

Clallam County Charter Review Commission
Water Committee
Minutes of April 18, 2025 meeting

The meeting was called to order at 9:05.

The Committee approved the agenda.

Bowen Kendrick, Water Manager for Clallam County PUD, provided information on the how the PUD and the County work together. He discussed the case study of the Carlsborg water supply project. He provided some feedback on the Water Steward proposal. A discussion with the Committee followed.

Bruce Emery, Director of Community Development, and Jennifer Garcelon, Environmental Health Manager, shared information on the aspects of water management in their departments. They provided feedback on the Water Steward proposal. A discussion with the Committee followed.

Comments were provided in the Public Comment section of the agenda.

A discussion of next steps followed with a few interim decisions:

- **TASK:** Nina will continue work on researching water management in other Counties.
- **TASK:** Paul will organize a meeting of the Tribes in Clallam County.
- **All agree:** The position will not include regulation and enforcement. It will include data collection, sharing, and education. Coordination is a goal but needs to be carefully defined.
- **All agree:** This will not be a volunteer position.
- **TASK:** Paul will do some preliminary research on position costs and funding options.
- **TASK:** Christy: will make a flow chart of water management .
- **TASK:** Paul will finish his list of rivers and streams.
- **Next meeting:** May 1st, 9:00 to 10:30 am

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 pm.

Pickett meeting notes:

Clallam County Charter Review Commission

Water Committee meeting

April 18, 2025

Committee attendees: Paul Pickett, Nina Sarmiento, Christy Holy, Ron Richards

Clallam PUD – Bowen Kendrick

Clallam County and PUD

- County right-of-way
 - BOCC on utility easement
- Public works – operation, maintenance
- Drinking water laboratory – regulatory requirements for routine monitoring, or other like water main break, line flushing. QA/QC
- County funded structure improvements, \$3¾ million
- Specific projects, like Carlsborg

Carlsborg case study

- Outside PUD service area, limitations to providing services outside that area
- Water rights, system capacity
- Ensure existing needs are met first, then capacity for new systems in new service area
- County contacted PUD about serving Carlsborg
- County doing drilling, pump testing, hydrogeo analysis
- Looking at tapping 4th aquifer (deepest)
- Steve Gray at County, moving forward
- WQ problems – nitrate in existing wells
- Develop new deep well

Value of Water Steward concept

- Vacant position – licensed hydrogeo: Caro Kreise (sp?), Ann Soule before
- Water steward looks similar, maybe different
- Have some recommendations

Q&A

- Order of Operations
 - 1st priority – take inventory of water resources in jurisdiction
 - Gaps in staff and information
 - County responsibilities and authorities – related to PUD operations
 - USGS provided studies
 - Water resources issues outside of Dungeness
 - Strategic plan for water resources
 - Objectives and Goals

- Gaps
- Actions needed
- Other entities – coordinate, don't double
- Ron: "guide and coordinate", focus on collecting information
 - Lack of information – clearing house
 - BK: consistent with his views
- Nina: more on Sequim watershed study? Other watershed studies?
 - BK: Dungeness – not sure who was lead. Clallam was lead agency, others co-lead (PA, CoSequim, JSK Tribe, Agnew irrigation)
 - Look at County website
 - PUD and ongoing watershed planning: water system plan addresses source protection, including watershed
 - Coordinating water system plan with County Comp planning
- Ron: re water rights, what does water supply look like
 - BK: GW and surface water supply. Surface source out west, limits when flow is low. Assessing source can be expensive. Paper rights may not represent actual water available
 - Morse Creek has limits on water use with stream flow. Had to do emergency development of GW sources to back up surface sources
 - Water rights can be interrupted, frequency may be increasing due to climate
- Ron: question about GW sources – management and adaptation
 - BK: GW rights require monitoring of water levels. Most wells have stable levels. Drawdowns are stable
 ome eastern well show signs of declines. Shallower wells, changes in irrigation water may have affected them (loss of "Artificial recharge")
- Ron: status of deep well? BK: consultant working on testing, pumping rates for testing long term at lower rate
- Christy: Water steward and PUD – use water system plan information? BK: WSP doesn't do hydrogeo. Ecology has a lot of that info. USGS, too. Role as purveyor is to comply with state law and code, to develop and operate. Not validation unless called
- Paul: gaps in data outside of Dungeness? BK: western systems have issues with limitations due to limited recharge and emerging drought. Makahs having problems. Need for information about sustainability. Working on efficiency and cooperative watershed management.
- Nina: Morse Creek likely to have more interruptions, how does community address climate impacts BK: historically information has been collected, trends are clear, reliance on surface water is uncertain, GW more important.
 - Nina: recharge being explored? BK: did work on that in California, not a big proponent of active GW management. Talking to Dungeness Water Exchange about sustaining GW resources and helping with future water rights needs.
- Paul: watershed planning – just Dungeness, how about others? Elwha included in plan. Reevaluation of WRIA 18 west might be good. Other tools available, such as CWSP – county could take a lead role to coordinate resources and water system boundaries [ask Bruce]. More review of water from holistic planning is good.

County roles – Bruce Emery and Jennifer Garcelon

- Bruce: Charter notes watershed planning. Extensive in Dungeness. Multiple layers of aquifers, managing for people an environment. Dungeness Rule has allocation to flow and human supply. Unregulated wells have a reserve. Water rights need to show no impact on environment and senior rights.
 - WRIA 19 “fledgling”. WRIA 17 inactive.
 - Heading west, rain increases but geology limits recharge. Communities clustered near water availability.
 - Reservoirs? Might be helpful in some areas. Current proposal: try it and see how it works. Dungeness reservoir supports irrigators and ag.
- Paul: role of water in permitting and planning? Bruce: comp plan looking climate and resilience. Need to look at limits on water resources – evaluate availability and changes, how it affects land uses
- Nina: hydrogeo staff historically. Jennifer: Around 2020 had hydrogeo on staff.
 - Bruce: Ann Soule was hired for watershed planning in DCD. Carol Kriese in DCD, then to PW (roads). Water steward could fit in DCD. EH reports to Board of Health. A lot of overlap.
- Ron: EH can’t be elected official – Charter, or WDOH? Jennifer: EH is regulated by BoH, enforcement duties – Pros Atty said it can’t be elected position. Charter exempts Health.
- Jennifer: water availability for small and individual systems. Well driller policy. Onsite septic systems. Drinking water laboratory.
- Nina: does DCD or EH address specific problems? PIC monitoring for bacteria problems in Dungeness. Started at Straits, working upstream.
- Me: water availability – how do you do? Just checking in admin role that pumps and pipes are available. Individual
- Me: staff doing water? Jennifer: EH has science degrees. Pump tests – just look at numbers compared to specs. Bruce: DCD has biologists who know fish habitat. Go to Ecology for more detailed water evaluation.
- Ron: See coordination as a problem. Bowen talked about wells with dropping water levels. Sequim looking at aquifer recharge. Should ditches not be lined? What about forest practices and stream flows? Multiple issues
 - Bruce: ditching lining from 90s helped river flows, but lowered aquifers. Exchange program is working on restoring GW levels. Timing of recharge and ISFs – one solution makes another problem worse. Working ok, perhaps in hindsight could have been handled differently.
 - Ron: coordination role could help. Bruce: had a hydrogeo during Dungeness process. Good to have someone on staff to monitor and advise. Ron: streamflow effects need more attention
- Nina: adaptive management – DCD Natural Resources division – both water and forest. County wants to move forest responsibilities. Need to look at both water and forests. Do current staff have capacity to deal with these issues?
 - Bruce: Current positions are mostly grant funded, which forces them to focus on specific projects.
 - Charter points to environmental management – gives authority to look at broader issues, forest health and watershed health. Removing trust land issues could be addressed with environmental management.
 - Partial grant funding for all positions. Some is federal or pass-through
- Paul: how does the County implement Dungeness rules for wells and septic?

- Get well permit application. Go to water bank to buy offset
- Septic: distance from wells. Look at soils – designers can decide systems that are required. Work closely with DCD.
- Nina: public education – who does it? Jennifer: septic system training, Dungeness education, home shows and expos. Bruce: have done public outreach on water quality (fertilizer, oil, pesticides) Jennifer: household waste disposal training, through city landfill. Part of Dungeness training for bacteria control.
- Paul: how to respond to angry property right advocates?
 - Bruce: calm down the discussion. Environment is part of our infrastructure. Jobs always have an education component. Help people see how one person's rights affects another person's rights. "do whatever you want" versus living in a society.
 - Jennifer: get septic complaints. Often some resistance. Explain problem, direct to cost-shares or other help.
 - PIC program has an education component
- Ron: send some background info.
- Paul: would a water steward be helpful, and how? What are the boundaries?
 - Bruce: Can see a need, especially with climate change impacts. Need to be looked at closely. What would scope be? Would it belong in the Charter? BOCC sets structure of DCD. Watershed planning versus infrastructure element. Legal and functional questions.
 - Jennifer: no strong opinion. Need for water expertise. Example – needed hydrogeo review of a septic (use loophole to keep regulation at local not WDOH). Once in 20 years. Lots of water
- Nina: curious about code regarding water collection – what are the rules. Bruce: allowed unless there is an impaired water body. Paul: individual ok, larger may need permitting.
 - Ron: when first practicing law, sometime since then residential use was authorized.
- Paul: relationship with Tribes?
 - Bruce: good relationships with Tribes. GMA required Tribal consultation. Tribes have treaty rights to fish, and therefore to water, but "murky". Participate in watershed planning, and other water resource issues.
 - Jennifer: JSKT active in PIC, do a lot of sampling. Board of Health include Tribal members.
- Paul: his own ideas – science division. Also identify funding source.
 - Bruce: identifying funding source is a good idea.
 - Ron: other proposals have cost issues – hearing examiner. Cost of position would be small.
 - DCD has 1.8 FTE grant-funded, plus halftime internship for marine resources, so 2.3 FTE. Some direct revenue. Not counting City of PA
- Nina: where would it sit in the organization? Paul: independent under BOCC perhaps? Bruce: need to look at legal requirements of what belongs under Board of Health.
 - Ron: duties in state statute can be assigned by Charter. Required duties opens a can of worms. Focus on gathering information, don't overlap with responsibilities
- Nina: State law requirements is one thing, but still a gap in the overall view. Logically fit under Natural resources department, under be available for other departments.

Other counties – Nina

- Done some research, not ready to report

More discussion:

- Ron: public comment says apolitical, suggests it's independent. Independent source of data useful, such as for comp plan. Colorado model interesting – appointment, followed by election confirmation (for judges).

Public Comment

- John Worthington. We lack information from (???) Forestry organizations not on radar. DCD just one point of view. Other streams have other approaches – lack of consistent. Political goals of organizations making decisions for water. Creating a county commission that they won't want. Don't need a hydrologist. Need coordinated policies. Racial profiling of communities.

Next agenda items and some decisions

- **TASK:** Nina will continue work on Counties
- **TASK:** Paul will organize a meeting of Tribes
- Ron: concerned with perception of our work – stay focused on information
 - Christy: not clear on role of position, or multiple position
- Ron: What information is needed? Lots of issues out there – fish, etc. Charter includes natural resources issues. PUD expressed willingness to help
- Nina: DCD Natural resources department is project-based and grant funded. This could be a barrier. Like idea of bringing some resources to help.
- Paul: can we agree on certain parameters?
 - Not regulation and enforcement. Data collection, coordination, education. **All agree.**
 - Not a volunteer position? **All agree.**
- Paul: Core need is a hydrogeologist, but other job classes with similar skills could work, like engineer or hydrologist. Needs careful definition.
- Nina: coordination is tricky. We should work more on defining coordination. **All agree**
- Nina: should we leave funding to the BOCC?
 - Paul: might be good to include sources of funding. I'd like to research more.
 - Ron: tiny amount of funding.
 - Paul: would like to see what position would cost
 - Christy ok to research
 - **TASK:** Paul will do some preliminary research on position costs and funding options.
- Nina: why was hydrogeologist position cut? Can we designate that?
- **TASK:** Christy: will make a flow chart of water management
- **TASK:** Me: I'm working on a list of rivers and streams, will send that later
- Ron: including in Charter explains the importance of it.
- Paul: should we summarize legal boundaries of water issues?
 - Ron: complex, for example, County Board of Health can be formed different ways. State defines duties, Charter can set them up different.

Next meeting: May 1st, 9:00 to 10:30 am