

# Geoduck Task Force Meeting 4

September 26, 2024 1-4pm

## AGENDA

- I. Introduction and Welcome
- II. Review of TF Purpose and Goals
- III. Report out from Subgroups
- IV. Outfall Ranking Method Memorandum (circulated 9/20/24)
- V. Review of Technical Memo (circulated on 9/20/24)
  - a. Water Quality
    - i. Nonpoint source
    - ii. Unclassified areas
  - b. Harvest Restrictions
  - c. Management Framework
  - d. Recap of Recommendations
- VI. Discussion of agendas and deliverables for October Task Force meeting
- VII. Action items and close out

## ATTENDEES:

Billy Plauché (Plauché and Carr), Amanda Carr (Plauché and Carr), Kelly McDonald (Confluence), Alexis Huynh (Confluence), Chris Cziesla (Confluence), Paul Williams (Suquamish Tribe), Aaron Purser (Suquamish Tribe), Abby Barnes (DNR), Austin Paul (Point No Point Treaty Council), Bill Dewey (Taylor Shellfish Farms), Blain Reeves (DNR), Chris Eardley (WDFW), David Winfrey (Puyallup Tribe), Eddie Kim (Squaxin Island Tribe), Eric Sparkman (Squaxin Island Tribe), George Stearns (Puyallup Tribe), Jason Haveman (Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe), Josh Chapman (Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe), Katalin Plummer (DNR), Kyle Lentz (Chelsea Farms), Leslie Connelly (Ecology), Liz Tobin (Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe), Max Showalter (DNR), Megan Russell (Nisqually Indian Tribe), Merita Trohimovich (DOH), Mike McHugh (Tulalip Tribe), Thomas Gorman (DNR), Scott Berbells (DOH), Tonya Lane (Ecology), Viviane Barry (Suquamish Tribe), Todd Hass (Puget Sound Partnership), Aaron Jones (Tulalip Tribe), Steve Robideau (Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe), Matt Beirne (Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe), Courtney Hart (Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe), P. Sean McDonald (UW), James McArdle (Swinomish Tribe)

## ACTION ITEMS:

- Confluence will follow up with Tulalip to discuss any additional WWTPs that should be included on the priority list.
- Confluence to follow up with Scott/DOH on nonpoint pollution source recommendation.
- Task Force to provide written feedback on draft deliverables by October 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- Confluence to incorporate revisions and written feedback to Technical Memorandum and Ranking Method Memorandum.

## SUMMARY:

During this task force meeting, the discussion primarily focused on reviewing and receiving feedback on the drafts of the Ranking Method Memorandum and the Technical Memorandum, which were both circulated in advance of the meeting. Confluence presented the prioritization framework and process used to evaluate wastewater treatment plants based on available information. Participants provided feedback on the scoring of WWTPs and recommendations. It was noted that the data received and incorporated in the prioritization framework may be limited and further work to fill in knowledge gaps may be necessary before any funding decisions are made. Confluence provided an overview of the content within the Technical Memorandum and presented recommendations for each topic/section. This discussion resulted in suggestions for revising recommendations in the Technical Memorandum to either broaden or refine the language of the recommendations. The final task force meeting will focus on the discussion of feedback on the Enhancement Report and Factsheet.

## NOTES:

### **II. Review of TF Purpose and Goals**

- Task Force established by legislative proviso to investigate increasing and sustaining harvestable geoduck for the state and tribes.
- Guiding parameters:
  - Strategies must focus on protecting sustainability
  - Bounded by protecting human health
- Three subgroups established: Water Quality, Harvest Restrictions, and Geoduck Population Enhancement

### **III. Report out from Subgroups**

- Water Quality subgroup
  - Held two meetings since the June Task Force Meeting.
  - Focused discussion on point priority list and unclassified area priority list.
  - Discussion of prioritization criteria and ranking of priority list. Gathered information to feed into technical memo and ranking method memo.
  - Unclassified areas requires a different set of criteria and considerations.
- Harvest Restrictions subgroup did not meet.
  - Technical Memo incorporates the work of this subgroup.
- Enhancement subgroup
  - Annotated outline was distributed. Enhancement will be subject of the next Task Force meeting in October.
  - Confluence conducted follow up with individuals for pilot projects and topics to build out the factsheet and report.

### **IV. Outfall Ranking Method Memorandum (circulated 9/20/24)**

- Confluence gathered available data and information to prioritize locations through the following:
  - Publicly available GIS and other data
  - Information provided by subgroup members
  - Information from agency representatives, including DOH, Ecology, WDFW, DNR

- Ensure that the criteria meet the need of prioritization effort and consideration of information received. Additional information would have been great to include, though difficult to obtain.
- Scored locations based on data received, no weighting applied. This resulted in a prioritized list of WWTPs.
- Criteria used:
  - Acreage potential: tract area that may be opened through efforts to improve water quality. This was primarily a GIS exercise to obtain the area of overlap between DOH growing area prohibited and geoduck tracts.
  - Necessary remedies and cost: consider technical feasibility and identification of remedies at WWTP, including considerations of likely cost. Information on the cost of technical solutions was limited for this criterion.
  - Stakeholder support: information on local support, remedies would require capital improvements to the facilities. Not able to identify meaningful information, so not included in scoring but identified as an important factor.
  - Number of co-managers
  - Reasons for closure: noted reasons for prohibited areas, such as WWTP, boating/marina, or other reasons
  - Ancillary benefits: other benefits associated with improvement of water quality in the location
  - Tract value: survey information, density, recovery information
  - Remedies to increase harvest currently planned: work underway at a treatment plant to specifically address geoduck harvest.
- Discussion on criteria:
  - Is acreage including all acreage of tract or just overlap with closure zones?
    - Just overlap with prohibited areas.
- Prioritized WWTPs (8 total)
  1. Taylor Bay STP
  2. Miller Creek WWTP, Lakota WWTP, Chambers Creek WWTP, and Redondo WWTP
  3. Central Kitsap Treatment
  4. Olympic Water and Sewer Inc
  5. Midway Sewer District
  - Ranked by facility rather than tract.
  - Scores were averaged if there were multiple tracts affected by one WWTP facility.
- Discussion on list of prioritized WWTPs:
  - Taylor Bay and known capacity of remedies – concern around potentially double counting information.
  - Data used to score facilities and the total scores are included in circulated draft materials as appendices to the ranking method memorandum.
  - Given limited data, there are a lot of different ways things could be scored. If the goal is to allocate funding to get things done, it might not be possible to do it now with this list. If funding were to be allocated, there should be an attempt to fill out the knowledge gaps. This may not be the best available data to base funding decisions.
    - Confluence will provide an adequate caveat in the memo for this. Perhaps funding is allocated to help fill some of those gaps.

- Please see language before recommendations in the memo. It might be helpful to have a recommendation to do further data investigation
- Recommendations:
  1. Work with stakeholders to continue to address the unpredictability and hydraulic overloading at the Redondo Beach WWTP. DOH has funded an alternatives analysis and Ecology has issued an administrative order and timeline for correction.
  2. Provide funding and support for surveys at the Three Tree Point and Dumas Bay tracts to better understand the current geoduck density.
  3. Conduct feasibility studies at the Miller Creek, Lakota, and Chambers Creek WWTPs to elucidate possible options to reduce the size of the Prohibited areas. Note that a consideration to address issues at the Redondo WWTP is diverting flow to the Lakota WWTP; options at the Lakota WWTP should consider this potential increase in flow.
    - These recommendations were based off of the priority list of tracts and include additional specificity for recommended next steps.
- Discussion on recommendations:
  - Is there any concern with not engaging municipalities for this yet in conducting facility improvements?
    - Haven't envisioned having conversations with treatment plant operators within this task force effort. Coordination would likely happen afterwards.
  - Seems like high-level analysis and other WWTPs are not included in this. Tulalip has a lot of tracts that have a high need of repair.
    - Confluence will follow up with Tulalip to discuss any additional WWTPs that should be included on the priority list.
  - Is larger list still available? Are tracts previously listed still being considered?
    - Yes, these tracts are included in the appendices of the documents.
  - Competing interest in needs – a lot of recommendations will be needing to refine what happens at treatment plants and next steps. There are many steps in between, which would allow other areas to work their way into consideration.
  - Could see element of feasibility study with stakeholder buy-in, local support, etc. It would be helpful to provide a notice to municipalities on what this report to legislature means in advance of submitting to legislature. Ecology could give them a courtesy notification.

## V. Review of Technical Memo (circulated on 9/20/24)

### a. Water Quality

- Full discussion of water quality effects is provided in the Technical Memorandum.
- Information on regulatory authorities associated with point sources is described in memo but analysis is completed and described in the Ranking Method Memorandum.
  - i. **Nonpoint source pollution**
    - Impact of nonpoint and discussion of Poverty Bay.
    - NSSP regulations were based on short-lived species vs. long-lived species of geoduck.
    - Discussion:
      - Potential for geoduck to be relayed. A change in rule would be required for relay from Prohibited area to change seed size.

- Could change classification of area from approved to unclassified or restricted, where there's no harvester effort.
- Would like to bring WDFW enforcement in to bring in science for movement of shellfish from unclassified to unclassified.
- In a restricted classification, shellfish can be relayed to an approved or conditionally approved area. Moving shellfish from an unclassified or prohibited area would not be allowed, would need to change the rule to do that.
- Relay is typically for selling right away, others may be referring to enhancement.
- Recommendation: Provide funding for studies and pilot projects, as appropriate, to create rules and regulations for relay of geoduck. Current NSSP regulations are based on information specific to short-lived shellfish species and not necessarily applicable to geoduck.
  - Second sentence needs to be revised. Confluence to loop back in with Scott/DOH.
  - Also consider whether it would be practical for geoduck to survive relay. Is there a way to hold them to last through relay?

**ii. Unclassified areas**

- Information was received for both classified and unclassified areas.
- Gathered information and data to understand feasibility and pathway to classification (included in Tech Memo appendix table):
  - Tract acreage
  - Available geoduck density
  - Proximity to WWTP outfall or other point source pollution
  - Timeline to classification
  - Solution identified
  - Ancillary benefits
- Worked with subgroup members and agencies to gather available information and data. Geoduck density depended on survey information.
- Tech memo describes process for classification.
- Examples are provided to capture different ways to get through classification process.
- Example: historically Approved area
  - Colvos Rocks East and Tala Point tracts
  - Reactivation of marine water quality sampling stations would allow for area to be conditionally approved. Request made to DOH would allow this.
- Example: area adjacent to Approved area
  - Big Hunter Recovery Bed and Weist Windmill tracts
  - If marine water quality sampling has been conducted, it would be quick process to complete addendum and classification upgrade
- Example: classification process in progress, based on harvest interest

- Foulweather Bluff, Foulweather, Foulweather 1, and Foulweather 2 tracts
- Marine water quality sampling in process, and shoreline survey is scheduled to begin next year
- Example: ongoing work to address point sources
  - Richmond Beach and West Point tracts
  - Discussion in tech memo describes work that has been done to date and coordination necessary to provide information for classification
  - Required engagement with local sewer district
- Recommendations:
  1. Providing funding for the Shoreline Sewer District to upgrade monitoring and telemetry equipment to improve predictability and enable classification of the Richmond Beach tract.
  2. Reinitiating marine water quality sampling at stations near the Colvos Rocks East and Tala Point tracts to allow for the tracts to be Conditionally Approved, based on co-manager interest.
  3. Increasing capacity for the marine water quality sampling necessary to classify a shellfish growing area through partnerships and funding, as available. Tribal and other support can halve the time required for DOH alone to conduct sampling (from 5 years to 2.5 years).
  4. Prioritizing classification efforts for tracts that are outside the zone of influence of WWTPs or other known point sources of pollution.
    - First two are more specific to tracts, third is more broad, fourth is for prioritizing.
- Discussion on unclassified areas:
  - Tribes already participate in water sampling to maintain classified areas and to classify new areas. We would need state or other sources of funding to fund DOH so that they can take on more than they can now. Ownership is not on tribes for these areas. It would be the state's responsibility to address issues with the water quality in these unclassified locations. Would want the funds to be allocated to the agency and for the state to do the work.
  - Support is needed to speed up water quality sampling. Could potentially build capacity at DOH, but DOH does not have that right now.
  - Suggest adjusting third recommendation to remove tribal support from language.
  - From chat: WDFW doesn't have a ton of spare capacity, but we have been able to find some for water sampling from time to time and we would be willing to explore that where it makes sense. It is at least worth exploring.
    - Chris Eardley volunteers to have that conversation internally at WDFW.

- Tribes are already spending a lot of money helping the state in various ways and different fisheries. Preferred if it isn't expected, but would like to support where they can.

**b. Harvest Restrictions**

- Summarizing harvest restrictions topics discussed in previous subgroup and Task Force meetings, including surveys/resurveys, eelgrass, macroalgae, and the 200-yard rule.
- Confluence provided a brief overview of some of the main takeaways from the harvest restrictions sections and reviewed recommendations.
- Previously opened up discussion of eelgrass restrictions and introduced concept of potentially providing flexibility in restriction, particularly where there are smaller tracts stitched together to create a large harvest area and a eelgrass depth restriction applied across the tract.
  - Technical Memorandum captures this discussion.
- There is ongoing work for understanding the impacts of geoduck harvest on macroalgal habitats and species that DFW is conducting, as well as other discussions and potentially more work that could be conducted to better understand the interaction between the geoduck fishery and herring spawning habitat.
- Recommendations:
  1. Provide funding for targeted geoduck surveys for the following:
    - Conduct resurveying of areas that have not been surveyed for 10 or more years.
    - Pilot project or investigation to explore using newer methods or technologies (e.g., ROV or sonar).
    - Provide funding for research into developing a new or updated show plot method that will consider environmental conditions compared to show.
  2. Statutory amendment to the 200-yard rule: “... Vessels conducting harvest operations must remain seaward of a line two hundred yards seaward from and parallel to the line of ordinary high tide eighteen feet below mean lower low water (0.0 ft) or the shallowest edge of the harvest area, whichever is deeper.”

**c. Management Framework**

- Framework used to manage the fishery relies on key assumptions to set harvest rates that also protect the population. There's a lot of connectivity and interplay between the priorities identified in the task force and the management frameworks under consideration between the co-managers of the fishery.
- Stock assessment
  - There is error associated with show factor, whether determined in the field or the default (75%) is used; this error is not incorporated into the error associated with final population estimate.
  - Investigation of methods to improve show factor to improve biomass estimates.
- Lower than predicted recovery/recruitment
  - Large spatial variability in recruitment and recovery rates.
  - Uncertainties around factors affecting geoduck recruitment and survival are discussed in Wild Stock Geoduck Enhancement Factsheet.
- Management strategies

- Ongoing discussions (outside of task force) of multiple management frameworks under consideration.

**d. Recap of Recommendations**

- See recommendations from the above sections.

**VI. Discussion of agendas and deliverables for October task force meeting**

- There will be an opportunity for the Task Force to review and provide comments on the Enhancement Factsheet.
- The final Task Force meeting will be a focused discussion on the Enhancement Factsheet. Confluence will circulate the draft document in advance of the meeting.

**VII. Action items and close out**

- Task Force to provide written feedback on draft deliverables.
- Incorporate revisions and written feedback