



Hood Canal Coordinating Council

Hood Canal Regional Pollution Identification and Correction Program

Phase II Outreach and Education: Supplemental Evaluation of 2015 Site Visits

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This report and the final project report will be available on the Hood Canal Coordinating Council website: www.hccc.wa.gov

Introduction and Background

In the spring and summer of 2015 the Washington State Conservation Commission and WSU Extension collaborated with Pierce, Kitsap and Mason Conservation Districts to conduct an outreach project in targeted watersheds in the three counties. The Focused Watershed Outreach and WSU Shore Stewards' Model Stewardship Project was designed to educate landowners on Best Management Practices (BMPs) to reduce fecal coliform pollution in marine waters and tributaries, and to increase the likelihood that the BMPs would be implemented.

This report focuses on activities in Mason County, where the target area was the Hood Canal Shellfish Growing Area #6 watershed in the population centers of Hoodspport and Union. Landowners with properties within 250 feet of Hood Canal and its tributaries were offered a site visit by Clean Water Advisors from WSU Mason County Extension and the Mason Conservation District. The outreach resulted in site visits with 32 landowners. Evaluation of the 2015 project included calls to site visit recipients to ask about their site visit experience. Results of those calls are discussed in the *Focused Watershed Outreach and Model Stewardship Final Report* (Joy et al., 2015). One key finding was that the timing of the follow-up interviews was too soon after the site visits (1.5 – 2 months) to measure whether the BMPs were implemented and what barriers may have prevented implementation. Therefore, the follow-up interviews were re-conducted approximately a year after the site visits to better inform the 2016 outreach and education project. The results of these interviews are provided in this report.

Methodology

There were 32 site visits conducted with landowners owning 35 properties in Mason County in 2015. Site visits were conducted by two staff members for all but one property. A WSU Mason County Extension Clean Water Advisor was present for all site visits, accompanied by one of three Mason Conservation District staff, including an engineer and a shoreline specialist, depending on the issues to be addressed. Working in pairs allowed Clean Water Advisors to focus on their primary area of expertise to address the target Best Management Practices (BMPs) which were:

- Inspect septic systems at least every three years and make repairs when needed.
- Pick up, bag and dispose of dog waste in the garbage.
- Install buffers of (native) plants to absorb and filter water.
- Improve management of runoff.

Door knocking began in mid-March 2015 and site visits on 35 properties took place from March to June. The number of site visits ramped up from seven in March, peaked in April with 20, then declined in May (5) and June (3) when outreach ended. The number of site visits on upland properties (20) were greater than those on the shoreline (15), and greater in Hoodspport (19) than in Union (16), but the relatively small difference provided a good spread over those communities.

Follow-up calls also were made to the 32 recipients of site visits to gather information about the landowners' implementation of the recommended BMPs.

Calls were made over a two-day period, followed by additional attempts on different days and different times of day (morning, midday, early evening). At least three attempts were made for each landowner. Once contact was made, interviews were either conducted at that time, or an interview was scheduled.

Survey questions focused on the success of the site visit as measured by implementation of recommended BMPs. The landowner was first asked about his/her preferred method of contact. The first question about the site visit asked what recommendations were made to the landowner since not all landowners had the same issues and the BMP recommendations were tailored to each. The answers to this question was designed to measure the lasting impression of the recommendations and what the landowners considered the most useful. The following questions asked about factors surrounding implementation:

- Which, if any, BMPs were applied?
- What were the obstacles to implementation?
- What did and what could help?

The final questions asked if the landowner had suggestions about incentives or what might improve outreach efforts in the future. Survey questions can be found in Appendix 1 and grouped individual responses in Appendix 2.

Results

Fifteen of the 32 site visit recipients could not be contacted due to disconnected phones (2), contact information could not be found (4), or they did not return the call (9). One landowner chose not to participate.

Of the 16 recipients that responded, eight live in Hoodspout and eight in Union. All landowners were full time or mostly full time residents.

Successful contacts were defined as when a person could be reached or a person called back. Contacts made between noon and 4:30 pm and between 5:00 pm and 7:00 pm resulted in more contacts than morning hours. The 16 interviews were conducted at the landowners' preferred time. Only one landowner abstained.

Summary of Responses: Key Points

When summarizing responses, an additional assessment was used to capture the participants' memories of the *wording* of a BMP and the understanding of the *intent* of the BMP (See Appendix 2). This might better reflect the motivation for implementation. Summaries of responses also include the frequency of use of the term "fecal coliform" or other specific reference to the contaminant most used as an indicator of water quality.

The survey questions are in Appendix 1. The sum of responses in each question below will not always total to 16 (recipients), but will reflect the total number of times a subject, topic and/or choice is mentioned.

Letters are the preferred method of contact (8). Letters were also mentioned indirectly in four other combinations. No other methods gained more than one or two mentions.

Planting native plants (14) was mentioned with related BMPs (8) and for displacing invasive plants (11).

Septic systems (6) were mentioned with preventive measures (5) and repair (1). Connections were made to redirecting runoff away from drainfields (2) and water quality (2), but not to fecal coliform (0).

References to the specific BMP for septic inspections (2). References to the **reason for inspections (7).**

Implementation of recommendations (10) was expressed with pride and confidence. The connection to water quality (2), fecal coliform (0)

Not implementing recommendations (2) was expressed with willingness but inability. Mentioning the specific related BMPs (0). **Lack of understanding the goal of the recommendation (12).**

Barriers to implementation were physical limitations (9) and need for information/assistance (6). Secondary barriers were cost (4), time (4), and resistance to change (4).

Follow-up was a common and important request throughout the survey. Help needed to implement recommendations were for information and education (6), follow-up (4), and money (4).

Specific help the landowner remembered receiving during the site visit to implement recommendations: Information (8), technical assistance (3) and access to low cost plants (3).

No specific help received (5). Specific references to BMPs regarding help received: septic system (2), plants to absorb and filter (4).

Native plants (16) was the only incentive chosen. No one chose the pooper scooper, but two were given to landowners for a Homeowner's Association and a community beach. No one needed the tarp to cover manure.

Plants were planted (18), but some died (2). Plants died before planting (1).

Native plants were good incentives (8).

Also a good incentive: Funding for assistance (3) with planting (1), in general (1), and with septic (1) "but it probably wouldn't be worth it since it is so expensive".

Suggestions for increasing interest or implementation in the future:

- Useless if no follow-up or completion.
- People are motivated more by wanting to improve their properties rather than water quality.
- Timing is difficult with people at work on weekdays.
- Septic coupons or discounts (2).
- Letter followed by a phone call – "people don't want anyone on their property".
- Advertising or advice on social media, flyer in paper to raise awareness.
- Stenciling street drains "as reminder that stormwater can carry contaminants to marine water".
- Add a "blurb" about how upland properties and marine waters are connected, and how "uplanders" can help.

- Participation is discouraged when some get away with something while others are being conscientious – it’s alienating. Need to enforce environmental laws evenly to gain confidence of people.
- Focus on invasive plants: solutions for maintaining and potentially beautifying stormwater ditches.
- Educational materials about native plants.
- Examples of neighbors’ successes is encouraging.
- Community “connectors” (such as Alderbrook) could provide meeting place or incentive.
- Use KMAS radio/website to get information out.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are provided for follow-up or future work.

- **Allow preparation time** for assembling resource materials. Site visits that occur at the time of door knocking are effective in gaining the interest of landowners, however returning to the site for follow-up with more specific information is most effective.
- **Help with planting is needed.** Many site visit recipients cannot physically implement the recommendations for buffer planting. Money is an issue for hiring professionals. A strategy could be developed with other organizations that provide service within the education system such as Americorps or high school students who are required to do community service. Including follow-up and timing elements in the strategy will most efficiently utilize manpower and establish plantings. There is also the additional educational opportunity to the service provider in implementing the recommended BMPs.
- **On-going Follow-up is critical.** Develop a mechanism or protocol for follow-up to support landowners with tools and information, as well as technical assistance. Without on-going outreach and designated staff, landowners become discouraged and are less likely to complete a recommended practice. Audience research found that landowners requested information and continuing education. It is recommended that follow-up include an additional site visit.
- **Develop a strategy and materials for upland landowners.** Provide educational materials to educate landowners on tributaries or those who live in the uplands. A common theme for landowners is that distance means they have no impact. Include conveyances such as ditches in this education. Create a resource sheet with services available that can be edited to pertain to an individual landowner’s property.
- **Post visit follow-up is valuable to develop an ongoing relationship with the owner or resident.** After the visit, staff obtained email addresses and sent a written summary of recommendations, researched information that they were unable to provide on the spot, and provided contacts and links for more information and support.

- **Provide a role for the Conservation District**, either within a separate grant that allows follow-up or within the Outreach and Education grant:
 - The project’s field work should begin sooner (April or May) to allow scheduling site visits and follow-up throughout the summer. Provide time and budget for continuing follow-up by WSU Extension and the Conservation District.
 - Some drainage issues were too complex for the scope of this project, and were referred to the Conservation District. Future outreach and education projects in these areas should work with local stormwater agencies to develop a strong stormwater component.
 - Conduct site visits in pairs. The most effective use of time in the site visit, and which generated the most positive responses, was having two Clean Water Advisors conduct the site visit, preferably WSU Extension and Conservation District staff. This provided expertise as well as backup if other field staff are unavailable, and may reduce the need for follow-up. During these site visits, one representative from WSU Extension and another from the Conservation District felt strongly that sessions would not have been as successful had they gone out by themselves. Property owners benefitted from the range of expertise, from septic system maintenance to planting. Several who went out alone said it was hard to represent the interests of another agency and felt that property owners received “half of what they needed.”

- **Promote the Conservation District’s plant sale.** Be sure to recommend the Conservation District’s Native Plant Sale. Acquire the schedule and plant options early so education around appropriate plants can be provided for the specific site. This sale increases the opportunity for landowners to obtain a larger quantity of plants at an affordable price. Additionally, plants are picked up in late winter, which is a good time to get new plants successfully established.

- **Review lessons learned.** Several of the “lessons learned” found in the 2015 Focused Watershed Outreach and Model Stewardship Final Report are directly applicable to providing site visits to landowners. Key highlights include:
 - For this type of outreach, mailing did not seem to be an effective way to garner interest in the program even when multiple contacts by mail were attempted. The number of site visits derived from door knocking provided a significantly improved response rate compared to the mailings, however, some staff observed that visits that occurred spontaneously were less successful than the visits that were scheduled in advance due to lack of ability to prepare for the individual site.
 - The initial mailing using a standard letter format with WSU Extension heading and return address was more effective than either of the two subsequent postcard mailings. However, the larger educational mailing packet and envelope seemed to garner greater notice than the standard letter envelope the initial mailing used. Multiple mailings increased landowner participation in site visits.

- People were most enthusiastic when they had a problem and perceived that you could help them solve it. Choose a BMP that you can help people enact and install. Some BMPs are expensive (e.g. installing manure compost bins) while others, like ivy pulling, are hard for some property owners to do themselves. A project of this nature should include follow-up assistance to help property owners act on the outreach provided. Consider developing a volunteer component for follow-up maintenance like weeding or summer-watering until plants are established.
- Strategies are important in steering the conversation to the target BMPs. Property owners signed up for a variety of reasons, often not related to the target BMPs, so staff developed a variety of ways to steer the conversation toward the target BMPs. These included making observations while touring the property, looking for clues about property owner interests and making the connection to best practices, and sharing personal stories that put them on the same level with property owners.
- Provide a combination of educational materials including single topic fact sheets and longer booklets. While the booklets were too long for people to read on the spot, they were well received and several staff used them at the end of each site visit to point to the pages that related to their recommendations.

Appendix 1: Interview Questions

2016 HCPIC Outreach and Education

Site Visit Follow-Up Survey of 2015 Site Visit Recipients

- Interviews will be conducted with the 24 homeowners that participated in a site visit during the Model Stewardship grant work in Hood Canal 6.
 - Interviews will be done by phone, but we may return to the site to offer more assistance if requested.
1. Date of original site visit (from our records)
 2. What is your preferred method of contact to offer a site visit?
 - a. Letter in mail
 - b. Door knocking
 - c. Other?
 3. What actions/changes were recommended to you for your property? (Potential here to compare what they remember with what we recorded.)
 4. Have you been able to implement any of the recommended changes on your property?
 5. What barriers have prevented implementation of the recommended changes?
 6. What would help you implement those changes now or in the future?
 7. Was there any specific help you received that was necessary to implement the changes?
 8. What incentive did you receive for the site visit?
 9. Have you used your incentive?
 10. Do you have recommendations for other types of incentives that could be offered in the future?
 11. Do you need additional help to implement the recommendations?
 12. We plan to do some more outreach in this area, do you have any suggestions on how we can best gain the interest some of your neighbors.

Appendix 2: Grouped Interview Responses

1. Date and time of original site visit?

Between March and June, inclusive. Mondays through Fridays, usually between 10am and 4pm.

2. What is your preferred method of contact to offer a site visit?

(8) Letter in mail

(1) Door knocking

Other:

(1) Email preferred but otherwise Letter

(1) Phone call

(1) Letter followed by phone call

(2) Letter followed by email

(2) None - one respondent had a negative response and one felt he didn't have an impact

3. What actions/changes were recommended to you for your property?

(Potential here to compare what they remember with what we recorded)

(14) References to planting native plants.

Related BMPs mentioned

(4) To absorb and direct runoff (prevent erosion)

(1) To filter runoff

(2) To direct runoff away from septic system

(1) To help riparian area below

(11) Remove invasive plants and replace with native plants

(6) References to septic system.

Related BMPs mentioned

(2) Avoid impacts (runoff, drainfield area, tree roots)

(2) Maintenance

(0) Pumping

(1) Inspection

(1) Repair (add risers)

References to other recommendations:

(2) Redirect surface water runoff

(1) Each: yard waste disposal, bulkhead softening, bulkhead planting to absorb water, bulkhead repair

Connections made to

(2) Water quality (to help riparian area, filter runoff)

(0) Fecal coliform

References to BMPs selected for 2015:

Specific references:

Reflecting the concept or goal:

- (2) Inspect septic system and repair when needed (7)
- (0) Pick up, bag and dispose of dog waste in garbage (0)
- (6) Install vegetation to absorb and filter water (14) planting/native plants

4. Have you been able to implement any of the recommended changes on your property?

- (10) Yes (expressed pride and confidence)
- (2) No (expressed willingness but inability)
- (6) Some - overlaps with "yes" and "no" ("yes but", or "no but")

Connections made to:

- (2) water quality
- (0) fecal coliform

References to BMPs selected for 2015:

Specific references:

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| (0) Inspect septic system and repair when needed | (2) |
| (0) Pick up, bag and dispose of dog waste in garbage | (0) |
| (0) Install vegetation to absorb and filter water | (12) planting/native plants |

Reflecting the concept or goal:

5. What barriers have prevented implementation of the recommended changes?

- (4) Cost
- (4) Time
- (9) Physical limitations
- (6) Information needed
- (4) Resistance (likes the look of the invasive plants, limited options for dumping yard waste)
- (3) None

6. What would help you implement those changes now or in the future?

- (4) Money
- (2) Physical help
- (6) Information, Education
- (3) Nothing
- (4) Follow-up

7. Was there any specific help you received that was necessary to implement the changes?

- (6) No
- (5) Yes
 - (3) Access to low cost plants
 - (1) WSU weed removal
 - (8) Information
 - (3) Technical assistance

References to BMPs selected for 2015:

- (2) Onsite Sewage System
- (0) Pet waste
- (4) Plants to absorb and filter

8. What incentive did you receive for the site visit?

- (16) Native plants
- (0) Pooper Scoopers
- (0) Tarps for Manure (there were no livestock properties in the Mason County target areas)

9. Have you used your incentive?

- (18) Yes
 - (15) Planted
 - (2) Planted but died
- (1) No
 - (1) Died before it was planted

10. Do you have recommendations for other types of incentives that could be offered in the future?

- (8) No – satisfied with plants
- (2) Doesn't care, can't think of anything else
- (6) Suggestions
 - (3) Funding for assistance
 - (1) Septic – "would have to be worth it"
 - (1) Planting
 - (1) General
 - (1) WSU Extension class
 - (1) Follow-up visit (to advise, answer questions)
 - (1) Mason Bee houses

11. Do you need additional help to implement the recommendations?

- (8) No
- (8) Yes
 - (5) Information/Follow-up visit
 - (3) Help planting
 - (1) Funding for assistance

12. We plan to do some more outreach in this area, do you have any suggestions on how we can best gain the interest some of your neighbors.

(Responses recorded as they were spoken)

- S1 Thinks it's useless and a waste of time if not followed with action or project completed
- S2 Not really. "You all" already met with a few neighbors so feel WSU/CD did do what "you" could; Not sure that Water Quality is what motivated people. It was motivating to them because Mr Anderson worked in Water Quality; She felt that people were motivated because they want to improve their properties in a natural way.
- S3 No - timing is difficult with people at work, not very approachable - esp. weekdays

- S4 septic coupons or discounts
- S5 No - just the septic coupon/discount
- S6 not really. People don't really want to have anyone on their property. Probably a letter is best then follow-up with a phone call
- S7 advertising or advice on social media. Maybe a promotional flyer in the paper to raise awareness like that done by the Journal (a bright orange flyer was in paper with a one-day offer for several free issues)
- S8 A very good reminder to people is the stenciling of street drains and culverts (esp. the ones that fish use) to remind them that stormwater can carry contaminants to marine shoreline
- S9 none relating to WSU project (suggested mandatory impromptu OSS inspections)
- S10 Asked a neighbor if they'd received the letter. The neighbor said yes, but since they live far uphill, it didn't apply. Mrs. Parks thought that adding a little blurb about how upland and marine waters are connected, or how uplanders can help, would be helpful
- S11 Need the confidence of the people by enforcing the environmental laws - when people see that some can get away with something and others won't because they are being conscientious, it alienates and discourages them from participating
- S12 Flyer in people's mailbox to let them know about the benefits of the site visit and access to native plants.
- S13 Invasives may be more of an issue to focus on, a solution for how to maintain & potentially beautify the stormwater ditches; neighbors were encouraged when they saw the property owner making such progress on knotweed removal; sludge dumping on web hill is a huge problem for local residents and conflicts with the water quality messages (60 trucks per day at one point) especially irking because of the enforcement on residents to protect water quality and septic maintenance
- S14 Word of mouth is a good way to get other property owners to get involved; educational materials were a great help; getting native plants after getting the educational material about native plants
- S15 An into letter - does not remember receiving a letter in Seattle at home address; the offer of an incentive for a site visit is good.
- S16 The Alderbrook Resort is a kind of community connector since Union does not have a community meeting place for info & meetings; perhaps some kind of incentive from them - to provide a meeting place or access to an event (e.g. they have auctions); could possibly hold a meeting there to introduce info to community (of project site visits); KMAS does a lot of info distribution so would be a good way to get the info out