Lake Whatcom Policy Group
July 16, 2018 Meeting
Brief Digest of Presentations and Discussion

Policy Group members in attendance: Gene Knutson (Bellingham City Council); Larry Brown (Sudden Valley).

1. Tributary and lake monitoring update

A third phase of tributary monitoring in the Lake Whatcom watershed was initiated last winter. The objective is to increase understanding of water quality and pollution sources affecting the watershed. The consulting firm Brown and Caldwell has administered the program since 2007, working in conjunction with Wilson Engineering which does the sampling. There are 29 sites for monitoring storm events which will produce data to fill gaps in the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) model of phosphorus loading into the lake. There is also quarterly baseflow water monitoring of 20 sampling sites. The samples are tested for total phosphorus, soluble reactive phosphorus, total suspended solids, and fecal coliform bacteria. There were two rounds of base flow sampling in February and May, and one storm event was monitored in March. There are three years in this phase of the study and current results are very preliminary, and a report is due at the end of the three year cycle. Information is also presented to staff quarterly to monitor the progress of the contract.

2. Review of 2018 stormwater capital projects

The City of Bellingham is working on a project for stormwater treatment in the Summit, Hayward, and Huntington areas near the lake that will treat stormwater for about 30 acres total of treatment. These are the last major areas in the City portion of the watershed that will receive new stormwater treatment facilities, with future projects being retrofits or improvements of existing facilities. Construction for this project will cost approximately $460,000 and engineering and design costs about $150,000.

The City also has a project to develop advanced new treatment media for phosphorus control that is currently being tested for possible approval by the Department of Ecology (DoE). This system will treat much higher volumes of water flows than other systems and will achieve a high rate of phosphorus removal. A testing facility is being constructed for this project and there will likely be one or two years before it can be approved by DoE. A Park Place area reconstruction project is in the design phase for 2019, and the City will use the new media filter system to upgrade treatment of about 152 acres, at a cost of approximately $2.5 million.

The County is in phase one of a project for phosphorus treatment near Agate Bay. The project went out to bid this spring and will cost approximately $570,000. The project will create three filter vaults along Northshore Drive and Agate Heights Road and will also include ditch stabilization in residential neighborhoods. Construction started this month and the project is expected to be completed in September.

3. Update on County Lake Whatcom Stormwater Utility Service Area Funding Study

There is a funding shortfall for County stormwater projects in the Lake Whatcom watershed, and in 2017 the County Council authorized the creation of a new utility

service area that will have its own funding mechanism. In March 2018 a Lake Whatcom Stormwater Utility Advisory Committee was authorized to oversee a study to develop the funding mechanism. A public meeting occurred in April to provide information on the study, and advisory committee members were selected in May. The goal is to have a fee roll established by the beginning of 2019 but the process is currently a bit behind schedule and implementation in early 2019 is ambitious. Issue papers will be written to analyze fiscal policies, options for rate structures and possible credits, capital facilities charges, and revenues needed to pay for the cost of services. Two meetings were held thus far, both in June. An ordinance will be drafted in the Fall that will include the proposed rate schedule, to be reviewed for approval by the County Council. Another public meeting will also be scheduled in the fall to get feedback on the proposal. For more information see the project web site at: https://whatcomcounty.us/2830/Lake-Whatcom-Stormwater-Utility

4. Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Program: Mid-season update

Permit sales to date are ahead of the pace from last year at 5,026 total, up from 4,763 for the same period last year. Permits are up for both motorized and non-motorized boats. Permit revenue is also up by about $6000 over last year's pace, for a total of almost $113,000 thus far. There have been 7,895 inspections through July 16, also up from 2017, with most occurring at Bloedel Donovan. Inspections occur seven days a week from dawn to dusk at Bloedel Donovan and Lake Samish, on the weekends 9:00 to 4:00 at Sudden Valley, and at South Bay on Lake Whatcom from 10:00 to 5:30 on weekends.

A number of high-risk boats have come through this year, including boats from Lake Havasu and Lake Powell, both water bodies that are infested with Quagga Mussels. These required extensive decontamination including flushing of engines. At Lake Powell mussel infestations are so pervasive the staff at that lake have difficulty decontaminating all the boats that come out of the water there, and they recommend that other jurisdictions also complete inspections and possibly decontaminate the boats. Another boat was transported from an area with Zebra Mussels in Tennessee to a Lake Whatcom resident, and the transport company had evaded border inspections at Idaho and Wyoming by telling inspectors that the boat was new. Fortunately the owner had called ahead to arrange for an inspection before launching the boat, indicating that awareness of the need for inspections of boats is high among some local residents. When the boat arrived it was given a full decontamination including flushing of ballast tanks and bladders and an engine flush. Cleaning the boat took a full day. Another high risk boat arrived this weekend at Lake Samish from Lake Mead without having an inspection scheduled, and staff had to do a thorough inspection during a busy cycle.

The number of inspections vary tremendously depending on the weather, day of the week, and presence of holidays or of special events. For example, on Father's Day at Bloedel Donovan a total of 194 boats were inspected, with more than 30 boats per hour going through inspection at the peak of the day. An average inspection time is about 10 minutes. The boat sealing program, where boats who last launched in Lake Whatcom are given an express inspection, helps to save time, particularly later in the season.

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife staff are coming out this week to do invasive mussel monitoring for Whatcom, Samish, and Terrell lakes this week. Also, program staff is seen as a resource for other watersheds, and local staff have consulted with staff at Lake Chelan as that lake is considering starting its own inspection program. Lastly, staff participated in a webinar to learn about a Colorado pilot program that is sharing inspection data, and a database may be set up so that different inspection programs

	can get a sense of whether boats that have been transported from other areas have received an inspection.
5.	**Review of proposed topics for the September 17, 2018 Lake Whatcom Policy Group meeting**
	Proposed Topics for September include: • Updates on forestry activities and land acquisition • A presentation on recreational developments at County Parks in the watershed: facilities developments, trends in trail use, and parking. • TMDL update Policy Group members will consult with their colleagues to identify any new topics that they would like to see added to the list.

Upcoming Meetings:

The Next 2018 Lake Whatcom Policy Group meeting will occur on Monday September 17 at 3:00 PM in the Fireplace Room, 625 Halleck Street.