



PUYALLUP RIVER WATERSHED COUNCIL

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Minutes, PRWC Forum, Wednesday, January 23, 2008

The Puyallup River Watershed Council met on Jan 23rd, 2008 at the Sumner City Hall. Chair David Seabrook called the meeting to order at 5 pm.

In attendance were: Bob Burkle (WDFW), Linda Burgess (citizen of Edgewood); John Blanus (citizen of Buckley), Ann Coon (Friends of Clarks Creek), Jeanne Fancher (citizen of Pacific); Kurt Fremont (Dept. of Ecology), Ray Hanowell (Tacoma-Pierce County Health Dept.), Fred Jacobsen (citizen of Bonney Lake), Cindy James (Dept. of Ecology), Russ Ladley (Puyallup Tribe), Paul L., Monte Martin (Salmon Creek Stewards), Kelda Miller (citizen of Puyallup), Lorin Reinelt (PC Water Programs, watershed coordinator); Mike Rhubright (City of Tacoma); Susan Schell (Puyallup Herald), Dave Seabrook (Pierce Conservation District); Renee Skaggs (PCD), Allen Zulauf (citizen of Puyallup)

Forum: 'CONSERVATION AND FARM PLANNING IN PIERCE COUNTY AND IMPLEMENTATION OF BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES' , a Powerpoint presentation, Speaker Rene' Scaggs, Farm Resource Specialist, Pierce Conservation District,

Rene Scaggs gave a Powerpoint presentation which first addressed the Pierce County Conservation District's financial stability and goals. She said the PCD receives a property tax assessment from residents of unincorporated Pierce County and member cities (\$5/parcel). This assessment funds staff and projects. The main emphasis of the PCD is water quality. The PCD works closely with the NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service). PCD has a Farm Program, Dairy Assistance Program, Stream Team, Salmon Habitat Recovery program, Annual Plant sale, and a demonstration project on several properties on South Prairie Creek.

Ms. Scaggs discussed the Conservation District's Cost Share and Farm Planning Programs. She talked about the PCD Farm Assessment program that helps "hobby farmers" plan how to use best management practices (BMPs) to protect water quality. This program is non-regulatory, is education and outreach based, and starts with contact with a small farm owner. Education and outreach includes requests from hobby farmers for information, on-site visits, and/or farm workshops on BMPs.

The goal of these PCD programs is to work with farmers to reduce contamination of stream and groundwater through education and voluntary BMPs. Farmers are important to watershed health (water quality) as they can manage their farms to meet the goals of the Federal Clean Water Act. The highest priorities are farms along streams draining to shellfish beds, and along streams listed as polluted (State 303(d) list). BMPs are recommended to reduce contamination from manure entering streams. René said it takes as little as a fenced, 25' buffer of pasture grasses along a stream to process manure-tainted run-off coming from the adjoining livestock pastures. The PCD farm specialists recommend a 35' buffer, to be safe. Even small hobby

farmers can get Cost Share program financial help to build these fences. Farmers can also get Cost Share help to build coverable-manure bins, to add rain gutters to barns, and/or to bring in fill to build raised "loafing areas" near barns. These actions reduce contamination from manure, winter mud and muddy runoff. There is also a separate program for commercial dairy farms. Farmers are encouraged to ask for a Farm Assessment, and to write a Farm Management Plan. Farms must have a Farm Management Plan to be eligible for the Cost Share program. For farm management tips go to <http://www.piercecountycd.org/farmtips.html> The PCD Home page is <http://www.piercecountycd.org>

If you have any questions about the PCD Farm programs, please contact René Skaggs(253) 845-9770 or Erin Ewald (253) 884-9474. Here are their email addresses:

René Skaggs, Farm Resource Specialist, renes@piercecountycd.org

Erin Ewald, Small Farm Planner, erine@piercecountycd.org

A lively discussion punctuated Rene's presentation. It is included as Appendix A, at the end of these minutes.

The following 3 *DISCUSSION QUESTIONS*, as proposed in the Agenda, were asked by Lorin Reinelt.

Question 1. *What incentives might increase the extent to which farm best management practices are implemented in Pierce County?*

Q1a: What would help, more money?

Q1b: Building more concrete manure bins to USDA specs?

Answer: We need more small items, with inspection of the projects, the way it is done in King County. The landowners will use pallets and tarps to contain and cover manure... (if they are educated and are committed)....concrete bins are not needed to start controlling leachate from manure piles. Bins made of pallets, with tarps, work fine.

Question 2. *How can the PRWC or individual members be most effective in supporting farm planning and BMP implementation efforts with the farm community in their watersheds*

Q2a: Are there other effective incentives?

Answer: We need more tax incentives and discounts on property taxes for increasing stream fencing distances. We (PCD/ST) can find free labor to build fences and to plant buffers.

Q2b: With Cost Share programs in King County you have different densities.....

Answer: The problem (in Pierce County) is enforcement....

Question 3. *What are the opportunities to assist with volunteer efforts related to streamside planting or fencing on farms in the Puyallup watershed?*

Answer: (we can) have a community meeting, with the Farm Planning Technician providing information on water quality.

Q3b: Lorin: If there are Farm Events in the Puyallup River watershed, send the info to me to send on to the PRWC mailing list; there are about 300 on the mailing list.

Q3c: Have you used volunteers for fencing and...?

Answer: Yes, volunteers can sign up for hands-on workshop, then lend a hand building manure bins. Allen added: A mailing list is available from Pierce County Solid Wastes. If we can get them to "cough it up" we can get mailings to the Horsehaven Creek neighbors.

Q3d to Ray Haniwell, TPCHD: Can you Identify the E.coli sources (in people, in water?)?

Answer from Ray: the E.Coli is mostly food borne, it is hard to figure were it is contracted.
Ray Hanowell, RHanowell@tpchd.org

The general mood of the membership at the end of the discussion period was that the PRWC would work with the PCD to help publicize Farm Planning Workshops.

PUBLIC COMMENT (On any items not on the agenda)

PRWC Chair Dave Seabrook called for Public Comments.

Linda Burgess, Edgewood, and member of the PRWC Executive Committee, announced that the PRWC Citizen Watershed Steward Award for 2007 had been chosen by the Executive Committee. The award reads "Recognizing the citizen volunteer who most embodies the spirit that individuals can inspire their local community to take actions that will make a difference in the environmental health of their watersheds." Ms. Burgess announced that Friends of the Lower White River co-founder Jeanne Fancher was chosen as the 2007 Citizen Watershed Steward for her "efforts to raise awareness and educate the community about the importance of preserving the biodiversity found in this special area." Linda cited the 3 booths FLWR had at Pacific, Algona and Edgewood community events, the newsletter, and the web page as examples of the Jeanne's work. Jeanne would like the record to show that it was a FLWR group effort, and that Fran Neumiller and Paula Wiech, in particular deserve recognition, too!

Alan Zulauf, Exec Comm. member and Puyallup resident, asked that education efforts along Horsehaven Creek be increased, as setbacks from the creek are not being respected. Residents along the creek have in the past reported "midnight dumping" of sand and gravel truck wash water. The residents report no additional dumping lately, but there is still concern about how the sediment is getting into the creek. Allen zulauf, eazul@msn.com

Ann Coon, Friends of Clarks Creek, Puyallup, reported that she has an appointment with WDFW to discuss removing obstructions from under the Clark's Creek 56th St Bridge. Apparently organic sediment, garbage, and gravel are hanging-up on rocks or old wooden pilings under the bridge, and are preventing natural water surges from moving "rock" down the creek. Ann reported that a lot of good work was completed last summer removing Eurasian Elodea, a prolific and invasive non-native water vine/weed. Removing Elodea has resulted in the fine silt and sediments trapped in roots and stems being washed out to the Puyallup River and to Commencement Bay, revealing a nice gravel bottom in Clark's Creek. Salmon spawning habitat has increased. Removal of the obstructions under the bridge should continue the above successes. [Ann Coon, 253-864-6042](tel:253-864-6042)

Cindy James, Department of Ecology South Puget Sound TMDL (total maximum daily [pollutant] load) Coordinator, Water Quality Program, reported that the DOE's Clark's Creek TMDL Report is due to be posted on the DOE website after February 15th. She said the next step is a water quality improvement plan for the Creek. Cindy James, cjam461@ecy.wa.gov. Ecology homepage: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/wqhome.html> Search for: TMDL Reports + Clark's Creek

DOE Emergency Information: To report an emergency to DOE in the Puyallup River Watershed, call the 24 Hour Emergency Response Tracking System (ERTS) Lines. In the SW Region (includes Pierce

County portions of the watershed) call 360-407-6300. In the NW Region (includes King County portions of the watershed), call 425-649-7000.

Bob Burkle, WDFW Fisheries Biologist, reported that the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife is hiring a new Biologist to work with Growth Management Act and Shoreline Management Act planners/requirements. This new position will enable WDFW to respond with scientifically defensible recommendations to issues like Pierce County (PALs) regulations, flood plain management, and to coordinate with the Puget Sound Partnership's mandate to save Puget Sound. Bob Burkle, WDFW Fisheries Biologist, burkleb@dfw.wa.gov

6:25 Discussion of Draft 2008 PRWC Workplan

The draft 2008 WorkPlan was developed by the Executive Committee based on the December 2007 PRWC Annual Retreat and the 5-year 2007-2011 Action Agenda. The 2008 Draft Workplan was emailed to PRWC members in December and January. Further comments were taken at the January 6th Executive Committee Meeting. These refinements were incorporated by Lorin Reinelt, Watershed Coordinator, and sent to PRWC Chair Dave Seabrook for review/fact-checking. Then they were sent as emails by Lorin to the PRWC for today's meeting. PRWC Chair Seabrook called for comments or proposed changes to the plan. **J. Fancher** proposed the development of a new element in the work plan: a Puyallup River Watershed Stewardship Plan, which would address, holistically, how the watershed works, and what is needed to establish a sustainable economic and ecological balance. Linda Burgess reminded the Forum that "stewardship" is in the work plan. Discussion ensued about addressing global warming and the new Puget Sound Partnership initiatives in the plan/action agenda. Chair Seabrook asked Jeanne to send in example "quarterly goals" by Friday. Mr Zulauf indicated he would be interested in helping Jeanne Fancher, pacificnaturalist@clearwire.net, Allen Zulauf, eazul@msn.com

Mike Rhubright, City of Tacoma, announced that he is working on the 2008 Work Plan's action of a Water Front Tour. He sees room for about 6 passengers in a captained boat touring the Commencement Bay shoreline. The PRWC-Tacoma tour would target City representatives and/or officials and watershed council members. The near shore environment is crucial to salmon recovery, and this tour would highlight what needs to be done. Mike Rhubright, mikerubright@ci.tacoma.wa.us

Allen Zulauf stated that **Cindy Beckett**, Midland resident, would like to add a Swan Creek Tour to the Work Plan, to highlight stormwater management, and how it effects Puyallup Tribal Fisheries' restorations on lower Swan Creek. Cindy Beckett, Rvlady@prodigy.net, Friends of Swan Creek: Sue Bernstein, sueb@prodigy.net, Allen Zulauf: eazul@msn.com

The Puyallup River Watershed 2008 Work Plan was approved as presented, with the amended Plan to be circulated to the PRWC membership.

The next meeting of the PRWC Forum is February 27th, at 5PM, Sumner Council Chambers, 1104 Maple St. Sumner, WA 98390

Meeting Adjourned at 7:04 PM by Chair Seabrook.

Respectfully submitted,



Jeanne Fancher,
19 February 2008

PRWC Secretary,
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Milton, WA 98354-1173

Attachment: Appendix A, next page.

**Puyallup River Watershed Council Forum Minutes
January 23, 2008**

Appendix A:

Forum: 'CONSERVATION AND FARM PLANNING IN PIERCE COUNTY AND IMPLEMENTATION OF BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES', Speaker Rene' Scaggs. The following is an approximate transcript of the Q and A session. Many questions were asked by the audience/PRWC members. Most answers were from Rene' Scaggs. Some clarifications were made.

Q: How many Farm workshops do you hold in a year?

A: About 12 on-site, and another 12 indoors for about 24/year. The best turnout is in the spring and fall, when they see "mud", but the best time to get into action is August, to get ahead of the problem. Our biggest problem is to "get the word out" about PCD, we are confused with WSU-extension service.

Q: What is the Cost Share Program?

A: We have about \$30,000 a year to "share costs" on BMPs related to improving water quality. These include cross-fencing, stream fencing, gutters on barns, raising paddock areas, pasture renovations, manure bins, and nose-pumps for water draws. It is a 50% match, with up to 75% if the project is on a creek or wetlands.

Q: Can you tell us about the technician's visit?

A: The goal of a visit is a Farm Plan, which is detail oriented. We use auto-cad, aerial photos, and physical measurements to record objectives. Then we make a detailed map with nutrient calculations and feed forage balances, etc. and write the plan. The Farm Plan is used to write the Cost Share Contract. Farms Plans are kept on file. We make mailings to follow-up on Cost Share contracts.

Q: How many Farm Plans are there?

A: About 200 Plans are active (about 10/year over the last 12 years) plus about 80 older plans.

Q: Who do people contact?

A: On the Gig Harbor Peninsula, contact Erin Ewald. Contact Rene' for the Nisqually watershed (majority of her "area") or for the rest of Pierce County. (contact info below)

Q: What is the minimum size of the farm for Farm Plans and cost share?

A: There is no minimum size. 99% of the farms are hobby farms. Another Farm Technician does Dairy Farm Plans.

Q: How do you get assistance to places like Horseheaven Creek? (Allen Zulauf)

A: We have a newsletter, post flyers at feed stores and every library, put ads on Craig's list, and use the Capitol (farm/ag) Press. We also do some targeted mailings, like Spiketown Creek. We also get referrals from DOE or PC, if they have made a site visit in response to a complaint. PC may require a Farm plan, but they have no enforcement follow-up.

Q: If you had a list of property owners on Horesheaven creek?

A: Yes we would mail.... But not much response...

Q: How do you identify farms?

A: We drive around, or if a property is over an acre in size, or we get "referrals" from neighbors

Q: Are there any sub-watersheds which need attention?

A: Ray Hanowell, Tacoma-Pierce County Health Dept says "Burley Lagoon".

General comments from Rene':

There needs to be a Farm Plan to be eligible for Cost Share. Participants are strongly encouraged to implement everything in their plan, they have to invest their own time, we only have \$30,000 per year, so applicants are ranked, and there is a \$5,000 max per Cost Share Contract. Plans helping shellfish beds go to the top of the list. The rest drop down, so those future projects could include stream fencing (Ohop Creek), manure storage bins (Spanaway), raised "loafing" areas by barns. We have done volunteer coordination with the Stream Team and/or WCC (Washington Conservation Corps). For one Farm Plan/Cost Share farm, the Stream Team and WCC volunteers installed buffer fencing and replanted for a mile along a creek.

There was a discussion of landowner recognition, including publicizing implementers, profiles in newsletters, wildlife stewards, and plaques for gates. Rene' said there have been 111 site visits in the Puyallup watershed since 2001, 12 farm management plans in the Puyallup since 2001, and 22 farm management workshops.

Q: What are the Stream Buffers?

A: Farms practices which are pre-1992 have no buffers, animal access to creeks is grandfathered in. For farm practices established after 1992, the Pierce County (PALs) buffers apply, usually a minimum of 35 feet, or what ever buffer designation for the stream applies. We recommend 35 feet if the owner (pre-1992) is not going to follow setback recommendations.

Q: If the property changes hands, do current regulations/buffers apply?

A: Not if there is no change in "use". If there is a 5 year "skip", then they have to go by the new regulations. The Wash. State Dept of Agriculture enforces "AFO/CAFO" Animal Feed Operation/Controlled Animal Feed Operations.

Q: Does DOE measure water quality?

A: DOE will check water quality and refer to Pierce Conservation District. DOE has one employee for the SW Region (Olympics to Vancouver, to Cascades, to Ocean, Pierce County south). He is Derek Rockett, Non-Point specialist, Water Quality Program, 360-407-6697, droc461@ecy.wa.gov

Q: What do you do when you get a referral?

A: We look up the property in the Pierce County GIS, to find out what the setbacks should be. It takes 25' of healthy grass buffer along a stream to 'purge' the fecal coliform as water moves toward the stream.

Example: one farm had too many animals (head of livestock) so they went to a wider fenced buffer. The minimum "plan" is to tarp the manure pile. If an owner will not do that on their own, then they probably will not do much with a farm plan and Cost Share.

Q: Is there a process for prioritizing activities related to TMDLs? (Cindy James, Ecology)

A: We (PCD) could coordinate with DOE to help the (livestock owner) help themselves.

Q: How could we get a property owner along Horseheaven Creek to host a property owners meeting?

A: Word of mouth is good, and the local Veterinarians schedule workshops. And we need to contact (livestock owners) at feed stores and through 4-H Clubs.

Lorin Reinelt suggested a PRWC sponsored workshop, and Allen suggested a meeting at a local school.

Q: Have you observations on how things have improved? How close are we to improving Water Quality?

A: What has "Helped" a lot is (land sub-division). The new owners of 10 acre parcels (subdivide from 40 acres) have to follow the new (wider) setbacks. Pierce County is educating the new owners during the (building) permitting process.

Q: Does Animal Control (animal welfare complaints) have an effect?

A: It depends. The 96th and Waller Road property (with neglected horses) was referred to the Dept of Agriculture, then DOE, and video was shown on YouTube. Ecology was called for water quality violations, once the berm was in place between the animals and the roadside ditch, Ecology had to back out. Animal control tried education and warnings. We (PCD) cannot force a farm plan. (Editor's note: RCW/Pierce code requires a veterinarian to declare neglected animals in danger, and in many cases a warrant issued, before such animals may be fed or removed).