

NEWS RELEASE

May 24, 2011

MASON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

**411 NORTH 5TH ST
SHELTON, WA 98584
(360) 427-9670 EXT. 419**

TO: KMAS, KRXV, SHELTON-MASON COUNTY JOURNAL, THE OLYMPIAN, SHELTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, NORTH MASON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, CITY OF SHELTON, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, THE SUN

**RE: Clean Water Program Public Meetings
Commissioners want your input about program components and funding options**

Mason County Board of County Commissioners invite you to attend one of three Clean Water Public Meetings. The purpose of the meetings is to share information about a proposed Clean Water Program and potential funding options. Citizens will be asked their opinions about the scope of the program how to pay for it.

The meetings will be held:

Tuesday, June 7, 12-2 p.m., Mason County Public Works, 100 W Public Works Dr
Wednesday, June 8, 5:30-7:30 p.m., Hoodspout Fire Hall, 331 North Finch Creek Rd
Thursday, June 9, 5:30-7:30, Theler Community Center, 22871 NE State Route 3

The Clean Water Program comes in response to local plans and initiatives; Growth Management Act compliance; the Puget Sound Action Agenda; and State and Federal Clean Water Act compliance. While Mason County has taken great strides forward in water resource management, nearly all of this work has been grant funded and these grants will expire in the near future. There is much left to do with no established, on-going funding sources to carry on this work. Additionally, new grant funding prospects are diminishing.

These three meetings are second in a series of three outreach opportunities the county is undertaking to explore long-term program and funding needs. In December 2010, Mason County hosted four Open Houses to begin the public dialogue. "Over 200 people either attended, sent letters, emails or postcards to share their thoughts on how to manage our water resources. An overwhelming majority of participants expressed concern about the health of Mason County waters, felt it was important to pay to prevent pollution, and that the responsibility for water pollution prevention is a joint effort. Participants also identified specific problems and locations on maps. We've used that input to help develop the proposed Clean Water Program." said Loretta Swanson, Stormwater Program Coordinator for the county.

The proposed Clean Water Program is estimated to cost approximately \$5.3 million per year, and it is estimated that existing funding sources of approximately \$1.5 million per year will continue in the future. This leaves a funding gap of approximately \$3.8 million per year. To fill the gap, financial consultants have identified nine new potential funding sources including various types of fees and taxes. The Clean Water Program components and potential revenue sources will be explained during the June meetings where participants will be asked to share initial reactions and program/funding preferences. The Clean Water Program has been

developed in coordination with WSU Mason County Extension, Mason Conservation District and many other partners within the County.

Input provided during the June meetings will be considered by the 28-member Stormwater Task Force (SWTF) who is charged with making program and funding recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners. Program refinements and more detail about preferred revenue sources will be presented during another round of public meetings in November.

For more information, visit www.co.mason.wa.us/stormwater or contact Loretta Swanson at (360) 427-9670 Ext. 769, LorettaS@co.mason.wa.us

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