipate what work utility will do, that sets rate for next 2 years. This is the year we adjust rates based on workload we see coming forward

10:33 AM **Summary of USGS study, discussion of implications for water management** *Vicki Heater*

Kyle & I met with the USGS folks doing the project. They have finished their analysis/modeling and what they're conducting now is a soil/water balance analysis. They've come up with the same conclusions as 20 years ago when they did a deep percolation model. Next will be to calculate water use so there can be a budget. That report draft won't be available until the end of the year. This is a good opportunity to interact with them and influence the type of information we want to see in the report. For example, curious about changes over time with evapotranspiration. Evidence that's happening earlier in the season (that plants take up all the moisture in soil). Looking at their data and at how that's showing up over time. The question about how they've compiled data on consumptive use (individual wells, agricultural) is an area where it'll be possible to offer information. They appreciate local feedback and perspective. I'm interested in seawater intrusion risk and the bedrock aquifers.

Kim: I wish they had talked to more of us at the beginning of the study. I'm uncertain about Buck's assessment that water levels are looking good in the state. We're different from the mainland and everyone who studies our aquifers says the models don't work here because of primarily bedrock. evapotranspiration will be a real issue

Vicki: Forests are stressed. Next step is to see how much water stored underground, the concept of a basin doesn't exist, we have fractures and pockets constantly moving out to sea. Calculating that capacity is challenging

Judy: I think one of the interesting things to come from that study will be the water budget. So dependent on use estimates. How confident are you that they're using appropriate use estimates?

Vicki: I'm leery, the available data has assumptions. Mainly they'll use data from metered group A systems

Judy: so how would discussion happen between us and them? Regular meetings? How can we comment?

Vicki: We don't have schedule meetings, but they'll come up periodically, once they do that budgeting analysis they'll ask more questions. The big question is how to aggregate the data? It's so much about location and timing

Ann: how can we further this study?

Vicki: they are available for that, just a matter of writing a proposal, County would likely need to cost-share

Cindy: We will bring it to council at some point to pursue more information. It leaves more questions than answers

Ann: how will this affect County progress forward? I hope you're looking at it aggressively

Kendra: also trying to get a realistic number is going to be tricky, we're going into uncharted territory in changes in hydrology. One curious piece is a lot of roadside ditches, people have drainage networks to keep themselves dry in winter, all that water is getting shunted off landscape, no easy way to quantify how much is coming off as run off instead of soaking into ground. Our goal isn't to rush all the valuable freshwater off landscape and into the sea, want to make sure it's in streams and wetlands and recharging to help us out as well as other species

Vicki: the other study they did was on Guemes, we're getting the same modeling for the same money

Cindy: we're grateful to Senator Lovelett and to Guemes for the impetus that came from their study first

10:53 AM **Committee Housekeeping**

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

Kendra: need to put word out again to folks on Lopez, Shaw and SJI. If we get at least 2 applications in we should go ahead and interview folks and check with Cindy about backfilling positions, Tyler will get on that  
Judy and Kim: Kudos to Tyler, he's really figured out the many moving parts, great at setting up meetings  
Kendra: we have moved out of Spring Street, we are on third floor of Beaverton Valley facility with Public Works

10:58 AM **Next Meeting: June 22<sup>nd</sup>** – virtual or in person?

Kendra will be in Boston at climate adaptation conference, Tyler will present CIP in June, vote on it in August.

Jenny and Judy: from off-island, specifically in June easier not to take the ferry and rely on it to get back

Cindy: heads up that June 21-22<sup>nd</sup>, WA state commission will be using Council chambers

Kim: so, we'll keep this virtual on Teams for June 22<sup>nd</sup>

Ann: what happened to the age of water testing that Byron was going to have done?

Lynn: I'll send you the graph we got back from ISOlabs, saltwater intrusion levels. Don't have capacity to test age

ACTION ITEM: Lynn will send to Kendra for distribution to the whole CWAC

11:02 AM **Adjourn Meeting**