

# Skagit County Agriculture Advisory Board Meeting Summary – November 18, 2020 MS TEAMS MEETING

## Members in Attendance

Michael Hughes	Nels Lagerlund	Barbara Cleave	John Morrison
Justin Hayton	Kraig Knutzen	Murray Benjamin	Steve Omdal
Steve Wright	Terry Sapp	Tim VanHofwegen	

## Proxy Designations

## Members Absent

Steve Wright  
Rachael Ward Sparwasser

## Others in Attendance

Scott Bohling, Department of Ecology  
Jenna Friebel, Skagit County Drainage and Irrigation Districts Consortium  
Brandon Roozen- Western Washington AG  
Hal Hart, Skagit County Planning & Development Services (PDS)  
Kim Adams, Skagit County Planning & Development Services (PDS)  
Peter Gill, Skagit County Planning & Development Services (PDS)  
Craig Macku, Skagit County Resident

## Call to Order, Introductions

Michael Hughes called the meeting to order at 6:04 pm.

## Guest Speaker

### **Scott Bohling, Department of Ecology**

Scott Bohling presented a PowerPoint on the Padilla Bay Freshwater Tributaries Fecal Coliform

Total Maximum Daily Load Study

- The Padilla Bay freshwater TMDL focuses on 4 Tributaries:
  - No Name Slough
  - Big Indian Slough
  - Little Indian Slough
  - Joe Leary Slough
- It consists of four major sloughs and many interweaving drainage systems
- The watershed is relatively flat with high water tables, making drainage a challenge for communities in the watershed.
- These tributaries drain roughly 9,300 ha (22,980 acres)
- TMDL process started in 2016, water samples were taken over two years. The data was then evaluated to determine the TMDL Values. The initial Draft was completed in April 2019 but the project was

delayed. An updated draft was completed May 2020 with the goal of complete the TMDL process by the end of 2020

- Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act establishes an assessment process to identify and clean up polluted waters.
  - Requires the develop of “designated uses” and water quality standards
  - Any waters that do not meet water quality standards are subject to a TMDL
- Designated Uses and Water Quality Standards
  - Aquatic life uses
  - Recreational uses
  - Water supply uses
  - Miscellaneous uses
- Currently, the Padilla Bay freshwater tributaries do not meet the bacteria state water quality standards for Recreational Use – Primary Contact
- Assessment and Impairment
  - Ecology compiles our own water quality data, and invite other groups to submit water quality data they have collected
  - Once the assessment is complete, the public is given a chance to review and give comments
  - The final assessment is formally submitted to the Environmental Protection Agency for approval of the category 5 listings, also called the 303(d) list
- What is a Total Maximum Daily Load?
  - A Total Maximum Daily Load, or “TMDL” can be compared to a diet
  - It is a pollution diet, where the end goal is to reduce the level a pollutant and restore the health of the Padilla Bay freshwater tributaries
- TMDL Values:
  - TMDL - Based on flow data, how much bacteria can be in the water and meet the standards
  - Measure the amount water in the watercourse (flow), and determine how much pollutant it can have and still meet the standards
- How do we reduce bacteria?
  - Septic Systems- Outreach, inspection, maintenance, repair, pollution identification, & correction
  - Agriculture- conservation planning, technical assistance, & BMP implementation
  - Stormwater Management-source tracing, illicit discharge detection & elimination, stormwater management planning
- Prescriptive guidance:
  - Prescriptive guidance, based on the “Voluntary Clean Water Guidance for Agriculture” has been included for agricultural practices
  - The guidance is currently in development and review by the Agriculture and Water Quality Advisory Committee
- Livestock and manure management:
  - Manure management
  - Exclusion Fencing to prevent water access
  - Pasture rotation and cross-fencing
  - Barn gutters and downspouts
  - Heavy use area protection

- Funding for implementation is a key to successfully reducing bacteria:
  - Local funding programs and implementation efforts
  - USDA Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
  - USDA Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)
  - Centennial Clean Water Program grants
  - Clean Water State Revolving Fund loans
  - Stormwater Financial Assistance Program grants
  - Clean Water Act Section 319 federal grants
  - RCO Farmland Preservation Grants
- A draft of the TMDL will be submitted to the EPA in December

#### **Peter Gill, Skagit County Planning & Development Services**

- Agritourism update-
  - Putting together a public outreach plan to include virtual outreach hopefully will be available next week.
    - Terry asked how general input will be solicited. In all phases of the plan they will reach out via Social Media and other outlets to reach as many people as they can to provide input
  - Working with Berk Consulting on the Outreach Plan- presenting to the Planning Commission next week
    - Will contact Lisa from Berk to come to December Meeting to discuss.

#### **Hal Hart, Skagit County Planning & Development Services**

- Hal gave an update regarding the Projects going on at the airport
  - There are approx. Nine projects happening now and more coming in 2021
  - A lot of Aviation, Legend Brands expansion, Vikama, Heritage Flight Museum, Air hangers Commercial Planes, Trico expansion, Systima, Sacatta Seed, Pac Car expansion, and an Amazon facility
  - Rural housing as well in the same area
  - Concern from Michael that 2019 Stormwater not being applied correctly- Hal responded that they are doing what is required by law to meet the requirements and continue to meet with Jenna Friebel to work on long term and wanting to take care of water.
- Shoreline Master Program Update
  - Hal will be receiving an update in a few days and will send the update to the AG Board wanting to make sure everyone has a chance to comment
  - Timeline is to be done with the Master Plan by June 2021
  - Betsy Stevenson is still the lead on this project, Hal and Mike to provide assistance when needed

#### [Approval of Meeting Summary](#)

Kraig Knutzen moved to accept the July 8, 2020 Meeting Minutes, Tim VanHofwegen seconded. Motion carried.

#### [New Business](#)

Michael Hughes, Chair wrote a letter regarding the Padilla Bay Freshwater Tributaries Fecal Coliform Total Maximum Daily Load Study- sent to Board for comments.

Thoughts on Letter:

- Steve Omdal & Terry Sapp said yes to sending the letter

- Brandon Roozen spoke about the process that you can dispute the reports and the criteria is listed in their policies, he and Jenna Friebel are putting together a similar comment letter. Brandon said it is critical to know why we have this system and need answers to what it used to be. Department of Fish & Wildlife should be used more, they take surveys and could be able to provide more info.
- Tim VanHofwegen motioned to submit the letter Terry Sapp seconded pending a few revisions
- Michael will send letter to Kim Adams to put on letterhead and submit it using the process mentioned by Scott Bohling Friday, November 20<sup>th</sup>.

## Committee Reports

### **Economic Development- Don McMoran**

Larger Businesses are up at the Port, Island Grown.

### **Critical Areas – Nels Lagerlund**

None at this time.

### **Land Use –Barbara Cleave (Chair), Michael Hughes, John Morrison, Steve Wright**

None at this time

### **Flood, Drainage & Irrigation – Kraig Knutzen (Chair), Nels Lagerlund, Steve Wright**

None at this time.

## Old Business

### **New Chair Nominations:**

- Michael Hughes asked for email nominations so there could be a vote for Chair/Vice Chair next meeting.
- It was brought to the attention that the vote should take place at the meeting since almost the entire board was in attendance
- Murray motioned that Michael Hughes remain the Chair and Nels Lagerwood remain the Vice Chair, Barbara Cleave seconded and the motion was carried.

### **WSU Update:**

Don McMoran reported:

- Providing great outreach for public
- Working on building updates for bringing employees back in phase III
- WSU has asked for a 10% budget cut across the board to begin and another 10% in Spring
- Grants
  - Cover crop grant-discouraging mustard seeds
  - Irrigation systems- funding through USDA CIG Grant got an extension for this year
  - Puget Sound Partnership- Outreach for Pasture Management
  - Ag Suicide Prevention grants, three suicides in Skagit County
  - Famer Assistance Program- More outreach to Washington/Oregon

- Seed Workshops starting in January
- Skagit Summit will be on January 29<sup>th</sup>
  - One day summit online
  - Series of workshops for 6 weeks (Potato Workshop-February 29, Berry Workshop-March 12<sup>th</sup>)
- There will be a Spanish Pre-Pesticide License Course in Late April- need 35 participants or it will be cancelled

## Adjourn

Steve Omdal moved to adjourn, John Morrison seconded. Meeting adjourned at 8:03 pm.

Next meeting is December 9, 2020 at 6 pm.