



HOOD CANAL ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL

WINTER 2012

Hood Canal Shoreline Master Program

The three counties bordering on Hood Canal are at varying stages of updating their Shoreline Master Programs (SMPs) as required by the State's Shoreline Management Act. HCEC Board Members are either involved in, or closely monitoring, the updating processes. Phil Best is following the ongoing process in Kitsap County; Monica Harle is on the Citizen Advisory Committee for Mason County; and Barbara Moore Lewis is watching the planning process unfold in Jefferson County. Following is a summary of the counties' SMP updating processes, current statuses and primary issues.

JEFFERSON COUNTY

The Jefferson County SMP Update was approved by the Board of County Commissioners (BOCCs) and sent to the Washington State Department of Ecology (WDOE) for final approval in 2010. In January of 2011 the WDOE issued a "conditional" approval with recommendations for changes in language dealing with net pens/finfish aquaculture. The original SMP Update proposed by the county prohibited net pens and allowed other finfish aquaculture only under strict criteria. However, the WDOE will not allow an outright prohibition of a preferred, water dependent use.

In early October, 2012, the BOCC held a workshop with fish disease experts. Jefferson County planners are working with the Commissioners and the WDOE on adding revised Conditional Use Permit criteria and Performance Standards to the SMP Update. A final public hearing and comment period will be conducted before final adoption by the BOCC.

MASON COUNTY

The Mason County SMP Update is entering the final stages of the writing process. A "draft" compilation of the information found in each of the "issue papers" as well as reach sheet maps and the ICR (Identification and Characterization Report) document is scheduled to be completed by November 14, 2012.

Each of the issue papers contains (1) the requirements of the WDOE, such as new regulations which must be met; (2) current and "proposed" Mason County regulations for each "issue" such as aquaculture, forestry, boating facilities (formerly Docks and Piers), etc. and (3) the overarching "policies", both current and proposed. The challenge of the SMP updating process is how to incorporate the myriad of requirements of several government agencies into the issue papers in a way which provides consistency throughout many agencies.

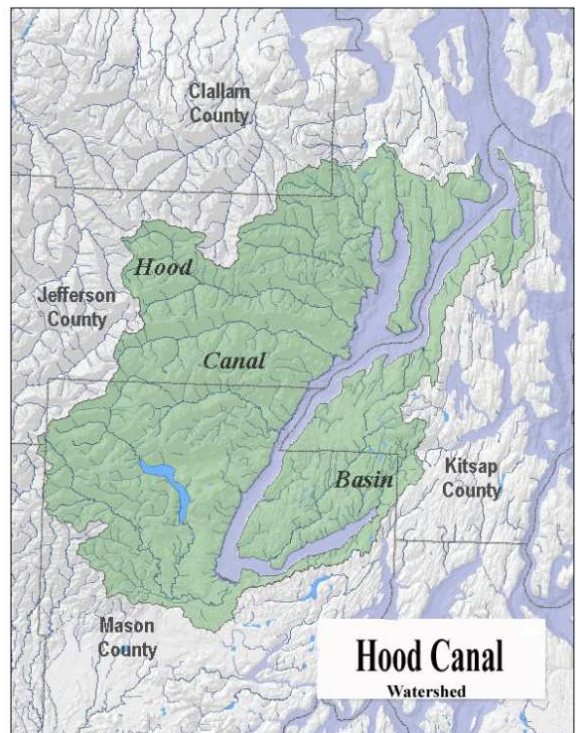
Once the draft SMP document is compiled it will be available for public review and comment by accessing the Mason County SMP Update website. This signals the beginning of the process of making its way through the county's Planning Commission and eventually to the Board of Mason County Commissioners. When approved by the Commissioners, it will need to be approved by the WDOE. The SMP Update is scheduled to be finished by June of 2013.

KITSAP COUNTY

Adoption of the Kitsap County SMP Update is expected by the end of the year. Board Member, Phil Best, spoke for the HCEC in general support of the SMP Update at the final hearing on the second draft on

October 29, with the following observations and concerns: (1) "no net loss," is defined as the maintenance of the aggregate total of the county's shoreline ecological functions, but could be better limited to more ecologically meaningful segments of the shoreline such as drift cells – one shouldn't be able to compensate for damage in Hood Canal with mitigation in Dyes Inlet; (2) Hood Canal is defined by state law as a shoreline of statewide significance from ordinary high water seaward, while the rest of Puget Sound is of statewide significance only seaward from extreme low tide, but no regulatory significance is attached to that added protective label on Hood Canal beaches; (3) special detailed attention and pre-approval of the proposed Port Gamble development (for which no application is yet filed with the county) is inappropriate, especially (a) allowing the standard buffer in urban conservancy to be reduced administratively from 100' to 35' in Port Gamble but from 100' to 85' everywhere else in Kitsap County, and (b) allowing a new dock in Port Gamble Bay, which is a significant shellfish and bait fish resource for tribal fisheries, while spending millions of dollars to clean up pollution from past mill operations; and (4) except for commercial geoduck operations, aquaculture would not require a Conditional Use Permit, and the draft SMP provides that, because of new technology, "latitude should be given when implementing the regulations" as opposed to the caution by academic researchers as to the impact of aquaculture that "the precautionary principal should be followed when there is lack of data".

The HCEC will continue to follow the three counties' updating processes and will take whatever action is deemed appropriate as issues arise. These are important planning efforts because the resulting updates will guide shoreline resource protection and management throughout Hood Canal for many more years. We encourage anyone interested in following the progress of the Jefferson, Kitsap and Mason Counties' SMP Updates to access the information on their websites.



KITSAP COUNTY ADDRESSES GEODUCK FARMING IN HOOD CANAL

The July and September HCEC board meetings were devoted to discussions of the environmental issues surrounding shellfish aquaculture in Hood Canal. These discussions focused mostly on the controversial subject of geoduck aquaculture as addressed in Kitsap County's draft Shoreline Management Program (SMP) Update.

At the July meeting, board members heard from the county's Department of Community Development (DCD) planner, Dave Greetham, who provided some background on the planning process and listed some of the contentious issues, including shellfish farming practices. Comments on this issue have been received by the county from both environmental groups and Taylor Shellfish, one of the largest shellfish growers on the West Coast.

The guest speaker at the September meeting was Jesse DeNike, a lawyer with Plauche and Stock, who outlined the concerns of the shellfish industry as stated in a letter to the county from Taylor Shellfish and responded to questions from board members about the damaging environmental impacts from geoduck farming.

The potentially harmful impacts expressed by environmental organizations, including the Coalition to Protect Puget Sound Habitat, the Case Inlet Shoreline Association, and the Washington State Chapter of the Sierra Club, include the following:

- Reduced biodiversity from the elimination of aquatic life on multiple levels resulting from the clearing of natural plant, animal and debris before planting, and harm to benthic organisms from the liquefying of intertidal substrate at the time of harvest;
- Plastic pollution from aquaculture gear (tubes, bags, fencing, plastic containers, etc.) which can harm aquatic animals;
- Potential harm to beachcombers, windsurfers, divers and boaters from PVC shards found on beaches and drifting canopy nets; and
- Restricted public access for recreation.

Environmentalists are asking for adequate buffers from aquaculture sites to protect forage spawning/rearing habitats and allow eelgrass beds to expand without degradation from adjacent operations. They believe that geoduck farming belongs in the deeper water where older geoduck seed could be planted and where jute canopy nets could be used. To address the problem of plastic pollution, environmentalists are recommending new regulations to control derelict equipment and that a bond should be required for such equipment. Some groups believe that intensive commercial geoduck farming should not be allowed in certain shoreline environments with high ecological value. In addition, they are recommending that any change in species being farmed should require a new permit. Some are calling for a requirement that commercial

Spokespersons for the shellfish industry have responded by stating that language in the draft will discourage shellfish growers from locating in Kitsap County due to overly burdensome and costly application requirements and infeasible development standards. In answer to HCEC members' questions, Mr. DeNike pointed out that the new requirements will have a disproportionate impact on small growers. He stressed that, while Taylor Shellfish shares some of the concerns with the county and environmentalists, the company does everything it can to keep any negative impacts to a minimum.

Industry spokespersons point to research by the Washington Sea Grant which, they say, confirms that geoduck aquaculture does not pose a risk of harm to the environment. Further, they emphasize that state and national policies promote shellfish aquaculture. Aquaculture is a preferred, water-dependent use of the shoreline in the Department of Ecology's Shoreline Management Act guidelines. In 2011, Governor Gregoire launched the Washington Shellfish Initiative, which recognizes the industry as "critically important to the state's ecology, economy, and culture". Further, they contend that shellfish help to improve the quality of marine water by filtering out nutrient pollution, thus the industry is an integral part of the clean water solution.

The Kitsap County Planning Commission approved the draft SMP Update with revisions in September. The revised draft is anticipated sometime in October. The HCEC will continue to be involved in the planning processes of the Hood Canal counties as they prepare their SMP Updates and will be especially interested in any new policies and regulations regarding Geoduck aquaculture. For more information, contact Donna Simmons by phone at (360) 877-5747 or e-mail to donna@hoodcanalenvironmentalcouncil.org

Coalition to Protect Puget Sound Habitat
<http://coalitiontoprotectpugetsoundhabitat.com/>



Shrimping on Hood Canal by Gary Cunningham

WATERSHED PLANNING GROUPS LOSE FUNDING

State grant funding for watershed planning groups ended in June of this year as a result of Washington State's budget cuts. For members of the two planning groups in the Hood Canal watershed, this means that important decisions must be made about how to continue working without funding for administration, operations and projects. Both the WRIA 16/14b and WRIA 17 watershed planning groups are committed to playing a prominent role in the management of water resources and protection of water quality within the watershed and to make sure that years of hard work will not be lost. There are good reasons for continuing the work of the watershed planning groups. Their members have an intimate knowledge of local issues. Membership includes a broad spectrum of local agencies and interest groups with proven ability to reach consensus on important issues. The first priority of these groups is to make sure that the recommendations contained in Watershed Management Plans are implemented. They also hope to provide whatever support is needed to the Hood Canal Coordinating Council (HCCC), the Puget Sound Partnership (PSP) and other organizations as they work together to implement the Hood Canal Action Agenda. WRIA 16 members have also discussed assisting the State Department of Ecology (DOE) in some way as future Water Management Rules, often referred to as "instream flow rules", are developed. As a sign of commitment to continuing its work, the WRIA 16/14b Planning Unit recently changed its name to "WRIA 16 Watershed Team". It is currently exploring potential funding sources, including private and/or additional state or federal grants. Along with the HCCC, the Team has requested that the DOE restore funding that was withheld in 2010.

For more information about the Team visit its website at www.co.mason.wa.us/health/environmental/WRIA. The site includes links to reports and newsletters produced by the group, watershed contacts, ongoing events and a list of organizations working on Hood Canal issues. A joint meeting of the WRIA 16 Watershed Team and the WRIA 17 group, now called the "East Jefferson County Watershed Council, will be held in November, 2012 to discuss possible legislative funding and other issues of mutual interest.

For more information or to find out how to get involved in the work of these groups, call Donna Simmons at (360) 877-5747 or e-mail to donna@hoodcanalenvironmentalcouncil.org.

WILD OLYMPICS BILL INTRODUCED

Upper watersheds and major westside rivers in the Hood Canal region would be afforded greater protection under legislation introduced by Congressman Norm Dicks and Senator Patty Murray. If passed, the *Wild Olympics Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 2012* would protect critical fish and wildlife habitats in lower elevation forests that were not included in the *1984 Washington State Wilderness Act*. Wild and Scenic River designation for Hood Canal rivers, including major portions of the Dosewallips, Duckabush, Hamma Hamma, and South Fork Skokomish Rivers, is particularly important in light of ongoing salmon recovery efforts throughout the greater Hood Canal watershed.

Of particular interest to our organization is the proposed Wilderness designation for the upper South Fork Skokomish River watershed. HCEC members worked for many years to have this area included in the 1984 Wilderness Act as a natural extension of the Wonder Mountain Wilderness. Unfortunately, it was not included in the 1984 Act. This proposed legislation provides yet another opportunity to call for permanent protection for this area.

The HCEC and other environmental groups see the Wild Olympics Bill as an important step forward in the effort to preserve our remaining natural forestlands and riparian habitats of the eastern Olympic Mountains. If enacted, this bill will be remembered by future generations as a truly historic conservation effort.

For more information or to find out how you can help to assure passage of the Wild Olympics Bill, call Donna Simmons at (360) 877-5747.

HCEC BRIEF HISTORY HIGHLIGHTS:

- Founded in July 1969 after Phil Best heard about a proposal to dredge Stavis Bay to put in a big marina and the neighbors (including Gary Cunningham) decided to oppose that project and held a community meeting in the Seabeck fire hall;
- Campaigned for the passage of the 1971 Shoreline Management Act;
- Opposed the proposed gravel mine at the mouth of Hamma Hamma River;
- Opposed Boise Cascade's proposed 6,000 acre second-home subdivision called "Nettleton Lakes on the Canal" between Holly and Dewatto;
- Encouraged the creation of the Hood Canal Advisory Council to advise the three Hood Canal counties on Hood Canal issues (which was eventually replaced with the Hood Canal Coordinating Council with members from the counties and tribes);
- Joined with Concerned About Trident to sue in federal court about the Navy's compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) at Bangor;
- Lobbied for more protection in Olympic National Forest;
- Comments on development and regulatory proposals (for, against and concerns) around Hood Canal to county governments, state agencies, and the Army Corps of Engineers.

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The Board of Directors meets the fourth Wednesday of each month. If you would like to attend, call Donna Simmons at (360) 877-5747.

GPC Update

HCEC supports the work of Great Peninsula Conservancy because the Conservancy is playing a key role in conservation of Hood Canal's shorelines and its watershed. Its major function is to work with willing landowners to assist them in protecting their properties in perpetuity, generally either by accepting fee title donations or by agreeing to enforce conservation easements on the properties to assure that the restrictions the owners have placed on the properties will be honored in the future when they are no longer alive or own the properties.

Of particular interest are the Klingel/Bryan/Beard wetlands along North Shore Road between Belfair and Belfair State Park. Eighty-six acres of shoreline was donated in the 1980s. More recently, the federal government has funded a restoration of the Klingel portion to remove in 2011 a dike constructed in the 1950s. Young salmon, crabs, and other marine organisms now have access to thirteen acres from which they were formerly cut off. Restoring a section of naturally functioning Hood Canal shoreline is a small but significant step in restoring a healthy Hood Canal.

The Conservancy is playing a major role in the Kitsap Forest and Bay Project. One of the initial areas of focus is the Port Gamble Bay shoreline --- 564 acres and 1.8 miles of shoreline containing rich shellfish beds, some of the largest spawning populations of forage fish in Puget Sound, and large numbers of waterfowl each winter. The state legislature has appropriated \$7 million towards the purchase of the shoreline from Pope Resources. Many conditions and details have to be worked out before it is a "done deal." GPC may be playing a major role in the long-term protection of the property. GPC has a number of other smaller pending and completed projects relating to Hood Canal. A notable one was the devise of a waterfront home and acreage on the Olympic View Loop Road. The owner had no heirs interested in the property and she didn't want the forested eight acres logged and the property divided. She had no problem with the house being used as a home in the future, so GPC placed a conservation easement on the property protecting its natural character and sold the property to a family who was willing to take it with those restrictions. The sale proceeds were used by the Conservancy to fund other projects.

On the other hand, it isn't necessary to sell or give away your property to have it protected by GPC. A couple with a waterfront home south of Tekiu Point donated a conservation easement to GPC to protect the shoreline and the large wooded bank above the shoreline. They will continue to live in their home and they can either sell it or have it be a part of their estate when they die. Donating the easement doesn't mean they have to allow public access; it only means they have to allow GPC monitors to visit the property at least once a year to allow GPC to be sure the terms of the easement are being met.

Whether a project is large or small, GPC stands ready to assist landowners if there is significant conservation value in their proposal.

Gary Cunningham

Bill Matchett retires as President of the Hood Canal Environmental Council.



It doesn't pay to turn your back. Bill Matchett returned from a trip overseas to discover that he had, in his absence, had been elected President of the Hood Canal Environmental Council. That was twenty years ago, and he has conducted the organization's meetings since then, Gary Cunningham filling in whenever Bill was absent. "It is time now for someone with more energy" said Bill, pushing 90. Donna Simmons, who served in that office from 1972 to 1984, when she had to resign to accept employment with the Hood Canal Coordinating Council, is now picking up the office again where she left off.



Donna Simmons elected President of the Hood Canal Environmental Council.

Besides being a past president of the HCEC Donna was a member of the Washington State Ecological Commission. She has served as the Hood Canal Coordinating Council's Education Program Coordinator and Administrative Assistant. She also was a commissioner on the Mason County Conservation District Board, and is currently a member of the WRIA 16 Watershed Team.

**HOOD CANAL ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL YEARLY
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Individual - \$10 _____

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Sunset over Hood Canal by Vern Rutter