



COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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**PUBLIC HEALTH AND  
SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

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**Director**  
Diana T. Yu, MD, MSPH  
**Health Officer**

**Nisqually Reach and Henderson Inlet Shellfish Protection District**

And

**Nisqually Reach Septic System Operation & Maintenance Project Committee**

Meeting Notes: May 18, 2010

Members present:

Mat Buldis (Aquaculture), Tris Carlson, Mark Fischer (Community Shellfish Farm), Peter Heide, Randall Hurst (Septic Professionals), Randy Jackson (Septic Professionals), Linda Malatesta, Fred Michelson, Gregory Moe (Realtors), Gene Brown (Homeowner Association), Mike Zittel (Business)

**County Staff:** Mark J. Swartout (Shellfish Protection District Staff), Art Starry, and Linda Hofstad (Environmental Health)

**State Staff:** Lynn Schneider (DOH), Lawrence Sullivan (DOH), Cindy James (DOE)

1. No changes to April meeting notes.
2. Recap and Questions
  - a. Where are the shellfish growing areas?
    - i. Distributed a map of the current harvest areas. Green areas of the maps are approved and red are prohibited
    - ii. Harvest sites change annually.
    - iii. No harvest sites in the prohibited areas
    - iv. The two red prohibited areas in the North.
      1. One is a marina
      2. The other doesn't meet the water quality standards.
        - a. Pollution is coming from bulkhead discharge pipes and small tributaries.
        - b. It was reported that a property owner that has cattle where runoff goes into a stormwater pipe that drains to the beach.
        - c. Possible pollution sources in the tributaries may be wildlife and suspect septic systems

- b. Are septic systems a problem in the Nisqually Reach?
  - i. Flow of water is along the shoreline. Not like an inlet where the water circulates around.
  - ii. Handout showing past sanitary survey results.
    - 1. Failure rate in the Nisqually from 1994-1999 was 27% while other inlets were at 14%.
    - 2. The data from Henderson and Nisqually were mostly from systems where the owner volunteered to have it tested.
    - 3. Nearshore systems in the Nisqually show a 50% failure rate.
    - 4. 60% of failures are usually minor repairs.
    - 5. Soils are tight throughout the survey areas with a few pockets of better draining soils.
    - 6. Totten Inlet has lower density of systems.
    - 7. The systems in these survey areas that were found to be failing have been repaired. But without a consistent program, other systems are now likely to be failing...
    - 8. Kitsap County has found that the *catastrophic* repairs go down over time, but about the same percentage of minor repairs.
  - iii. A statement was made that there are no large streams emptying onto the Nisqually Reach. [McAllister Creek flows in south of the Reach.] Finding the sources may be easier because there is a smaller area being drained.
  - iv. The Nisqually River discussion
    - 1. FC continues to look good.
    - 2. There are often spikes in September / October due to the first flush events.
    - 3. Lots of effort has been spent to improve agricultural practices in Nisqually valley.
    - 4. McAllister Creek data is looking better, but the fecal coliform is '*fickle*' in this area. There are sites that indicate pollution problems though the sources are difficult to identify. Added to this is that the portion of McAllister Creek from the Reach to just south of Martin Way, is held to the marine standard (14 fecal coliform per 100 mL) due to the high salinity of the creek from tidal flushing. It is very difficult for a freshwater body to meet this stringent water quality standard.
    - 5. The remainder of the creek must meet the freshwater quality standard of 100 fecal coliform colonies per 100mL. Most often it does, but portions sometimes exhibit problems. Caution: continue to work in the McAllister Creek watershed.

### 3. Formulate Proposal

#### a. Boundary of area

- i. Boundary will be adopted by the BoCC and BoH
- ii. FC doesn't pass from Lake St.Clair to McAllister Springs.
- iii. Nisqually tribal area need not be included because the tribe is building a high tech sewage treatment plant.
- iv. First suggestion was to cut off south of Yelm Hwy – no consensus
- v. Next suggestion was to only include areas that can contribute to the Nisqually Reach area. Use LiDAR to help determine the boundary. The group agreed to this suggestion. Line would be south of the Springs and north of Lake St Clair.

#### b. Name

- i. Nisqually Reach Watershed Protection Area.

#### c. Inspections: Criteria for intensity and frequency

- i. Dye test methods will work in the Nisqually Reach area.
- ii. No changes to proposed program

#### d. Enforcement: Level and methods

- i. The Board just adopted a regulatory requirement that when a property is sold the health department needs to provide a notice on whether the septic system is in compliance. This will go into effect on September 1<sup>st</sup>.
- ii. If a system is out of compliance, no county permits can be issued until it is brought back into compliance.
- iii. The group accepted what was proposed with no changes.

#### e. Service Providers: Who does the inspections, what are the qualifications

- i. The group accepted what was proposed with no changes.

#### f. Funding formulas and billing mechanisms – how to calculate and collect program fees

##### i. Incentives.

1. The group accepted keeping the same incentives with no changes or additions.
2. Incentives will be built into the program costs – agreed to by the group.
3. Need to consider what incentives are restricted by what the county can provide funds for.
4. There was a question on whether the riser rebate program should be included.
  - a. Good for social marketing to change the behavior.
  - b. The county is noticing speedier renewals perhaps due to the riser installations.

##### ii. Fee per system or per parcel discussion.

1. A proposal was put on the table to have a fee per system.
2. Staff will bring back some idea of number of parcels with multiple systems.

- iii. Adaptive management:
  - 1. If the group decides to go with fee per system, then recommend that the county amend the Henderson program to make the same change.
- g. June 15th the next meeting. Staff will present a draft proposal based on consensus. Staff will begin work on program budget – will present a rough draft for review.