

PROPOSED PIT-TO-PIER PROJECT RESURFACES

The HCEC recently sent a letter to the Jefferson County Department of Community Development (DCD) to affirm our strong opposition to the proposed pit-to-pier project in Jefferson County. We view this highly controversial proposal as a major threat to the environmental health of Hood Canal. Environmental organizations throughout the region have expressed dismay that it is being considered again.

The proposed project proponent is Thorndyke Resource. The project site is in the eastern portion of Jefferson County, about 5 miles southwest of the Hood Canal bridge and northeast of Thorndyke Bay. The plan calls for building a central 4 mile long conveyor and a 990 foot pier to move sand and gravel from the reconfigured Shine pit within the Thorndyke Tree Farm to Hood Canal for marine transport by barges.

The Jefferson County DCD has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Statement and is currently asking for comment from interested parties. The intent of our letter of July 7, 2014 was to establish again our standing as an interested party.

Our concerns are detailed in the public record from the first time this project was proposed in 2007. At that time, it was known as the Fred Hill Materials pit-to-pier project. We see no reason to modify our position now. In fact, we believe that the sensitivity of Hood Canal is even clearer now than it was when we first assessed the environment threats posed by this kind of industrial development.

The HCEC stands behind the Hood Canal Coalition, which is taking the lead in opposing this proposed project. For more information or to learn what action needs to be taken at this point in the process, contact John Fabian at fabianj@olympus.net.



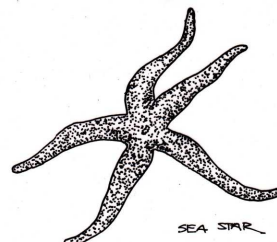
DNR SIGNS AGREEMENT ON CONSERVATION EASEMENT

July 7, 2014 news release announcing an historic agreement between the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the U.S. Navy was heralded by the HCEC and other environmental groups as a win-win deal for Hood Canal. This agreement allows the Navy to purchase a conservation easement on a strip of tidelands along the west shore of the canal from the Hood Canal bridge to just south of the Jefferson/Mason County boundary line near Eldon, for the next 55 years. The purpose of the agreement is to ensure the long-term security of the Bangor Naval Base and at the same time, to prohibit future industrial or commercial development on 4,800 acres of state owned aquatic land.

Restricting development on these tidelands will provide new protections for sensitive marine ecosystems and safeguard public access to the canal's shorelines. Navy personnel are quick to point out that restrictions on development will not affect public access, privately owned lands, recreational uses, or aquaculture or geoduck harvesting.

The HCEC will be following a proposal made public last fall for a similar conservation easement along the east shore of Hood Canal in Kitsap County. This easement would extend from the Hood Canal bridge south to the county line near Holly. We will keep our members informed of any movement on this proposal.

It is unknown whether the Jefferson County easement will prevent the controversial pit-to-pier sand and gravel project from moving forward. The project developer, Thorndyke Resources, continues to pursue the project and asserts that the DNR will grant the company a subtidal lease to allow for the proposed pier.





Port Gamble Bay by Don Willott

CLEANUP ACTION PLAN FOR PORT GAMBLE BAY

For many years, the Hood Canal Environmental Council (HCEC) has known about the threats to the marine environment and public health in Port Gamble Bay due to toxic pollution associated with past sawmill operations. The cleanup site, located at the mouth of the bay, was used to transfer and raft logs and for the manufacture of wood products from 1853 to 1995. The old mill was removed in 1997 and subsequently used for log sorting, wood chipping, materials handling, and marine research. Some toxic materials are still found in sediments on the floor of the bay and in soils in and around the sawmill site. Pollutants released during former operations include cadmium, petroleum hydrocarbons, carcinogenic polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons and dioxins/furans. Wood waste threatens animals in sediments, either by smothering or by the release of sulfide and ammonia.

After years of hard work on the part of government agencies and private interest groups, including the present property owner, Pope Resources, the Washington State Department of Ecology (WDOE) prepared a Draft Cleanup Action Plan (DCAP) for the bay last October and asked for public review and comment. In November, 2013, the HCEC sent a letter to the WDOE supporting the Port Gamble S’Klallam Tribe’s recommendations for strengthening the plan. We stressed the importance of developing strong and comprehensive remedial actions that will reduce toxicity to sediment-dwelling organisms, human health risks, and dioxin/furan compounds and cadmium in shellfish.

While we applauded the intent of the DCAP, we pointed out that, as written, it could fall short of these goals if the remedial actions chosen by the WDOE for a large segment of the bay were not strong enough to protect human health. According to the DCAP, this area contains levels of cPAH (carcinogenic Polynuclear Aromatic Hydrocarbon) and other contaminants that exceed human health risk. For this reason, it is imperative that strong remedial action be taken to protect fish and shellfish, particularly considering that local tribal people depend heavily on the consumption of fish and shellfish as part of their subsistence culture. We believe that the “monitored natural recovery” actions chosen by the WDOE for this SMA (Sediment Management Area) could lead to a slower recovery process that could pose a higher risk over a longer period of time.

As of this writing, the WDOE appears to be moving ahead as quickly as possible. The Port Gamble S’Klallam Tribe and others continue to be involved in the engineering design and other stages of the project.

The cleanup of Port Gamble Bay is a huge undertaking with serious implications for the bay and surrounding uplands. The development of the DCAP represents a major step forward toward restoration of water quality and related natural resources in this part of the Hood Canal watershed. We believe it would be unfortunate to find out years from now that the actions taken were not sufficient to protect the environment and public safety.

The HCEC will continue to follow the cleanup process and to keep our members informed as the cleanup project moves forward. For more information, contact Paul McCollum, Natural Resources Director for the Port Gamble S’Klallam Tribe, at (360) 297-6288

KITSAP FOREST AND BAY PROJECT UPDATE

Hood Canal Environmental Council is a participating member of the Kitsap Forest and Bay Coalition, which consists of many local conservation organizations led by Sandra Staples-Bortner, Executive Director of Great Peninsula Conservancy, and which supports the efforts to acquire and preserve up to 6,700 acres of Pope Resources land in North Kitsap. The overall program is called the Kitsap Forest and Bay Project.

The first acquisition of the Project was completed February 12, 2014, when Kitsap County became the new owner of 535 acres of forestland and 1.5 miles of shoreline on Port Gamble Bay. (See Don Willott photo.) The acquisition area is one of the largest lowland forests and becomes one of the longest stretches of public shoreline in the Hood Canal watershed, offering important habitat for salmon and other wildlife. Conservation of these lands will link marine and freshwater habitats together for the protection of the entire watershed ecosystem. Kitsap County will manage the forest and shoreline to protect its natural heritage while providing open space for public enjoyment.

Another portion of the Project is a proposal which Kitsap is putting together with the aid of its Coalition partners to submit to the state's Department of Natural Resources to establish a Community Forest out of 484 acres of Pope Resources land which it refers to as the Divide Block. The purposes of the Community Forest would be to retain the land's legacy use as a highly productive working forest, protect a contiguous corridor of wildlife habitat spanning the Kitsap Peninsula, and contribute to the watershed integrity of Port Gamble Bay in Hood Canal and Miller Bay.

A North Kitsap Community Forest would contribute to realization of a regionally significant shared use trail, known as the Sound to Olympics Trail. This recreational trail will span the Kitsap Peninsula creating a link from the Seattle ferries (at Kingston and Bainbridge Island) to the Hood Canal Bridge. It will be enjoyed by local residents and people from around Puget Sound, and will provide a strong boost to the local economy of Kitsap County.

HOOD CANAL REGIONAL STORMWATER RETROFIT PLAN

The Hood Canal Coordinating Council's *Hood Canal Regional Stormwater Retrofit Plan* was officially released in April. The overriding purpose of the plan is to guide future stormwater projects in the Hood Canal Action Area, which includes the Hood Canal watershed north to and including Port Ludlow Bay. One of the goals in the project was to identify and prioritize sites where stormwater runoff poses a threat to fresh and marine water, associated natural resources and even the public health. An example of a stormwater retrofit project is the construction of a rain garden to filter out pollutants and provide better drainage in parking lots or other impervious surfaces. All of the projects will be bioretentions or detention ponds.

For over a year, a steering committee worked to narrow a preliminary list of 60 potential sites, located on both public and private property, down to 8. Listed by county, they are:

Kitsap County – Twelve Trees Business Park, Edgewater neighborhood, Lake Symington neighborhood, and Camp Union Grocery

Mason County – Hood Canal Community Church and Union County Park

Jefferson County – Brinnon Community Center and Dosewallips State Park

In addition to the potential educational benefits provided by the retrofit projects, public agencies, tribal governments, and other responsible partners now have a better understanding of the extent of the stormwater problem, what needs to be done and where they need to focus in the near term. Also, we now have a good deal more information about projects that did not make it to the final phase but may be retrofitted later when funding becomes available.

For anyone who is interested, the Hood Canal Regional Stormwater Retrofit Plan can be found on the Hood Canal Coordinating Council's website at: www.hccc.wa.gov.

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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.

HCEC WELCOMES NEW BOARD MEMBER

The HCEC Board of Directors recently welcomed John Arthur as a member of the board. John is a retired vascular surgeon who resides on Hood Canal north of Lone Rock in the Ioka area. He is currently serving as chairman of the HCEC Conference Planning Committee.



Dave Herrera (Skokomish Tribe) presenter of the award - together with Bill and Judy Matchett.

Bill and Judy Matchett were recipients of a HCCC Environmental Achievement Award on Oct. 31, 2013, for their “passionate and tireless roles as advocates for Hood Canal.” Bill served as president of HCEC for 20 consecutive years, and both have been HCEC board members for as long as anyone can remember. Bill’s service on the Kitsap County Planning Commission for 13 years and Judy’s service on the Kitsap County Open Space Committee and its successor, the Kitsap County Parks & Recreation Advisory Board for 16 years were also cited, as well as their being founding members of the Westsound Conservation Council. It was noted that Bill and Judy have made a significant difference in their longtime work to protect Hood Canal.

HCEC PLANNING FALL CONFERENCE

The HCEC plans to hold a conference in the fall of this year which will serve a dual purpose – to celebrate our organization’s 45th year anniversary and to focus on the environmental health of Hood Canal – past, present and future. A separate mailing in August will provide the details of the conference.

For more information, contact Donna Simmons at (360) 877-5747 or e-mail to nana@hctc.com.

Salmon Recovery in Hood Canal

Millions of dollars are spent each year in Hood Canal on salmon recovery projects. The Washington state salmon recovery process is described at http://rco.wa.gov/salmon_recovery/index.shtml. The Hood Canal Coordinating Council (Mason, Kitsap and Jefferson counties together with Skokomish and Port Gamble S'Klallam tribes) is the lead entity for recommending salmon recovery projects in Hood Canal, and is assisted by a Technical Advisory Group of scientists and representatives from state and federal agencies and a Citizen Advisory Committee of persons (including two HCEC board members) from the three counties.

The advisory groups spent 3 days this Spring visiting about 18 proposed salmon recovery sites around Hood Canal, which helped the project sponsors refine funding proposals to the state Salmon Recovery Funding Board. The advisory groups met together July 9 to evaluate the proposals and rank them for benefit to salmon and the public. Project sponsors included Jefferson Land Trust, Skokomish Tribe, Great Peninsula Conservancy, Mason County Conservation District, Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group, North Olympic Salmon Coalition, Wild Fish Conservancy, Kitsap County DCD, and the state Department of Natural Resources. Not all proposed projects will be funded, and some projects have alternate funding possibilities.

The following is the list of prioritized projects recommended for funding: #1 Lower Big Quilcene River Riparian Protection; #2 Skokomish Estuary Restoration Phase 3C; #3 Duckabush Riparian Habitat Acquisition; #4 Beards Cove Restoration; #5 Dosewallips Estuary Barge Removal; #6 Skokomish River General Investigation 2014; #7 Kilisut Harbor Restoration-Construction Phase; #8 Lower Big Beef Creek Restoration; #9 South Fork Skokomish LWD Enhancement Phase 3; #10 Mainstem Skokomish LWD Design; #11 Hood Canal S Chum Nearshore Habitat Use Assessment; #12 Dosewallips River Forest Service Road Decommissioning; #13 Lower Union River Habitat Assessment and Feasibility; #14 Vance Creek LWD Design. For more information, contact the Hood Canal Coordinating Council at <http://hccc.wa.gov>.

Black Point Up-Date

About 10 years ago Garth Mann, Canadian owner of the Statesman Group of Companies, bought both the Pleasant Harbor Marina and the largely abandoned campground on Black Point. His intention was to develop a Master Planned Resort (MPR) there.

The area had been designated as one that could be developed as an MPR in the Brinnon sub area plan. However, it is not yet zoned MPR. An MPR places urban density development in the middle of a rural area (and next to a very sensitive body of water, Hood Canal).

Currently some of the structures are planned to be 4 stories high. The Shoreline Management Plan affected the ability to develop the marina area, so the campground area became even more dense.

The county approved a conceptual Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in 2008, with a number of conditions that needed to be address in a Supplemental EIS (SEIS). The developer has been trying to address these conditions since that approval in 2008.

The economy failed about the time the EIS was approved and the developer has apparently found it difficult to find backers for his project, which includes a golf course. (Golf courses are going out of business all over the peninsula). He is trying to use a US program called the EB5 Visa program, where he can "sell" green cards for investment of \$500,000. His first effort to do this failed when the US government rejected his effort.

Local residents in the Brinnon Group have received draft sections of the SEIS through public disclosure and have done extensive analyses of them. There are serious issues with the Black Point aquifer and with the developers plan to dispose of waste water. There are also serious problems with the analysis of traffic impact, both environmentally on the Canal and in terms of accidents and traffic congestion.

The county has tried to set a schedule to get the SEIS done this summer. However, the developer has not kept to the schedule in turning in draft sections of the SEIS. At this time, it is unclear when the SEIS will be released and when public meetings will be held. Opposition to the development centers on the effects of such dense development on the rural character of the area, on pollution of the canal, on the wells of other residents of Black Point, and on traffic.

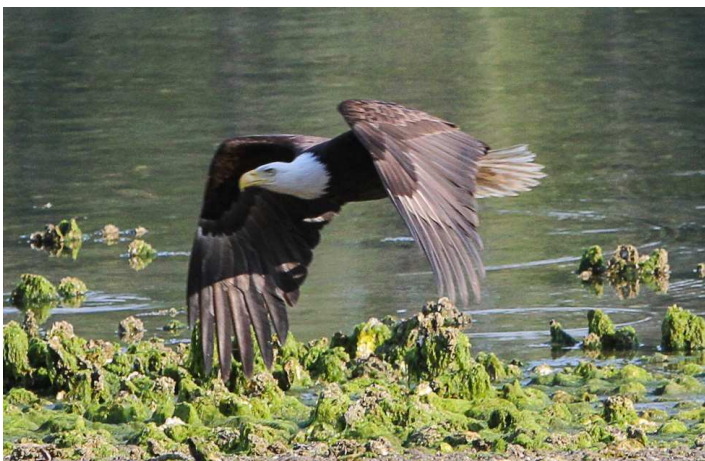
OTHER NEWS

Proposed Beausite Lake Inter-Trust Exchange

The HCEC has notified the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) of its strong support for the proposal to preserve the Gibbs/Beausite Lake area as a natural recreation area through an inter-trust land exchange between the DNR and Jefferson County. Preventing timber harvest and protecting open spaces and wildlife habitat in this area will ensure continued use by local residents. This proposal is just the first step in the land-trust designation process and the HCEC will follow it closely.

No-Discharge Zone for Puget Sound

The Washington State Department of Ecology (DOE) has proposed to designate Puget Sound as a no-discharge zone. In a letter of support to the DOE, the HCEC pointed out that reducing the levels of bacterial and other contaminants from boats is especially important in Hood Canal where a complete flushing of water does not occur as quickly as it does in other watersheds throughout greater Puget Sound. However, we believe that a sewage discharge ban will be feasible only if there are enough convenient and accessible boat sewage pumpout facilities and conveniently placed toilets for boaters who do not have onboard toilets.



Bald Eagle by Phil Best



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Courtesy of conniegallant.com

Proposed Devils Vista Timber Sale

In April, the HCEC sent a letter to the State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) supporting the Jefferson County Board of County Commissioners' opposition to a proposed timber sale in the Devil's Lake area. We agreed with the Commissioners that this area should be retained in its relatively natural state to protect a unique plant community and other natural resources and to provide recreational opportunities in the Quilcene/Mt Walker area. We also supported the county's request for a 415 acre addition to the existing Natural Resource Conservation Area, including a large portion of the proposed timber sale.



Sketch by Nicki Yarbrough

**HOOD CANAL ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL
YEARLY MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION**

Individual - \$10 _____

Family - \$30 _____

Group - \$50 _____

Patron - \$100 _____

Contributions in any amount are welcome

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Please send this coupon and your check to: HCEC, P.O.
Box 87, Seabeck, WA, 98380

**HOOD CANAL BRIDGE IMPACTS
STEELHEAD SMOLT OUTMIGRATION**

Late last year, researchers studying how and where steelhead smolts go when they migrate from Hood Canal to the Pacific Ocean made a surprising discovery. What they found was a dramatic increase in mortality when the smolts encountered the Hood Canal Bridge. The study involved capturing out-migrating smolts in freshwater and inserting radio tags into the fish. Radio receivers deployed throughout Hood Canal and Puget Sound tracked the tagged smolts' movement from freshwater to open ocean. Researchers believe that the high mortality rate may be due to predation from seals or other fish which can hide in the darkness under the bridge. It has also been suggested that the bridge may be a barrier simply because it extends into the water column (about 3.5 meters) which is beyond the depth salmon and steelhead use during their outmigration. The bridge may potentially be a problem for other salmon and steelhead populations.

Anyone interested in learning more about this issue can find the complete paper at:
<http://www.eopugetsound.org/articles/paper-floating-bridge-disrupts-seaward-migration-and-increases-mortality-steelhead-smolts>

ACIDIFICATION IN HOOD CANAL

Unlike other sources of water quality degradation in Hood Canal which have been studied extensively since the early 1970s, marine water acidification has been the focus of scientific research for a relatively short time. In 2007, commercial shellfish growers sounded the alarm about this new threat to their hatcheries in the northern part of the canal and other areas of the state. Their concerns are shared by many others in a region where the shellfish industry helps to support local economies. Since then, research has been carried out in an effort to provide answers to important questions about the science of acidification, the role of global climate change, and the future management of shellfish resources in response to the increased acidity.

Ocean acidification is primarily the result of atmospheric carbon dioxide that is absorbed by the oceans. Pacific coastal upwelling of cold, salty water high in carbon and low in pH eventually makes its way into Puget Sound, including Hood Canal. Nutrient runoff, organic carbon and localized air emissions can also be contributing factors, especially in more developed areas. Tiny young oysters cannot tolerate this acidic, corrosive seawater and have been killed by the billions in Pacific Northwest hatcheries.

TAKING ACTION: In late 2012, a report was issued by Washington State's Blue Ribbon Panel on Ocean Acidification. According to Bill Ruckelshaus, co-chair of the panel, over 30 percent of Puget Sound's marine species, particularly those that have shells, could potentially be affected. The report urged state agencies and concerned citizens to take action to protect the commercial shellfish growing industry, especially in Hood Canal, South Puget Sound and Willapa Bay, areas that recent studies show are particularly vulnerable. These actions include reducing carbon emissions and other contributors, increasing efforts to adapt, continuing to monitor and conduct research, informing decision-makers and the public, and staying focused on the problem. Early actions call for assisting shellfish hatchery operations and creating a center for ocean acidification. Among other Puget Sound bills passed by the legislature in the last session was a bill designed to protect the state's water from the effects of ocean acidification.

More information about acidification in Hood Canal and other areas can be found on the Department of Ecology's website at <http://www.ecy.wa.gov>.



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Trumpeter Swans by Donna Simmins