

Big Bend Shellfish Protection District (SPD)
Third Stakeholder Meeting
2/22/2017

Introductions while conference call troubleshooting.

1:05p meeting start.

Welcomed everyone in attendance

Quick run-through of slideshow from previous meeting.

Covered the basics of Shellfish Protection Districts and the Pollution Identification and Correction process.

The goal is to target pollution through septic servicing, surveying for activity and agriculture in the watershed.

Q: This is responding to just 292?

A: Yes, station 292.

These are the boundary lines. (Presented image of SPD outline.) Highlighted Hood Canal #6 regions "G", "H", and "I", and their differences. Explained that the sections are overlapping different conditions. Alderbrook's Marina in "I" is closed due to the point source pollution of boats. "G" and "H" are a combination of being seasonally closed, and being closed due to rain events, due to their proximity to the marina closing "I".

Went over the ground rules of the meeting.

Q: Have the commissioners approved?

A: Tentatively, yes.

Q: Is this expanded list of stakeholders?

A: Yes.

Q: Is the new POTUS going to be affecting our work?

A: No. The funds granted for this work have been allocated. The funding is accounted for through 2018 for a two year period, starting this April.

Q: April 2017 is when the two year allocation begins?

A: Yes.

Q: Is this project well funded? Will there be enough for changes to the plan?

A: Yes, this grant is well funded.

Q: Could there be more stations installed in the area?

A: We could. Let's discuss that over email.

Moving onto the agenda.

Q: Could we add terminology to the term 'hotspot' to the plan?

A: Yes.

Q: We should add language about the differences in regions "G" and "H" and that they are affected by rain events.

A: Thank you we shall.

Also suggested language that states the rain gauge triggering the closure is located at the Taylor FLUPSY in Oakland Bay.

Presented maps of the SPD to the stakeholders.

Q: Is it too late to tweak the boundary lines? There are concerns about water flowing eastward across the 1st and second fairways.

A: We will certainly look into see how much water is moving from these fairways into the watershed.

It was suggested to look into Alderbrook's storm water management before discussion of the watershed's boundaries ensued.

Q: Can we focus on just what we can do in the time left on the grant?

A: We'd love to.

Sentiments expressed from stakeholders about wanting to get going with the work as the time for the grant appears to be running short.

Q: There are 276 residential parcels and 19 commercial parcels; will it be possible to get through these in 6 months?

A: The sooner we can start, the more we can cover.

Q: How can we rate the risk of sites? Can we prioritize sites?

A: We can. Reducing the risk of future pollution is a huge part of our work. There are many things happening in the area, we want to get things started so we can find out.

Stakeholder voiced a concern that if the right stakeholders aren't in the SPD, then there's potential for everyone being taxed under the SPD and the polluters not being taxed. Stated that involved agencies need to deal with the high reading and fix it.

A: We need to work to be able to do anything. We have to get through the work plan and have it approved before any work is authorized.

Q: We are targeting Station 292?

A: Yes. There are many stations in the area, 292 is the one that had the high readings that triggered the SPD.

Q: Readings are taken monthly?

A: Yes. The other stations have been coming up clean, and this monitoring is coming off of 25+ years of data.

Station 222 is just off-map (of projected map image), but clean. DOH also has limited time and resources as well and cannot feasibly add more monitoring stations or take readings more often.

It was suggested that a map be included in the next meeting showing the septic systems in the watersheds, their type, and O&M status.

Mason County can create and provide these maps.

Q: How soon would you want to get started?

A: ASAP.

Stakeholder notes that the work plan says monitoring of onsite septic systems is to take place Summer of 2017?

A: We can start sooner or whenever it is most appropriate.

Attempt to go through the work plan for approval.

Q: Before that, there are only two sample points with high readings?

A: Right now, yes. It is clean now, a year ago it was not. It is too close to be able to upgrade. There needs to be some change, some action done, to warrant the upgrade, even though it is technically in compliance.

There was a jump in 2010 with high bacterial readings. In 2015 the major high hits dropped off, but higher numbers were seen again in 2016.

Q: Isn't this high hit just an outlier?

A: Yes, statistically, but we are looking for all data and the highest risks. We have to look at the highest percentiles as a factor for public health and safety.

Q: Are we to assume that the sampling is being done correctly?

A: Yes, there are Standard operating Procedures that are followed.

Q: What happens when there's a high reading from marine sampling?

A: DOH notifies the County to look into. The data cannot be ignored, as high readings, outlier or not, can be a danger to public health. Shellfish are food, and regulated by the FDA.

Q: Is rainfall reflected in the graph of readings from Station 292?

A: No the graph is not that specific, it is more a visual aid for referencing the total historical pollution. Rainfall can be compared to wet and dry seasons though.

Q: Can you take samples after rainfall at stations? Can rainfall being a factor be validated? Is there data that correlates pollution with rainfall?

A: There is data to reflect this. The highest numbers are after rainfall of more than .75 inches in less than 24 hours. If we remove rainfall events, the remaining data is compliant.

Q: Can there be a rain gauge station closer to 292?

A: We can look into that, but the County does not have the authority to make it happen.

Seagrant explained that there is scientific data to support the concept of closures after rain events.

Short discussion on why the Taylor FLUPSY is used and why rain events are notable for non-point source pollution.

The role that salinity, light, and temperature play in fecal coliform die offs is addressed, with a suggestion to detail what fecal coliform is in the work plan so it is not confusing.

Stakeholders state that if there are spikes in bacterial readings on a rolling average, that means that there was an event: a catastrophic event. We need to find out what happened in the past.

Suggestion to move on with the agenda and cover the work plan.

Q: Have we decided on Bylaws and Governance?

A: Yes: A Health Department committee that is open to all who wish to attend.

Began reading through the work plan.

Monitoring Big Bend: DOH samples, MCPH coordinates efforts to sample streams.

Q: Who will be sampling?

A: DOH will monitor marine waters, MCPH will sample streams in the watershed.

Q: Is the Tribe Sampling?

A: In other areas in the region, not this specific one at this time.

Q: Can we be specific what this sampling would be? Can we be doing peak sampling and sample during rain events?

A: Yes.

Q: How do we identify a proper rain gauge?

A: DOH can look into a new rain gauge. New weather stations are a laborious process to get approved, but it is possible.

Stakeholders suggested sampling high use events (holidays, mother's day, 4th of July, etc), rain events, and DOH marine sampling.

Q: How do acting agencies sample?

A: We start at the shoreline, close to marine waters: culverts, seeps, bulkheads, etc. Then work our way up through the stream and into the watershed, following pollution.

Q: If you sample on a rain event, do you have to wait for the reading to continue? Don't you miss the rest of the rain event?

A: True, but we don't want to be sampling up clean streams. We have approved Standard Operating Procedures that we utilize to sample. The strategy is approved by state and federal agencies.

Stakeholders suggested a 24 hour monitoring possibility when warranted. Also suggested that sampling in peak use from major events be utilized. Response stated there are not the kind of resources that allow for routine, ongoing monitoring of streams. But, sampling after major events and rain events is a part of our goal.

Q: Do we have a way of focusing our investigation?

A: Yes. Segmenting of streams for sampling, bracket sampling allows us to isolate sources of pollution.

Q: Could efforts be made to coordinate with Department of Transportation and Public Works' stormwater management?

A: Certainly.

Read through Task 6: ID Agricultural activities. Finance and work with Mason County Conservation District.

Q: Are there agricultural sources in the watershed?

A: We don't know. This is what we hope to determine from our work.

Q: Mason County Conservation district?

A: They are an organization that can help with a variety of agricultural activities, from equipment rental to manure controls.

Q: Are they too busy or lack the funding to be present at this meeting?

A: Both. They are an organization that can help with solving problems, but they are NOT a regulatory or enforcement agency.

It was suggested that referrals to MCD should be tracked in the grant. Stakeholders need to know what MCD does as a part of this grant: Number of farm plans developed, farm plans implemented, as outcomes.

Q: Post correction sampling? What is this?

A: This is something we do to track a change in a possible source of pollution. It allows us to see if a change in livestock management, or a septic repair has affected the readings we get from water.

Q: Do we know of any farm plans in the area?

A: Not yet.

Q: Could we use drones?

A: Unlikely.

Q: Why is agricultural practices separate from wildlife and pet waste management in the work plan?

A: Because Mason County Conservation District can only assist with agricultural practices.

Explained that septic systems are the biggest factors that can be realistically managed.

Stakeholder expressed criticism of the marine sampling triggering the SPD due to the high spikes, and that the spikes need to be investigated. Stakeholders suggested getting through the agenda so any work in the SPD could get going.

Detailed the mailings component of the work plan.

- Overdue Septics
- Info packets
- Incentives such as rebates for O&M.
- Requests for Evaluations and Dye tests.

Septic info is collected by MCPH before going out into the field.

Q: Since rain events are a factor, will we be identifying areas with poor drainage, ponding, etc?

A: Certainly, we definitely are looking for areas of poor drainage and flooding, especially around septic systems.

Stakeholders suggested coordinating with Public Works and Department of Transportation's storm water management for looking at areas prone to flooding/ponding and to correlate with any seasonal trends.

Representative from Alderbrook offered up historical data of their wastewater management through Department of Ecology. Also referenced the proprietary mechanism utilized on a drainfield at Alderbrook properties that improves functionality.

Q: When we're talking onsite management, are we also talking Sani-cans and RVs?

A: We interact with Sani-can companies and certainly look into RVs and whether or not they are properly hooking up to septic systems and/or using their holding tanks properly.

Stakeholders addressed the "Summer 2017" date on the work plan for septic monitoring.

A: Between Memorial Day and Labor Day is the best time period for inspections and maintenance on septic systems. It's when most seasonal and vacation homes are occupied.

Q: What are As-Builts?

A: They are drawings that determine to the best of our ability where a septic system is located and what type it is.

MCPH explained the Septic Blitz. "All Septic Systems Require Maintenance."

Stakeholder states that back on page 9, that the readings from station 292 were 7 times higher than other times.

Q: What are we trying to do with this SPD? Shouldn't we be trying to ID what happened on the 11th of May?

Stakeholders referenced in response that the 11th of May was just after Mother's Day Weekend.

A: It is important to determine where previous high readings came from, but it is also important that measures are taken to prevent increased pollution from occurring in the future.

We are here to form an SPD with the goal of bringing the shellfish growing areas from Conditionally Approved to Approved.

Q: We had a spike, can't we just remove it from the data as an outlier?

A: No, we can't remove the outlier. It is still pollution that happened and affected the shellfish growing beds.

Q: The threshold limit for fecal coliform standards is 43 CFU/100mL?

A: Yes.

A horse show can be an event.

A: Yes it can be.

Q: What if efforts fail? What happens if we are unable to improve the pollution?

A: The growing areas stay downgraded. SPDs that accomplish their goals tend to stay on the books as a reference for the future. It varies from district to district due to stakeholder input.

Q: If there was a task "Go look at the May 11th high reading" to investigate what caused the high reading that triggered the SPD in the first place, would this work for concerned stakeholders?

A: The goal is to look into the future and identify all potential sources that make cause spikes in the future.

Understanding what happened in the past helps us know what to do in the future, but the important focus is reducing potential pollution in the future. We don't want to be in a situation where the growing areas are continuously being upgraded and downgraded. Future-proofing is important to the process.

Stakeholders express that cause + effect is usually very clear, the more we are able to work to develop plans to address pollution in the future, the better off we all will be.

Stakeholder offers a scenario: The spike that was sampled on May 11th could have been a boat dumping their waste into the water by station 292. Could this have triggered this whole SPD process and sending us chasing windmills?

A: There are a lot of events and high readings from station 292, not just the May 11th. Also, the readings have been trending upwards steadily, which is also a concern we are addressing.

Q: But if grant money runs out, and the problem is not solved, then we will get taxed? If we are responding to this data, we are breaking with statistics because the high reading should be ignored as an outlier.

A: It's not just the data from one reading. Spikes do occur, and the effort here is to develop preventative measures.

Q: But if we ignore a high reading, we wouldn't have to do any of this.

A: We can start with investigating the May 11th reading to try and explain that specific event. But at this point we must adjourn the meeting as we have gone out time.

We will schedule another meeting within the next month and being with item #7 in the work plan.

Final statement asking about Public Works and Department of Transportation's involvement with storm water management.

Agreed that we want to coordinate efforts with them.