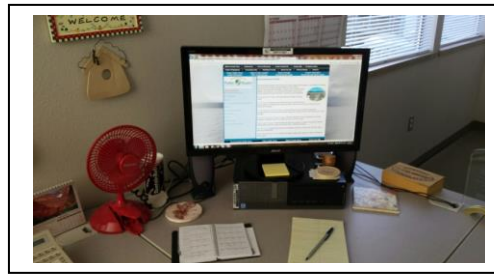


**From the Desk of the
Environmental Health Manager
December 2017 & January 2018**
For Board of Health January 23, 2018



Happy New Year! The calendar year 2017 ended with EH staff finishing up projects, completing reports and developing their program's work plans for 2018. Highlights of 2017 included:

- In June Maria Machado attended the State Department of Health sponsored "Environmental Health Training in Emergency Response Operations" workshop at the Anniston, Alabama Center for Domestic Preparedness.
- Cody Lund was awarded 2 of 3 grants he applied for to perform tasks required for implementation of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Program Standards program aimed at promoting uniformity of retail food inspections.
- Staff performed 37 Group A public water system sanitary surveys, 66 well site inspections (47 of those with the driller present), inspected 4 well decommissions and completed 23 site inspections for new two-party water systems for the drinking water program.
- The solid waste program responded to 85 new solid waste complaints, completed 245 site visits, closed 74 complaint cases and issued 3 civil infractions (tickets) for solid waste violations. She also inspected 6 solid waste facilities, renewed 6 solid waste facility permits and issued 1 new solid waste permit. These numbers are excellent when one considers the fact that we have not had Department of Ecology funding to operate a solid waste enforcement program since June 30, 2017 because the Legislature's failure to adopt a Capital Budget. This source usually funds 75% of our solid waste program.
- Staff conducted 394 inspections at 240 food service establishments and 129 inspections on 130 temporary food permits. 2,963 food handler cards were issued to Mason County residents. We received 15 food borne illness complaints and 27 non-illness complaints.
- Staff issued 407 onsite septic system permits, 74 of those were repairs, provided technical assistance for 33 pre-application conferences and generated 31 loan status reports. We certified 26 septic system pumpers, 57 installers, and 34 operation and maintenance specialists to work in Mason County. Sent out a total of 48,041 reminders for service and educational packets to homeowners. Of the 26,156 septic systems in the O&M database 87% have record drawings on file and 63% are current on their service/maintenance.

- Sixteen routine inspections of 15 permitted pools and 4 permitted spas were conducted.
- Staff followed up on 3 animal bites – 2 dogs and 1 cat. We sent 8 bats to the state lab for rabies testing; none of them were positive for the virus.
- Grant funded water quality work was performed in 3 shellfish protection districts – Oakland Bay, McLane Cove and Hood Canal #6. Two new shellfish protection districts were formed because of water quality downgrades. Those areas are North Bay and Annas Bay. Both present unique issues.
 - Allyn is served by the North Bay (County) sewer, so the usual onsite septic system reviews and Pollution Identification and Correction protocols will not work. How should the county go about charging a fee for water quality work to an area where citizens are connected to and paying for sewer service? Public Works Utilities will need to be an active partner in this work.
 - Annas Bay is home to the Skokomish Tribe. They are willing participants to do work on the reservation properties. We will do our work as laid out in our policies and procedures for the properties that are not on the reservation.

Some of the preliminary work for Annas Bay is being done under the Hood Canal Regional Pollution Identification and Control grant we have with the Hood Canal Coordinating Council. The grant does not have sufficient funding for the implementation of the plan. Although we are requesting funding through the South Sound Near Term Action workgroup for North Bay, there is no money to do the preliminary work and write the plan. There may be some funding for implementation when we get to that point.

During 2018 the Environmental Public Health section of Mason County Community Services will continue to push for adequate, sustainable funding for water quality and operation & maintenance work. This funding will allow program staff to do the work in a timely manner that is beneficial for the county, with the needs of our natural resources and best interests of our local businesses and citizens identified.

2017 was a year of change for the Environmental Health section. Two long time employees retired in July. Between them they took over 45 years of Mason County environmental health experience with them. The current staff are a wonderful group of young professionals with a great deal of enthusiasm and a willingness to learn. They have endless potential and truly want to be in Mason County. They are smart and talented, and I am honored to work with them.

We closed out 2017 with a sense of pride and accomplishment. We start 2018 with enthusiasm and a “can do” attitude for the challenges that lie ahead.