



# Hood Canal Coordinating Council

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## Hood Canal Regional Pollution Identification and Correction Program

### Phase II Outreach and Education: Audience Research Report

March 2017

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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](http://www.hccc.wa.gov).

## Executive Summary

Audience research was conducted to better understand how to effectively reach landowners in the Hoodspout and Union areas of Hood Canal prior to conducting outreach efforts. A total of 15 people participated in the audience research, including five from Hoodspout and 10 from Union. Interviews were conducted primarily by phone.

Findings show that most people are interested in having a site visit to their property to assess potential pollution sources and solutions, once they understood what a site visit entailed. Most people were concerned about runoff issues and some wanted information on buffers and planting. Those who indicated that they did not want a site visit felt that it was not needed in their situation. Scheduling seemed to be a concern amongst landowners.

Most participants said they had heard of fecal coliform pollution in Hood Canal, and all but one had heard some recommendations about what homeowners could do to help improve water quality. Most participants knew that septic system maintenance was a key recommendation and many had also heard about the need to pick up pet waste and dispose of it properly. Participants felt most motivated to have a site assessment due to concerns about potential detrimental health effects and water quality.

Participants wanted to ensure that the site visits would be conducted by qualified individuals and that regulatory agencies would not receive the findings. Washington State University Mason County Extension was identified as the most trusted, with the Mason Conservation District as second. Several comments were made that they would not want regulatory agencies to provide a site visit.

The most popular incentives for participating in a site visit were a \$200 rebate for having a septic system professionally inspected and maintained and a selection of free native plants appropriate for the Hood Canal region. Participants felt that letters or phone calls to homeowners would be the most conducive way to reach people. The least popular methods were by door hanger and door knocking.

Key recommendations for future outreach include using a variety of methods including letters and post cards that provide links to in-depth information and invite people to call for a site visit, followed by door knocking as needed. Focusing on helping a landowner solve *their* issue is key, thus, asking people up front if they have any specific concerns will aid this. Site visits need to be confidential, voluntary, educational, and free of regulatory consequences, offering new information such as how to solve issues of stormwater runoff on their property and improve water quality at the same time.

Scheduling the site visit must be made easy. The value of incentives should be balanced; high enough to be motivating, but not a waste of tax dollars. When discussing BMPs: septic system maintenance was a more approachable subject when put in terms of property value and health. Discussions about pet waste are aided when pet owners are given credit for knowing what the BMP is, and keeping the mood light.

More work is needed to develop improved messaging about impacts to water quality for non-shoreline landowners, part-time residents, those with onsite sewage systems (OSSs) far from water, smaller dogs, and run off.

## Background

One of the early steps of the Hood Canal Regional Pollution Identification and Correction (HCRPIC) Outreach and Education Project was to conduct audience research to help design an outreach plan and strategies. This Outreach and Education Project builds off of work done in 2015 by Washington State University Extension and the Washington State Conservation Commission (Joy et. al., 2015). Although audience research was conducted as a part of the 2015 project, it was only conducted in the project areas in Kitsap and Jefferson counties. Therefore, audience research was conducted as a part of the current project with residents in Union and Hoodspport.

## Methodology

Participants for the 2016 audience research project were recruited through a targeted mailing to more than 300 property owners in Hoodspport and Union. These property owners were a subset of the group identified for contact in the 2015 project (Joy et. al., 2015) who had not responded to previous attempts via direct mailing or door knocking, and who had not had a site visit. All participants in the interview were offered a \$10 gift certificate to a local business, either the Hoodspport Coffee Company or the Union Country Store.

The original goal was to have 10 property owners participate in an interview. We anticipated a challenge to meet our goal since the people contacted were non-respondents from the 2015 project (Joy et. al., 2015). However, we exceeded our goal, receiving 29 responses, and had to limit participation to fifteen property owners to stay within this project's budget. To randomize the selection of participants, each step to schedule and conduct an interview was recorded in the order in which contact was made: responses to the letter, calls to schedule, responses to calls, successful interviews. After the first 10 interviews, respondents were informed that no more gift certificates were available. After the 15 interviews were conducted, most of the remaining 14 were informed that the interviews had concluded.

In-depth telephone interviews were conducted with 15 people who own property within 250 feet of the marine shoreline or its upland tributaries. Participants were asked a series of open-ended questions. During the call, they were also sent an email with various program ideas and options to which they were asked to react and rank in order of preference. Three people were willing to give their email addresses for this purpose; the rest preferred to listen while the interviewer read the information. The interview script was adapted from the script developed and used during the 2015 project, by Heidi Keller Consulting (Joy et. al., 2015).

## Findings and Analysis

A total of fifteen people participated in the audience research including five from Hoodspport and 10 from Union. Interviews were conducted by phone, with one conducted in person. The interview solicitation letter and script for the interviews are found in Appendices 1 and 2. Responses are grouped by topic as follows.

**Interest in a site visit.** Learning more about what a site visit involved convinced 50% of the audience who identified as “Somewhat Likely” to participate, to change their minds to “Very Likely”.

Of the 15 participants, eight identified as “Somewhat Likely” to be interested in a site visit when asked early on in the interview. After learning more about the site visits and the concerns to be addressed, four who were “Somewhat Likely” changed their minds to be “Very Likely” to participate. Those who identified as “Very Likely” (4) and “Not at all Likely” (3) remained unchanged.

**Influences on participation:** Concerns about runoff had the greatest influence on participation. Words and subjects that influenced the likelihood of participating in a site visit primarily regarded “runoff” (8); “buffers” (3) and “plantings” (3) were associated with runoff. Other words specifically mentioned were “scheduling” (2) and “confidential” (2).

**Reasons for not participating:** The most cited reason for not participating in a site visit was that they felt it was not needed. Six of the seven participants who continued to be hesitant or were “Not Likely” said the site visit was “not needed” and would be a waste of time. Properties were assumed to have no issues or their conditions would have minor or no impact if:

- Residency was part-time
- Property was upland
- Onsite Sewage Systems (OSSs) were maintained or “far” from the Hood Canal
- Dogs were small or upland
- Runoff appeared to travel within a ditch or other conveyance

The most-cited concern about agreeing to a site visit was scheduling. There were nine part-time residents and five full time residents on Hood Canal in the survey. One participant had been both part-time and full-time for more than 20 years. While four of the participants suggested that timing was a factor (ability to make an appointment (2) and the amount of time it would take (2)), only two of the four were part-time residents.

Some respondents were willing to have a site visit but would like more details, such as how to prepare for a site visit, what types of things the Clean Water Advisor would look for, and examples of recommendations that might be made. One asked about the availability of OSS records.

**Awareness of fecal coliform pollution in Hood Canal:** When asked without cues, all of the participants said they’d heard of fecal coliform pollution in Hood Canal and all but one had heard some recommendations about what homeowners could do to help improve water quality.

**Recognition of Best Management Practices (BMPs):** After reading or listening to a water quality status summary for Hood Canal, and the specific recommendations to homeowners, all said they had previously heard the recommendations from other sources. Five respondents simply said “yes,” they had heard of them and 10 voluntarily mentioned specific recommendations. Of those, the most common response was related to maintaining septic systems (9), followed by picking up pet waste (4), and managing runoff (4).

**Sources of information.** Where people got their information was varied and came from many sources including:

- PUD/water district (5)
- Unknown (4)
- Shellfish company (3)
- Newspaper (3)
- Neighbors (3)
- TV, if shellfish harvesting conditions were dangerous (2)

**Organizations mentioned:** Those organization mentioned without prompting were Mason County Public Health, Kitsap, “DOH”, Hood Canal Coordinating Council, WSU, and WRIA; also mentioned were Do Some Good for the Hood (an earlier educational campaign) and Gold Coast Shellfish Co. websites, homeowner associations, event booths and pamphlets.

**Reaction to pet waste recommendation:** In response to the recommendation that pet owners pick up dog waste and dispose of it in the garbage, the majority of participants (13) agreed that it was an important recommendation and expect pet owners to do so. One said “I don’t know,” one found it hard to believe that pet waste is really an issue, and one didn’t think it was an issue with a small dog more than 100 feet from surface water.

**Motivators and barriers for a site visit:** Participants were provided with a list of potential reasons to agree to a site visit including economic reasons, health reasons, concerns about nearby waters, and receiving free, confidential, and site-specific recommendations. Many of the participants were happy with all of the statements, while some highlighted a few that were particularly motivating:

- Public health (7)
- Concerns about water quality (5)
- Free site-specific and confidential recommendations (2)
- Economic reasons (2)

Participants were also asked if any of the statements were more of a deterrent to participating in a site visit. While none of the statements were considered a deterrent, statements regarding site visits raised most of the interviewees’ questions. Their concerns included: who would conduct the site visits, whether or not they’re qualified and knowledgeable, and who would receive the findings (i.e. regulators).

The most motivating reasons for a site visit were concerns about water quality (5 “most” to 1 “least”), and health (7 “most” to 4 “least”). Economic reasons and receiving site-specific recommendations were both balanced between “most” and “least” motivating (2 “most” to 3 “least”). One person was not motivated by any statements related to pet waste because the feeling was that people already pick up the waste, and one felt that pets were getting the “brunt of the questions.” Two participants were concerned about how much money was being spent on the project and were not comfortable with the use of grants or tax money for this type of project.

Interviewees were asked which specific words had the greatest impact on their responses. Only three of the participants slightly objected to the words: “site visit”, “pet waste”, and “financial incentive”. “Confidential” was the most impactful word during the survey and was mentioned by five respondents in response to this question. Other words liked by individuals included “customized”, “site-specific”, “clean”, “fecal matter”, “poop”, and “health”. One participant suggested the use of more positive words and statements would have a greater impact, such as “working together”, and highlighting the successes of “neighbors” in the community.

Common themes included:

- The impact of a septic system’s condition on the property’s market value was more motivating than its effect on ongoing personal finances, the local economy or best practices for water quality.
- Some found confidential recommendations to be most important in case a problem was discovered.
- Health reasons would be especially important in an area where residents like to eat the local shellfish. Personal health experiences as well as complaints were expressed during the survey, primarily regarding illness from eating contaminated shellfish, and that some in the community were able to continue practices “known” to pollute.
- Large-scale sewage disposal, livestock operations, and failing septic systems were concerns.

**Trusted organizations:** Participants were asked if they had suggestions for organizations they would trust to conduct a site visit on their properties. The nine suggestions favored educational organizations over regulatory entities. Participants were then offered a list of eight organizations from which to choose one or more as most likely to be welcomed onto their properties to provide site visits and consultation. Washington State University Mason County Extension (8) and WSU Shore Stewards (8) were identified as the most trusted. Although not all the participants were familiar with the Mason Conservation District, it was the 2<sup>nd</sup> most popular option (4). Other organizations selected from the list were Tribes (3) and septic professionals (2). Three respondents said they would allow any organization on the list to conduct a site visit.

Several comments were made identifying organizations that would not be trusted to provide a site visit: “no government” (i.e. regulatory entities), no Tribes (2) due to their perceived agendas, and no septic professionals (1) due to possible profit motives.

Concerns were also raised about ensuring the person conducting the site visit was qualified and had identification and credentials.

**Preferred incentives:** Participants were asked to select incentives that would make them more likely or least likely to agree to a site visit. Two of the most popular incentives for participating in a site visit were monetary rebates and coupons for professional septic system inspection and maintenance. These results indicate that financial assistance for OSS maintenance was the most preferred incentive to agree to a site visit. The responses rank as follows:

- \$200 rebate for OSS inspection and maintenance (6)
- Selection of free plants native to Hood Canal (6)
- Coupon for a discount on septic inspection and pumping (5)
- Assistance applying for a low interest septic repair loan (5). One participant commented that help applying for a loan wouldn’t interest anyone whose septic was working.
- Septic leak - dye testing kit (5)
- Pet waste station (4). One participant commented that a pet waste station might encourage people to walk a beach when they might not otherwise, so it would be best if placed in frequented spots. Similarly, one commented that pet waste stations are good because of all the Hood Canal visitors, and three commented on specific locations where pet waste stations were needed: fire easements, parking lots of popular dog walking beaches, and “uphill locations.”

Participants were asked about the incentives that would be of less interest to encourage them to agree to a site visit. The least popular incentive options were all related to pets. The complete list of least popular incentive options are ranked below (**least** popular at top):

- Dog kerchief (6)
- Poop scoop bucket (4)
- Clip on pet waste bag container (4)
- Certification as a Shore Steward, including a Shore Stewards yard sign (4)
- Septic leak testing kit (4)
- Pet waste station (3)
- Dog poop scoop shovel (3)
- Selection of Hood Canal native plants (3)

There were some notable comments of interest to the overall idea of incentives. Five participants said that there were none in which they would be ‘uninterested’. Two participants stated that the incentive didn’t matter and wouldn’t affect their decision to participate in a site visit. One expressed concern that the incentive not cost too much to provide, and one said that a \$200 coupon for inspection and maintenance would be a “drop in the bucket towards the thousands of dollars of bills”. One participant observed that she did not know what some of the incentives were, specifically the septic leak testing kit and Shore Stewards. Another suggested that pet waste stations and/or poop scoops might be of use for visitors of home owner or neighborhood associations. Addressing pet waste, one comment was that it “wouldn’t make a difference to Hood Canal”.

**Recommended method of contact:** Interviewees were asked about their preferred method of being contacted. The most popular suggestion was to contact local property owners by letter to offer site visits (9). The ranked responses for preferred mode of contact include:

- Letter to offer site visits (9)
- Phone call to offer site visits (7)
- Door hanger (6)
- Door knocking (5); the 2015 project found that door knocking was the most effective method resulting in property owners agreeing to a site visit.
- Postcards (4); according to one respondent, “It wouldn’t give enough information” (i.e. not enough detail to convince a homeowner to allow someone to visit the property).

Several suggested email though it was generally understood to be the most difficult to execute. Overall comments regarding preferred method of contact included:

- Part time owners would not be present
- Phone calls are screened
- Mailings are overwhelming

**Participant profile:** Participants were asked what best described their practices for septic system maintenance and repairs. Of the 15 respondents, 11 had their septic systems inspected in the last three years. Three said that they weren’t sure but probably *not* in the last three years. No one said that their septic system had not been inspected in the last 3 years. One declined to answer.

When asked whether they had followed through with making the recommended repairs, 10 said “yes”. Two said that no, they had not made all the repairs. One commented that it depended on the recommendation and whether it was really necessary or affordable (there was no further clarification of the response). Three people said that no repairs were recommended. One participant did not know, and one declined to answer.

The third profile question regarded annual income, according to a range:

- \$25,000 to just under \$50,000 (3)
- \$50,000 to just under \$75,000 (1)
- \$75,000 to just under \$100,000 (2)
- \$100,000 or more (4)

## Recommendations

Recommendations to achieve the goal of conducting site visits to discuss water quality issues and provide guidance on landscaping choices, septic system maintenance, drainage issues, and mud and waste management in the Hood Canal area include:

**Initial contact:** This research produced and reinforced a set of basics to apply to outreach, whether by written materials, phone calling or in-person. There is very little time to make the case for a site visit, so saying what is both important and motivating, as well as addressing resistance, is a challenge. Hood Canal populations around Hoodspout and Union have been hearing the messaging for years now. Getting landowner attention with many of these issues is harder, but offering to help a landowner solve *their* issue, is well received. It is recommended to combine outreach tools:

- Use letters and post cards to introduce the idea of a site visit, and the option to call to schedule
- Use the same letters to offer links to more in-depth information that addresses their concerns (such as the <http://shorestewards.wsu.edu> website)
- Follow with door knocking (even though it was not favored, it was the most cost-efficient and effective method in the 2015 project)

The offer of a site visit needs to be educational in nature and free of regulatory consequences for the landowner. It should focus on what they have not heard much about: how to solve issues of stormwater runoff on their property and improve water quality at the same time.

The following is an example of language to use that meets the initial challenge of engaging the landowner:

| Objective                                | Example  |
|--|--|
| Provide a clear and concise introduction | "Hello, I'm <i>name</i> with <i>organization/agency</i> ."                       |
| State the purpose and the reason         | "Our goal is to improve <u>water quality</u> and protect public <u>health</u> ." |

|                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Focus on key motivational words | "We're offering <u>free</u> and <u>confidential</u> site-specific <u>recommendations</u> to help landowners <u>solve issues on their property.</u> " |
| Example of a common concern     | "Are you concerned about stormwater <u>runoff?</u> "   |
| Example of solution             | " <u>Buffer plantings</u> can <u>filter out contaminants</u> and prevent <u>erosion.</u> "   |

**Incentives:** Incentives need to provide high enough value to motivate, yet not be seen as a waste of tax dollars. A \$200 rebate was clearly a preferred incentive, however some people felt this to be an excessive use of tax dollars. A low cost option that was well received was a 4-pack of native plants which serves as a nice reward and as an example of a solution to erosion.

**Scheduling:** Once catching their interest, scheduling must be made easy. The landowners do not want to waste their time – they want to know that they can participate when it's convenient, that it won't take too long, and that they will hear sound advice. There must be ready information and ready resources. There is a strong advantage to being ready with answers, but if an issue is identified that requires more expertise, then providing resources that can help is just as important to credibility.

**Messaging:** Most people in this audience had heard about the connection of septic systems and pet waste to water quality and health, but seemed less aware of what else homeowners could do to help. Reinforcing the need for septic system maintenance and pet waste management along with specific information on what they should be doing, along with additional information on other BMPs is our recommended strategy.

Septic system maintenance (inspection) was a more approachable subject when seen in terms of property value. Whether to prevent having an expensive fix or to increase the home selling price, protecting an investment is a good way to open the subject.

Pet waste discussions are sensitive and can be easier if the landowner is given credit for knowing what is supposed to be done. Only a few in the audience felt that pet waste was not likely to impact water quality. A lighter approach, using words such as "poop" and tying the family's health to what comes in on Spot's feet.

Specific outreach message improvements needed for landowners who do not recognize their impact. Property owners generally assumed they would have minor or no impact if their:

- Residency was part-time
- Property was upland
- On-site Sewage Systems (OSSs) were maintained or "far" from the canal
- Dogs were small or upland
- Runoff appeared to travel within a ditch or other conveyance

## References

Joy, Shana, R. Simmons & M. Brincka. (2015). *Focused Watershed Outreach and Shore Stewards - Joint Final Report*. 45 pp. Puget Sound Partnership. Tacoma, WA.

## Appendix #1: Interview Solicitation Letter



May 2016

To: Owners of property on or near Hood Canal, local streams, and surrounding watersheds

From: Robert Simmons, Olympic Region Water Resources Specialist  
Washington State University Extension

Subject: Sign up for homeowner interviews

I am writing to ask you to participate in a 25-minute, confidential phone interview about your property on or near the waters of Hood Canal and nearby watersheds. You will receive a \$10 gift certificate to a local business for your time.

Washington State University Extension is working with a coalition of local organizations to improve water quality and stormwater management in your area. We want to hear your thoughts, ideas, and opinions on landscaping, septic system maintenance, drainage, and mud/waste management.

Your opinions are very important to us. To schedule an interview please call or email our contractor:

Wendy Mathews  
[wendy.odm@gmail.com](mailto:wendy.odm@gmail.com)  
360-463-6966

Your comments will be confidential and your name will never appear in documents related to this project or any other.

Hood Canal waters are a precious resource and are important to the economy, recreation, and culture of our communities. By signing up for a telephone interview you can help us to make our outreach and education programs meet the specific needs of your community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Bob Simmons'.

Bob Simmons  
Olympic Region Water Resources Specialist

## Appendix #2: Interview Instrument

Hood Canal Pollution Identification and Correction  
Outreach and Education Project 2016  
WSU Mason County Extension

### Audience Research Property Owner Questionnaire

#### KEY FOR DATA ENTRY

In this document, choices of responses are numbered and letters highlighted for ease of data entry into the spreadsheet only. They were not conveyed to the participant.

#### Property Owner Audience Research Guide

##### Introduction:

Thank you for making time to talk with me today. I want to start by assuring you that everything you say will be confidential. I am taking notes, but your name will not appear in any reports and nothing you say can be identified with you.

PURPOSE: WSU Extension and their local partners want to improve their outreach and education services to homeowners in your area. They want to make sure that you have the information and support you need to manage your storm water, septic system, landscaping, and waste and mud management issues. The purpose of these interviews is to make sure that their services are helpful and something that people like you want and need. Your candid and honest answers are very important. Again, this conversation is strictly confidential and your individual responses will never be shared with any regulatory agency.

This interview should take about 25 minutes.

First, I'd like to know more specifically where you live (for out of area property owners: the location of your property) and how long you have lived there (owned this property).

(Prompts) Do you have a specific name you call this area?

Do you have a dog?

IF YES: Which of the following best describes you- you pick up your dog's waste and put it in the garbage.....

**E**very time

**M**ost of the time

Some of the time

I don't pick up my dog's waste and put it in the garbage

Do you have any livestock on your property?

IF NEEDED: This would include farm type animals such as horses, goats, chickens, and llamas, etc. but not companion pets such as dogs or cats.

How many?

As mentioned in the letter, WSU Extension and their local partners in Mason County provide advice to homeowners on septic system, landscaping, and stormwater issues.

First let me ask if you have specific questions along those lines.

One of the things that WSU Extension and their local partners are working on is preventing household waste from draining into area lakes, streams, and bays. They would like to meet with homeowners like you and provide recommendations specific to your property.

How likely would you be to agree to have a clean water advisor visit your property and work with you on a customized drainage plan?

Very likely (If yes, ask if they have any questions)

Somewhat likely

Prompt: What concerns/questions do you have? What would you need to know before agreeing to this?

Not at all

Prompt: What concerns do you have?

## Section 1: Unaided awareness of facts and recommendations

One of the reasons we are reaching out to you is that high levels of fecal coliform have caused closures and restrictions on shellfish harvesting in some areas of Hood Canal. Your property is within what is called the Hood Canal 6 shellfish growing area. The area adjacent to the Hoodsport shoreline is prohibited for shellfish harvest. A new area of restricted commercial shellfish is near Big Bend Creek and the Alderbrook Resort dock. This is a conditionally approved area with the area near the Alderbrook dock closed May 1st- September 30th. The Big Bend Creek area is closed based on rainfall if there is 0.75 inches of rain or greater within 24 hours.

IF NEEDED: Define fecal coliform pollution:

Fecal coliform is a bacteria found in human and animal waste. When it is found in water it shows that the water is contaminated with fecal matter. Contaminated water can cause diseases such as gastroenteritis, ear infections, typhoid, dysentery, and hepatitis A. When fecal pollution levels reach a certain point, shellfish areas are downgraded or closed.

Have you heard anything about fecal pollution in Hood Canal?

Have you heard any recommendations about what homeowners can do to prevent fecal pollution?

I'd like to take a minute to review some facts about water quality in Hood Canal and area lakes and streams. I'd like you to open the email that I just sent you and read along with me.

### **Email Section 1: Water Quality Problems in Hood Canal**

Fecal coliform levels in Hood Canal have fluctuated in recent years. Hood Canal is fragile and susceptible to pollution. Recently, some drainages have shown elevated levels of fecal coliform. Fecal coliform levels occasionally exceed the levels required for harvest and human consumption of shellfish, and have resulted in closures and restrictions to recreational and commercial shellfish gathering.

Through studies and analysis it has been found that sources of fecal coliform in Hood Canal include:

- Human waste coming from broken septic systems, and
- Domestic animals, primarily dogs and livestock

There are a number of ways that property owners can prevent human and domestic animal waste from entering nearby waters, including:

1. Have your septic system professionally inspected at least every 3 years, and make repairs as needed
2. Pick up, bag, and dispose of dog waste in the garbage
3. Dispose of cat waste in the garbage
4. Manage water runoff and wet areas
5. Install plantings to absorb and filter water

Have you heard any of this before? Where have you heard this?

Do you have any questions, or is any of this unclear?

How about the recommendation regarding dog poop? What is your reaction to that recommendation?

### **Section 2: Site Visits**

Washington State University Extension wants to work with homeowners to identify and fix sources of fecal pollution. They would like to conduct site visits with homeowners that live within 250' of marine

shorelines and freshwater tributaries. While on site they would identify sources of fecal pollution and provide a customized plan to help prevent water pollution.

I'd like you to look at Section 2 in that email I sent you. Some of the recommendations could include:

### **Email Section 2: Potential Site-Specific Recommendations**

- The proper collection and disposal of pet and livestock waste
- Drainage plans
- Recommended plantings for buffer zones along your property and the shoreline
- Recommendations regarding septic maintenance, including do-it-yourself maintenance and the availability of low interest loans for septic repair or replacement. And how to get the most life from your septic system investment.

**IF THEY WERE HESITANT EARLIER:** You mentioned earlier that you were hesitant to have someone visit your property. Now that you know more about what a site visit would involve, does that influence you?

Are there particular words or messages that do/would help change your mind?

(Prompt) What piques your interest? Makes you more likely to participate?

Still hesitant or unlikely:

I'd like to hear why.

Want more information

(Prompt) What questions do you have? Things you would need to know before agreeing to a site visit?

### **Section 3: Motivators**

Now I want you to look at that area in my email that is labeled Section 3. This information about fecal pollution is meant to give you and your neighbors some reasons why you would want to have a free site visit from a clean water advisor. Take a few minutes to read through this and I want you to identify the section that most motivates you to have a site visit. And while you're at it, identify the section that you find the least motivating- things that just don't appeal to you or maybe even rub you the wrong way.

I'll give you a few minutes to read through these and you tell me when you're done.

#### **Email Section 3. What is the best reason for having a site visit?**

##### **1. Economic reasons**

- 1 If my septic system fails it will lower the value of my property and can prevent the sale of my home if I ever decide to sell.

- 2 Regular septic maintenance extends the life of the system and saves money in the long run by avoiding more costly repairs.
- 3 Our local economy will suffer and jobs that depend on shellfish harvesting and water recreation will be lost if the waters are too polluted.
- 4 Learning about financial incentives to help me implement recommended practices on my property.

**2. Health reasons**

- 1 If my septic system fails it can make my family, pets, and even my neighbors sick.
- 2 Pet waste bacteria and parasites survive for long periods of time. When people walk across my yard they bring bacteria from pet waste into my house.
- 3 Bacteria from pet waste can make me and my family sick.

**3. Concerns about nearby waters**

- 1 Local bays could be closed to collecting shellfish, swimming and other water sports if pollution here worsens.
- 2 Dog poop left in the yard and along roads and paths flows directly into local streams and bays.
- 3 Detectable levels of animal waste have been measured in Hood Canal area waters.
- 4 Fecal pollution has resulted in closures and restrictions to recreational and commercial shellfish gathering in Hood Canal.
- 5 I want to do my part to improve and protect Hood Canal area waters.

**4. Getting free, confidential, site-specific recommendations**

- 1 A site visit will result in recommendations that will be customized specifically to my property.
- 2 Recommendations from the site visit will be strictly confidential, and will not be shared with any outside people or agencies.
- 3 Education and recommendations for things like stormwater runoff, waste management, and planting for buffer zones.

Let's start with the section that you found most motivating.

Prompt: Are there any words or statements that you particularly liked? That really grabbed you?

Okay, how about the section or statements that you found least motivating – that just don't grab you or even rub you the wrong way.

Prompt: Are there certain words that stand out? If it were worded differently would that make a difference?

**Section 4: Incentives**

We know that your time is valuable and it's hard to squeeze in more appointments, so the sponsors are considering offering some incentives – things that would encourage people to agree to a site visit.

Look now at Section 4, titled “Incentives.” These are things that they are considering offering to homeowners, and I want to find out which of these would make you more likely to agree to have a visit.

Go ahead and mark those that you like the best – things that **would make you want** to schedule a visit. Then I want you to tell me the ones that you just would **not be interested** in.

#### **Email Section 4: Incentives for having a site visit**

- 1 Coupon for a **discount** on septic inspection and pumping
- 2 Help applying for low interest septic repair or replacement **loans**
- 3 Tank **risers** installed that make it easier to inspect your septic system
- 4 **Kit for testing** for septic leaks
- 5 Up to \$200 **rebate** for having your septic system professionally inspected and maintained
- 6 **Green Cleaning Kit**- items that help extend the life of your septic system, such as Zip-it drain cleaners, sink screens that keep food from going down the drain
- 7 A selection of **native plants** appropriate for the Hood Canal region
- 8 Certification as a **Shore Steward** (includes personalized assistance, newsletter, and yard sign)
- 9 Shovel to **scoop dog** poop
- 10 Clip on pet **waste bag container**
- 11 Poop **scoop** bucket
- 12 Pet **waste station** bag dispenser installed in my neighborhood
- 13 Dog **kerchief** that says “I poop, you pick it up” or “Dogs for clean water”, or “My owner picks up after me”

#### **Section 5: Agencies and Spokespeople**

Are there organizations that come to mind that you would trust more than others to come onto your property for this purpose?

**Take a look at Section 5** in the email. These are some of the groups that are interested in providing site visits and consultation. I'd like you to tell me which of these organizations (*or other if they mentioned any*) you would be most likely to invite onto your property to for a site visit and customized plan.

#### **Email Section 5:**

- 1 WSU County Extension
- 2 WSU Shore Stewards
- 3 Mason Conservation District
- 4 Mason County Public Health
- 5 State Department of Health
- 6 State Department of Ecology

- 7 Local Tribes
- 8 Septic professionals
- 9 Other?

## **Section 6: Communication Methods**

This service will only be available to people living within 250 feet of the marine shoreline or the upland tributaries. We want to know the best way to contact people like you to let you know about this program.

Here are some ideas. I'd like to know the one that you like best. (Read aloud)

- 1 Phone call
- 2 Postcard
- 3 Personal letter to my home
- 4 Knock on my door and discuss it with me
- 5 Doorknob hanger with program information and contact information
- 6 Neighborhood or homeowner association

Which do you think is best? Are there any that you don't like?

Do you have any other suggestions?

Any suggestions about specific words or information that should be included?

## **Participant Profile**

Before we end this call, I'd like to ask a few more questions. Again, your answers are voluntary and will be kept strictly confidential.

Which of the following best describes your practices toward septic maintenance...

- 1 Your septic system has been inspected in the last 3 years
- 2 Your septic system has not been inspected in the last 3 years, or
- 3 You are not sure when it was last inspected but probably not in the last 3 years
- 4 Refused - DO NOT READ

Have you followed through with the recommended repairs based on that inspection?

- 1 Yes on all recommended repairs
- 2 No, not on all of the recommended repairs
- 3 There were no recommendations for repairs
- 4 Don't know
- 5 Refused - DO NOT READ

What range best describes your annual income? Would you say...

- 1 Under \$25,000
- 2 25,000 to just under 50,000
- 3 50,000 to just under 75,000
- 4 75,000 to just under 100,000
- 5 Or 100,000 or more
- 6 Don't know - DO NOT READ
- 7 Refused - DO NOT READ

### **Conclusion**

Before we go, are there any other thoughts you have or words of advice for the sponsors?  
Thank you.