

## **From the Desk of the Environmental Health Manager (interim) June 2018 and July 2018**

For Board of Health July 24th – by Alex Paysse

As we said goodbye to our respected long time EH manager, Debbie Riley, we are wrapping up bi-annual reports and looking at the remainder of the years work. In June, Dave Windom asked me to step up to the interim manager position. If any of the board members have any questions, do not hesitate to call me. You can reach me at [alex@co.mason.wa.us](mailto:alex@co.mason.wa.us) or 360-427-9670, ext. 279.

On June 1<sup>st</sup> we hired two new employees, Jeff Wilmoth and Luke Cencula. Jeff comes from the east side of the state, working with Whitman Co. Public Health and will be joining the onsite and drinking water team. Luke is new to public health, but with his Hazwopper certification already he feels like a great fit with the solid waste program.

### **Onsite Sewage:**

On June 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Mason Co. hosted its second (and third) soils class for onsite septic professionals. This was the 2nd time we had DOH come to our county to teach and educate our staff and industry professionals. We had so many people interested we had to split the class into two days! Overall the class was a great success, with county staff and onsite professionals diving deep into exploration of soils from the onsite septic aspect. DOH offers these classes throughout the year in various counties, but Mason Co. has their own unique soils here, so its nice to have professional opinions on our local dirt.

As of June 30<sup>th</sup>, we have received 249 onsite sewage permits, which is an increase of 28% from last year. Onsite sewage staff have been very busy, however the addition of Jeff W. has helped with the additional work load.

### **Drinking Water:**

We were working on possible funding from DOH for drafting/updating a Group B water system program. Towards end of June we were notified there was no further funding for this year and we would have to wait till next year. We hope to make application for these funds and work on our Group B water system program next year.

As of June 30<sup>th</sup>, we have received 86 well construction applications, which is an increase of 48% from last year. 48 well constructions (23 with driller) and 1 well decommission have been inspected by staff.

### **Water Quality:**

On June 20<sup>th</sup>, DOH reclassified 350 acres of Oakland Bay commercial shellfish growing area from “Conditionally approved” to “approved” and 19 acres from conditionally approved to “unclassified”. The attached before and after maps from the DOH report shows the amount of work from Mason County staff, DOH, Other water quality affiliates, and the residents for the Chapman Cove area. Congrats to all involved!

With Staci McDowell leaving us in May, Sean M. has stepped into the work on Hammersly inlet with our SSI Grant. Katie O. continues her work on the Hood Canal following up on hotspots and performing sanitary surveys. She has found 2 failures through dye tests in 2018. Onsite staff are working with the owners on repair permits.

Additional funding has been granted to Mason County for an additional .5 FTE to work on prevention with communicable disease through water quality work. With additional work available in the other ongoing water quality grants, we will be hiring an additional full time temporary employee.

#### **Food Safety:**

Cody has been very busy inspecting temp events around the county. Working odd hours and weekends to catch as many events as he can, we appreciate the hard work he puts forward every year in this busy season.

#### **Solid Waste:**

Luke C. is picking up where Maria Machado left off with our solid waste program and complaints. He is working on getting us caught back up, so we can respond more promptly to related public health concerns. We have received 130 Environmental Health complaints as of June 30<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Vector:**

Staff responded to 2 animal bites (1 cat, 1 dog) and several bat inquiries in June. All submitted specimens were found negative for rabies.

#### **Shellfish:**

Sean M. continues collecting Mussels from Jerrell’s Cove for Biotoxin testing.

#### **Water Recreation:**

In July Cody L. will inspect our 12 water recreation permits for public pools and spas within the county.