

Meeting Notes for Thurston County Hazardous Waste Plan Stakeholders Group Meeting - July 17, 2008

The following individuals attended the July 17, 2008 meeting:

Nicky Upson, Thurston County Environmental Health
Rachel Laderman, Thurston County Environmental Health
Cheri Reimers, City of Olympia (filling in for Liz Hoenig)
Leslie Morris, Ecology Hazardous Waste and Toxics Reduction - SWRO
Al Salvi, Ecology Solid Waste and Financial Assistance Program - SWRO
Dan Smith, City of Tumwater
Mike Schultz, ORCAA
Ken Butti, Lott Alliance
Cedar Bouta, Ecology Hazardous Substance Information and Education Office - HQ
Chris Grabowski, City of Olympia
Ernie Paul, Thurston County Environmental Health
Jennifer Johnson, Thurston County Environmental Health
Mike Williams, Williams Group
Gerald Tousley, Thurston County Environmental Health
Jane Mountjoy-Venning, Thurston County Environmental Health

- 1) Welcome & Introductions – Mike Williams**
- 2) Guiding Principles and Vision – Mike**

Mike handed out the draft guiding principles. Eight draft guiding principles along with suggestions submitted by Liz Hoenig were presented at the meeting. The draft principles were the result of previous discussion with the group, plus the input of county staff who work in the Hazardous Waste and HHW programs.

The group generally agreed that the list is comprehensive. The group began with a discussion of Guiding Principle 1 and the revised version that was included on the backside of the document. There was agreement not to include language which would narrowly define the tools available by mentioning terms like social-based marketing in the guiding principles. Rather, the recommendation was to use the term “education” and recognize that there may be new approaches or methodologies to reaching target audiences.

The group then discussed Guiding Principle 3 as well as the revised version. There was agreement not to include language that was self-limiting. For example, “using proven tools” may preclude the use of new and innovative tools. The group suggested getting rid of the word “tools” entirely and instead saying “facilitating citizens’, employees’ and business owners’ ability to make changes.”

There was some discussion about whether to use the terms “residents and business owners” versus “citizens.” Rachel indicated that they will go back and discuss that with staff and make a decision.

The group talked about Guiding Principles 5 and 6. In particular, the group focused on how the county acts as a leader and its role in creating partnerships. It was agreed that the two principles could be combined by staff at another time.

The next step for this particular document is to redraft the principles for staff’s review and e-mail out the revised version of this between now and next meeting.

Rachel reported that the Hazardous Waste Section had been asked, as a result of the last meeting, to come up with a draft vision for the Plan. The consensus of staff was that this was not something that they needed to move forward, nor was it something that they felt would be a productive use of their time, so they did not do one. Staff is open to more discussion about this if the group thinks it is absolutely necessary, but at this point they are not convinced that a vision statement is something that they should take staff time and have a series of meetings for.

3) Thurston County Demographics – Rachel (see powerpoint – on website under July 17 “presentation”)

Information presented is from the 2007 Thurston County Profile, although some is getting old as it is based on the 2000 Census. Total County population is 238,000 as of 2007. Growth has slowed over the previous decade’s rate of 2.5% but the increases are still significant. Yelm and Lacey are growing at the fastest rates. The projection is that by the year 2020 the total county population will be 319,000. Forecasters predict the rate of growth will slow over next 10 years and then pick up again. (Currently the county’s growth as reflected in building permits is very slow.)

In terms of how the population make-up is changing, average household size is going down (from 2.7 in 1970 to 2.5 in 2000) and the number of households with children is down to 35% from 46% in 1970. Racial composition isn’t changing too much; the area of growth is Hispanic and Asian. As of 2000, Americans and Alaska Natives have dropped down. Regarding languages, the 2006 American Community Survey shows we have over 1500 households that are linguistically isolated, meaning there are no adult members that speak English. Many speak an Asian language or Spanish. There are also 22,536 residents who speak a language other than English at home.

Ken asked how the department is using this data. Rachel said that it’s useful for them to look at to see if their materials will reach the intended audience. Are they preparing materials assuming that everyone is in a household of 2.5 kids, speaking English, etc? Are other counties, with similar demographics, investing more in translating materials or having bilingual staff?

Cedar said have they looked at Census data in terms of where speakers of different languages are clustered? Rachel said this information was not in the Profile but they do know that for example, in South County there are more Spanish-speaking people seasonally. Certain businesses such as landscapers or dry cleaners need to have materials

translated into Asian languages. Cedar said at Ecology they have a map of Washington that shows percentages of languages in clusters. This would be useful to see if it is cost effective to do a translation. Rachel agreed that it makes sense to do a small localized distribution of a translated brochure to a specific audience rather than a larger printing.

4) Household Hazardous Waste Education (see Hazardous Waste Plan Chapter 4 and p. 70) – Rachel

A) Goals

Rachel said they want feedback on the big picture: is the content of the basic areas they are covering good? Where should they put more or less emphasis? In order to start the conversation they will use the 7 goals and 5 objectives that need to be reviewed from the 1998 education plan, listed on page 70.

Rachel went through the goals on powerpoint.

On goal #7 (“Reduce potential for causing publicly owned facilities such as the landfill or sewage treatment plants to exceed pollutant discharge limits”), Mike Shultz questioned why the concern is just about reducing potential for the publicly owned facilities, not other sites such as office space? Rachel said that is a good question. Ken asked further, why not include on site (ie septic systems) too? Rachel said it seemed reasonable to strike the word “publicly.”

Editor’s Note – Revise Goal 7 to read: “Reduce potential for causing waste treatment facilities such as the landfill, on-site septic systems, and sewage treatment plants to exceed pollutant discharge limits.”

Rachel said the thought she had when reviewing this material was “how do we know we are meeting these goals?” In preparation for this meeting she looked into what reports or tools are available to evaluation progress in meeting the goals. Some of these are shown on slide 17, “Sources to use for indicators.” She raised the idea that the next plan should build in a way to periodically check these indicators. The hardest parameter to measure is reduction in household hazardous waste.

Gerald said the next waste sort is happening this fall, so they can update numbers on that by end of year. The waste sort is carried out by Water and Waste Management and does include hazardous materials and automotive parts. Rachel questioned whether hazardous waste was just lumped under “special waste” but Gerald said it will be broken down into 27 different categories.

Rachel asked if people have suggestions for how to build in these or other ways to track whether they are meeting their goals.

Cedar had a couple of ideas. Ecology will be redoing the statewide household survey they did in 2007, again in late ‘09 or early ‘10. Cedar wants to invite the MRW programs to be a part of this, and think of how it could be used for evaluation. Jane Mountjoy-Venning asked if the county would be able to pay over samples, to collect extra data in our county that might be useful. Cedar said this should be possible, and Rachel said that would be

great and much more economical than a separate survey. Cedar said they also get the county-to-state comparisons, which will be interesting.

Another thing she is looking at doing in Lewis County, because she has struggled finding data on this, is to investigate what people are using within a household. This could answer questions of what demographics bring materials to HazoHouse, and separate that from whether the message is working to not buy so much; but first you need a good baseline of what people are currently using in their households. The idea would be to do household sampling of a few households, looking at how much they use, how much they buy, and tracking over 6 months. Could look at risk exposures, for example asking how often they clean bathrooms, what they use, and whether kids are in the area. Rachel said she it would be great to get data of what people really are doing in our community. Cedar said she would be happy to talk to Rachel about methodology.

Rachel asked the group if there are goals that are missing, or too broad, or didn't make sense?

Leslie Morris said she had comment on goal #6, "Reduce damage to collection and transfer vehicles, disposal equipment, and disruption of treatment facilities by ensuring hazardous waste is kept out of these facilities or systems." She noted it is very focused on reducing damage to inanimate objects, rather than mentioning harm to solid waste workers that are actually taking our garbage from can to truck. She knows there have been incidents of serious injuries due to people improperly disposing. Rachel agreed that protecting the workers was the actual intent of the goal however not how it was written.

Editor's note – Revise Goal 6 to read, "Protect waste collection, disposal, and treatment workers from harm and reduce damage to equipment and treatment facilities by ensuring hazardous waste is kept out of these systems."

Dan Smith asked how narrow or broad the goals should be. To make them broader, there are terms that could be taken out, for example "private property at home and school," "publicly owned facilities." Rachel said while she thinks broad is good, there is a limit to what they can do. Usually when a term was added to a goal it wasn't to exclude something else, but to bring particular attention to that aspect.

Cedar had a question about where specific audiences are addressed. She is thinking about business workers versus the home audience. Cedar said you can do a matrix of priority audiences, secondary audiences, tertiary audiences with goals. Rachel said they often do this when they start a project and brainstorm who is important to reach with what messages and then narrow it down. She also mentioned that their group wants to call out certain audiences for attention in the Plan, such as vulnerable populations.

Gerald said to broaden out you might want to just get rid of the word household. Their work has expanded to schools and other areas, and maybe it should just be broadened to be called hazardous waste education. Maybe household is restricting them and now it's time to take the restrictions off.

Leslie Morris said important information shouldn't be put in parenthesis, and suggested looking at what they put in parenthesis, as well as italics, because people tend to ignore both.

B. Objectives

Objective 1: “Continue delivery of household hazardous waste education programs, whenever possible, resulting in measurable changes in waste reduction, recycling, and proper disposal.” Program outreach (handout – also see slide 19 for list of methods of outreach)

To illustrate how the education team carries out this objective, Rachel said that Jane, Ernie and Jennifer put together a handout that shows general methods of outreach and a few examples of each one. It also notes whether you can measure the effectiveness in some way – some to a shallower degree, some a more sophisticated measure of effectiveness. They didn't include whether they think it's effective or not, because that involves a more lengthy discussion.

Mike observed that the chart is very close to the matrix that was referred to earlier matching audience and goals.

Objective 2: “Continue and create new partnerships with retailers of hazardous products to educate consumers.”

Rachel said that having partnerships is a huge part of being effective. She showed a county map with pins color-coded to sites where they have point-of-purchase materials or collection sites. These included oil recycling sites, nurseries, post offices, libraries, paint stores, hardwares, and big box stores. The idea is to get information to people when they are shopping or otherwise looking for advice. Ernie visits these sites weekly.

Objective 3: “Assess customer needs and collect information about target audiences to design programs that will result in behavior change or increased knowledge of options and services.”

Rachel used an in-depth example of a project to show how the education team meets this objective.

Evaluation example: Protect Kids from Toxins. To assess customer needs, the educators interviewed childcare professionals, pediatricians, the WIC manager, DOH staff and others to ask what topics they thought were important to communicate to parents and caregivers to protect children's health from toxins. From there they came up with sample materials, which they tested one-on-one in sessions with WIC program clients, who received a gift certificate for participating. The recommendations included a wipe-off refrigerator message board with reminder messages and a poster. They also used visitors to the Hands on Children Museum's "free night" to test whether people understood the poster messages and what they meant. Final products included posters in Spanish and English, a brochure and display. They did a lot of presentations and trainings to HeadStart and other staff or parent groups. The brochure was distributed statewide through the Department of Health's Child Profile mailing and was translated into Spanish; the DOH also made several copies of the display for state use.

To evaluate behavior change, the educators were able to add questions to a county health department survey that was going on. The questions were on chemical product use and behaviors such as taking off shoes, reading labels, and opening windows. The county did a repeat survey after one year of doing the program, so the educators were able to get a baseline and follow-up after one year of carrying out the program. The county Health Epidemiologist said the results were statistically significant that 17% more people heard local information on harmful effects of toxins than in the previous year.

Another evaluation method for the same project was to survey class participants at a HeadStart training directly after class and also several months later. At class-time they were asked what changes they planned to make based on the day's presentation. Several months later they were asked what changes they had actually made. In several categories of actions from 30-40% of participants made changes, for example, in purchasing less-toxic cleaning products.

Rachel briefly described a second evaluation method, a phone survey that was done to determine if the Common Sense Gardening program results in changed behavior. One-third of those surveyed had read a Common Sense Gardening guide and 66% had made changes; 40% used less toxic chemicals as a result. The survey also showed that 94% of those who attended a workshop put information to use, but that people found the less-toxic products that were described hard to find in stores. This led to a major effort still underway to work with stores to shift the products for sale to be less toxic.

Objective 4: “Implement programs targeting high risk and high volume hazardous materials as a first priority, then high risk and low volume hazardous materials as a second priority. Next, target low risk and high volume hazardous materials, then materials that are low risk and low volume.”

Rachel showed the way this was intended to be used was to prioritize for example used motor oil, because it is high volume and high hazard, and to have as a lower priority cleaners, which are low volume waste and low hazard in general. The problem is that this approach doesn't acknowledge risk from use and exposure. Cedar asked how they determine whether they have met the objective – do they have some measure, and is there someone determining when to move to the next level? Rachel said that she did prepare a chart showing time and money spent on different categories, which she will show us in a few minutes, but that this was not built into the program.

Cedar said you have to have a goal for each objective so that you know whether you are meeting the expectations. Jane responded that the current plan does not have that in it. Rachel agreed it would be a good idea to build measurable goals into the new plan.

- **Revised Objective 4: “Prioritize hazardous materials that are highly toxic (acute and chronic), have high exposure or contamination potential, and/or are produced in large amounts. Research newly emerging chemical concerns and develop programs for those that meet the above criteria.”**

Rachel asked for responses to this proposed replacement for Objective 4. Cedar asked if it also meant prioritizing your resources to align with the materials, and Rachel said yes.

Nicky asked if the word should be “produced” when it’s the discarding that’s an issue. General conversation ensued and concluded to use “available” or “utilized” instead.

Editor’s Note - Revise Revised Objective 4: **“Prioritize hazardous materials that are highly toxic (acute and chronic), have high exposure or contamination potential, and are available or utilized in large amounts. Research newly emerging chemical concerns and develop programs for those that meet the above criteria.”**

Objective 5: “Increase understanding of individual responsibility of proper selection, use, storage, and disposal of hazardous products.”

Rachel said that carrying out this objective is basic to many of the messages and programs. One measure they use to see what the population is learning is surveys asking knowledge and use of HazoHouse. The last phone survey they did, in 2000, showed that 67% of county residents took unwanted household products to HazoHouse or the WasteMobile. They learned about HazoHouse primarily from signs at the landfill. Mike Shultz said this means you are only capturing those that use landfills, which is not all of the population. Cedar added that it might be too late if they are already there. Rachel noted that the survey doesn’t reflect a new emphasis by the Solid Waste educators who in the last few years have been more dedicated to getting the word out on these programs.

Gerald said they just finished the Yelm WasteMobile and everyone said that although people knew about HazoHouse they wait for the WasteMobile, because they are not willing to drive too far. Al Salvi said you just have to go to where people are.

Rachel next showed a graph that used the 2008 work plan to show money spent in the different major topic areas. In purple is the amount of staff time in dollars. In blue is the nonpersonnel money spent on printing, advertising, displays, etc. Cedar asked if this reflects the total budget; Rachel said it does not include overhead and does not show other programs the educators do that include some household hazardous materials messages, such as septic system workshops.

Mike Shultz said on Objective #5, it’s great to have individual responsibility for these things but it would be nice to shift this to manufacturers’ or corporate responsibility. Rachel said she agrees and will show a suggested objective in a minute that addresses this.

C. Gaps (slide 35)

Rachel showed a slide with six gaps the educator groups has identified in their services.

(1) Not equitable – services mainly available to drivers and English-speaking.

Almost all printed materials are in English. Also many services are only available to people that are driving. In the 1998 planning process, they had put forward as an option increasing translation but this proposal was not funded. However, as the program has evolved it might be time to put resources towards reaching a smaller percentage of the population but one that hasn’t been reach at all. Chris Grabowski said he was surprised that WIC posters were only in Spanish and English and not Cambodian or Vietnamese. Jane said they are only required by HeadStart to have Spanish and English. Chris said but

based on your demographic it seems like they should have others. Jane said part of the problem when they have looked at the Asian languages is that it's not just one language it's multiple languages. Cedar said it would be nice to understand the risk and exposure to those audiences so that materials you create could apply to their needs. Rachel recommended looking at low cost ways to reach a very targeted specific audience.

(2) **We do not know who is NOT being reached (phone surveys help).** A lot of surveys get information from people that have picked up materials or, in the case of phone surveys, people who are home during the day and have a phone and speak English. This misses a lot of people.

(3) **Need to use results of environmental sampling as evaluation.** This gets back to whether they are satisfying the goals of protecting ground water, surface water, soils, etc. There is information available that hasn't been put together.

(4) **Are people purchasing less HHM?** Because sales data is not available, Jane has an ongoing shelf survey program that will compare over the years the actual inches of different products for sale in Home Depot and Lowe's. The surveys will answer the question of whether or not the stocking of low-hazard products that have passed our IPM review is increasing. The educators are also looking at doing a shelf survey with the Protect Teens from Toxins project. Continue to do classes on personal care products and also working with stores on signage. Leslie Morris asked why can't they get sales data? Jane said they were able to at one point, but then it became unavailable.

Cedar said Ecology will also soon be enacting the Children's Safe Product Rule. Rachel added that part of this includes Ecology identifying other toxins that could be in children's products. Rachel said they pay close attention to priorities Ecology sets, for several reasons. For one, funding. Also, it makes sense to put out messages on a topic when many other communities are also addressing that topic, and people hear about it from a variety of sources. She added that clearly the types of waste have changed from large easily identifiable things such as used oil and solvents to things that are everywhere, such as flame retardants and chemicals in plastics, such that you can barely touch anything that doesn't have something hazardous in it.

(5) **Need better take-back and recycling infrastructure for antifreeze, battery, fluorescents, paint, pharmaceuticals, small electronics.**

(6) **Who addresses radon, electromagnetic radiation?**

Rachel asked if anyone had gaps to add to those so far presented.

Dan Smith said he is interested in the idea of an incentive program for retailers to not purchase certain products, so consumers don't have the opportunity to even purchase it. The education is of business managers or owners rather than the shoppers. Rachel said that's exactly where they are going, to provide purchasers with a list of what they (the county) recommends. For example in the area of pesticides, they are directing people to look for certain safer products and at the same time letting the retailers know so they can stock those products. That's an area of growth that they can continue to apply to other

sectors. Cedar asked have they ever considered EnviroStars program? Gerald said yes they have, many times.

Rachel asked “**What is the mechanism for when education does NOT meet the goals we have set?**” When do we go to regulation and enforcement (see pp. 68 and 72 of the 1989 Plan)? Education plus enforcement is the most effective. You really get changes when some kind of law is in place. Unlike some counties, Thurston County does not have an ordinance banning household hazardous waste going into the trash. So the question is, why are we letting this into the environment? At our first meeting Dave Nightingale of DOE handed out a sheet of Beyond Waste ideas; on page 4 it recommends passing a local ordinance that prohibits MRW from being disposed in solid waste. Leslie Morris asked if they have checked with how California deals with it, because they regulate household hazardous waste. There might be counties you can talk to down there about what can be done. Rachel says we can learn from counties here such as Snohomish and Kitsap. Al Salvi said Clark County is working on the same ordinance right now. Rachel said it would be interesting to see what kind of impact that has made. Chris Grabowski said there would have to be the political will to reinforce it. Mike Shultz said you also need the funding for enforcement. Rachel says this is just the first testing of waters for this; she hasn’t even talked about it with Gerald. Chris Grabowski said one thing to think about is whatever fines or fees are collected could go towards education and not into a general fund but a targeted account. Rachel says that’s a good selling point to garner support.

Rachel next mentioned a new Suggested Objective, “Further policies that reduce the toxicity of products in the marketplace by promoting, for example, manufacturer take-back programs, the precautionary principle, market transformation, and the Thurston County Sustainability Policy (Environmentally Preferred Purchasing).” She explained the precautionary principle means that instead of trying to clean up a mess once you’ve made it, you should be more conservative in what is allowed in the first place. In some ways it’s theoretical for the County because they don’t have a lot of manufacturing that they are permitting or not permitting. Any larger scale industry is permitted through Ecology.

Cedar said she was just thinking that maybe one of the guiding principles could be to follow the precautionary principle. It would be great to have the County adopt that as a guiding principle for their actions in term of their own purchasing and what they do in terms of education. It would help with prevention versus cleaning up, which gives a foundation for what they are doing their “Protect Kids” work. It would be great to have the County adopt it. Rachel says the good thing about bringing it up is that it is educational even though it might not pass the first time.

The discussion then moved on to how to prioritize education work; the question of funding an environmental health program through solid waste fees; and whether to drop a program if it cannot be evaluated.

Rachel described the funding dilemma – that while most of their funds are from Water & Waste Management, emerging threats such as endocrine disruption, chronic disease tied to chemical exposure, etc., are far from a waste reduction issue. Beyond Waste does address these broader issues but that does not mean they will be seen as appropriate to be funded by tipping fees. There were no solutions offered.

Rachel asked if we cannot evaluate a program, should we drop it, because we don't know whether it's working or not? That gets back to some of Liz's adjustments to the goals, about using proven methods and measurable techniques. Leslie Morris asked if this means there is a focus on quantitative versus qualitative evaluation. Rachel said if the qualitative evaluation is strong enough and not totally subjective, it can be used. She said ideally they would like to hire someone to come in as a third party and evaluate what they are doing. Jane said they have used both methods on projects, it just depends. Measuring collection numbers isn't very helpful.

Mike Shultz said if you stick just to goals and objectives, then if you cannot evaluate it, you should drop it. Rachel said there is a point where we shouldn't do things if we can't evaluate but some things have to be done without knowing if they make a difference or not. They have to weigh out expense versus what the results are. Cedar said if you are doing good design work and focus group work up front to know it will work with your target audience, then you can make some assumptions that you know it's going to work. So to her it's a pre-evaluation. Rachel said that another option is to adopt someone else's program that has been evaluated, although in a different community it might not transfer 100%.

The last two slides were two more suggested new Objectives. The first was, "Relate hazardous materials education to broader regional and global environmental health concerns such as restoring Puget Sound and mitigating climate change." Mike Shultz said he really liked this one and it should definitely be kept.

The second was "Implement programs reaching vulnerable and underserved populations." (This had been discussed earlier and was supported.)