



Clean Water Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Friday Harbor Grange -March 14, 2019

Committee Members in Attendance: Jenny DeGroot, Vicki Heater, Ann Jarrell, Kyle Loring, Judy Meyer, Bob Neiman, Byron Rot, Gary Sale, Laura Jo Severson, Kendra Smith,

Non-Committee Members in Attendance: Krista Davis, Marta Green, Jolyn Leslie, Mike Pickett

Committee members not in attendance: Kyle Dodd, Paul Kamin, Buck Smith, Kimbal Sundberg, Bill Watson

8:40 AM Kendra opens the meeting.

MOTION: Laura Jo moves to approve December & January meeting minutes, Gary seconds. All in favor. Judy abstains (due to absence)

8:41 Agency Updates

Jolyn Leslie

Connected Kyle Dodd with grant specialist in our office to help facilitate his plans

8:42 Phase II of Stream Action Plan

Byron Rot

First a recap of Phase I, presentation given at LIO meeting included SJI salmonid limiting factors and recommended actions. One conclusion: in-channel ponds are a problem, they limit flows and access

1. Garrison Creek, now has 12 ponds where it once had zero

Has a genetically unique cutthroat stock. There's a diversion dam that's no longer used, removal would expose sediment plug in small county culvert. Fish spawn up until the dam. In winter fish move down-Island when/where there's water.

Recommendations: remove diversion dam, enhance water storage/wetland in SE corner, assess opportunities for water retention, plant riparian cover in lower watershed, deal with county culvert

Discussion: woody debris/structure can be put in to slow water down, trapping sediment. If full block were removed, it would open up habitat, possibly more rearing than spawning habitat.

2. False Bay Creek, map showing riparian layer with assessment of vegetation height.

Bottom line: False Bay needs more vegetation. Working with Land Bank at False Bay Creek reserve.

Discussion: in-stream ponds have an effect on temperature at Zylstra, not so much at Trout Lake.

First need to get livestock out (Preservation Trust is working with landowner(s) and cattle rancher to improve water quality downstream) add vegetation, but need temperature probes

Problem: Zylstra has Bass in it. Downstream of fork there's a mechanism town uses to circulate water, fish can't migrate out until that's resolved. Oldest water right is lower Zylstra. The town is planning to raise/enhance the Trout Lake dam, may add more flow for fish as mitigation

Note: a fire truck couldn't reach Trout Lake, trees and limbs that should be thinned out.

March 26-27: terrestrial managers' meeting to discuss forest health, including risk of fire. Relative humidity is a major factor for fire risk and it rarely drops for long in our region. Soil temperature/moisture changes can also be a sign of increased fire risk

ACTION ITEM: more firewise talk scheduled to occur at Terrestrial Managers meeting at end of March

Pole-assisted log structure are man-made devices that can affect flow patterns. Act like a weir. There needs to be more than a few to withstand big flows. Help with fish rearing habitat creation.

3. Crow Valley Creek, water quality-limited. Opportunity to plant trees to replace grass in watershed. "Hunger Pond" on Maple Rock farm, it's a fish block, if there's no warm-water fish it could be a fish-rearing habitat. There's good habitat in the southeast corner if a couple of blockages are removed. Historically there has been cutthroat. Three main ponds together store a fair amount of water.

Fairly modest recommendations – need more assessment for what fish are in the Valley

Discussion: San Juan County is #7 in State for number of (permitted) dams. Depending on what's downstream a dam could be dangerous, a liability to the owner. Farming is generally irrigating directly from Crow Valley creek. This is changing, State and County are requiring more permits. Need strategies that promote the cutthroat fishery recreationally, opportunities to educate regarding native fish. Need careful public outreach, especially to watershed landowners and key influencers

4. Cascade Creek – we've already talked about this in detail – Will have a tour in April

5. Doe Bay Creek – the other watershed with resident cutthroat. This is the most genetically unique stock. There's a fish passage barrier (natural falls) in Doe Bay Resort. A local landowner stocked a pond with nonnative goldendale trout with no permit, WDFW didn't respond appropriately. They have no fish screens. If these fish could be removed, this could be a cool summer refugia.

Cutthroat have been found at a few spots but need more surveys to assess where fish actually are.

Discussion: We need a moratorium on stocking non-native fish, it hurts native fish, no current regulations. We should meet with WDFW to combine with public outreach campaign, figure out how to engage landowners who want to stock native fish and remove non-native fish. We need people to remove or modify illegal ponds. Native fish are genetically unique with only 20-25 breeding adults

6. Bayhead/Victorian Creek (next to ferry landing on Orcas). Many problems and fish-blocks.

Local community near blockages are not interested. Willow Creek has some flow – potential habitat? Out of the 8 watersheds this should be lowest priority - heaviest lift and biggest problems. As of 2007 there were cutthroat, then one pond got built and no more were found.

7. Fish Trap Creek; Landowners put a culvert in dam so there could be flow for the first time in 50 years, proceeding cautiously, starting with low flow. There are 6-7 landowners along creek corridor. 3 culverts, 2 are private, southern-most one is most risk. Upper end expected flow: pipe was situated so that 2-5 year flood event will go to Fish Trap. A screen is being installed on the outflow to Fish trap creek, working with an engineer to size the fish screen appropriately. This is all mitigation for having built an illegal pond. This story could be a 'road map' to dealing with other ponds

8. West Beach Creek; County road culvert will be replaced this summer. One pond will be removed, worked with landowner for access to the upper part of the watershed with potentially good habitat (Byron to clarify the above statement).

Other recommendation: more log structures, more surveys to assess if/where fish are. In 2008 there were cutthroat, but in 2014 there weren't (in the lower parts of watershed)

Discussion: Need to think creatively about next steps, like bringing in WDFW— maybe to one of our next meetings. Let them know “here is one of the main things we need to do for our fish populations”. Two fronts: regulatory and social (this includes recreational fishing & stocking bass)

ACTION ITEM: Fish subcommittee needs to meet again

Byron: planning to talk on each island soon, talk to locals, build enthusiasm for restoring native fish populations. Inform people they can still fish, for cutthroat instead of bass. Build community support

Jenny: It's important to address the Ag community. Farmers may assume they can use water on their property. Need to make sure they're working with natural resource management groups

9:56 AM Stormwater management challenges and proposed updates *Krista Davis*

There haven't been qualified people reviewing stormwater permits. Plans come in, people sign off, and it becomes part of the building permit. We're losing a level of enforcement, basic erosion control.

We've been trying to inspect more areas, to communicate with building inspectors that do private residences. Currently building inspectors aren't really looking at stormwater plans, just checking the box. Sometimes contractors are just building (without clearing and grading etc. and no permits)

Krista shows examples (pool on Lopez, houses in Eastsound). Need to develop a better system, of engagement and enforcement. There will be an erosion control training (CESCL) offered in the County soon.

10:15 CIP (capital improvement plan) and budget brief update *Kendra Smith*

It's taken a year to negotiate 4 grants with Dept. of Ecology, those will go into budget this spring.

The calculation of parcel #'s for the clean water utility fee accidentally included the town of FH (which has its own stormwater fee); they should have been removed from the parcel count. That affected the number of projected equivalent service units by just over 800. The Treasurer had to re-send tax bills to property owners who got charged the County amount instead of the Town amount. The discrepancy comes to approximately \$50K in revenue. We may need to slide one San Juan Island project a year back to start (because this is an issue that affects the capital budget calculation on San Juan primarily), and this will be reflected in the new budget Kendra will bring in May/June. We'll need to think about how to deal with this in the future.

10:20 Public Comment

Question: is there a person in the county office people can ask about a pond(s) on private property?

Answer: Need to talk with DCD (Dept. of Community Development).

ACTION ITEM: Kendra to find out who will be point-person for ponds

10:30 Adjourn

Next Meeting: April 11, 2019 – field trip to Orcas / Cascade Creek, takes place of monthly meeting
May Meeting – Marta will talk about monitoring program. Kyle will talk about groundwater