

# Hood Canal Environmental Council

Fall 2024

Protecting Hood Canal since 1969

## Pleasant Harbor Master Planned Resort Update

(Barbara Moore-Lewis)

Under the Growth Management Act, a master planned resort (MPR) is a self-contained and fully integrated planned unit development of urban density in a non-urban area, in a setting of significant natural amenities, with primary focus on destination resort facilities consisting of short-term visitor accommodations associated with a range of developed on-site indoor or outdoor recreational facilities. An MPR may include only those residential uses within its boundaries that are integrated into and support the on-site recreational nature of the resort. RCW 36.70A.360.

The clearing shown in the pictures has been going on since summer on the proposed site of the Pleasant Harbor Master Planned Resort (MPR). The developer may be clearing under two stormwater permits from the county and the state.

Usually, compliance with stormwater codes is based on a set of project development plans that show the amount of impervious surface that will be constructed and calculations of anticipated stormwater runoff from those surfaces based on rainfall averages. Sizes of stormwater ponds or infiltration facilities are calculated based on anticipated runoff volumes in comparison with existing conditions.

Currently for the Pleasant Harbor MPR there are no building or site construction approvals, or even applications for building permits, road construction or other construction that might create impervious surfaces. Nor has the preliminary plat been approved. The preliminary plat would include determining whether the plat is consistent with the MPR plan, including the construction of resort amenities to go with residential development.

The Brinnon Group has sent pictures of the clearing to both the county planning department and to the state Department of Ecology. The county did a site visit, and county Development Code Administrator Greg Ballard, wrote after the site visit, “Based on my cursory review, the proposal appeared to be in compliance with the ...stormwater plan for grading and clearing.” The state entered our concerns as a report of an environmental issue and sent the report to Ecology Water Quality Program, Shorelands and Environmental Assistance Program, Fish and Wildlife, US Army Corps, and Jefferson County Code Enforcement.

The county is still working with the developer on approval of the preliminary plat. When the plat is approved, there will be a hearing before the county hearings examiner where public comment will be encouraged.

**The Brinnon Group’s attorney is entirely paid for through donations. Here is a link where you can donate: [Brinnon Group](#). Or you can send a check to PO Box 572, Brinnon, WA 98320 payable to “The Brinnon Group.”**



*Clearing at Pleasant Harbor MPR 2024 Summer*



*Clearing at Pleasant Harbor MPR 2024 Fall*

## Thomas Creek - A Conservation Journey

(Bernadette Olson and Michael Beaulieu)

The conservation journey for Kit & Kathleen Kuhn began thirty-plus years ago when they purchased six acres in the peaceful community of Holly in Kitsap County on Hood Canal. Their property included part of Thomas Creek, which flowed year around and harbored a secret that would change their lives: each fall the creek filled with salmon returning to the stream of their birth. Over the years, Kit, Kathleen, and their kids worked to make things better for the salmon, mostly just making sure they could spawn in peace, and continue to make their way into the best spawning habitat. And they established alliances with like-minded neighbors.

When Paige Stockley built her home on Thomas Creek in 2009, she built weirs and planted willows to shade the stream where the salmon rested before swimming up through a concrete box culvert about five feet high under the Seabeck Holly Road. Lee Wyatt also lives at the mouth of the creek and has worked endless hours to help maintain the creek and salmon habitat. The willow trees now hamper the ability of salmon to run up the creek, and with Ms. Stockley's encouragement Kit and Lee have been cutting down the ones in the middle of the creek. The weirs are no longer needed.

Sediment accumulates in the culvert to the point where the salmon can barely pass. Arlen Johnson, who lived at the edge of the creek for years, had educational walking trails about the salmon and worked with Kit clearing the inside of the culvert starting 25 years ago. In 2012 and 2014 Kit and his neighbors contacted Kitsap Road Superintendent Jaques Dean to clean out the culvert, but that was only a temporary solution and by December 2023 the culvert clearance was reduced to only eleven inches, significantly impeding fish passage.



*Thomas Creek Culvert 8/16/2024 - Before cleanout*

Kit arranged with environmental planner Marla Powers and research scientist Juliana Sullivan, from the Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe, to survey the spawning occurring in Thomas Creek to ensure that appropriate resources are mobilized to protect the salmon habitat. The tribal survey is ongoing, but results to date have already convinced Ms. Powers to propose submission of a US DOT Aquatic Organism Passage (AOP) Grant in 2025 for the design and construction of a new fish friendly bridge over Thomas Creek.

There is support from the community, the property owners along the creek, Kitsap County, and the tribes to have a bridge built where the culvert now sits. Kitsap County removed the sediment in the culvert in October 2024 to allow for another great Chum run this year. Kit and Kathleen are sponsoring an open house for the Holly community to view the returning salmon on their property this fall.

The Kuhns contacted Great Peninsula Conservancy (GPC) to investigate how best to meet their personal conservation goals for their Holly property. Whether it's establishing a conservation easement, outright purchase, or a donation, conservancy organizations like GPC can ensure a brighter future for the places we love, including Thomas Creek.

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## Whales and Boats in Hood Canal

(Tanuj Bansal)



As of January 1, 2025, all boats will be required to stay at least 1,000 feet away from any orcas in Washington waters.

Learn more and report incidents at <https://www.bewhalewise.org/>.

Please visit our blog about orcas and boats at <https://www.hoodcanalenvironmentalcouncil.org/hcec-blog.asp>

And check out this video about how noise impacts orcas: <https://www.kuow.org/stories/shhh-the-orcas-can-t-hear-their-dinner-4751>

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## Seabeck Shoreline Saved

(Phil Best)

In October, the Great Peninsula Conservancy (GPC) acquired a 13-acre shoreline property along Hood Canal at Johnson Creek north of Seabeck, with the long-term goal of restoring a historic pocket estuary and salt marsh habitat for resident and migratory species. The property includes 530' of shoreline, freshwater springs, and 400' of Johnson Creek as it empties into the nearshore. The acquisition was funded by grants from the Recreation and Conservation Office's Salmon Recovery Funding Board's Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration Fund, the National Coastal Wetlands program through the Washington State Department of Ecology and U.S. Fish and Wildlife, the U.S. Navy's Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) program, and donations through the Hood Canal Environmental Council and Kitsap Audubon Society. For more information see the GPC blog at

<https://greatpeninsula.org/seabeck-shoreline-saved-a-win-for-endangered-hood-canal-summer-chum/?eType=EmailBlastContent&eId=11ed113b-d41e-47db-b251-6f934d1e6fce>

## Dabob Bay NRCA Expansion

(Bernadette Olson)

The Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will expand the Dabob Bay Natural Resources Conservation Area (NRCA) by approximately **3,943 acres**, per [Commissioner's Order 202422](#) (and map) signed September 23. About 2,600 acres within the expanded NRCA boundary are state forest lands to be preserved.

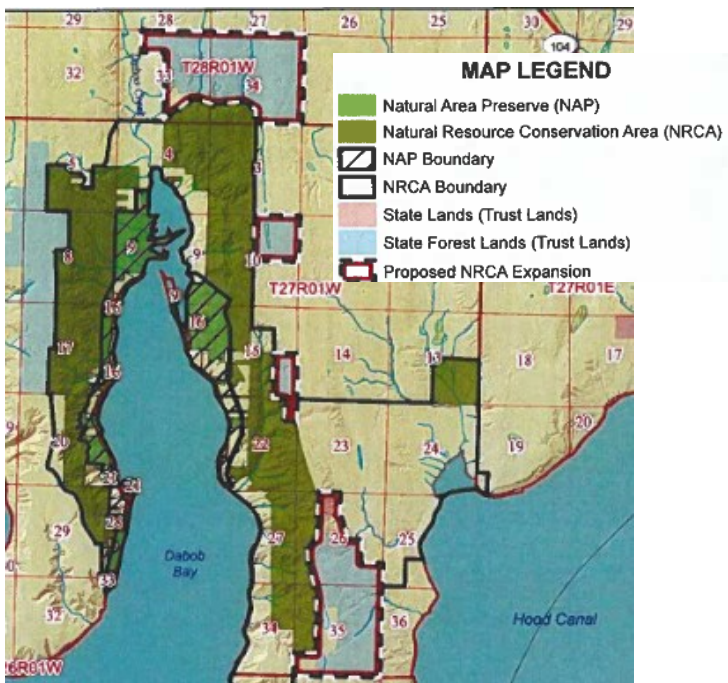
This was made possible thanks to Hilary Franz's leadership and the collaborative efforts by DNR, Jefferson County Commissioners, citizens, landowners, the shellfish industry, Tribes, and local and regional conservation groups. Phil and Karen Best attended the last Public Hearing on June 17, 2024, in Quilcene on behalf of HCEC, and witnessed the overwhelming support from everyone.

The total Natural Area boundary now includes over 11,000 acres around the bay. Within that area, approximately 4,300 acres are already protected as State Natural Area: either state timber lands that were transferred into Natural Area or private lands purchased from willing sellers.

This is a much anticipated, huge step forward in protecting the globally rare forests, streams, wetlands, and shorelines of magnificent Dabob Bay, one of the least developed and ecologically rich bays remaining in Puget Sound.

Now that the expanded boundary is approved, it will be incumbent on DNR to ensure that these lands will be formally protected with Climate Commitment Act funding approved last year. DNR will need new funding from the state's Trust Land Transfer program to purchase replacement timberlands.

DNR did not include the Dabob West 160 acres with its habitat for endangered Marbled Murrelet, but they did include some private land to the south where the landowner was very interested in conservation and it was high priority shoreline, bumping the total to 3,943 acres.



## Eelgrass – Our Ally in Protecting Hood Canal

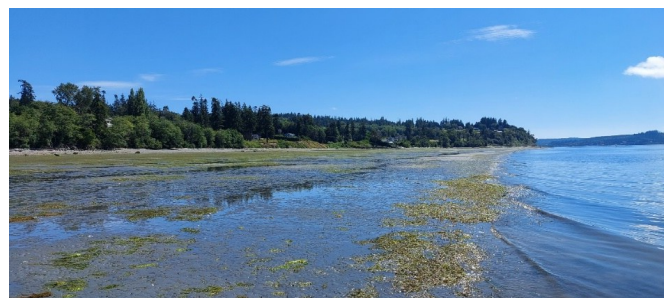
(Bruce Morse)

Eelgrass is the unsung hero (feel good plant) of marine ecosystems. *Zostera marina* provides critical habitats for fish and shellfish, contributing to biodiversity. Its roots stabilize tidelands to reduce erosion and protect coastlines. Eelgrass is a flowering plant that photosynthesizes like land plants and absorbs carbon dioxide, helping combat climate change by acting as a carbon sink. It also improves water quality by filtering pollutants. This humble underwater plant plays a vital role in maintaining healthy, resilient coastal environments. Lynda Mapes, Seattle Times environmental reporter recently reports on eelgrass' "superpowers." <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/climate-lab/researchers-discover-eelgrass-superpower-in-puget-sound/>



*A healthy eelgrass meadow in South Puget Sound providing marine habitat for all and bubbling off oxygen from photosynthesis.*

In 2022, the Washington state legislature passed a bill requiring the restoration of 10,000 acres of kelp and eelgrass within Puget Sound to protect eelgrass meadows and stop the decline of eelgrass. The Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is the lead agency to implement this law and since 2000 has been restoring and monitoring eelgrass throughout Puget Sound. Eelgrass Monitoring Data Viewer ([Puget Sound Seagrass Monitoring \(arcgis.com\)](#)) is an interactive map that provides access to annual eelgrass monitoring data to display the data collected in Hood Canal, such as the eelgrass meadows along Squamish Harbor (photo below)



*Squamish Harbor Eelgrass Meadow at low tide.*

DNR is using advanced technology to help meet their goals. Data is collected using underwater video and machine learning algorithms to estimate the abundance and to show trends of eelgrass throughout the Sound. DNR is experimenting with remotely operated robots to restore critical eelgrass meadows.

Eelgrass is a fundamental ally in our fight against climate change and environmental degradation, deserving our utmost protection and restoration efforts.

## HCCC Salmon Recovery Program (Michael Beaulieu)

The Hood Canal Coordinating Council, (HCCC) is a watershed-based council of governments consisting of Jefferson, Kitsap, and Mason counties, the Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe, and the Skokomish Tribe. HCCC facilitates the implementation of salmon recovery plans and serves as the Lead Entity for the Hood Canal Region.

The HCCC Lead Entity Program gets technical expertise from local, tribal, state, and federal watershed partners for project and regional evaluations of salmon recovery proposals, with help from two groups established for that purpose: the Technical Advisory Group (TAG), and the Citizens Advisory Group (CAG). The TAG advises the HCCC Lead Entity Citizens Committee (CAG and HCCC Board of Directors), which in turn reviews and ranks salmon recovery projects on the Habitat Project List for each annual grant round for submittal to the state Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB).

In December 2023, the SRFB announced salmon enhancement funding and called for lead entity projects. One month later, potential sponsors were asked to submit letters of intent, followed by submission of an initial project presentation two weeks later. Sponsors had approximately 3 weeks to develop their specific proposals. Field visits were conducted in March 2024, where TAG and CAG members visited each proposed site where the sponsor presented their proposed project. An initial ranking was established for all projects by vote of the TAG & CAG, then TAG members and the HCCC staff deliberated through the Spring to fully understand each project as to: phasing with current and future projects, design or actual construction, conservation easements or land purchases, development pressure, interrelationships with other projects and between fish species, riparian factors, source and intended purpose of funds, and sponsor(s) expertise & capacity.

At the end of May, HCCC staff brought TAG & CAG together again to deliberate on the 16 proposals and provide a recommendation to the full HCCC Citizens Committee for a final ranking to be submitted to the SRFB in Olympia on September 24th & 25th, 2024 as the regional recommendation for project prioritization. Six funding sources were targeted for the various projects submitted by HCCC. In the 2024 grant round, sixteen separate salmon protection and restoration projects were submitted by five primary sponsoring organizations, including HCCC, for inclusion on this year's SRFB Habitat Project List. For more about this program see <https://hccc.wa.gov/LeadEntity>.

## Kitsap County CAO Update

(Bernadette Olson)

Kitsap County Critical Area Ordinance Update was enacted on 10/14/24 (Ordinance No. 633-2024) effective 4/1/2025.

Environmental highlights of the CAO include:

- \*Habitat Corridor with a minimum width of 100'
- \*Increased buffer width along streams of 50'
- \*No Net Loss via mitigation and replacement
- \*Type "O" stream with a 50' buffer width

See it at [SKM\\_C751i24102102590](https://www.kitsapcountygov.com/DocumentCenter/View/124102102590). It will be incorporated in the Kitsap County Comprehensive Plan Update due to be finalized at the end of the year.

## Jefferson County Shoreline Master Program Review (Jan Wold)

The Jefferson County Shoreline Master Program (SMP) periodic review updates the policies and regulations that guide the use of county shorelines. This process continues to be under final county review for approval by the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC), with final approval by the Washington Department of Ecology (ECY). This process was to have been completed nearly two years ago and is now far beyond the required due date.

Issues that remain undecided include county permit requirements for commercial shellfish farming. Almost every commercial shellfish farm in Jefferson County was deemed "grandfathered" or "legal non-conforming" for operation without needing county review or a county permit. This was because shellfish farms operating prior to the 2014 Shoreline Master Program did not need a county permit.

The state requires that new geoduck farms go through a county permitting process with a public hearing before a Hearing Examiner who then determines whether to approve the permit. Many local citizens and HCEC support requiring the same process for both conversions of clam or oyster farms to geoduck farms and geoduck farm expansions, consistent with neighboring Kitsap and Clallam Counties. The shellfish industry opposes this public hearing and hearing examiner requirement for geoduck expansions and conversions. HCEC also supports maintaining either the present permitting requirements or something similar for any change of shellfish farming techniques. This will ensure changes such as replacing harvesting by hand with the use of tulip bulb digging machines that harvest across acres of tideland are adequately reviewed for impacts such as environmental consequences and loss of jobs.

Jefferson County Chief Civil Deputy Prosecuting Attorney, Philip Hunsucker, has taken over review of the Jefferson County SMP process. He has advised the ECY in a letter dated August 30, 2024, that his review of the process will take another two or three months. Then there will be a notice of hearing to restart deliberations by the BOCC, which will include an additional public comment opportunity. The final updated SMP will then be delivered to ECY for final state approval.

The public can provide input to the BOCC on the SMP at [jeffbocc@co.jefferson.wa.us](mailto:jeffbocc@co.jefferson.wa.us).

The Jefferson County link for SMP information is listed below with a last update on September 2, 2024. You can scroll down to the most recent date: [Shoreline Master Program Periodic Review | Jefferson County, WA](#)

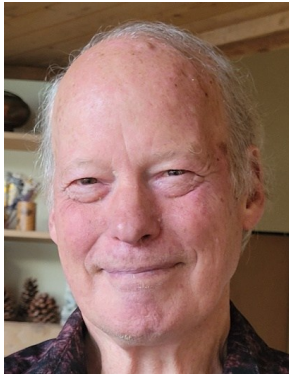
Here is a link to the letter HCEC sent the BOCC a year ago: [HCEC Ltr to JeffCoBOCC 11-30-2023.pdf](#)

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*Buddy fishing on Hood Canal*

## Meet HCEC's Newest Board Members



Paul McCollum

Paul McCollum's experience with and knowledge of native tribes has proven very valuable to the HCEC board. From 2007 until retiring in 2022, he was director of the Natural Resource Department of the Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe. Previously he worked in Alaska as a fisheries biologist and then as a consultant to remote Native Village Councils, helping them to fight the oil industry and other environmental threats to their villages.

He adopted and raised 3 children from Nepal and helped to support several Nepali orphanages and projects concerning women and children.

With a very supportive tribe, he led the fight to secure a \$20 million cleanup of Port Gamble Bay from what Washington State had first proposed as a \$1 million project. Paul greatly admires the Port Gamble S'Klallams for their deep caring about Mother Earth and climate change.

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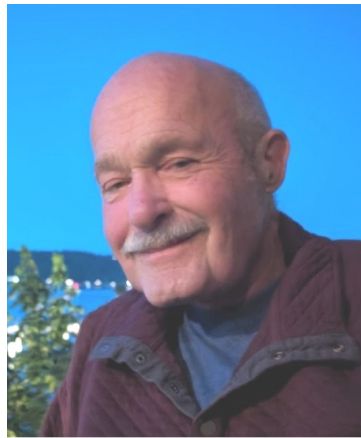


Tanuj Bansal

Pronounced "Tanooj"

Tanuj Bansal recently moved to Hood Canal with his wife Kim, driven by their love for nature, mountains, salt water and everything else Hood Canal has to offer, including oysters, crabs and shrimp. Tanuj currently works in marketing for Oracle Corporation. He is also actively bringing his professional skills to HCEC as a new board member. Tanuj immigrated to the US decades ago, to pursue graduate education. He has a MS in Engineering from Case Western Reserve University, and an MBA from University of Michigan.

Tanuj loves to hike and is an avid book reader/listener. As the only non-retired member of the board, Tanuj has found time to write blogs, attend board meetings, and propose new ideas.



Tom Flagg

HCEC is very fortunate to have Tom Flagg aboard with his knowledge (a BS and MS in fish biology with later studies in natural resource management and genetics) and 39 years of experience as a fisheries biologist with NOAA. Many of those years were spent with NOAA at the UW Big Beef Fisheries station beginning in 1982. He rented a cabin on Misery Point, later buying a home at Lake Tahuya, his 2 daughters attended Seabeck Elementary and he kept his boat at Seabeck Marina. All that began his love of Hood Canal.

Later in the 1980's, Tom took a job with NOAA at the Manchester Research Station as a Supervisory Fisheries Research Biologist and later retired in 2016 as Station Chief.

Mid-career, Tom was awarded a US DOC Gold Medal in a ceremony in Washington D.C. for his research that helped save Redfish Lake Sockeye salmon from extinction. After retirement he was inducted into his fish culture society's Hall of Fame for his work in salmon conservation.

When living at the Misery Point cabin in the 1980's, Tom watched the destruction of tidelands from commercial fishing in front of his cabin and reported it to WDFW along with the commercial fishing impact of the Chinook bycatch which was documented at the time to be as large as the sport harvest. Allowing the commercial druggers to wipe out the bottom fish was also permitted at the time. Although retired, Tom is still trying to get the message out about overfishing and predation as the largest limiting factors.

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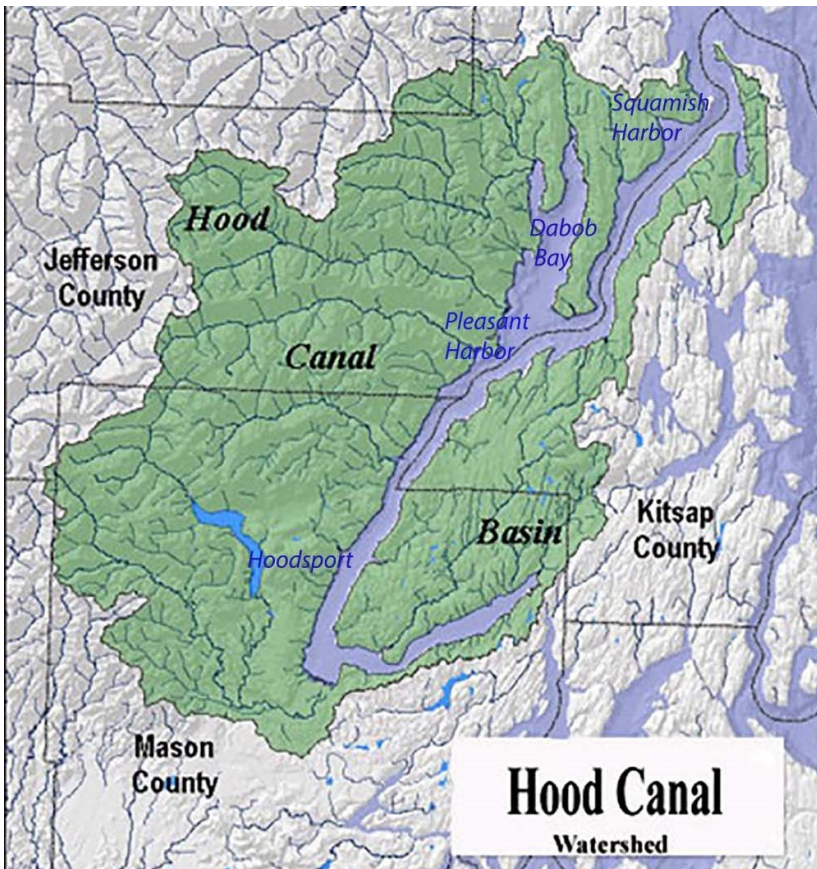
Seining on Hood Canal

**Hood Canal Environmental Council**

PO Box 87

Seabeck, WA 98380

hoodcanalenvironmentalcouncil.org



**HOOD CANAL ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL  
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