



**PORTAGE BAY SHELLFISH PROTECTION DISTRICT
ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

MEETING SUMMARY

Date: September 8, 2003
Time: 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
Place: 322 N. Commercial St., Bellingham – First Floor Conference Room

AGENDA

1.	6:00	Public Comment Period
2.	6:05	Review Agenda and Previous Meeting Summary
3.	6:10	Water Quality Monitoring Project (Fair Week)
4.	6:50	July Water Quality Results
5.	7:10	Education and outreach projects – what to focus on in the coming year
6.	7:50	New Business
7.	7:55	Next Meeting's Agenda

MEETING ATTENDANCE

Committee Members

Chris Woodward
Bob VanWeerdhuizen
Justin McKay
Mike Cochrane

Others

Andy Ross – Lummi Nation
Andrew Craig – Department of Ecology (DOE)
Mark Henderson – Department of Ecology
Ed Halasz - Whatcom Co. Health Department
Beth Chisholm – Whatcom Conservation District
Mary Edwards – Anvil Corporation
Ami Stillings – Whatcom County Water Resources
Jagoda Perich Anderson – Shared Strategy for Puget Sound

DOCUMENTS DISTRIBUTED

- 9/8/03 Agenda
- 7/15/03 IFA Portage Bay Advisory Committee (AC) Meeting Summary
- Lynden Fair 2003 Raw Data Results
- Water Sampling Site Map
- Whatcom Conservation District Annual Report
- Whatcom Conservation District: Get your farm ready for winter.
- Summary of Marine Water Data

MEETING CONTENTS

1. Public Comment Period
There was no public comment.



**PORTAGE BAY SHELLFISH PROTECTION DISTRICT
ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

2. Review Agenda and Previous Meeting Summary

7/15/03 Meeting Summary

AC members reviewed the 7/15/03 IFA meeting summary with Andy Ross' comments incorporated.

- *Action:* Distribute the 7/15/03 summary as Final.

Meeting Agenda

AC members reviewed the agenda but did not suggest revisions.

3. Water Quality Monitoring Project (Fair Week)

Starting 8/8/03 and continuing through 8/17/03, DOE staff sampled a series of sites for fecal coliform twice a day on Fishtrap Creek and the Nooksack River.

Fishtrap Creek

Andrew Craig reported that on 8/13/03, higher concentrations of fecal coliform were already being seen in Fishtrap Creek. However, on 8/15/03 and 8/17/03, high concentrations were found at the Northwest Washington Fair outfall on Fishtrap Creek. While the concentration was high, 4,640 colonies of fecal coliform (CFU)/100 mL (FO site 8/15/03), the amount of water coming out of the outfall was approximately the same quantity as a drinking fountain stream. It showed little impact to the stream, with the upstream site at 210 CFU/100mL and the downstream site and 220 CFU/100mL on 8/15/03.

The count from the outfall on 8/17/03 was 2,330 CFU/100mL with the upstream site at 170 CFU/100mL and the downstream site at 230 CFU/100mL. The volume, while highly concentrated, was not considered enough to cause a problem to the Portage Bay Shellfish Beds.

On 8/19/03, Andrew accompanied Fair staff around the fairgrounds and examined several drains near the horse barns, some of which had noticeable animal waste near them. Three of the drains had standing water. The water in the drains was tested (test results ranged from 48,000 to 5.8 million CFU/100 mL). The City of Lynden came and pumped the contaminated water out of the storm drains and took it to the city plant for treatment. Several options were discussed as possibilities to help prevent potential contamination in the future: blocking the drains and collecting the water during the Fair for treatment at the city plant, eliminating the drains completely or connecting the drains to the city system.

Nooksack River

A high fecal count (630 CFU/100mL at Station N5) was also detected in the Nooksack River Mainstem on 8/15/03. Ed Halasz from the Whatcom County Health Department interviewed and investigated several residents, a golf course, and a religious camp in the area of the high count to see if they had an on-site septic system and to see if the system was functioning properly. The interviews and site inspections, which included physical



PORTAGE BAY SHELLFISH PROTECTION DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

investigation and dye tests, indicated that the inspected residences, the golf course, and the camp systems do not appear to have caused the high concentration.

Andrew and Ed will continue investigating a series of houses that appear to be on a septic systems as well as a number of storm drains in the area. They will write a final report summarizing the study and investigative work accomplished as part of the study for the Environmental Protection Agency and the DOH after the investigations are complete.

4. July Water Quality Results

During the DOH July Portage Bay sampling, the sample at station 52 showed the fecal coliform level at 130 CFU/100 mL, which is higher than the standard of 43/100mL set for an approved shellfish growing area and is considerably higher than the counts that DOH has been getting from this site recently. However, the Northwest Indian College conducted a test at the same time that showed the levels at 13 CFU/100 mL. It is still unclear why the DOH and the NWIC results are so different. This count of 130 CFU/100mL puts Station 52 above the standard of 43 again.

5. Education and outreach projects – what to focus on in the coming year.

The Education and Outreach subcommittee (Dori Belisle, Chris Woodward, and Ami) met. Ami reported that they discussed what public relation ideas the AC could implement during the next year.

The subcommittee discussed linking Portage Bay information with other related newsletters already in distribution. They also hope to mirror the Drayton Harbor approach of submitting information to the local newspapers on a regular basis. One of the highest priority items was creating a Portage Bay display that could be displayed at places like the Salmon Summit to show what is specifically being accomplished.

One member suggested clarifying who the audience is and possibly creating more than one display depending on the reader's amount of background knowledge. Another member suggested defining terms to help the general public understand basic terms such as "watershed." Members suggested displaying the information at such places as fish markets, grocery stores, County Council, and the Farmer's Market.

6. New Business

Quarterly Report

Ami asked for a consensus regarding whether the quarterly report should be moved from 4 to 2 times a year, due to the labor intensity of collecting the data. AC members voiced concern that information would be forgotten and not included in the report. Mark Henderson offered to collaborate with Ami since the quarterly report he creates for Ecology covers similar information.

- *Action:* Ami and Mark will collaborate on gathering information and creating a report for the upcoming quarter.



**PORTAGE BAY SHELLFISH PROTECTION DISTRICT
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Whatcom Conservation District Update

Beth Chisholm reported that the Whatcom Conservation District (WCD) is continuing the Stream Team for Bertrand and Fishtrap Creeks. However there will be no more educational classes because the funding was not renewed.

The WCD received 2 additional years of funding for technical support for farm plans. The WCD wanted to thank the AC members for writing a letter of support for the program to the legislature. There is a shift in the focus towards smaller, non-dairy farms (chicken, beef etc.).

The WCD is continuing to write plans for small farms and dairy farms. The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program may also expand to include wetlands. The type of wetlands has not been decided.

The WCD is also in touch with Canadian authorities regarding Fishtrap Creek because Canada will be monitoring fecal coliform counts, along with temperature and flow, on their side of the border.

The WCD is hosting a workshop titled "Get Your Farm Ready For Winter!" on 9/17/03 in Ferndale to inform horse and small animal farms on how to manage mud and manure. The WCD is also hosting additional horse farm management workshops in October and November.

Department of Ag Inspectors

Andrew reported that the Department of Agriculture has taken over dairy inspections from the Department of Ecology. The Depart of Agriculture is still hiring inspectors, however they do have 2 temporary inspectors.

Andrew took 3 Ag employees around the area recently to show them how inspections have been conducted in the past. They also flew over the county to inspect the dairy farm manure lagoons to monitor levels. He emphasized the importance of working with local governments and maintaining current collaborations. The inspectors said they were dedicated to continuing the quality of the programs already in place.

7. Next Meeting's Agenda

AC members agreed to confirm a meeting date for November after researching Don Lennartson's availability. The date and agenda will be emailed to the AC members at that point.