

# HOOD CANAL ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL

Summer 2007

## Mason County Commissioners Reject Planning Department's Belfair Sewer Proposal

By Bill Matchett

In the move towards Belfair sewers, Mason County's Planning Department proposed extending the sewers along the North Shore east of Belfair, using the 2002 Department of Health declaration of a "sewer public health hazard" in Lynch Cove due to fecal coliform pollution caused by failing septic systems. They also proposed creating a LAMIRD (Limited Area of Intense Rural Development) in this area under GMA rules, seeing the proposed new sewers as an excuse for more homes in the area, and these as one way to help pay for the very expensive operation.

Excellent research by Gary Parrott demonstrated clearly that the 2002 data was no longer relevant. The Belfair State Park septic system was failing massively in 2002; renovation of that system and repairs to others have resulted in the fact that there is no longer a fecal coliform problem in Lynch Cove. (The lack of dissolved oxygen is quite a separate matter.) HCEC saw the proposed North Shore sewers as creating more problems than they solved. Quite apart from their expense (which should not be imposed upon those who already paid to clean up their septic systems), the sewers and the LAMIRD would have led to more and larger houses, more impervious surfaces and hence a greater impact to the Canal through increased surface-water runoff.

We are pleased to report that these arguments prevailed with the Mason County Commissioners, who complimented those who had brought them to their attention and who voted unanimously to reject their Planning Department's recommendations

## WRIA 16 WATERSHED PLAN

HCEC continues to monitor the activities of the Planning Unit for WRIA (Watershed Resource Inventory Area) 16, which covers an area from the Dosewallips River to the Skokomish River. The Watershed Management Plan developed by the Planning Unit also includes the portion of WRIA 14 which lies along the canal's south shore.

Members of the group recently compiled and prioritized a list of projects designed to implement the Plan's recommendations. The list of project proposals has been submitted to the Department of Ecology (DOE) with a request for grant funding. The DOE is expected to announce its grants awards in a few weeks.

The Planning Unit is also requesting operations funding to pay for project administration, preparation of an implementation plan, education and outreach, and other activities. Another name for the group will be established to better reflect the fact that the planning phase is complete and the implementation phase (Phase IV) is beginning.

At its last meeting, Dr. Jay Watson, Executive Director of the Hood Canal Coordinating Council (HCCC) briefed the group on its Puget Sound Watershed Protection and Restoration Grant Agreement for Hood Canal. This project will determine whether there is consensus among the various groups working on Hood Canal issues, goals and solutions. Hopefully, this effort will lead to a framework for an ecosystem approach for protecting and restoring water quality and related resources in the Hood Canal watershed. More specifically, the discussion centered on how the WRIA 16 Watershed Management Plan may fit into this project.

For more information, contact HCEC Board Member, Donna Simmons by telephone at (360) 877-5747 or by e-mail at [nana@hctc.com](mailto:nana@hctc.com).

HCEC has a much expanded and beautifully constructed web site thanks to the motivation and guidance of Board member Bob Wiltermood. The site was constructed by Mike O'Connell. It comes with a new address. [www.hoodcanalenvironmentalcouncil.org](http://www.hoodcanalenvironmentalcouncil.org)

Visit there and you will find information about this organization and its objectives; an excerpt from Travis Baker's *Splendor at Risk* describing the probable geological creation of the Canal; links to sources for environmental and scientific information concerning the Hood Canal and its endangered condition as well as our HCEC newsletters, past and current.

### HOOD CANAL ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL YEARLY MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION

Individual - \$10 \_\_\_\_

Family - \$30 \_\_\_\_

Group - \$50 \_\_\_\_

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

## Opposition to a Long Dock on Port Gamble Bay

HCEC testified before the Kitsap County Hearing Examiner in June against a private dock that would intrude into Port Gamble Bay to the detriment of communal uses of what has been open water. The construction of a 220 ft. pier and float structure on Pristine Port Gamble Bay has been in the permitting process since 2004.

The dock, though the Department of Community Development had cut it down to 100 ft. from the requested 220 ft. in April 2007, would still prevent placement of tribal nets on their traditional fishing grounds.

Although the Hearing Examiner's decision is still forthcoming, it is fair to say that the combined testimony of the Port Gamble S'Klallam, the Friends of Port Gamble and HCEC was most compelling.

There are no privately owned similar structures on the Port Gamble Bay. The Tribe and the former Pope and Talbot Mill site have docks at the mouth of the bay, three miles away. There are few docks on the Western Shore and most of the shore line and surrounding land is undeveloped. Port Gamble Bay, at the headwaters of Hood Canal, is designated along with the canal as a Shoreline of State Wide Significance.

For more information contact Gwenn Thomas at [spt1@centurytel.net](mailto:spt1@centurytel.net). To read more go to <http://www.northkitsapherald.com> Keyword,"Dock".

*Commissioner of Public Lands, Doug Southerland is inviting the people of Washington to nominate sites for consideration as Aquatic Reserves. Questions regarding the process may be directed to Kyle Murphy, Aquatic Reserve Manager at (360)902-1073 or [kyle.murphy@dnr.wa.gov](mailto:kyle.murphy@dnr.wa.gov)*

### HCEC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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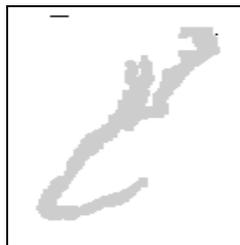
**The Board of Directors meets the second Monday of each month. If you would like to attend. call Bill Matchett at (360) 830-4154.**

## Barner Conservation Easement at Stavis Bay

Over 60 years ago, Dr. H. A. Barner and Billie Barner acquired about 50 acres of property along the East side of Stavis Bay a few miles south of Seabeck on Hood Canal. They kept it in its natural state and enjoyed their visits over the years with their two sons, Hendrick and Bruce, and their families. In 1969, when a proposal was made to dredge out Stavis Bay and put in a 350 boat marina, the Barners joined others in creating the Hood Canal Environmental Council to oppose that project and guard against other harmful projects elsewhere on Hood Canal.

Eventually Dr. H. A. Barner and Billie Barner passed away, leaving this special place to their two sons, who divided the property between them. Kitsap County obtained funding from Washington State to protect environmentally significant areas around Stavis Bay from future development. Working with Kitsap County, the Great Peninsula Conservancy negotiated a conservation easement to protect forever the 26 acres owned by Bruce Barner (allowing only two potential residences), and then conveyed the conservation easement to Kitsap County. Because of the conservation easement, Bruce Barner was also able to obtain "Open Space" classification with significant reduction on property taxes for the 26 acres.

This story represents a win-win-win-win situation: The residents of Kitsap County, including the creatures who live here, will have open space and a natural habitat to enjoy forever; Hood Canal and the natural world at Stavis Bay is more protected; the Barners receive a tax reduction and know that their legacy will benefit future generations; and the Hood Canal Environmental Council knows that its initial creative impetus has again borne fruit, where it all began in 1969.



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**This newsletter and back issues can be read online at <http://www.hoodcanalenvironmentalcouncil.org>.**









