



**DRAYTON HARBOR SHELLFISH PROTECTION DISTRICT
ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

MEETING SUMMARY

Date: September 17, 2003
Time: 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.
Place: Blaine Harbor Meeting Room, Marine Drive

AGENDA

1.	4:00	Public Comment Period
2.	4:05	Review Agenda and August Meeting Summary
3.	4:10	Seagrass Cottages Development Update (Russell Nelson)
4.	4:25	Blaine Marina Bird Counts Presentation/Update on Project (Ami Stillings/Doug Stark)
5.	5:05	Whatcom Conservation District – Drayton Project Update (George Boggs)
6.	5:20	POB Live-aboard Summary (Alan Birdsall)
7.	5:30	RFQ/Drayton Projects Update (Ami Stillings)
8.	5:45	Dye Study Discussion – Next Steps
9.	6:00	New Business
10.	6:05	Next Meeting's Agenda

MEETING ATTENDANCE

Committee Members

Jan Hansen
Geoff Menzies
Bjorn Hrutfiord
Alan Birdsall
Kathy Cullen
Charles Hawkins
Bob Williams

Public

Sara Kinney – Nooksack Tribe
Stephen Banham – City of Blaine Public Works
Mary Edwards – Anvil Corporation
Ami Stillings – Whatcom County Water Resources
Doug Stark – Whatcom County Water Resources
Mark Henderson – Department of Ecology
Frank Meriwether – Washington State Department of Health Shellfish Program
George Boggs - Whatcom Conservation District
Russell Nelson – City of Blaine

DOCUMENTS DISTRIBUTED

- 9/17/03 Drayton Harbor Shellfish Protection District Advisory Committee Agenda
- 8/20/03 Drayton Harbor Shellfish Protection District Advisory Committee Meeting Summary
- 9/15/03 Summary of Shellfish Growing Areas – Water Quality Study Results
- 9/15/03 Summary of Marine Water Data
- NSSP statistics over time at stations in Drayton Harbor
- 7/02 – 6/03 Whatcom Conservation District Annual Report
- 2003 Blaine Harbor Life-Aboard Inspections
- An Abundance of Riches: Enjoying and Preserving Washington's Shellfish Resources



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MEETING CONTENTS

1. Public Comment Period

Steve Banham reported on the 9/11/03 petroleum leak in the sanitary sewer system. The fire department came and evacuated fumes from the sewer. Blaine employees identified an old line running toward a gas station in an adjacent property that was supposedly capped off but was leaking. Blaine employees closed off the manhole to keep the petroleum from leaking into the sewer system. Blaine employees are continuing their investigation.

The citizens wastewater advisory committee is continuing to look at options for dealing with the wastewater treatment plant and its capacity issues and will report their recommendations to the Blaine City Council. Blaine City Council will provide general sewer plans to Ecology in time for next year's funding cycles.

Blaine will host an open house on 10/8/03 at 7 p.m. at the new fire station on Odell Road. The citizens wastewater advisory committee will present their findings/recommendations on the wastewater treatment plant and answer any community questions.

2. Review Agenda and 8/20/03 Meeting Summary

Review Agenda

AC members reviewed the agenda. There were no suggested revisions.

Review Meeting Summary

AC members reviewed the 8/20/03 IFA Meeting Summary. There were no suggested revisions.

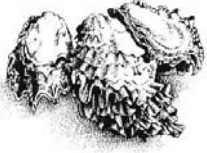
- *Action:* Anvil will distribute the 8/20/03 IFA Meeting Summary as Final.

3. Seagrass Cottages Development Update (Russell Nelson)

Russell Nelson reported that Trillium Corporation submitted a new application for developing on Semiahmoo spit. The new application has just been submitted and Blaine's review cycle is in the initial phase. By 9/30/03 the formal comment period will open. Written comments to the City of Blaine Public Works Department are encouraged until the close of the public hearing (the public hearing date has not been set).

Trillium abandoned their previous application to build condominiums. They are now proposing a formal subdivision, which includes 36 duplex lots and 8 tracks. Track A will be used for the community and visitor parking. Track B will be deeded to Blaine. Track C will be an open space with access to the community, not the public. Tracks D-F are for future development. Track G is the marina area. Track H is tidelands and is undevelopable.

The total proposed land use includes 48 acres, which increases the previous proposal's total acreage and reduces the population density. This proposal also pushes back the building footprint on some tracks to provide space for cultural resources around the flood plain. The proposal includes 3 integrated public trails. A crushed rock trail will follow each shore and a paved trail will parallel the proposed realigned road.



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- *Action:* Russell will notify Ami Stillings when the package is ready to be reviewed. Ami will forward the notice to the AC that the package is available for review.

4. Blaine Marina Bird Counts Presentation/Update on Project (Ami Stillings/Doug Stark)

Project Review

Ami and Doug reported that, with funding from the Northwest Straits Commission, the Marine Resources Committee (MRC) is beginning a study to look at the commercial portion of the Blaine marina to identify sources of high fecal coliform counts. The project is being conducted between 3/03 – 3/04 with the goal of hopefully reducing the fecal coliform counts within this area. The study was designed to help re-open the shellfish beds by spring 2004. The project reviewed literature, surveyed birds, surveyed rat bait stations, and mapped drain and runoff structures.

Bird Surveys

The bird surveys were conducted by 15 volunteers; 40 surveys were completed between mid-July and mid-August. The surveys were developed to account for variations in bird populations, utilizing such factors as time of day and tidal cycle. The average session count was 930 birds. The majority of birds were gulls. A few pigeons were found on the roofs and some cormorants were nesting on the breakwater. The majority of the birds were found on the breakwater and the numbers for the breakwater did not appear to be affected by time or tide. The Webhouse did appear to be affected by tide with large numbers of birds evident on high tides and much lower numbers evident during times of low tide.

One member asked if the birds were coming into the marina to feed on by-products of the fishing industry. Doug responded that some birds came to investigate boats that arrived, but in general, the boats seem to keep things covered up. Some birds gathered during crab boat baiting, but the crabbing employees chased the birds off.

Geoff asked if the survey would also look at the average amount of waste the different species produce, in order to make a rough estimate of fecal load that is being contributed by the birds. Ami responded that the current scope of the project did not include looking at bird waste collection and analysis.

Rat Survey

To get a rough estimation of the rat population within the commercial portion of the marina, the committee gathered information documented by the pest management contractor for the Port of Bellingham on the activity associated with the various rat bait stations in the marina. The usage will give a very rough approximation of the rat population.

Mapping

The committee completed the preliminary mapping of structures in the commercial portion of the marina, including sewer and storm systems, catch basins, roof drains, etc. Rainy weather will be required to ground-truth the mapping, prior to a final map being generated.



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Next Steps

After reviewing the survey data, 13 sites were selected in the commercial marina area to be sampled for fecal coliform bacteria during rain events. The sites represent both areas of high bird concentrations as well as low, so the group can gain a better sense of the bird impact. Frank Meriwether said the Department of Health (DOH) would be interested to see flow numbers associated with these sampling events so estimations of load can be calculated.

Several management options will be developed, one or several options will be selected by the committee and the option(s) will be implemented on a pilot scale and monitored for effectiveness to see if the fecal coliform counts decrease.

The committee will also create an education component for the commercial tenants and public.

5. Whatcom Conservation District – Drayton Project Update

George Boggs reported that the Whatcom Conservation District (WCD) would like to thank the committee for supporting them in their bids for the past centennial funding cycle. He also reported that the District's funding was almost eliminated this past legislative session. They hope to find permanent non-grant funding in the future to provide program continuity.

WCD received 2 additional years of funding for their Dairy Nutrient Management Program. State-wide there is a shift toward all livestock operations (not just dairy) in hopes of promoting management of bacteria and nutrient discharge to watercourses.

WCD is continuing to write plans for small farms and dairy farms. All local dairies have developed nutrient management plans. Over one-half have certified with WED that the plans are fully implemented.

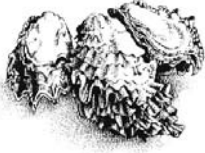
Local small farms are applying to the federal Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQUIP) to obtain cost share assistance to upgrade their farms. The applications have not been accepted yet and funding for the upcoming year has been cut.

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) may expand to include wetlands creation.

One member asked whom to report to if they saw cows in a stream. Another member recommended reporting to the regional Ecology office.

George invited any members to apply to be an associate supervisor on the board.

- *Action:* George will provide Ami with information regarding the associate supervisor position and how to apply.



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6. POB Live-aboard Summary (Alan Birdsall)

Alan reported that the Port of Bellingham (POB) completed a summary of the live-aboard boat septic system inspections. Five out of the 50 live-aboard boats did not have their Y valve secured but were set in the holding tank position. The owners secured the Y valve in the presence of the inspector. The Port completed a summary of the data and inspection process and is still considering if the inspection will occur again.

Several members voiced concern that the boat owners may only have been in compliance because the inspections were scheduled. Alan said that while deception was a possibility, he believed the open approach adopted by the Port was working and that the live-aboards viewed the water as their back yards and had no reason to violate the regulations.

Geoff reported a rumor that the live-aboard population was much larger than reported by the Port and that many boats do not comply with the septic regulations.

- *Action:* Geoff will follow up on a rumor he heard about the live-aboard population not complying with the septic rules and will provide more information to Alan.

7. RFQ/Drayton Projects Update (Ami Stillings)

Ami reported that project selection is moving forward and that they are conducting follow up interviews with the top candidates.

8. Dye Study Discussion – Next Steps

Frank Meriwether reported that the DOH wrote a letter to the AC regarding guidelines for reclassifying station 4 and 6. There were 3 criteria that needed to be met.

Criteria 1: water quality standards at Station 4

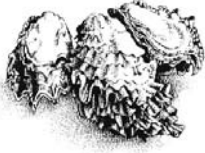
The estimated 90th percentile calculation for Station 4 last month was 45 organisms/100 ml. The standard for an approved bed is 43 organisms/100 ml. Frank reported that the DOH does not simply look at the latest test and reclassify a shellfish bed. The DOH looks at the history (the last 30 samples) of the shellfish bed to see how volatile the numbers are. Otherwise the shellfish bed would constantly be reclassified.

Frank noted that the more recent test sample numbers have been good.. However, prior to that, the high numbers have ranged from 49-350 organisms/100 ml. Those high numbers need to get out of the database before the shellfish bed can be considered for reclassification. Therefore about ten or so new samples with relatively low numbers need to be collected before the 90th percentile value at Station 4 drops to a low value.

The criteria for water quality was not met.

Criteria 2: pollution transfer from Station 8 to Stations 6 and 4

The estimated 90th percentile calculation at Station 8 for last month was 218 organisms/100 ml. Station 8 water quality is worse than Station 15, which implies that pollution is not entering the marina from the outside. (Frank noted that it is interesting that Station 8 is adjacent to the highest population of birds on the breakwater.)



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The July 14 dye study conducted by DOH looked at flood tides to see if the pollution at Station 8 was being directly transferred to Station 4 (community shellfish beds) and Station 6. Drogues and dye were released at Station 8 during a flood tide. The first drogues went directly toward station 6 but dye was highly diluted at station 4.

The criterion for potential reclassification at the community beds was met because there was high enough dilution between Station 8 and Station 4 to indicate that Station 8 does not impact water quality at Station 4.

Criteria 3: determination that human fecal coliform doesn't impact water quality at Station 4

This criteria looks at whether the fecal coliforms in the water are of human origin. After evaluating the recent sanitary sewer tracer-dye studies, circulation tests and inventory of live-aboards, there is no evidence to indicate that the fecal coliforms at Stations 4 and 8 are of human origin.

Therefore, this criterion has been met for Station 4.

Conclusion

Frank said he realizes people want the shellfish beds to re-open by next spring, but he does not foresee that happening based on the current monthly sampling frequency.

One member asked if the high numbers seen in the dataset were errors because they were not typical. Frank replied that natural spikes occur, but some of them could be caused by an external force (e.g., wastewater overflow events). However, he noted that regardless of the high numbers, the baseline consistently hovers above the 43 maximum.

Geoff noted that higher counts often coincide with 4-day rain events and that the numbers may go up during the winter and affect the overall numbers in the future.

Several members asked if the shellfish beds could be opened seasonally when the historical record shows that the numbers were under 43 (taking into consideration any historical events that occurred and spike the numbers). Frank suggested that the AC draft a letter to the DOH stating all suggestions, concerns, and requests regarding time-sensitive bed openings. The DOH will review the request.

9. New Business

No new business was discussed

10. Next Meeting's Agenda

The next meeting's agenda was not discussed.