



**PORTAGE BAY SHELLFISH PROTECTION DISTRICT  
Advisory Committee  
August 2007 Meeting Summary**

Date: August 15, 2007  
Time: 3:00- 4:30 pm  
Place: 2011 Young Street, Suite 201, Bellingham (above Whatcom Land Title)

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**Agenda**

1.	3:00	Introductions
2.	3:05	Water Quality Monitoring <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Long-Term Stations</li><li>• Special Projects- Kamm and Fishtrap Watersheds</li></ul>
3.	3:45	2007 Priorities <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Response Protocol for High Bacteria Counts</li><li>• Small Farms</li><li>• On-site Sewage Systems</li></ul>
4.	4:30	New Business
5.	4:45	Wrap-Up and Schedule for Meetings

Meetings may be digitally recorded for notetaking purposes.

**MEETING ATTENDANCE:**

Committee Members: Bas Scholten, Dorie Belisle, and Albert deBoer (member?)

Others: Beth Chisholm (Whatcom County Conservation District); Erika Stroebel and Remy Stratton (Whatcom County Public Works); John Wolpers, Ed Halasz, and Molly Burke (Whatcom County Health); Jason Pentzer (WA State Dept. of Agriculture), and Mak Kaufman (WA State Dept. of Ecology)

**MEETING CONTENTS:**

1.	3:00	Introductions and Review Agenda
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Meeting was called to order at 3:13 p.m. Introductions were made with no changes to the agenda.

2.	3:10	Water Quality Monitoring
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- **Long-Term Stations**

Handouts were distributed including information from Greg Combs, WA State Dept of Health. The first gave a status report for Portage Bay water quality data at various stations. Appeared to be positive, however attention should be given to the upper tributary where there are still problems.

The second handout was a map that identified the different stations. The third handout was a data quarterly summary, from Steve Hood at WA State Dept. of Ecology, that indicated improved areas and problem areas (including Fishtrap).

Discussion followed regarding water quality data on the various stations and reports from lab testing. Mak noted that to speed up response time, he requested labs be sent to him to narrow the lag time in receiving data. A question arose on giving more attention to sampling efforts, and Erika responded the need to meet with EPA to possibly use money in that area. The group also raised the issue of involving the City of Lynden.

Erika also suggested using optical brighteners as has been done in the Drayton Harbor watershed. She described the process using black light and recommended doing this in dry months and identify areas that will have more discrete drainages. This could still be a viable option at Fishtrap also as it is a lot cheaper than other methods of microbial source tracking.

**Requested action:** Approval to continue using money for monitoring in Kamm area.

**Action:** Approved.

- **Special Projects-Kamm and Fishtrap Watersheds**

There was discussion on maps in the watershed. Beth wanted to make sure everyone knew where stations are. GPS cartographer put locations on the map and wanted to know what was dormant (historical) and which were active. Feedback of stations by the group included the use of color coding and different layers to distinguish old and new.

Members also asked to be added to distribution list of monthly fecal coliform data reports.

3.	3:30	2007 Priorities
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- **Response Protocol**

Erika mentioned the improvement in response communication and follow-up. Special monitoring is taking place at Drayton Harbor on California Creek, and many of the spike counts there are higher than anywhere in Portage Bay. This helps determine the need to clearly establish thresholds when we need to notify others when they are exceeded.

- **Small Farms**

There was discussion regarding the turnover in PDS staff and the need for enforcement. As a non-regulatory body, the CD (Conservation District) can assist with more workshops (three already done this year and there will be one in the fall), and they can offer up site visits which they hope to do.

Erika noted that it doesn't look like we will get funding from the grant application that the CD put together for the County. This would have been an opportunity for the County to work with environmental projects, and resources would have gone to staff and for CD, however funding only went to King and Island Counties. It was suggested that it may help to read the grant applications of the successful candidates so we know what to do next time.

Another major issue was raised was regarding landowners who go to County to get permits, then they are told they need to get a farm plan. They may seek assistance from the CD or pay for a farm plan through a consultant, but it becomes a frustration when it gets lost in the system at the County. If you spend the money and time, you should have it looked at.

- **On-site Sewage Systems (OSS)**

County Health noted that of 200 systems, there were 16 failures, and 5 being worked on. Also, 30 needed maintenance of the 250 systems of sales with agents (not FSBO—For Sale By Owner).

Inspections are being done by licensed inspectors (currently 10 countywide) and they do follow up. It does not stop a home sale (have no authority), but current and new owners are aware if there are any issues.

Copies of OSS forms are available on the County website. The Health Department is also working on getting their database up to speed.

There was discussion on ROSS (REPORT OF SYSTEM STATUS, costs \$35) and permits (new, \$65) and that expenses have exceeded revenue. Discussion also focused on the OSS Local Management plan, similar activities in Skagit, water quality monitoring, and workshops.

4.	4:20	New Business
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Suggestion at meetings on education to homeowners was to send out quarterly postcards beginning this fall indicating what people could do to help out. The committee was asked to provide input. Project would start with Kamm Creek. Concept: Postcard to all residents in watershed, with a map, basic statistics of their neighborhood, size of watershed, number of parcels, number of systems, and number of animals. Group provided suggestions as adding the number of ROSS performed; including events, dates and workshops; questionnaires; explaining standards; .

Beth noted a potential one-page, legal size newsletter by the Conservation District to commercial dairies with informational statistics. Small farm workshops also help with educating folks, especially for new people moving in, urbanites, with limited knowledge of farming. We would like to train real estate agents also so they can relay accurate information to home buyers.

5.	4:30	Wrap-Up and Action Items
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Next meeting will be held on hopefully sometime in November. Erika will advise definite date. John mentioned that he is phasing out of the Portage Bay meetings since Ed and Molly from his department are on board.

Meeting adjourned at 4:54 p.m.