

Big Bend Shellfish Protection District (SPD)
Initial Stakeholder Meeting
3/3/2016

Meeting begins: 1:04 pm

Jean Snyder with the Department of Health (DOH): passed our RCW that is used to create SPDs for the group to read and reference. Station 292 failed in 2015. Once there is a downgrade the local authorities create SPD. We had 180 days to create the SPD structure. 180 days to write "potential pollution plan".

Q: When you talk about commercial shellfish harvest is it the same as recreational growing?

A: There are only regulations on commercial shellfish harvests because it affects public health. We can only "advise" recreational growers.

Q: How do we know if areas are closed for commercial harvesting?

A: You can check online on the DOH website, sign up for the list serve also located on the DOH website and you can always call the DOH office directly.

Q: How can you tell which type of pollution is in the water?

A: That's why we're here, to make a plan collectively to find the pollution source(s).

Q: Which areas?

A: DOH has some failing systems in the area which dictated the boundaries for investigation.

Q: Does it include the creek?

A: Yes

Q: Please clarify: Big Bend Creek comes in at the V but 292 is at the water wheel plus there's Alderbrook Creek. So which one is associated with the failure of 292?

A: It's not specific. It's a general description.

Q: How were the boundaries established? It doesn't show the whole district. Concerned with Big Bend Creek affecting a lot more than just what's in the boundary lines. Why is the whole Big Bend Creek not drainage incorporated in the SPD boundary lines?

A: Through a lot of sampling and historical data we were able to create these boundary lines. It's based off the two brown areas where we found fecal coliform bacteria (FC).

Q: Is this group aware of the Blue Heron?

A: That's why we're here; to talk about a plan for finding point/ non-point source pollution sources.

Q: Is the contamination in question FC?

A: Yes, FC. In both marine and shoreline sample sites.

Q: What is the source of FC?

A: Failing onsite septic systems (OSS), wildlife, livestock, etc.

Q: Will it probably be OSS?

A: Likely, but not necessarily.

Q: I'm still looking for a straight answer on how boundary lines were established because I'm worried about the home and business owners within the SPD getting taxed.

A: Technically yes, you could get taxed but that is highly unlikely due to the fact that the county commissioners historically are very reluctant to tax. Cindy explained how we have 3 different grants to work on this project. There is more than enough money for the SPD and the probability of taxing happening is extremely unlikely. The county commissioners said they have no intention to tax. The boundaries are based on historical data and might change as new data shows new information.

Q: Which commissioners are we talking about?

A: The Mason County commissioners.

Q: What progress have we made?

A: We have established boundary lines, enacted the SPD and have a draft plan written.

Q: What is the deadline?

A: The first deadline is March 8th in which we have to enact a SPD. That is not the deadline to finish the project, start sampling, come up with a plan, etc. It is only the deadline for the county to start the process. So we have met the March 8 deadline because here we are starting the process.

A discussion started regarding making a taxation district without letting us know. DOH and Mason County Public Health (MCPH) assured the concerned home owners that we are not creating a taxation district but we are creating a shellfish protection district and reiterated that the probability of taxation is extremely low. The home owners still seem frustrated about the boundary lines. DOH explained that there are a number of policies and regulations we all have to abide by and this is just the process.

Q: If a tax does get proposed does it have to be voted in by the county commissioners?

A: Yes.

Q: Could you check?

A: Yes.

The discussion is moved forward away from boundary lines and taxation and back to the agenda.

Q: Are there any stakeholders missing?

A: Alderbrook might not want to be officially at the table but would probably want to be informed of progress. A homeowner suggested Brian McGuinnes and Sean Tucker. Another homeowner says Brian McGuinnes was already notified. Stephanie already talked to Robin Hood Resort. Several homeowners say there are plenty of stakeholders outside of the boundary lines that should be included but they're not because the boundary lines are not adequate. Several homeowners want every parcel in the drainage included. So we need to do more outreach. Someone also suggested NOAA. Another homeowner mentioned Manke along with other timber companies operating in the area.

Stephanie explains that this is just an initial meeting. Our goal today is look over the plan and decide who can vote on it. We'll have to form a committee of voting members.

Stakeholders suggest those interested in becoming voting members submit a resume or cover letter of some sort to show their commitment and explain why they want the opportunity to vote. It shows long-term commitment to the project.

Q: Does the SPD have a charter? Template? Is a charter an appropriate first document?

A: No. We have no intent on introducing a charter.

It was suggested and agreed upon to look at other successful SPD documents to have something to go off of. Many other attendees of the meeting wanted more information because they are unfamiliar with SPDs in general. They want to see what a successful SPD looks like so we can move forward to the correct and efficient direction. They said it would be helpful to see how other SPDs have structured themselves. Jean Snyder says she can provide that information. Sea Grant suggested we look at the Lilliwaup SPD because it was successful.

Q: I think we should make a list of all the businesses, residents, etc.

A: Okay.

It was suggested, in order to include all the residents in the Big Bend drainage area, to have a public meeting. After Stephanie has contacted more residents in the drainage we will have a public meeting in the area. DOH suggests that we keep the public meeting very broad with presentations. MCPH will have a presentation. Sea Grant and Mason County WSU Extension might have presentations/booths as well at the public meeting. Follow up needed.

Q: Are we going to have to keep asking "are there any stakeholders missing" when more and more people join?

A: Stephanie is confident that we will be able to catch any and all new members up completely before we continue when appropriate.

Q: Could we get an article about the SPD and the upcoming public meeting in the Mason County Journal? Reader boards? We think there's still a lot of work to do to get the word out.

A: We will look into that.

Q: Who in the area is in touch with local meeting spaces and can check out places to go?

A: Dan H. says he'll do the leg work to find a meeting space for the best price. He said to email him the flyer/handbill that is created and he will post it locally in gas stations, post offices, etc. Possible venues include Harmony Hill, Alderbrook, Golf Course, Hood Canal schools and the fire house.

Commercial harvesting areas are easy to close or down-grade but difficult to re-open or re-classify to an approved harvesting area. This is why we are all here today; to start the difficult process of re-classifying Hood Canal #6 to an approved commercial growing area.

There was a suggestion to stay on the FC topic and not get caught up in the nitrogen discussion because that's not why we're here. Everyone agreed.

There was a suggestion of coming up with a mission statement for the SPD. It was agreed to be a good idea but later down the line. Maybe next meeting.

Q: How can we measure rainfall? I think we need to start measuring rainfall.

A: A homeowner says she has a very nice rain gauge and can maybe work with DOH to get her rain gauge to be an approved data source. DOH said they'd look into that.

MCPH To Do:

- create hand bill and email to Mr. Hansen
- create appendix of acronyms for draft SPD plan
- more mailings to invite more people to future public meeting
- Schedule next meeting (after public meeting). Will use this meeting's sign-in sheet to send out doodle poll.
- look into getting the word out through articles, public access channel, reader boards, etc.

Did not get through whole agenda due to lots of discussion and clarification. Next official meeting we will start off where we left off by going through the draft plan together.

Meeting adjourned: 2:50 pm