



**To:** Clean Water Commission

**From:** Devan Rostorfer, Clean Water Division Manager

**Date:** April 4, 2024

**Subject:** Division Report – Clean Water Commission – April 2024

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## Greetings Clean Water Commission,

I hope you are all enjoying the warm sunshine and blooming flowers as we begin our slow transition into a beautiful and lush spring in the Pacific Northwest. While we all know that April showers bring May flowers (and even more importantly - April showers help recharge the instream flows necessary to sustain our Lower Columbia salmon populations) it is nice to have a reprieve from the rainy weather as we enjoy longer, sunnier days with friends and family, and more hours working in the garden getting ready to plant native plants, crops, flowers, or whatever it is that you choose to cultivate at home this summer.

Regardless of how much of a green thumb you have, I hope each of you has had a happy Spring Equinox and if you were celebrating Easter, Holi, Purim, Ramadan, or other celebrations this past month – I wish each of you a blossoming spring as we transition into summer.

Clean Water Division has been very busy this first quarter of 2024. A big focus for our work has been on all things Lacamas and Vancouver Lakes! We are very excited to be reaching some critical milestones to organize and formalize all of the necessary contracts and agreements to get to work. This includes finalizing an interlocal agreement with the City of Camas for long term work in the Lacamas Watershed and Lake, and also finalizing the county's agreement with Department of Ecology to begin Vancouver Lake work. We look forward to giving you a more detailed update on all of the recent momentum around lake work at our April meeting and getting ready for a busy summer with all eyes on Clark County's lakes.

Our division has also been deeply ingrained in what is probably our most important effort this year which is the Clean Water Division's rate study. The purpose of this rate study is to identify how much funding the Clean Water Division needs to provide all of the services needed, and then determine how much this will cost for ratepayers. Through this effort we have been asking ourselves – what services are mandatory that we must be implemented to remain in compliance with environmental regulations and how much do those mandatory activities costs? Additionally, we have been asking ourselves what services do we want to provide that are beyond normal compliance activities, to continue to move our division forward on leading practices to protect and restore water quality in Clark County? While we still have a long way to go, we are excited to share many updates with you regarding the Clean Water Division's rate study including upcoming milestones for public involvement and some of the policy decision milestones that will be in the hands of Clark County Council. To learn about what clean water services are most important to the public, our division recently launched a [survey](#) which we are asking residents of Clark County to complete by Earth Day on April 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Other areas where our team has been working hard is the capital planning, asset management, and inventory side of our program. Staff are currently in the field mapping all of Clark County's ditches and culverts, and staff are beginning to develop new pilot programs to begin essential pipe inspections later this year so we can move towards building a comprehensive pipe asset management program focused on maintaining and repairing aging infrastructure before it fails. Furthermore, capital staff are getting ready for new stormwater design and implementation projects, as we

continue to apply for grant funding to help increase our division's capacity for more projects. This includes pursuing funding for grants to help restore salmon bearing streams and also looking at new community based public private partnership models to explore different project delivery methods for stormwater capital improvements.

Our division is also actively preparing for new stormwater permit requirements later this year, which will affect what our division is required to do between 2024 to 2029. This includes new requirements for mapping and setting policies around tree canopy in Clark County and starting to think ahead about new requirements related to work with fire districts to manage PFAS in firefighting foams, as well as, developing new source control practices to reduce PCB pollution from old building materials in our environment.

To prepare for these new requirements, staff are working on a new interlocal agreement between all of the jurisdictions that participate in the Stormwater Partners for Southwest Washington group, and we are already beginning to think about which subwatersheds we should focus detailed stormwater planning work in, and where there are potential opportunities for stormwater retrofits on WSDOT roads in Clark County for potential future investments through the Move Ahead Washington program focused on implementing retrofits to reduce 6-PPDQ pollution near salmon bearing streams. Our team is also getting ready for an update the Clark County's Stormwater Code and Manual, which drives all of the development regulations in the County. Update of this Manual will require close coordination with Clark County's Development Engineering Advisory Board (DEAB), the Planning Commission, and Council.

At the same time, our monitoring staff are in the field collecting all of the data necessary to keep track of stream health, hydrology, and habitat, while helping us identify areas that have water quality challenges to focus implementation efforts. Pollution prevention, source control, and private stormwater facility staff also have regular inspections and technical assistance efforts underway to help businesses and homeowners' associations learn best practices to protect clean water. Staff are also making progress building environmental justice considerations into our work so that we can better reach underserved communities in Clark County.

To make sure we are keeping the Clean Water Commission ahead of the curve, our division has put together a proposed annual plan for what we hope to achieve with the Clean Water Commission at each meeting in 2024. It is truly an exciting year for the Clean Water Division with more opportunities for public involvement underway including multiple virtual and in-person open houses. We are also excited to host a Clean Water Commission and Clark County Council bus tour in July in partnership with CTRAN! And finally, we cannot forget the important Vancouver Lake Symposium coming in October 2024, which will be planned and hosted in partnership with the Clean Water Commission's leadership.

As always please let me know if you have any questions, concerns, or ideas for the Clean Water Division. My door is open, and I enjoy visitors. See you on Wednesday April 4, 2024, at 6:30 p.m.

**Happy spring & thank you for your commitment to clean water,**

**Devan Rostorfer** she/her/hers  
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## Clean Water Division Summary – April 2024

### Clean Water Commission

The Clean Water Commission recently experienced resignation of three members of the Commission. We want to thank Matt Jones, Bob Trost, and Jeff Kessenich for their service to the commission over the past years. To fill vacancies, Glen DeWillie and Tracy Ceravolo were appointed to the Clean Water Commission in March. Glen and Tracy originally applied and were interviewed for seats on the Commission back in December. For the April meeting, the Commission will appoint a new chair and vice chair. We will ask for Commission input on a strategy to fill the remaining vacant seat and a timeline for appointing someone into that role. The following is a summary of Glen and Tracy's credentials.

- **Glen R. DeWillie's** career has focused on water resources and environmental stewardship. It spans over 24 years of military and public service and two decades in the private sector. He ended his career as a vice president at Kleinschmidt Associates in Portland. Glen has been a Stream Team volunteer and instructor for tree planting and restoration projects. He serves as a volunteer water quality sampler at Lacamas Lake. He also records potential barriers and spawning habitat for salmonids in the E. Fork Lewis River and Kalama River drainages for Trout Unlimited Barrier Assessment Team. He's also active in the VA Gardens program in Vancouver and for the Clark County food bank. He is a licensed Professional Engineer with a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering/GIS minor from West Point, NY, and Master of Science, Civil (Environmental) Engineering from Stanford University.
- **Tracy Ceravolo** is a landscape architect who has designed and installed landscapes focusing on biodiversity and native vegetation since 1994. She is passionate about conservation, environmental stewardship, and creating climate resilience in the local community. Since 2017, she has spearheaded the National Drive Electric Week activities locally. Tracy serves on the board for the Clark Conservation District and is a certification volunteer for Portland Audubon's Backyard Habitat program in Clark County. She is a small farm owner in the Gee Creek watershed. She has a Bachelor of Science in Horticulture from Montana State University.

### Vancouver Lake Implementation

Clean Water Division is requesting Council approval to sign a \$330,000 one-time-grant from the Department of Ecology to implement the Vancouver Lake Management Plan to address harmful algal bloom issues and to improve water quality in Vancouver Lake. This approval is currently scheduled for April 16, 2024. This funding was made available through a legislative proviso and must be spent by June 30, 2025.

The scope of work was developed in partnership with Friends of Vancouver Lake, Port of Vancouver, Department of Ecology, and Clark County Public Health.

Work to be included in the grant includes:

1. Vancouver Lake Technical Advisory Group (TAG) facilitation.
2. Public participation plan development.
3. Partnerships & funding strategy.
4. Lake treatment investigation & feasibility study.
5. Lake flushing improvement study.
6. Watershed management implementation.

The Clean Water Division is planning to contract with Herrera Environmental Consultants to implement the scope of work. The final consultant contract is expected to be submitted to council for approval in May 2024. Coordination between Clark County Clean Water, Parks, and Public Health is underway. Clean Water Division has also met with the Vancouver Lake Rowing Club and is attending the Friends of Vancouver Lake board meeting on May 20<sup>th</sup> to go over the next phase of Vancouver Lake work. The Technical Advisory Group is expected to reengage regular meetings in summer 2024, with a Vancouver Lake Symposium planned for October this year.

The following activities are priorities for work under the Proviso by June 30, 2025.

**1. Framework for Vancouver Lake Management Special District & Governance Structure.**

- a. The Consultant will provide a framework to establish a Vancouver Lake Management special district to serve as a dedicated funding source and governance structure to support long-term implementation.

**2. Beach Algaecide Treatment Implementation Plan**

- a. The consultant will further investigate and recommend a beach algaecide treatment methodology.
- b. The consultant will develop an implementation plan for beach algaecide treatment with the goal to achieve permit issuance to enable beach algaecide treatment as early as summer 2024.

**3. Alternatives Analysis**

- a. The consultant will enhance and refine the VLMP model and complete updated hydrologic and/or hydraulic modeling to support conceptual design and alternatives analysis to improve Vancouver Lake flushing.
- b. The consultant will complete preliminary scoping and produce conceptual design drawings.
- c. The consultant will consult appropriate permitting authorities to assess feasibility.

**Lacamas Implementation**

The Interlocal Agreement Between Clark County and the City of Camas to *Develop a Long-Term Partnership for Management of the Lacamas Watershed and Lacamas/Round Lakes* has been submitted for Council's approval on May 7, 2024. This Interlocal Agreement (ILA) establishes a formal framework for Clark County and the City of Camas to work together to address water quality issues in the Lacamas Watershed and Lacamas/Round Lakes. Key elements of the ILA six 6 different sections starting first with an ILA Purpose, followed by a task focused on establishing a joint vision and charter for Clark county and camas coordination, followed by a call to create a formal technical advisory group for future work, as wells as areas where there are opportunities for joint public outreach and agency partnerships, policy initiatives we can work together, as well as work plans for Clark county and camas individually, as well as near term and ongoing joint workplans for us to achieve together.

This ILA will be updated every 2 years, and each year the County and City will stablish a workplan for implementation. Completed activities will be documented in an annual report, with updates to be provided to Council as frequently as requested. City of Camas is planning to approve the final ILA at a Council meeting on May 6, 2024. Policy considerations include future discussion regarding potential funding commitments to implement lake management activities. Currently, the Clean Water Division has no funding in its budget for lake treatment or for additional water quality improvement projects in the Lacamas Watershed. Clark County and Camas intend to work together on a legislative funding request in 2024.

**Clean Water Division 2024 Rate Study**

The Clean Water division is responsible for protecting and restoring water quality in streams, rivers, and lakes in Clark County. To do this, we manage stormwater, which is the water that runs off of streets, parking lots and buildings when it rains. Stormwater runoff is the number one way that pollution enters waterways. Activities of each person living and working in Clark County affects the health of nearby waterbodies.

To manage stormwater runoff, Clean Water builds, operates, and maintains drainage infrastructure to prevent flooding on roads and to remove harmful pollution before it enters rivers and lakes. We also collect water quality data, provide education and outreach opportunities for schools and residents, and offer technical assistance for privately-owned stormwater facilities to prevent pollution. Privately-owned facilities are usually the responsibility of businesses or homeowner's associations.

To comply with new federal and state requirements, Clean Water is preparing to update service offerings starting in the summer of 2024. To financially support these new services, Clean Water is completing a clean water fees study to determine how Clark County's existing clean water fees need to change. The last time clean water fees were studied was in 2014. Clean water fees are paid by property owners as part of their property taxes.

Clark County has a Phase I NPDES Municipal Stormwater Permit which requires the county to implement a variety of projects and programs to protect and restore water quality in rivers, lakes, and streams. To financially support these activities, municipalities typically collect a clean water fee. Today, Clark County has the lowest fee compared to other permitted counties and cities in Western Washington.

In general, the clean water fee is calculated based on the total cost to implement clean water services that are provided. This fee is charged differently for single family residential, multi-family residential, and non-residential lots. For residential lots, the clean water fee is based on the number of housing units on the property. Currently, properties in rural areas of the county have a lower clean water fees than properties in the urban growth area. For non-residential properties, the clean water fee is based on the quantity of impervious (or hard) surfaces on the property. Hard surfaces may include pavement, buildings, roofs, or graveled surfaces. The fee is assessed for every unit of hard surface on a property; every 3,500 square feet of hard surface is one unit. Owners of roads and railroads also pay a clean water fee.

Currently the Clean water Division is completing a Clean Water Rate Study to determine what services the Division needs to provide, how much those services cost, and how much it will cost ratepayers to implement those services. The following is an overview of Rate Study milestones.

- **April 3, 2024** – Receive Clean Water Commission input on what clean water services is important to the Commission.
- **April 24, 2024** - Present results from the Clean Water Divisions survey on what Clean Water Services are important to the public. Provide Council with opportunity to provide input on what clean water services are important to you.
- **May 22, 2024** – Receive council input on cost estimates for mandated, recommended, and optional services and what to include in final rate estimates.
- **June 5, 2024** - Receive Clean Water Commission input on cost estimates for mandated, recommended, and optional services and draft rate estimates.
- **June 26, 2024** – Receive council input on different rate estimate scenarios to consider for a final adoption in August.
- **July 2024** – Clean Water Commission & Clark County Council bus tour. Public open house on Clean Water Rate Study.
- **August 2024** – Target for final rate adoption (implementation in 2025).

### **Clean Water Survey – What services are most important to you?**

The Clean Water Division is asking residents for input about which programs, activities and services are most important to them via a survey opening March 26. This information will be used to guide planning efforts to update our service offerings. The survey asks residents why rivers and lakes are important to them and how we should protect and improve water quality. It also asks how much they value various services provided by Clean Water, like street sweeping and leaf disposal coupons.

The survey is open March 25 through April 22 and is available at [bit.ly/CleanWaterSurvey](https://bit.ly/CleanWaterSurvey). Residents can also take the survey over the phone or request a paper copy by contacting Alice Millward at [alice.millward@clark.wa.gov](mailto:alice.millward@clark.wa.gov) or 564.397.5267, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday and every other Friday. The survey is also available in [Spanish](#), [Russian](#) and [Ukrainian](#). The survey is anonymous, but those who participate can choose to provide their name and contact information to be entered into a prize raffle.

### **Education and Outreach**

The following is a summary of past, ongoing, and upcoming education and outreach activities implemented by the Clean Water Division.

#### **Past outreach events:**

- Our Lady of Lourdes school presentation – March 6.
- Odyssey Middle School salmon project panel – March 15.

#### **Upcoming outreach events:**

- Clark County Green Schools Student Summit – April 11, 2024, Clean Water will lead activities on watersheds and stormwater with EarthGen staff.
- Kline Kids Fish Derby – April 12-13 Clean Water plans to have booth at event.
- Heritage Farm Wetland Restoration Open House – April 22.
- Clark PUD Home and Garden Idea Fair – April 27-28 Clark County Public Works will have booth.
- Multicultural Resource Fair – June 1, 2024, Clark County Public Works will have table.
- Clean Rivers Coalition Forum – June 5, 2024, at Keizer Civic Center. Details coming soon.
- Dog Paw Bark n Park – June 8, 2024, Clean Water (Canines for Clean Water) considering co-tabling with Clark CD (Poop Smart Clark).

#### **Ongoing outreach efforts:**

- Stormwater Partners:
  - Students for Clean Water Video Contest – submissions due April 22. Share with students you know! <https://www.stormwaterpartners.com/video-contest>
  - Cities reviewing interlocal agreement and workplan.
  - Exploring possible collaboration on next year's stormwater permit behavior change requirements.
- Student Watershed Monitoring Network planning for culminating event in late May or early June at the Water Resources Education Center. Idea is to have participants share posters of their findings and invite teachers and families.
- Backyard Habitat Certification Program - updated their web resource library to allow for searchable results: <https://backyardhabitats.org/resource-library/>
- New Interlocal Agreement with WSU Extension – awaiting signatures from WSU.
- Ecology grant – listed as funded, still pending legislative funding approval. May include:
  - Fund Follow the Water digital marketing.
  - Changing Currents tribal engagement.
  - What's Your Lawn Style fertilizer/pesticide reduction behavior change campaign.
  - Latinx landscape professional fertilizer/pesticide reduction training.
- Completed Canines for Clean Water pet waste behavior change report and submitted with the 2023 annual report to Ecology, available at (p. 147): <https://clark.wa.gov/public-works/stormwater-management/regulations>
- Clean River Coalition:
  - Updated website: <https://followthewater.info/>
  - Planning for an in-person forum in first half of 2024.
  - Continuing What's Your Lawn Style behavior change work.