



Hood Canal Coordinating Council (HCCC)

Jefferson, Kitsap & Mason Counties; Port Gamble S'Klallam & Skokomish Tribes

Hood Canal Shellfish Initiative (HCSI) Workgroup Meeting #6

Date: May 28, 2020; 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM

Location: Zoom

Links:

- [Agenda](#)
- [Objective #1](#) (“Olympia Oysters”)
- [Objective #3](#) (“Water Quality”)
- [Objective #4](#) (“Sustainable Industry”)

Attendees:

- Bobbi Hudson, Pacific Shellfish Institute
- Phil Best, Hood Canal Environmental Council
- Bill Dewey, Taylor Shellfish Farms
- Jon Wolf, Skokomish Indian Tribe
- Camille Speck, WA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife
- Jodie Toft, Puget Sound Restoration Fund
- Paul McCollum, Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe
- Kevin Shutty, Mason Co. Commission
- Sarah Fisken, Dabob Bay shoreline land owner
- Alex Paysse, Mason Co. Public Health
- Joel Pillers, WA State Parks
- Teri King, WA Sea Grant
- Dan Tonnes, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- Laura Butler, WA State Dept. of Agriculture
- David Fyfe, Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission

Facilitators:

- Nate White, HCCC
- Haley Harguth, HCCC
- Kelly Biedenweg, Oregon State University

Welcome and Introductions

HCCC staff provided an overview of the meeting

- Discuss Actions
- Finalize the list of management actions for the three identified HCSI Objectives

Discuss Actions

The Workgroup discussed the actions that were brainstormed for [Objective #1 \(“Olympia Oysters”\)](#), [Objective #3 \(“Water Quality”\)](#), and [Objective #4 \(“Sustainable Industry”\)](#). The actions for the remaining Objectives will be discussed at the next meeting.

The actions are a combination of ideas generated from previous meetings, HCCC staff ideas, and ideas generated in subgroup discussions. To assist this discussion, participants were asked to complete a survey prior to the meeting that identifies the actions that participants think are most feasible and will actually “move the needle” for each HCSI Objective. The response rate was low

for the survey, so it will be made available prior to the next meeting for people to complete. Participants were encouraged to not take the survey twice to prevent skewing the responses.

At the meeting, participants were asked to review the actions with the following questions in mind in order to ensure that the actions that most impact the HCSI Objectives are included.

Actions review questions:

- Are there any surprises?
- Any actions missing?
- Any actions we can remove?
- What are some of the challenges/realities/logistics of the remaining actions?
- What actions do you want to see implemented more than others?
- Are you aware of other views on these actions, perhaps from those who are not here?
- How can climate change and resilience be incorporated into the actions?

Below are summaries of each Objective discussed at the meeting.

Note: Most of the Workgroup comments related to the actions were captured in the “Full Workgroup Notes” column of the linked spreadsheets. Notes on broader issues are summarized below.

Objective #4: Support a sustainable Hood Canal commercial shellfish industry

The Workgroup finished the discussion of the actions that were brainstormed for Objective #4 (“Sustainable Industry”) that was begun at the last Workgroup meeting.

- One gap is there is limited input from actual Hood Canal growers (except the growers participating in the Workgroup). Should we survey the broader Hood Canal shellfish industry to see what they need? Lack of knowledge about specific infrastructure needs such as processing facilities, refrigeration facilities, access, etc.
 - HCCC response: planning on taking a draft of the HCSI action plan to venues where Hood Canal growers meet to get their feedback on what’s has been developed.
- People are concerned with environmental impacts of the shellfish industry. Proposal to do a survey about this to increase understanding of these concerns.
 - HCCC response: this would be helpful.

Objective #1: Restore native Hood Canal Olympia Oyster populations

The Workgroup discussed the actions that were brainstormed for Objective #1 (“Olympia Oyster Restoration”).

- Does the state Olympia Oyster restoration plan have a Hood Canal section?
 - Response: It does. Two of the nineteen priority areas to rebuild Olympia Oyster populations are in Hood Canal: Quilcene Bay and Union River/Big and Little Mission Creeks. Recommended ways to rebuild Olympia Oysters include a combination of habitat enhancement through placing Pacific Oyster shell (or other conducive substrate), or spat on shell enhancement (grown in Manchester hatchery, then set in Pacific Oyster Shell, then spread to these selected areas).
- The subgroup created a great set of actions.
- Are tribes involved in Olympia Oyster restoration in Hood Canal?
 - Response: Skokomish is working on Olympia Oyster restoration on our own flats
 - Response: PSRF has been able to do the spat on shell in Skokomish, even though it is not part of the large plan. This uses the NRCS funding source. PSRF is working with tribes to access these funds and do these restoration projects.
- How did the Olympia Oyster get depleted? Overharvest? Predators? Competition with Pacific Oysters? Want to make sure there are management actions focused on the stressors that caused the depletion.
 - Response: Overharvest, poor water quality – these have been dealt with fairly well. The oyster drill is a stressor that needs more attention. Restoration programs show

that if you put Olympia Oysters in the right spot at the right density, they do a good job rebuilding themselves (on the contrary, if you put them in the wrong spot and density they won't). So we've reduced some stressors, but others exist (increasing water temperature, ocean acidification).

- From a restoration standpoint, are Hood Canal Olympia Oysters considered one population?
 - Response: for restoration purposes, they are one restoration region. Some genetic research on Olympia Oysters shows there being five sub-basin populations, with Hood Canal being one. Whether that's a distinct population remains to be seen. This sort of genetic research could be an action the HCSI could invest in. Additional research could look at genetic drift or adaptation in these populations. We don't know the genetic population structure prior to widespread depletion.
- Does Olympia Oyster broodstock have to come from the same area that is being restored, or does any broodstock from any part of Hood Canal qualify to do outplanting in Hood Canal?
 - Response: Right now it's the latter, but there are fs rich discussion about whether brood stock should be pulled from very close to the restoration site or not. The jury is out on the genetics, so pulling broodstock from sub-basins is the middle ground approach being taken now.
 - Response: Because Olympia Oysters are brooders, they produce fewer eggs and are dispersed less and are more likely to create genetically distinct populations.
- What is a shell stack effort?
 - Response: it's a "recruitment monitoring station". A piece of rebar 2-3ft tall where you place 12-13 clean oyster shells, stacked on each other with holes drilled in the middle. You pound the rebar shell stacks in the intertidal zone throughout summer. Use them to measure how many Olympia Oyster larvae settle on the Pacific Oyster shells. There are fourteen shell stack places monitored throughout Puget Sound. This gives a snapshot of Olympia Oyster larval recruitment.

Objective #3: Protect and improve Hood Canal's water quality

The Workgroup discussed the actions that were brainstormed for Objective #3 ("Water Quality").

- Has Mason County identified Marine Recovery Areas (MRAs) in Hood Canal?
 - Response: Yes: lower Hood Canal and Oakland Bay.
- Are there more restrictive septic requirements in those MRAs?
 - Response: the septic maintenance requirements are the same countywide. Depending on funding situation, they will sometimes do specific mailings to MRA areas to target maintenance issues, unsatisfactory reports, etc.
 - Response: Skagit County is very focused on meeting state standards for septic homeowner inspections in their MRAs. Homeowners in the MRAs who are not current on inspections will get fined by the county.
- What is the difference between a Marine Recovery Area and a Shellfish Protection District?
 - Response: Shellfish Protection District is formed when there is a downgrade in the growing area classification, and there is a statutory requirement to develop a plan to identify what caused the downgrade and to try to reverse it. There is no requirement to implement the plan, but counties work hard to do so. MRAs are the result of a bill passed years ago to enhance OSS oversight in areas with degraded water quality associated with shellfish or nutrients.
 - Response: The Hood Canal Regional PIC program has a Shellfish Protection District plan in place for Annas Bay, which is a PIC and Mason Co. priority area. Coordinating with Skokomish Tribe on this. There will be a lot of work around enforcement and monitoring in this area coming up.
- Is there any need to talk about microfiber in the water column and affecting shellfish?
 - Response: There's a recent study finding more microfibers than microplastics. But with the wrong analysis, some of the studies will erroneously identify natural fibers as synthetic. It is a legitimate concern. Related study on the east coast. The

research being done on this is far broader than Hood Canal. Still unsure of whether there are any implications on human or animal health associated with microplastics/fibers.

- HCCC staff: this group at some point said that set aside areas for non-harvest shellfish beds were not needed. Is this an action to lower priority or remove?
 - Response: Not sure there is a benefit. Better to have an actively growing population that is harvested. Having a young, growing shellfish population that are being harvested and replaced mitigates nutrient pollution more than a senescent population.
 - Response: Agree. There are plenty of shellfish areas in a prohibited status. Prefer our efforts to be focused on areas that could be harvested.
- What does the action focused on seeding polluted areas intend? To provide an incentive to fix septic systems and improve water quality? This has been effective in Drayton Harbor and Henderson Inlet. Or is it more to seed shellfish beds to address nutrient pollution?
 - HCCC staff: it was intended to focus on the latter.
 - Response: community shellfish farm model has been successful. It's not a light lift. But in service of water quality, it could be worth it. Willingness to explore this more.
- Is the action focused on seine net fishing impacts referring to deep water or beach seining?
 - Response: this is from the boats. From the nets themselves. Received a call from someone from Seabeck who noticed seiners with their nets going along the ground. Wanting to know if there was an impact from improper use of seine net fishing.
 - Response: Maybe that was just a rogue person? They wouldn't want their nets hung up on the bottom at all. Probably a minimal impact.
 - Response: it's an unknown thing, if the skiff is on the shore, there's more concern with prop wash.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held June 18, from 2:00-4:00 on Zoom. The Workgroup will discuss the actions that have been brainstormed for Objective #2 ("Shellfish Habitat"), Objective #5 ("Harvest Opportunities"), and Objective #6 ("Cultural Appreciation"). A survey for these Objectives will be sent out prior to the meeting to identify the actions that participants think are most feasible and will most impact these Objectives.