

Stillaguamish River Clean Water District Advisory Board

BOARD MEMBERS

Single Family Ratepayer – Stillaguamish Drainage Basin
Dale Shelton (Chair)

Single Family Ratepayer – Skagit Drainage Basin
Graham Logen

Single Family Ratepayer – Port Susan Drainages
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Single Family Ratepayer - Lakes
Miriam Lancaster

Single Family Ratepayer – Tulalip Drainage Basin
Vacant

Ratepayer – At-Large #1
Vacant

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Ratepayer – At-Large #3
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Ratepayer – At-Large #4
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Vacant

Snohomish Conservation District
Steve Van Valkenburg

Snohomish Health District
Steve Rice

Washington Department of Ecology
Vacant

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Vacant by agency choice

Stillaguamish Tribe
Vacant by agency choice

Tulalip Tribes
Vacant by agency choice

Surface Water Management Staff
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October 16, 2017

Brian Sullivan, Chair
Snohomish County Council
3000 Rockefeller Avenue, MS 609
Everett, Washington 98201

SNOHOMISH COUNTY COUNCIL
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OCT 16 2017

CC'D TO	CF	SRC
JRM	DIST 1	DLE
JDG	DIST 2	RNR
YSW	DIST 3	ELL
CJT	DIST 4	CMF
GOT	DIST 5	

Dear Councilman Sullivan:

The Stillaguamish River Clean Water District (CWD) Advisory Board (the Board) offers our final annual recommendations to the Snohomish County Council (Council) in the form of our annual letter.

On July 5, 2017 the Council approved Ordinance 17-020 to consolidate Surface Water Management service areas, amend portions of Title 4 related to revenue and finance, amend Title 25 related to storm and surface water management, and repealed Title 25A of the Snohomish County Code related to water quality restoration and water quality management. Among other things, this action dissolved the CWD Board, effective July 23, 2017. However, Council authorized SWM staff support to allow the Board to continue to function as a Board and fulfill our commitments and civic duties until the end of this year.

In previous years, our annual letter has addressed a myriad of issues including: funding for the Savvy Septic program, stormwater drainage, shellfish protection, funding the Snohomish Health District, funding the Snohomish Conservation District, solid waste and other pollutants entering and contaminating the CWD waterways, lake health, toxic algae issues affecting human health, the LakeWise program, and much more.

While we continue to be disheartened by the Board's dissolution, and with this perspective in mind, we offer to you our last letter to the County Council, and respectfully submit the following recommendations:

Water Quality and Quantity

- The highest priorities should be given to issues and cases where human health and safety are at risk and of serious consequence.
- High priority should be given to water quality monitoring and pollution reduction efforts within the Stillaguamish basin.
- Stormwater drainage, diking, and floodplain services should be given a higher priority. This should be extended beyond the Flood Reduction Grant Program; drainage infrastructure should be inventoried, improved, and maintained.
- Council should request a report from SWM that defines how the shellfish protection program will be administered and provide a plan to re-open closed shellfish beds and improve the recreational and commercial shellfish fishery.
- Council and SWM should strengthen efforts with PDS Code Enforcement and other agencies to provide effective enforcement where water quality standards are violated and voluntary compliance efforts have failed.

Monitoring

- SWM staff and citizen volunteers should continue the monitoring program of the county's lakes. Furthermore, we recommend that citizen monitoring be extended to other waterways including, rivers, streams, and storm events.
- More effort should be made to recruit, train, and continue support of citizen volunteer monitors, not only for lakes, but also for other bodies of water throughout the county.

Pollution Reduction

- Pollution Identification and Correction (PIC) type of work should be continued. In our view, this model has proven to be successful over the past few years.
- Riparian and fish habitat restoration should continue to be a high priority.

Lakes

- Council should require an annual SWM report that tracks lake funding, monitoring, treatment, and restoration of those lakes that exceed the action level for toxic algae and other pollutants. This should be among the county's highest priorities because of the risks to human health.
- The highly acclaimed and successful LakeWise program should be continued and expanded throughout the County.

Snohomish Conservation District

- Council should approve the Snohomish Conservation District's proposed Rates and Charges to replace the CWD revenue that was lost with the repeal of Title 25A. The Snohomish Conservation District has been a strong partner in achieving water quality objectives within the Stillaguamish River basin.

Discretionary Fund

- Discretionary Fund (DF) revenues collected in 2017 and the current fund balance should be used only for projects within the bounds of the former CWD.
- Council should request a SWM report on how the CWD DF fund balance is spent. This report should be available to the public and posted on the SWM website.
- The successful DF model should be continued on a county-wide basis.

SWM Consolidation Efficiencies

- Council and SWM should reduce administrative costs.
- At the time of the Council vote on Ordinance 17-020, Council requested that SWM track consolidation efficiencies, dollars saved, and projects planned and accomplished in the Stillaguamish River CWD. We ask that these reports be made available to the public and posted on the SWM website.
- Council should assess how the SWM business plan money is being spent and if this is in alignment with other local, County, State, and Federal departmental practices by contracting out business plan development and writing. In our view, the development and writing of business plans are key components of organizational leadership job descriptions and should not be contracted out. We are concerned that more than a quarter of a million dollars in tax payer money is being used on this business plan.
- Do not give up on collecting SWM fees owed by the US Navy and federal, state and other entities. We have seen no evidence that these entities are exempt.
- We commend SWM for their ability to obtain grants. The Board recommends that SWM continue to apply for grants, including Ecology's Water Quality Combined Financial Assistance program grant, and others as they are available.

Transparency and Citizen Involvement in Consolidated SWM Utility District

- Ratepayer and stakeholder input should be included in the development of the business plan, and continue after the business plan is written in the form of a fair and equitably representative way through a county-wide SWM Advisory Board.
- Council should require SWM to track and report evidence of SWM's transparency. We ask that follow-up reports be made available to the public and posted on the SWM website.
- After our duties on the Board are complete, we as individual citizens stand ready, as we always have, to work collaboratively and positively with the Council and SWM and are committed to fulfilling our mutual goals of water resource stewardship.

Recognition of Citizen Volunteer Service

- Council should provide recognition of the public service given by all past and present members of the CWD Advisory Board.

The Board appreciates your attention to our comments and recommendations. We look forward to receiving your written response.

Sincerely,



Dale Shelton, Chair



Bob Landles, Vice Chair

cc:

Dave Somers, Snohomish County Executive
Steve Thomsen, Snohomish County Public Works Director
Barb Mock, Snohomish County Planning and Development Services
Will Hall, Surface Water Management Director
Jeff Ketchel, Interim Snohomish Health District Administrator
Monte Marti, Snohomish Conservation District