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Stillaguamish River Clean Water District Advisory Board

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May 2, 2011

Debbie Terwilleger, Director
Snohomish County Public Works, Surface Water Management
3000 Rockefeller Ave., M/S 607
Everett, WA 98201

Dear Ms. Terwilleger,

The Stillaguamish River Clean Water District Advisory Board (Board) offers the following recommendations to Snohomish County Surface Water Management (SWM), regarding the 2012 work plan and budget. We value the close working relationship we have with SWM, including staff participation in our Board meetings, presentations on SWM activities, and Sean Edwards's staff support for the Board. We also appreciate SWM's collaboration with our subcommittees to effectively reach the objectives of Snohomish County Code Title 25A. The Board wishes to thank SWM for continuing to improve the transparency and availability of Clean Water District (CWD) budget planning and program/project accounting information.

Finances and Accounting

The Clean Water District (CWD) fund balances for RCW 36.89 (drainage) and RCW 90.72 (shellfish protection) revenues, including those for Water Quality, the Snohomish Conservation District (SCD), and the Discretionary Fund, are substantial and growing. **The Board therefore recommends** expeditious implementation of such related projects as Discretionary Fund on-site septic repair (OSS) and Shellfish Protection, and that the SCD contract be budgeted to draw on the SCD fund balance, in addition to their 33% allocation of projected RCW 90.72 revenue.

The Board believes CWD projected revenue and current fund balances provide adequate funding to support our recommendations. **The Board recommends** that SWM expeditiously use these financial resources to develop and implement projects related to shellfish protection, stewardship and education, lakes, stormwater, and fecal waste and trash at public access areas. **We recommend** the current CWD rate structure be maintained for 2012.

The Board thanks SWM for agreeing, last year, to provide certain accounting by each March and August, to better inform the Board in time for its recommendation letters to SWM and Council. This accounting includes the CWD Fund Balance Summary, Project Expenditures to date, and Projected Revenues. To ensure complete and timely delivery, **the Board requests** that a written procedure be instituted for providing these documents.

Shellfish Protection

The Board commends SWM on the release of the Stillaguamish Shellfish

Protection Program final report in March 2011, and the development of a strong implementation program starting this year. For the purpose of assessing any possible threats to the shellfish resource and to human health from chemical toxins in Port Susan and South Skagit Bay, **the Board recommends** compiling and evaluating the Mussel Watch data being collected in Port Susan, and any dependable related water quality data from the tribes and other shellfish stakeholders. **We ask** that SWM coordinate with the appropriate stakeholders to accomplish this and that SWM encourage the relevant government agencies to consider establishing shellfish consumption guidelines for South Skagit Bay and Port Susan, and to focus future program planning on filling any data gaps identified in the course of this evaluation.

The Shellfish Protection Subcommittee will continue to work closely with SWM and partners in implementing the Stillaguamish Shellfish Protection Program. **We ask** that SWM provide the Shellfish Subcommittee with updates on Shellfish Protection Program expenditures and an overview of SWM's strategy for ensuring that the budget and expenditure of all RCW 90.72 CWD revenues are focused on the highest priorities of the Shellfish Protection Program.

Stewardship and Education

The Board supports increasing the efforts of SWM, SCD, Snohomish Health District (SHD), and other organizations to raise public awareness of water quality issues in the CWD. **The Board recommends** that the 2012 SCD and SHD contracts contain ample funding for response to education and outreach opportunities in the coming year. **The Board also recommends** reinstatement of a full time watershed steward for the CWD. **The Board requests** that SWM, SCD, and SHD work together and with other partners as needed to implement the CWD education and outreach strategic plan that SWM, SCD, and the Board created earlier this year.

Lakes

SWM data show a clear trend of deteriorating water quality for lakes in the CWD. Though continued monitoring is needed, sufficient information is now available to address failing lakeside septic systems, misuse of landscape fertilizers and chemicals, loss of native riparian buffer vegetation, and pet waste. The Board supports the SWM proposal to create a pilot community outreach program, and collaboration with homeowners and volunteers to boost the level of community participation, acceptance, and adoption of BMPs around Lake Howard. **We encourage** acceleration of the Lake Howard Program in 2011 to validate the effectiveness of program design. **We request** that the Lakes Outreach and Remediation project be fully budgeted in 2012 for expansion to all lakes in the CWD.

Stormwater

Polluted stormwater is a major source of water quality degradation in the Puget Sound region. **The Board supports** promoting developer and homeowner incentives for Low Impact Development (LID) and using a share of the RCW 36.89 CWD revenues and fund balance to expand Project WA8593 (low impact development) or similar projects to achieve on-the-ground results. **We support** the county-wide *Water Quality Facilities Plan* that includes evaluation of stormwater facilities and identification of program actions to reduce water quality impacts of stormwater from County properties and rights-of-way and **we request** periodic updates on the plan. **The Board requests** that SWM provide an update on its Pollution Source Control Business Inspection Program.

Fecal Waste and Trash at Public Access Areas

The Board continues to be concerned about deteriorating water quality due to pet, equine, and human fecal waste from public trail systems within the CWD. **The Board supports** expanding SWM's South County Pet Waste Program into the Stillaguamish CWD, including outreach through commercial pet facilities (i.e., breeding, boarding, grooming, and veterinary businesses). **We encourage** SWM to revisit

with the Snohomish County Parks Department the importance of signage, dog-waste disposal bag dispensers, and waste receptacles at County parks. **We also recommend** SWM discuss with Snohomish County Solid Waste the feasibility of a periodic no-fee day to dispose of trash at County Transfer Stations in an effort to reduce trash entering the river system.

The Board recommends that SWM discuss with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) the option of pursuing installation of restroom facilities at WDFW public access areas. **We also encourage** SWM to discuss with WDFW the need for enforcement of proper anti-litter and pet waste disposal practices at their shoreline public access areas.

CWD Discretionary Fund


The Board recommends that on-site septic (OSS) projects be made eligible for financial assistance from the CWD Discretionary Fund. Failing septic systems have been recognized as a threat to water quality and shellfish ever since the CWD was founded, and the SHD's more-active participation provides a practical footing for Discretionary Fund OSS projects. **We recommend** that up to 25% of the Discretionary Fund budget be available for education and outreach, provided that funding for proposed projects cannot be arranged in the current year through SCD or from SWM project funds. **We further recommend** that all Discretionary Fund projects have a per-project CWD contribution limited to \$20,000, unless an exception is made by a majority board vote, through 2012, and require a minimum 25% match.

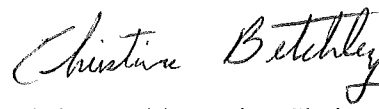
Other Recommendations

- **The Board requests** that SWM provide periodic updates on the progress of proposed CWD service charges for federal land and railroad property.
- **The Board recommends** continuation in 2012 of the intergovernmental services agreement between SHD and Snohomish County for 2011, including sanitarian services in the CWD and SHD participation on the CWD Advisory Board.
- The Board appreciates SWM's commitment to present to the Board any proposed changes to Snohomish County Code Title 25A. **We request** sufficient lead-time for the Board's comments to be considered for incorporation prior to SWM's submittal of the proposed changes to the County Council.
- The Board supports continued inter-local cooperation between SWM and other agencies in the CWD/Stillaguamish watershed.

Thank you for considering our recommendations and for your continued efforts to develop solutions to water quality and quantity issues in the Stillaguamish River watershed. **We request** a written response by the June 23, 2011 meeting of the Board.

Respectfully submitted,


John Connolly, Chair


Chris Betchley, Vice Chair