

Island County  
WATER RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

For more information about Watershed Planning in Island County, visit our web site.

<https://www.islandcountywa.gov/Health/DNR/WRAC/Pages/Home.aspx>



## Meeting Notes

REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING

Thursday, April 5, 2018 2:30—4:30 PM

Camano Island Public Library

848 N Sunrise Blvd, Camano Island, WA 98282

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### Call to Order and Introductions

Citizen Members: Julius Budos, Tom Fox, Joe Grogan, Al Williams, Carol Gillespie, Maddie Rose, Bob Boehm, Dave Thomas, Jay Lawrence

Island County Staff: Jenny Schofield, Matt Colston, IC Natural Resources Department

Guests: Kathryn Wells, Snohomish Conservation District; Janet Sinclair, Sound Water Stewards

### Adoption of March WRAC Meeting Summary Notes

Al Williams made a motion to approve the March meeting minutes. Carol Gillespie seconded the motion. Motion approved.

### Announcements

### Discussion

- **Residential Storm Water Management Successes and Failures in Snohomish County** (Kathryn Wells)
  - Snohomish Conservation District (SCD) has been assisting with Low Impact Development (LID) in Snohomish County (SC) for a number of years.
  - Derek SCD Engineer has designed hundreds of rain gardens, not all of which have been implemented. Some people have just gone as far as site visits and technical design.
  - SC, Kate (SCD Stormwater Team Manager) is finding huge demand within the county for LID. Particularly in rain gardens and rain catchment systems. Permeable pavement is expensive and difficult/expensive to maintain so there isn't as much demand for that. There is definitely a call for rain catchment systems and rain gardens, not just for stormwater management but for the ability to use the water on their landscapes etc.
  - Some jurisdictions that SCD has worked with have been fully on board with LID implementation while others have been more hesitant or resistant. Skepticism still exists in some jurisdictions on if LID is really needed or if it really works. The reason it is needed is that we have removed all the vegetation within our urban landscapes which allows stormwater to pick up everything along its way and pushes it into the sound increasing pollution in the sound and in our other waterways.
  - Seattle is huge and doing amazing with LID and encouraging LID. They have rebates for it and are really trying hard as a jurisdiction to go for it, so does the city of Everett. I see Everett as being a model for the things Island County could do, April Haines from the City of Everett would be a good contact. Everett has a Let it Rain: Green Stormwater Infrastructure program. They had a pilot project installing a number of rain gardens in North Everett where they have a combined sewer that they are trying to get the stormwater out of those sewers so they don't have to release at high water events as often. They offer raingarden tours, classes and workshops every year. They have a partnership with SCD and Washington State University

Extension where they offer a generous rebate for people looking to install LID infrastructure on their property, in particular rain gardens.

- Successes
  - Financial rebates have been most successful, especially in terms of the more expensive investments like rain gardens.
  - Technical assistance has also been key in implementation and design. Hard for individuals to implement alone so technical assistance has been huge.
- Snohomish County has a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit and many of the municipalities in Snohomish County are permittees. They must manage stormwater and according to stage one and stage two permittees, larger and smaller permittees, they must include LID as a stormwater management technique. It is written into code LID/Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) best management practices are required where feasible. The “feasible” part can get tricky with contractors opting that it isn’t feasible.
- Questions:
  - Al Williams’s question: Are the roads and highways the usual conduit for stormwater?
  - Kathryn Wells: Yes, streets and roads are, but also lawns. Lawns are remarkably impermeable because of compaction and thick turf.
  - Al Williams: The streets and highways being the conduit where it usually ends up and transported. Wouldn’t it be advisable for the treatment of that to be part of the infrastructure of those roads?
  - Kathryn Wells: Yes.
  - Al Williams: Doesn’t it make more sense for agencies to take care of the infrastructure instead of individual homeowners?
  - Kathryn Wells: Currently this isn’t included in Snohomish County’s right of way. However many jurisdictions to include is such as King County and The City of Everett.
    - Rain gardens and bio-swales being common features.
    - This has been met with resistance in Snohomish County due to specific maintenance techniques and overall investment in maintenance.
  - Al Williams: Government agencies may be better equipped to maintain than private landowners.
  - Kathryn Wells: In some instances yes, but it depends on the situation. Agencies investment in maintaining more technical landscaping on such a large scale is met with resistance.
    - Lack of understanding and trust in infrastructure, as well as scale of help that these features can accomplish is also a factor in resistance.
  - Tom Fox: Part of the issue is that if you have all the houses and development sending all their water off into the infrastructure that the infrastructure must be designed or retrofitted to accommodate. So the goal is to reduce the load by maintaining each individual’s stormwater.
  - Carol Gillespie: Are there rules and regulations that before you are given a building permit you have to design something for your site that you have to do something for the rain that falls on that site?
  - Kathryn Wells: I believe we do in Island County; it is just not LID/GSI development specific.
  - Jay Lawrence: When we build our house 16 years ago we were required to do that. Our stormwater basically has its own little septic system, which filters and disperses it.
- Julius Budos: Can you discuss pervious road surfaces? Is anyone e.g. King County or Everett using this technology?

- Kathryn Wells: I know that it has been done in part of the parking lot at Smoky Point. I don't know any in Everett, but it is included in the rebate program. There are few contractors that know how to properly install it and in the current system currently offered to the public the pavement must be cleaned every two years with a special vacuum truck, which is specialized equipment and very expensive.
  - Long term maintenance and breakdown of surfaces is still a major obstacle. Hopefully research can advance the product over time and on a large scale.
- Tom Fox: Large parking lots could have a greater ability to be successful with permeable pavement than highways. Highways are designed to move the water off the roadway where the water can then be treated off to the side of the road in bio-swales or similar infrastructure.
- Costs: Rain gardens average \$1,000 - \$3,000 for residential properties generally. Larger rain gardens can run more than that. There are a number of factors that play into cost, such as: size, how owners ability to build on own as opposed to a contractor, partners like conservation districts, available rebates etc.
  - Source of rebate for Everett's rebate program: Apryl Hynes (City of Everett) will have to get you that information.
- Rain barrels and cisterns which can be directed to gardens or other landscaping needs. Initial investment can be very little but depends on size, need and how fancy. These options are probably the lowest costs LID feature.
- Getting Island County involved is important but other avenues such as schools are great options. Incorporation into schools STEM programs is a great way to get involved and get implementation done. Getting kids in the community can get actions to filter up into local government where there is resistance.
- One point we want to really want to give you is that the reason that Seattle and Everett are doing so much retrofitting and LID implementation is because they created so many impervious surfaces and now has to go back and fix it. We have an opportunity on Island County to get ahead of the problem, we can see what can come if we let that development occur without taking precautions.
- The WRAC can go after Near Term Action (NTA) funding (would need a fiscal agent...partner such as one of the conservation district). There is funding available for feasibility studies and other stormwater management concepts.
- To be successful it is really important to have qualified technical staff and support available.
- Public demonstrations are great to show success stories as long as they are properly maintained.
- Neighborhood cluster projects, having a community sign up to get a rain garden together. Great for community to come together to see how rain gardens can be successful, how much stormwater a neighborhood can create and manage, and signage can be incorporated for education. Great to be able to bring people to visit and show different types of success stories.
- Follow up questions
  - Tom Fox: You brought up density, which is an important factor. Island County is an issue for Island County because people say we don't have the density that requires that (LID), but there are dense areas. In Snohomish County has anyone actually done the analysis that would say a specific density would trigger and LID approach? Or has anyone does a prioritization of where rain gardens

could be most needed? It seems that an analysis of such could be an approach that Island County would want to take.

- Kathryn Wells: I don't know that they have because they were told that they had to do it regardless of the density per the NPDES permit.
- Do you know what the NPDES compliance is in Snohomish County?
  - Kathryn Wells: No I don't.
- What role does that play when making decisions on where to put LID?
  - Kathryn Wells: I'll have to get back to you on that.
- Julius Budos: Oak Harbor's experience hasn't been good.
  - Joe Grogan: The Soil loading there is terrible. Coupeville is the same.
- Dave Thomas: Are rain gardens made to hold water and how fast to the infiltrate?
  - Kathryn Wells: They are supposed to infiltrate over 24-48 hours. Sometimes up to 72 hours but you want to keep infiltration within the mosquito larvae hatching time.
  
- **Incentivized Residential Stormwater Management (Julius Budos)**
  - See: Lay of The Land Report: On-the-ground realities in King County and audio for more detailed information. (Audio 54 min mark)
    - Barriers to LID identified in document (starts on pg.5)
      - Maintenance
      - Research
      - Education
      - Prioritization
      - Funding
  
    - If you look at the way Island County controls stormwater, it's all pipes and outfalls that dump directly into Puget Sound. The challenge is reducing the number of pipes or at least reducing the amount of stormwater in those pipes. I have been struggling trying to find out how much stormwater we (Island County) collects in the outfalls, but have yet to receive that information. That is the number one question, how much are we actually dumping into Puget Sound? We have to start there.
    - Related to maintenance this document discussed an equipment co-op or rental service, since the maintenance equipment is very expensive.
  
- Incentivized LID brainstorm list:
  - County to provide free workshops as part of required permit for new construction
  - Review State Environmental Policy Act
  - Provide incentive for retaining forest cover or replanting
  - Achieve cost reduction for mosquito control
  - Reduce CWU fee for reduced stormwater runoff
  - Realize a resale benefit
  - Encourage use of oyster mushrooms in LID features

- County (agency) to provide free rain barrels for homeowners
- Reduce Clearing and Grading permit fee
- County agree to maintain LID features
- County to coordinate with Conservation Districts and provide free/reduced cost plants for LID features
- County develop a set of approved LID installations for use by builders
- Coordinate with Master Gardeners to provide free assistance for plant selection and advice for LID features
- Create a stormwater fee for increase in flow off developed property

## **Public Comments**

## **Meeting Closure**

Meeting adjourned at 4:30 pm.

*Next Meetings:*

*May 3, 2018 Coupeville Public Library*

*June 7, 2018 Coupeville Public Library*