

MEETING NOTES

Project Name: Dungeness Wastewater Treatment Feasibility Study **Project No.:** 236-1587-005
Location: Old Dungeness School **Meeting Date:** May 24, 2012 **Time:** 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
Notes by: Brenda McDaniels
Subject: **Public Meeting #1**

Public Issues

- Community system cost per homeowner.
 - Beckett Point example – approximately \$1.4 million for 85-90 owners, about \$15-\$20k per owner but where distribute big variable
- Rumor regarding pumping wastewater to Sunland – is this being considered?
 - Yes.
- Current systems that are working and paid for, do those homeowners have to pay costs for those who don't have working systems?
 - Depends on the way the cost is spread among users/grants/loans/etc., and the timing of each. The feasibility study will develop several wastewater improvement alternatives to address the sewer issues at Dungeness. In turn, several funding options will also be investigated. Once these options are developed, we will then be in a position to answer this question.
- Ability to connect in the future – can they pay then and not now? Could cost be when connected because their current system is functional. Owner would like that option.
- Extension of study area to the East, along 3 Crabs, Seashore Lane – How to cross wetlands. The lots are larger and systems are newer and the costs seem exorbitant if using road to south.
 - Yes, this area is being considered. Will need to determine interest and feasibility.
 - County idea is to cross Cooper Creek (this needs study).
- Is it a foregone conclusion that something is going to be done and this meeting is just informative?
 - No, feasibility study only
- How many failing systems?
 - About 20 have been documented. There are many repairs needed; additional systems have not been inspected but are a concern, because many are from the 1970s.

Meeting Notes (continued)

- What is the definition of failure?
 - Black slime on gravel is a sure sign; other signs found when inspecting.
 - If a failure is resulting in groundwater contamination rather than surfacing sewage, we may not detect it. But the system is not treating effectively and is considered to be failing.
 - County currently does not have enforcement capacity.
 - At time of sale or permit action – inspection is conducted and repair may be required.
- Meadowbrook mouth regarding connecting with Dungeness River. Would opening the channel lower the groundwater table, flooding issues?
 - Yes, this work is planned for 2013 (by Clallam Conservation District). However, flooding and saturation is complicated and modeling predicts freshwater will still flood. Is not expected to change groundwater table.
- Old Dungeness – Mobile homes being used for rentals and using house septic systems without an expanded OSS permit. People are living on properties without adequate septic systems.
 - County has also noted this issue. EH is working on it but has little or no enforcement capacity. EH working on new enforcement policy. Political will matters.
- What support is needed from the community for enforcement?
 - Make yourself heard. (Commissioner McEntire provided his email address.)
- Quantity of impacts to water quality from Birds/Farms/Housing?
 - Microbial Source Tracking study was performed to identify the sources of fecal bacteria. Avian was found, but a significant portion is from humans, too. Determined it is best to put money where you get the most bang for your buck. (JST)
 - Human sewage is a vector for serious disease affecting humans. Brings public health into the equation which is different from the risk posed by other species. (Andy)
- Does Victoria sewage dumping into the Strait impact this area?
 - Victoria Harbor is very deep and also the currents are such that would not affect our water quality here. (Dr. Lake)
- Vacation rentals along 3 Crabs – Septic capacity designed for small house and being rented to 17 people – will this overtax the system? Can the County enforce the number of renters per system? Change the code?
 - OSS Design law does not account for that many people overusing a system.
 - The inspection rule created uproar. Political will matters.
 - Feasibility study can include recommendation for change to code to address this.

Meeting Notes (continued)

- Water Bank and Water Rule (allowed uses) – will that affect waste disposal question?
 - Rule primarily regulates outdoor uses, not indoor use disposed of through OSS. Engineers use conservative number (gallons per day for indoor only) in sewage flow calculations.
- What percentage of pollution found is from people?
 - Can't say exactly – (repeated answer from above. MST showed some human impact, among other species)
- Will this study consider the impact to the commercial and recreational Shellfish industries? The economic impact of closures (or benefits of re-opening year-round) need to be included in the study.
 - Bacteria counts are used to classify shellfish beds.
- Ulva is a problem. Nitrate in the algae or marine water could be used to estimate Nitrogen loading from land activities including septic. Fairly high concentrations were found in the marine water by JSKT and it could be causing Ulva increase and other issues such as plankton blooms, possibly affecting shellfish sales.
- Nitrate was not found in drinking water wells in high concentrations, probably because wells draw water from below dozens of feet of clay, from the sand and gravel outwash underneath.
- Who will be the recipient of the study?
 - County Commissioners and Health Department. Also, other local water quality managers.
- Will there be action steps in the study?
 - Yes, but no mandate.
- What type of bacteria caused shellfish closure?
 - Fecal coliform – which comes from any warm blooded animal. (international indicator)
- Low hanging fruit – can we go after the failing systems first?
 - Several failing septic have been repaired and it made a difference in the water quality of adjacent streams. Now need to go after non-compliance properties. EH has the “Red to green” program which will get more systems into compliance. Inspections are now required by law, and a professional inspection is required in the Clean Water District (aka Marine Recovery Area).
- How are personal/medical care products affecting the water quality?
 - Cancer drugs can kill septic flora, causing big problems.
- Will increased aquaculture (e.g., geoduck harvest) create a problem? (assumed to mean a problem with water quality due to harvesting)
 - Question noted; answer not known at this time.

Meeting Notes (continued)

- Can grant funding go to prosecuting attorney to help with enforcement?
 - EH has exactly this project underway now; will develop internal protocols and maybe laws.
- Is there a clear definition of what this study is wanting to accomplish?
 - The purpose of this study is to determine wastewater treatment options to address problematic private septic systems. The study will assess the feasibility of various collection, treatment, and disposal options. (Damon answered)
- Request to keep community involved in process.
- What are the recreation lot (RVs, etc.) impacts of this feasibility?
 - The impact of recreation lots will be looked at, but should be similar or the same as other lots.
- Cost/benefit – make sure the recommendations are aligned with Community needs.