

# HOOD CANAL ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL

Spring 2006

## HOOD CANAL'S DISSOLVED OXYGEN PROGRAM

The Hood Canal Environmental Council's Board of Directors is actively following the progress being made through the **Hood Canal Dissolved Oxygen Program (HCDOP)**, which was created in 2004 to address the low dissolved oxygen problem in lower Hood Canal waters after scientists and government officials became alarmed over two huge fish kills in 2002 and 2003. The HCDOP is a coalition of 38 federal, tribal, state, and local government agencies; educational institutions; and private organizations with interest and/or authority in water quality and related natural resources in the Hood Canal watershed. It was created two years ago in response to growing concerns about the low levels of dissolved oxygen and the potential for negative impacts on marine life. The situation has become so alarming that in recent years environmental activists and others often refer to the southern end of the canal as a "dead zone".

The HCDOP is made up of two arms, one that is science-driven and one that is education-corrective action-driven. The Corrective Action and Education group, led by the Puget Sound Action Team (PSAT) and the Hood Canal Coordinating Council (HCCC), focuses on preliminary assessment, corrective actions and demonstration projects designed to improve dissolved oxygen levels. This group is also responsible for educating and involving Hood Canal residents and others as to how they can help to protect the canal's water quality. The Integrated Assessment and Modeling (IAM) Program, a three year study led by the University of Washington's Applied Physics Lab and the Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group (HCSEG), was created in 2003 to research the causes of low dissolved oxygen. This work is critical in order to assess how much of the problem is caused by human activities and how much can be attributed to various natural processes.

Another group, the Hood Canal Coordinating Group, is made up of a member from each of the main HCDOP coalition partners and meets monthly to share information and ensure coordination of projects and activities. Board Member, Donna Simmons, will be attending these meetings on behalf of the HCEC.

Yet another group, the Hood Canal Watershed Education Network, is coordinated by the Washington State University Extension and meets monthly to coordinate education and outreach activities related to the HCDOP.

Scientists consider excess nitrogen to be a leading factor in low oxygen levels. Since 2004, millions of dollars have been allocated by state and federal agencies toward more than two dozen projects aimed at reducing the human contribution of nitrogen and improving overall water quality in the canal. This year alone, efforts to rehabilitate the canal received a multi-million dollar boost from state lawmakers in the supplemental budget. Two notable projects are: the Skokomish Tribe's diversion of as much as three million tons of surplus salmon carcasses, thought to be one of the pollutants that contribute to the problem, to other uses, including compost and pet food; and a small community "cluster" sewage disposal system constructed along the canal's south shore in Mason County.

HCEC Board Members are encouraged by the attention given to a long-standing water quality problem in the lower Hood Canal area. Progress is being made through HCDOP research, education, and corrective action projects and money has become available to carry them out. However, the board will continue to monitor the program to ensure that the money is spent on activities and projects that will truly make a difference and that the government agencies with primary authority carry out their responsibilities.

For those interested in learning more about the work of the **Hood Canal Dissolved Oxygen Program (HCDOP)** here are some good websites: <http://www.hoodcanal.washington.edu>  
[http://www.psat.wa.gov/programs/hood\\_canal.htm](http://www.psat.wa.gov/programs/hood_canal.htm)  
<http://www.hccc.wa.gov>

For more information, call Donna Simmons at (360) 877-5747 or e-mail to [nana@hctc.com](mailto:nana@hctc.com).



## **Critical Area Ordinance Better..... But Buffers Not Good Enough**

Thanks to Commissioner Chris Endresen as usual and to the integrity of Commissioner Patty Lent who, in casting the swing vote, considered what is best for the county and resisted extreme pressure from the radical wing of her party, Kitsap's new Critical Areas Ordinance is a big improvement on the last. Given our gratitude, it may seem surprising that HCEC is joining the Kitsap Citizens for Responsible Planning, Futurewise, People for Puget Sound and others in appealing two provisions of the new ordinance to the Growth Management Board. These two provisions must be challenged, however, because they not only endanger Kitsap County but, if allowed to stand, would set dangerous statewide precedents. Both have to do with buffers, one around certain wetlands and the other, most directly affecting Hood Canal, on marine shorelines.

We reviewed the problem of a 35-foot marine shoreline buffer in our Summer 2005 newsletter and testified in our opposition at the CAO hearings, recognizing that it was not likely that we would obtain the 250 feet recommended by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife but that 150 feet would be a big improvement on 35 feet.

It should perhaps be clarified again that these buffers would affect only future development, the ordinance having no effect on pre-existing conditions. Having lost great swaths of our shoreline already, we need to protect what still exists.

## **PROPOSED PLEASANT HARBOR MARINA AND GOLF RESORT**

HCEC's Board of Directors is closely monitoring a proposed westside Hood Canal development in the Pleasant Harbor/Black Point area of Brinnon. If successful, the result of this development will be a virtual city on Black Point. As currently proposed, it would consist of a 290-slip marina; a planned maritime village with 180 units; a 10,000 square-foot new commercial village replacing current facilities; an 18 hole golf course with conference, food service, and meeting capability; and 1,090 residential units designed to serve the visiting public through a "condotel" program with individual units privately owned but managed as a resort. A similar, but less grandiose, proposal was made several years ago, but was dropped due to opposition from local residents.

This proposal is still in the early stages. The developer, a Canadian firm, Statesman Group of Companies, LTD, has joined with Black Point Properties, LLC, in proposing a site-specific amendment to the Jefferson County Comprehensive Plan that, if adopted, would allow development of this "Master Planned Resort". The Jefferson County Department of Community Development (DCD) has issued a Determination of Significance, which will trigger the process for preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS).

*Continued next column*

## **"No" on Initiative 933**

HCEC has joined all the major state environmental groups in the Community Protection Coalition urging a "No" vote on Initiative 933, the Developers' Initiative. If passed, this initiative would create a loophole allowing developers and other special interests to bypass current land use laws safeguarding the health, safety and quality of life of all of us. Wisely, Washington voters soundly rejected a similar initiative in 1995. But exploiters do not give up and we must work to defeat them again.

The measure would require government to compensate landowners if any regulation damaged the use or value of their property. This would decimate state and local governments' ability to protect communities from inappropriate development or harmful activities. Local governments and taxpayers would have to pay landowners to obey land-use laws or exempt them from obeying. The entire idea is fundamentally unfair and irresponsible. The initiative would make it generally impossible and unaffordable for communities to protect themselves from excessive and poorly planned development.

We urge our supporters not only to vote against the initiative but to work actively in spreading the word.

***HCEC acknowledges with gratitude a special contribution from Margaret Frink given in memory of Al Gehri. Al, a lawyer for Snohomish County with a summer home on Hood Point, was only 54 when he was killed in an auto accident on March 4<sup>th</sup> of this year. He had been a staunch supporter of HCEC, beginning with his involvement with the Frenchman's Cove Defense Fund in the 1980's and its successful campaign to keep commercial net pens and their pollution out of Hood Canal. We miss his enthusiastic support.***

### **PLEASANT HARBOR *continued***

The HCEC will use the EIS process and opportunities that arise to express its concerns about potential impacts to natural resources in Hood Canal from this proposed development. Before any decision on permitting is made, we will insist on a complete and thoughtful analysis, which takes into consideration the ongoing effort to solve growing water quality problems in the lower portion of the canal. Federal, state, local and tribal governments and other entities have already expressed serious reservations about this proposal. HCEC hopes to work closely with these and other groups in presenting a strong, united front in opposition to the proposal, as it is currently proposed.

Information about this proposed development can be found on the [brinnoninfo.com](http://brinnoninfo.com) website. The Port Townsend Leader newspaper is also a source of information. To receive information on the review and permitting process from Jefferson County DCD, call Brent Butler; (360) 379-4464.

## RE: Proposed NASCAR Raceway in South Kitsap

Following is the text of a letter sent April 10, 2006, over the signature of Bill Matchett HCEC President, to the Kitsap County Department of Community Development SEPA Administrator:

*"The Hood Canal Environmental Council has been actively working to protect the environment of Hood Canal and its watershed since 1969. Kitsap County, along with Mason and Jefferson counties, has done much over the years to promote the protection of this fragile area, especially through the Hood Canal Coordinating Council in concert with federal and state agencies, the tribes, private organizations and many willing individuals.*

*In spite of these mutual efforts over the years, Hood Canal is now at greater risk than ever before, especially with the dissolved oxygen depletion with fish kills and areas where shellfish harvesting is no longer permitted. It is therefore more imperative than ever that a full and careful environmental analysis be undertaken with regard to all significant projects proposed in the Hood Canal watershed before any permitting decision is made.*

*The NASCAR raceway being proposed for South Kitsap, not far from Belfair and in the Hood Canal drainage basin, will generate a host of adverse environmental consequences, which could further diminish the possibility of restoring Hood Canal to a healthy state. We expect that the scope of the EIS which Kitsap County undertakes will consider the fragile state of Hood Canal and all of the ramifications of such a large project, including (but not limited to): auto emissions, leaded fuel used by race cars, the impact of large numbers of people visiting the area, water runoff issues, and impacts on wildlife including fish and shellfish.*

*Please keep the Hood Canal Environment Council timely informed of all steps to be taken in the review and permitting process, including the scoping of the EIS, comments on the draft EIS and the final EIS documents. "*

BREMERTON, Wash. (AP) 04/11/2006 - The company proposing a NASCAR racetrack in Kitsap County could decide in the next few months whether to drop out or continue. International Speedway Corporation Vice President Grant Lynch says it will reassess its chance of state support after a legislative work session on the speedway on May 31st in Olympia.

### PIT-TO-PIER LOBBYING IN OLYMPIA

A lobbyist from the maritime trade unions urged passage of an adverse amendment to SB 6175 designating the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) as lead agency for surface mining SEPA determinations in Jefferson and 8 other small counties, thereby taking away local control of surface mining environmental impact studies.

The maritime unions probably have only marginal interest in gravel mining, but a good deal of interest in building an industrial port facility on Hood Canal.

After considerable concerns were expressed by various environmental groups, the amendment was not included in the final vote. We can expect further efforts will be made to advance the pit-to-pier project.  
[Hood Canal Coalition On Line Newsletter](#)

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### HOOD CANAL ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL YEARLY MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION

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

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Contributions in any amount are welcome. \_\_\_\_

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

## AN UPDATE ON ANDERSON LANDING PRESERVE

The work that was accomplished in 2005 by volunteers: Two small foot bridges were put in across wet area or intermittent small creeks by Klahowya and Central Kitsap High School students; 150 trees and shrubs were planted along Little Anderson Creek; and approximately 300 feet of trail was constructed along the west side of Little Anderson Creek. Since the County installed signs at the crest of Anderson Hill Road, there has been an increase of cars parked at the trailhead.

The work for this year includes the completion of the brochure which will be part of the trailhead kiosk, continued cleanup around the homestead area, two Boy Scout Eagle projects – building of a viewing platform and installation of three more benches.

If you have any questions, please call CarolAnn Jackson a (360) 692- 6628.

## WRIA 16 WATERSHED PLAN NEARS COMPLETION

HCEC will be providing comments on recommendations contained in the Draft Water Resource Inventory Area 16 Plan for the Skokomish - Dosewallips watershed, which has been 5 years in the making. The Planning Unit, which has worked under the co-leadership of the State Department of Ecology and Mason County, has held public forums in Union, Brinnon and Hoodspout to provide the public the opportunity to offer comments and discuss the plan's recommendations. The full text of the draft plan can be accessed at the Department of Ecology website.

[www.ecy.wa.gov/apps/watersheds/planning/16.html](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/apps/watersheds/planning/16.html), under the heading "Documents Prepared by the Planning Unit".

## HCEC Board of Directors Increased by Three New Members

Three strong and familiar voices for environment concern have joined the HCEC Board of Directors. Donna Simmons, a founding member of the HCEC has rejoined the BOD. Also joining the Board are Bob Wiltermood and Susan Wiltermood. Donna, a resident of the west side of Hood Canal, and the Wiltermoods, residents of south Kitsap county, will be positive representatives and advocates for issues particular to those areas as well as for the entire Hood Canal and its watersheds.



P.O. BOX 87, SEABECK, WA, 98380

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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.**

**Visit HCEC at: [http:// www.hcec.ws](http://www.hcec.ws)**