

Deschutes River, Capitol Lake, and Budd Inlet TMDL Advisory Group Meeting

Thursday, October 27, 2011 -- 9:10 a.m. to 12:05 p.m.
Tumwater Fire Department, 300 Israel Rd. SW, Tumwater

Attendees

Citizen

- John DeMeyer
- Bob Holman
- Helen Wheatley

Deschutes Estuary Restoration Team (DERT)

- Zena Hartung
- Cliff Mitchell

Ecology, WA State Dept. of

- Kim McKee
- Lydia Wagner

Enterprise Services (DES), WA Dept. of

- Carrie Martin

LOTT Clean Water Alliance

- Karla Fowler
- Laurie Pierce

Olympia, City of

- Laura Keehan

Olympia, Port of

- Robert Zinkevich

Thurston Conservation District

- Kathleen Whalen

Thurston County Environmental Health

- Sue Davis

Thurston County Storm & Surface Water Advisory Board

- Gary Larson

Thurston County Water Resource Program

- Rich Doenges

Thurston County Water & Waste Management

- Barb Wood

Thurston Public Utilities District

- Chris Stearns

Tumwater, City of

- Dan Smith

General Updates

- **2012 Meetings:** Ecology has scheduled monthly meeting dates for 2012, fully expecting to cancel a few of them if there is no need to meet. The location remains the same.
- **Upper/Middle Watershed Document:** In June, Ecology developed for the EPA a “*Summary of Currently Identified Multi-Parameter TMDL Implementation Actions for the Upper and Middle Deschutes River Watershed*”. Ecology will post this summary with the October meeting notes.
- **Timeline Status:** We are moving forward and are ahead of the timeline due to starting discussions on the implementation strategy components. These discussions were originally anticipated to begin June 2012. Ecology will use the information and ideas gathered during these discussions to help develop both the Water Quality Improvement Report (WQIR) and later the Water Quality Improvement Report (WQIP).
- **December 15 meeting:** We discussed the possibility of taking a break and cancelling the December meeting. We *tentatively* decided to cancel it but will discuss it again and decide at the November 17 meeting.

Website links:

- 2012 Deschutes Advisory Group Meeting Schedule:
<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/tmdl/deschutes/advisorycomm/DeschutesAdvGrp2012MtgSchedule.pdf>

- *Summary of Currently Identified Multi-Parameter TMDL Implementation Actions for the Upper and Middle Deschutes River Watershed:*
<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/tmdl/deschutes/advisorycomm/Upper-Middle-WatershedSummary.pdf>

Draft Lower Watershed Summary

Lydia Wagner previewed a draft version of the presentation summarizing the key issues, ideas, and recommendations for the lower watershed. She will present the final version at the November 17 meeting.

Implementation Strategy Components

To start the discussion, Lydia provided the following on the whiteboard.

Main components to consider today:

- **What**...needs to happen?
- **Who**...needs to help make it happen?
- **Where**...do the actions need to happen?

Other components to discuss at future meetings:

- **Schedule** – interim targets
- **Monitoring** – to evaluate progress and to identify compliance issues
- **Adaptive Management** – target dates; are BMPs working; what else do we need to do?

We started with an informal roundtable of updates from organizations already doing environmental related work in this watershed. We can use this information to identify where we need to concentrate our efforts. These items are not all-inclusive, but are an indicator of efforts currently underway, work already finished, or activities under consideration.

Thurston Conservation District (TCD):

- They recently completed work funded through an Ecology grant.
- Farm plans: Ongoing development of farm plans, incorporating best management practices (BMPs) to improve water quality.
- Riparian restoration: Ongoing as funding is available.
- Technical assistance to landowners is ongoing as resources are available. The district is currently pursuing funding to work with farmers to help connect them to other leased lands to extend their farming area. An example of this effort is Kirsop Farms.
- Grant applications: They continue to look for and apply for grants to fund their work, including special projects and technical assistance. There are few dollars available for services within the Deschutes watershed, at this time. Most of their work has concentrated in the Shellfish Protection District and they would like to extend past it to other parts of the county.
- Workshops: They will continue to provide workshops as funding allows. There are currently two scheduled in November 2011 on Winter Pasture Management and Native Vegetation. They will add Rain Gardens and Low Impact Development workshops as resources are available.

- Lead Entity Program: Salmon Recovery work addresses sediment input and shade degradation in the system. WRIA 13 contact is Amy Hatch-Winecka.
- Clear Choices Program: They have developed a trial program which generated a lot of interest within the Deschutes River watershed. It is already very popular within the Shellfish Protection District in the Henderson/Nisqually watersheds. The program is incentive based. Landowners or occupants would pledge to take certain actions such as picking up pet waste or using non-pesticide applications.

Their wish list of what they would do with more resources:

- Continue and expand the Clear Choices Program
- Conduct more workshops on a variety of Best Management Practices (BMPs)
- Conduct another windshield survey looking at pasture conditions, facilities, types and quantities of animals, water conveyances, and fencing along streams in about three years. They would use this information to prioritize outreach and technical assistance.
- Develop workshops about Rain Gardens and Low Impact Development
- Provide technical assistance to help landowners install rain gardens or use low impact development elements

City of Olympia

- Septic to Sewer Program to help people with septic systems convert to sewer.
- Pet Waste stations provided to neighborhoods and interested parties who are responsible for maintenance.
- IDDE: They are using grant funds to televise storm and sewer pipes, looking for cross-connections and general conditions (breaks, problems with inflow of septic). The City also provides technical assistance to businesses. For example, they may target automotive stores to provide best management practices for their industry. They have also provided spill kits to on site for leaks and spills.
- Technical assistance for spill incidents.
- Integrated Pest Mgmt Plan for City.
- Piloting a lawn aeration plan for neighborhoods. Residents can partner with two other neighbors and the city will pay for a lawn aerator. The equipment rotates amongst neighbors for their use.
- They are looking for more money for retrofits in urban areas where they currently don't have treatment. Monitoring data shows problem areas that are the higher priority.
- Grant projects: Examples include stormwater pond at Yauger Park paid for my Federal Recovery Act funding and the Black Lake Ditch Riparian Restoration Project funded by a special Ecology grant.

City of Tumwater

- Pet waste program
- Water quality sediments
- Look at retrofits on major outfalls. Design retrofits for four major outfalls to the Deschutes.
- Constructed wetlands to help detain flows
- Recently Pioneer Park/Deschutes River has had serious bank erosion.
- They are working with South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group to deflect energy from bank and restore shorelines.
- Engineered log jams

- Revegetation: four active sites working on; focus on maintenance of sites at Pioneer Park, Tumwater Golf Course, converting old farmland into riparian area; look at survivability studies to see success of efforts. DOT donated some materials. They had numerous volunteer activities.
- Golf Course completed sediment control project, funded by the Squaxin Island Tribe, using root wads to anchor sediments in bank. Good results from project.
- Primary focus is completing outfall retrofits. Just finished stormwater outfall on Deschutes Way. Retrofit completed. Once large outfalls finished they will address the smaller outfalls.

LOTT Clean Water Alliance

- Expanding reclaimed water program; extending down to Tumwater. Infrastructure going in. It is very important for producing and distributing reclaimed water that will not be going into Budd Inlet.
- They are building two new primary sedimentation basins that will help with large storm events. The old basins will remain for back up, providing additional tankage capacity to help manage peak flows and reduce the potential for bypasses to Budd Inlet. This is an 18-month process with construction already started.
- They have released a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for a consultant to conduct a major groundwater recharge scientific study. This is a 4 year project. They will work with numerous agencies and conduct a major public involvement program to develop the scope of the project. They expect scoping and gap analysis to take up to nine months. The project will focus on the Urban Growth Area (UGA). Examples of project components include groundwater recharge areas; filtration; and how and where the water moves.
- LOTT provided funding to the Capitol Land Trust, in coordination with the Squaxin Island Tribe (SIT), to help with purchasing a 60-acre property in the Boston Harbor area. The site encompasses one of two primary freshwater inputs into the Gull Harbor estuary, the most intact freshwater/marine ecosystem remaining in the Deschutes/Budd Inlet watershed.
- LOTT is also working with the SIT to identify other water quality related projects up the watershed.
- They continue with ongoing education through the WET Science Center.
- They facilitated a regional Septic Summit for elected officials in June, with ongoing staff meetings to look at specific focus areas.

Port of Olympia

- They are in the process of designing the terminal modifications. Construction has not yet begun. They are completing the hydrology calculations for the site. The final design will entail redirecting the terminal's stormwater to an enhanced stormwater treatment system.
- Mission Creek restoration
- Phase II Municipal Stormwater General Permit education and outreach
- Dog waste program
- Clean Marina (Swantown)
- Habitat restoration

Thurston County will provide information about their programs, projects, and ideas later.

Representatives from LOTT Clean Water Alliance, the cities of Olympia and Tumwater, the Port of Olympia, and the WSU Thurston Extension Office were involved with the Budd Inlet Restoration Partnership. One product resulting from this group was a list of projects and activities already completed and new ones for consideration. Karla will send Lydia the final report to share with the Advisory Group.

Who else needs to be involved?

Squaxin Island Tribe
Forestry groups (such as....)
Capitol Land Trust
Cascade Land Conservancy
South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group
Non-profit organizations
Pacific Coast Shellfish Growers Association
REI, new Olympia store – potential volunteer opportunities for local projects
Woodland Trail Association (check with City of Olympia)

People for Puget Sound
WSU Thurston Extension Office
Olympia – downtown businesses
Stewardship Partners
Think bigger – Puget Sound Region – Governor’s Office, federal agencies such as NOAA and USFW
State agencies: WA Departments of Fish & Wildlife and Natural Resources

General discussion covering various topics

Funding

- **Q:** *Is Ecology providing any funding for sewer projects in Tenino and Rainier?*
A: This is not directly related to the TMDL effort so we don’t know.
- Ecology: Money is harder to get for everyone. Local governments are strapped and Ecology has fewer resources to offer. Money comes from Performance Partnership Grants and there are limits to what type of activities will qualify.
- Add the federal government as a potential funding source in the Lower Watershed Summary presentation slide.
- It is clear the implementation strategy will have many needed actions. We will need to prioritize actions since funding will continue to be limited.

Technical Report

- **Q:** Will the Implementation Plan have specific actions for both the lake and estuary scenario?
A: We will focus on the need to control nutrients from whatever sources we can in order to meet water quality standards. The WQIR will address both scenarios. We don’t know yet what the WQIP will look like since we have to finish the WQIR first.

Cisterns: A recommendation was made to consider the use of cisterns, either above ground or in vaults. Perhaps organizations such as the cities, county, or LOTT could promote these by offering a discount coupon to encourage people to buy cisterns. This is an untapped resource. A property owner wouldn’t have to build a rain garden and they could use the water from the cistern for watering their yards and gardens. It is a win-win scenario. Olympia has a local cistern business. [*From Merriam-Webster dictionary: Cistern - An artificial reservoir (as an underground tank) for storing liquids and especially water (as rainwater).*]

Deschutes Watershed Council: Concern was expressed that we do not have an organized Deschutes Watershed Council. The Nisqually River Watershed Council has done well to develop the Nisqually watershed. The Deschutes TMDL is a disappearing task force who has a focus – develop the report – then their work is over. We need a collective problem-solving group that looks up and down the entire Deschutes watershed. This group would include committed partners such as businesses, organizations, and citizens. It could have deeper community roots, could track the progress in the entire watershed, and spring to action when there is a specific need. Efforts could result in improved flow from the Deschutes River to Budd Inlet. *Is there any way this advisory group could help springboard the larger group/council?*

TCD Response: The Nisqually River Watershed Council was started in the late 1980s and is one of the largest such councils in the nation. They meet once a month. Justin Hall is the contact. *(Ask Kathleen for his contact information.)*

Farm Certification Program: Farmyards have issues with nutrients. Perhaps the TCD could develop a certification program to help educate landowners and farmers about organic farming and watershed protection. The program would have clear criteria and direction to achieve certification. Work with other organizations with similar missions or issues. This could be good advertising for everyone.

TCD Response: The Salmon Safe Farm Certification Program is similar. If a farm certification program was created, organizations could donate money, resources, or volunteers.

Sewage:

- Expand the existing Septic System Operations & Maintenance (O&M) Programs in the watershed. Older systems do not have inspection programs required so there is not enough information about these systems.
- Inspect sewer and storm sewer infrastructure. Consider plumbing from the house to the utility system from privately owned sewage conveyances (side sewers). Nobody is currently looking at the older systems. (Note: Pierce County requires the inspection of side sewers at the time of property sale.)
- We need to know more about the impacts of septic tanks to groundwater. A good septic system will still release nutrients into the soil going to groundwater. Nitrogen has a direct impact to water related to dissolved oxygen. The draft Technical Report addresses some of this, including acknowledging the nitrogen levels in the water is increasing over time. We need to follow up on this issue.
- The Septic Summit pointed out even properly run septic systems can have problems. What policies can the County put into place to address proposed new septic systems? Look at how Pierce County is handling this situation.

Shoreline Properties: Concerns expressed about shorelines of Budd Inlet, particularly Cooper Point Rd. and Gull Harbor areas. Some people owning shorelines keep it listed under an agricultural designation, allowing them to pay less for open space. If they are not responsibility managing their animals, (particularly cows and horses), this can affect Budd Inlet waters.

Ecology's Municipal Stormwater General Permit

- Will the permit get modified after this TMDL is approved by EPA? *(The following update was provided by Lisa Cox, Municipal Stormwater General Permit Manager: The 2013-2018 permit **may or may not be** modified but there is no way to know if a modification would occur before or after the TMDL is approved. If it is modified after EPA approves the TMDL, we do not know if specific TMDL actions will be included in the modified permit. There are a lot of variables involved. Lisa would communicate directly with the potentially affected permit holders. We would not want to take them by surprise if Ecology were to propose actions in a permit modification.)*

Future agenda suggestion: Fertilizer use in urban areas, particularly over outwash soils. What kind of education is needed to address this issue? Look at the Pierce County programs.

Website links:

- Stewardship Partners, homepage: <http://www.stewardshippartners.org/index.html>
- Stewardship Partners, Salmon-Safe Farm Certification Program: <http://www.stewardshippartners.org/salmon-safe-certification.html>
- The Stewardship Messenger, Summer 2011 Newsletter of Stewardship Partners: <http://www.stewardshippartners.org/downloads/newsletter-summer-2011.pdf>
- The Nisqually Watershed: http://www.stewardshippartners.org/prog_nis.html
- Ecology, Water Quality Grants & Loans homepage: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/funding/funding.html>
- Budd Inlet Restoration Partnership, Phase II Report, June 2011: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/tmdl/deschutes/advisorycomm/102711DeschutesAdvMtg-Final-BI-Restoration-Phase-II-June2011.pdf>.
- USGS Publication, "Nutrients in the Nation's Streams and Groundwater, 1992-2004", Circular 1350: <http://pubs.usgs.gov/circ/1350/pdf/circ1350.pdf>

Open Comment

Chris Stearns: He would like to see neighborhoods involved in this process. We should ask other groups to participate.

Next meeting

Date: Thursday, November 17, 2011
Time: 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon
Place: Tumwater Fire Department, 300 Israel Rd. SW, Tumwater
Agenda: Lower Watershed Summary, City of Olympia Black Lake Ditch Riparian Restoration Project, and continue discussion on Implementation Strategy Components