

Hood Canal Environmental Council

Fall 2015 Newsletter

Protecting Hood Canal since 1969

HCEC Role in Hood Canal

Who we are

Hood Canal Environmental Council is a watchdog organization protecting the environmental health of the Hood Canal watershed. The HCEC mission is *“to promote the highest standards for the environment for Hood Canal and its adjacent land areas for living, recreation, and wildlife, and for preservation of open space and wildlife habitat for the indefinite future.”*

What we do

We educate and inform our members and others about issues impacting Hood Canal with newsletters and other publications, sponsor events, provide information to news media, and participate in or support other education programs.

We advocate for strong environmental protection through current or proposed local, state and federal government regulations and programs. We do not endorse candidates for political office; however, we do inform officials about our positions on environmental issues.

We oppose projects or actions that could harm our natural resources or quality of life; and we support actions that promote the highest ecological values. Representatives of groups or agencies are regularly invited to HCEC meetings to inform our board members about environmental issues or conflicts. We try to thoughtfully consider all aspects of an issue before taking action.

Suspended Mariculture Facility Planned

Hood Canal Mariculture, Inc has proposed to construct a suspended mariculture facility in Hood Canal near Port Ludlow, north of the Hood Canal Bridge, ostensibly to “evaluate the potential of commercial-scale seaweed mariculture to modulate carbon and nitrogen” and provide suspended shellfish farming. The applicant did not respond to an invitation by HCEC to explain the project. See <http://www.nws.usace.army.mil/Portals/27/docs/regulatory/publicnotices/2015%20PNs/NWS-2008-502-PN.pdf>. Comments due by Nov 12, 2015

Army Corps Reduces Proposed Eelgrass Protection

The Army Corps of Engineers was prepared to adopt a well-documented science-based Programmatic Biological Assessment (PBA) for Shellfish Activities in Inland Marine Waters in Washington State. Proposed “Condition 7” in the PBA would protect eelgrass beds in the federal aquaculture permitting process by requiring that shellfish activities in ‘fallow’ areas [areas once used for shellfish that have gone uncultivated] not occur within 16 feet of native eelgrass and that any eelgrass present in the vicinity of a fallow area proposed for shellfish activities would have to be surveyed and documented with information about parcel boundaries and the locations and on-site dimensions of eelgrass and shellfish activities. It would not revoke coverage from existing operations, but would require a modest buffer from eelgrass beds in “continuing fallow areas.”

But the shellfish industry lobbied the Washington State Congressional Delegation, who requested (on Congressman Kilmer’s official stationery) that Condition 7 be removed from the PBA. Upon learning of this, twelve environmental groups and tribes wrote the Congressional Delegation asking them to retract their request to remove Condition 7 from the PBA, but to no avail. The Seattle District Engineer for the Army Corps of Engineers decided to drop Condition 7.

HCEC and other environmental groups are particularly concerned that the Congressional Delegation responded to industrial shellfish growers on this important environmental matter without first getting input from the environmental community. We will continue to follow this issue and will also make our position on the importance of protecting critical nearshore habitats known to our elected officials as opportunities arise.



Aquatic Lands Habitat Protection Plan

At an HCEC board meeting last Spring, David Palazzi, Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Aquatics Planning Program Manager, and Kyle Murphy, DNR Habitat Conservation Plan Project Manager, described DNR's proposed [Aquatic Lands Habitat Conservation Plan](#) (ALHCP). If approved, the ALHCP will become a negotiated agreement with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. It will provide the framework for the long term management of 2.6 million acres of state-owned aquatic lands in the state, including Hood Canal. Major objectives of the plan are to: manage habitats for 29 Endangered Species Act (ESA) listed species to reduce the risk of extinction; protect the long-term public and state interests; and minimize state financial and legal liability relating to the ESA. Activities addressed in the Draft are overwater structures, shellfish aquaculture, and log booming and storage.

A draft ALHCP was completed and distributed to the public for review in 2014. Several business and stakeholder organizations, including the Washington Forest Protection Association, Washington Public Ports and the Northwest Marine Trade Association, objected to the proposed ALHCP as too restrictive and then had legislation introduced to seriously limit DNR's ability to adequately carry out its mandate to protect marine habitats under its jurisdiction. In response, DNR put the planning process on hold, hoping to reach agreement through discussions with the opposing stakeholders.

While DNR staff claim that these discussions have been "beneficial and informative," they are asking the HCEC and others to share their thoughts about whether the planning effort should continue forward with development of an ALHCP. If the DNR decides to continue, it will initiate the Phase 2 outreach process to engage interested stakeholders to work out specific details included in a final plan. HCEC will continue to be involved and oppose any effort to weaken the protections in the current draft document. We will urge DNR to move into Phase 2 and eventually adopt an ALHCP that will protect Hood Canal's endangered species and their habitats.

More information about the ALHCP can be found on DNR's website at: www.dnr.wa.gov/aquatichcp.



Joint Land Use Study in Hood Canal

The Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) is a land use planning effort designed to promote effective collaboration between the U.S. Navy and local governments to preserve the environmental health of the Hood Canal watershed while recognizing the need to safeguard security at military installations. JLUS partners involved with Hood Canal include Kitsap and Jefferson Counties, Naval Base Kitsap (including Bangor) and Naval Magazine Indian Island. The study area includes the entire Hood Canal shoreline, adjacent installations and Navy transportation routes. The end product will be a framework and recommended non-binding actions that local communities are encouraged to implement in some form.

Recommendations include developing a system of identifying projects of concern before they occur. Among the land use developments listed as projects of concern due to their potential for incompatibility with the Navy's operations in the Hood Canal Dabob Bay area are large master planned communities or resorts. This would include the master planned resort (MPR) proposed to be constructed and operated in the Pleasant Harbor/Black Point area near Brinnon. HCEC has long opposed this proposed development for environmental reasons. It is unclear as to how the JLUS will deal with having such a densely populated MPR, if allowed by Jefferson County, so near Naval Base Kitsap at Bangor.

HCEC generally supports the JLUS partners for joining in this collaborative effort and addressing important issues such as adapting to climate change, supporting land conservancy and other local environmental groups, and calling for coordination among local jurisdictions and the Navy before approving growth-inducing land use plans and infrastructure. HCEC recently commented to Kitsap County on JLUS issues and recommendations prepared during Phase 1 of the 3-phase JLUS planning process. We intend to continue to be involved in the JLUS. For more information about the JLUS planning effort, contact Kathleen Barnhart, JLUS Project Manager, Kitsap County DCD at (360) 337-4601 or e-mail at kbarnhar@co.kitsap.wa.us.

Black Point/Pleasant Harbor Proposed Master Planned Resort

Since receiving comments on the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) and in response to public comments, Jefferson County has made major changes to the document, including adding a fourth option and requiring the developer to prepare a new economic analysis showing the economic benefit to the Brinnon Community. How much time will be allowed for public comments on the revised document remains to be seen. HCEC continues to follow the Brinnon Group's lead as it tracks the SEIS process.

Major Roadblock For Pit-To-Pier Project

HCEC joins the Hood Canal Coalition to approve a recent federal court decision dismissing a legal challenge to the July 2014 conservation easement agreement between the State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the U.S. Navy. Thorndyke Resources, a sand and gravel company, claimed that the agreement prevented it from constructing a 900 foot pier 3 miles south of the Hood Canal Bridge as part of a project to move sand and gravel to barges for marine transport through the Hood Canal bridge.

The Navy purchased a 55 year conservation easement along the nearshore from the Hood Canal Bridge to just south of the Jefferson/Mason County boundary near Eldon, to prohibit future industrial or commercial development on 4,800 acres of DNR owned aquatic land, protect sensitive marine environments, allow public access and help secure the Bangor Naval Base. The company claimed that the Navy exceeded its land acquisition authority and discriminated against the company by barring commercial development while allowing residential uses. The September 3, 2015 decision rejected those arguments and the legal challenge was dismissed.

For more information about the Thorndyke Resources' proposed development and the DNR/U.S. Navy conservation easement agreement, see HCEC's Summer, 2014 newsletter. For more information about the court's ruling and the implications for the proposed sand and gravel project, contact the Hood Canal Coalition at fabianj@olympus.net.

HCEC Opposes Residential Pier at Tekiu Point

HCEC takes a strong view against the proliferation of private docks for residential users along Hood Canal, because of their effect on navigation, fishing, sea life, beach drift cells, aesthetics, and their permanence versus a short-term intermittent benefit to the owner. The Tribes also oppose docks. This is especially true when a much less environmentally damaging alternative moorage method is available and in widespread use along Hood Canal—mooring buoys with dinghies.

HCEC opposed a private dock at Tekiu Point that is prohibited under the current Kitsap Shoreline Plan. Did the unsigned application submitted before the rule changed (but signed after the change took affect) vest the project to the old rule that allowed the dock if there were no feasible alternative? Did the applicant show there was no feasible alternative (such as a mooring buoy) under the old rule? We await final decision from the Hearing Examiner. For mooring buoy information, see http://wa-dnr.s3.amazonaws.com/publications/aqr_mooring_buoy_brochure.pdf

HCCC Climate Change Adaptation Workshop

In May , two HCEC members attended a Climate Change Adaptation Workshop, sponsored by the Hood Canal Coordinating Council, on climate change and the implications for natural resource management in the Hood Canal watershed.

Changes in air temperature, streamflows, precipitation and snowpack are already being experienced in this watershed and more are projected for the future. Future climate change projections for Hood Canal include increased air temperature, increases in extreme precipitation, a shift from a mixed rain and snow dominant system in the mountains to a rain dominant system, a shift in peak stream flows, and potential increases in severe weather-related events (flooding and drought). The results of these changes could have profound impacts on natural and human resources, including salmon, shellfish, forests, fresh and marine water, human health, and tribal culture.

How resource managers and local communities adjust to these changes remains to be seen. Together, they need to start preparing now by expanding existing efforts, launching specific actions, and developing new ideas. HCEC will encourage follow-up to the workshop with some bold strategies to adapt our natural resource management to the predicted changes in a way that builds resilience and preserves our quality of life for future generations.

HCEC Needs Your Help

If you have talents for laying out a newsletter; if you could maintain our website; if you have a passion for Hood Canal and have an interest in helping in some way---we need you. Most of us are ageing out, in our 70's to 90's, and we need the next generation to become educated about Hood Canal and to help carry on HCEC's work.

Please let us know if you are interested in assisting. Contact Donna Simmons at 1-360-877-5747 in Hoodspport or email her at nana@hctc.com; or contact any board member you know. To call is not to commit---you could attend a meeting or two to see if it's something in which you could be involved. We meet at Phil Best's office in Old Town Silverdale (3550 NW Byron St.) on the 4th Wednesday of the month at 6 pm (No meeting in November, next meeting December 9).

HCEC Board: Donna Simmons, Gary Cunningham, Phil Best, Don Seavy, Bill Matchett, Judy Matchett, Karen Best, Monica Harle, Alice Harris, John Arthur, Bob Wiltermood



Hood Canal Environmental Council

PO Box 87

Seabeck, WA 98380

**HOOD CANAL ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL
YEARLY MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION**

Individual - \$10 _____ Family - \$30 _____

Group - \$50 _____ Patron - \$100 _____

Contributions in any amount are welcome

Name _____

Mail Address _____

Email Address _____

Phones: _____

I would like to help, please contact me
My interest _____

Please send this coupon and your check to:

HCEC, P.O. Box 87, Seabeck, WA, 98380

Salmon shortage causes new rules in Hood Canal:



And new bait strategy:

