



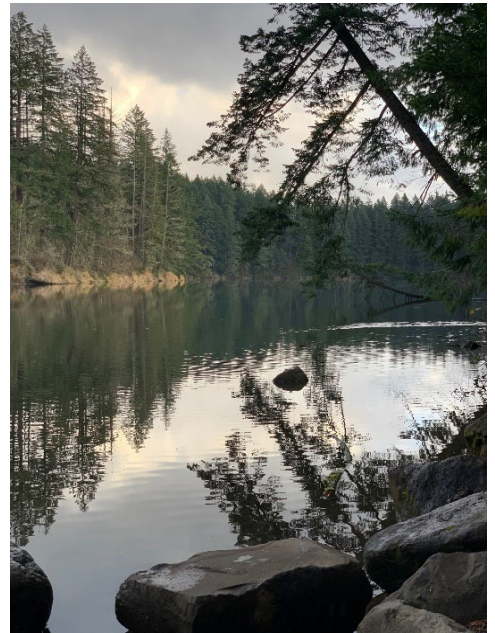
# Clean Water Commission

# ANNUAL REPORT

Clean Water Division

2022 REPORT

Approved June 7, 2023



# Clark County Clean Water Commission

## 2022 Annual Report



### 2022 Commissioners

**Brendan Addis, Chair**  
**Matthew Jones, Vice Chair**  
**Michelle Girts**  
**Rodger Hauge**  
**Jeff Kessenich**

**Marie LaManna**  
**Sandra Martin-Boehm**  
**Joshua Seeds**  
**Robert Trost**

On behalf of the Clark County Clean Water Commission, I approve the 2022 Annual Report to the Clark County Councilors.

*Brendan Addis*  
Brendan Addis, 2022 CWC Chair

**June 7, 2023**  
Dated



# Clark County Clean Water Commission

## 2022 Annual Report

### Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	4
Mission Statement.....	5
Meetings.....	6
<i>Special Meetings</i> .....	6
Community Involvement, Events and Education .....	6
Accomplishments.....	7
Challenges.....	8
2023 Action Plan.....	9
Recommendations.....	10
Summary.....	10
Appendix A: CWC Meeting Attendance.....	11
Appendix B: Adopted Strategic Plan.....	12
Appendix C: CWC Meeting Agendas.....	13



Subhash Poudyal

# Clark County Clean Water Commission

## 2022 Annual Report



### Executive Summary

In January 2022, three new commissioners and one current commissioner were appointed to serve on the Clean Water Commission (CWC). The commission met for six regularly scheduled business meetings and two regularly scheduled “special” educational meetings.

The Clean Water Commission’s 2022 areas of focus were:

1. Starting to develop specific action plans aligning with the CWC Mission and Strategic Plan.
2. Learning about the NPDES Phase 1 permit requirements, the Clean Water Division responsibilities, and the findings from the Stream Health Report in order to better assist staff and the county leadership in the future.
3. Develop new commissioner training curriculum and provide a history of the organization.
4. Explore how best to develop and build upon existing regional partnerships relating to stormwater, watershed education and inclusivity /environmental justice issues.
5. Each work group is pursuing their own specific projects such as the creek renaming project.

This annual report details the mission, vision, and values, scheduled meeting topics, accomplishments, action plans, and recommendations for the upcoming year. The Clean Water Commission will continue to advise the Clean Water Division, County Manager and Clark County Council on stormwater issues.

## Clean Water Mission and Vision Statements

### Mission

The Clean Water Commission's mission is to collaborate with Clark County residents, government entities, businesses, and non-profit organizations to enhance water quality, improve flow, and protect the ecological integrity of our watersheds.

### Vision

A Clark County with self-sustaining and healthy watersheds that benefit the county's human communities, wildlife, and environment.

The members of the Clean Water Commission will in all actions and recommendations strive to achieve healthy watersheds throughout Clark County and to ensure the integrity of the water cycle, guided by best available science. The CWC recognizes the importance of the community's needs, recommending practical actions that are feasible within Clark County.

The Clean Water Commission seeks to cultivate a more informed community, recognizing that all Clark County surface waters that flow to the Columbia River derive from watersheds entirely contained within Clark County (with the exception of several healthy headwaters). Therefore, improving our local water quality and quantity management practices yield environmental benefits both locally across the County and downstream in the Columbia River.

### Core Values

- Stewardship
- Cooperation
- Transparency





## Meetings

The continuing pandemic presented significant obstacles to normal operations of holding meetings, public outreach, and educational field trips in 2022. However, the commission maintained a regular schedule of video and hybrid meetings that allowed for a fairly productive year. Prior to October, they met only virtually. At the Oct. 5 meeting, the commission was able to start to holding hybrid (in-person and virtual) meetings in the Public Service Center Conference Room 698 and via Webex software. The Clean Water Commission's strategic plan helped guide the body and helped give framework for discussing stormwater impacts and the Clean Water programs within Clark County's jurisdiction. For meeting topics and action items, please see Appendix B which contains the 2022 meeting agendas. Overall, the meeting attendance was excellent with only a few of the commissioners having conflicts.

The public was encouraged to participate in the Clean Water Commission meetings in following ways:

- Attend in person at the Public Service Center in Conference Room #698 (hybrid option only).
- Submit written comments to [cleanwater@clark.wa.gov](mailto:cleanwater@clark.wa.gov) by noon the day of the meeting.
- Attend the meeting by calling (408) 418-9388 and then entering the meeting's access code.
- Attend via virtually by clicking on the link that was provided on the website and the agendas.

This information was published on the county's website, on the meeting agendas, and in the meeting announcement which is published in the newspaper of record.

## Special Meetings

The Clean Water Commission held two regularly scheduled special meetings on Mar. 30, and Oct. 5, 2022, to allow for presentations and more in-depth discussions on various topics. The spring meeting was held virtually due to the continued pandemic restrictions. The fall meeting was the first hybrid (virtual and in-person) meeting format, and this format is expected to be the normal course of business for the foreseeable future.

In the future, they plan to continue scheduling at least two additional "special" meetings each year (ideally one in Spring and one in Fall) where they can dedicate more time for educational presentations or to work on projects such as facilitating a multi-jurisdictional workshop focusing on watershed health.

The 2022 stormwater facility educational tour was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The safety and feasibility of conducting the tour will be revisited in 2023.

## Community Involvement, Events, and Education

The Clean Water Commissioners strive to be active in the community through volunteering on various environmentally focused and water quality boards, in community engagement and service events. This year, they have decided not to break out monthly their activities in the community. Some examples of their community involvement includes volunteering with the Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership, Friends of Trees, the Vancouver Urban Tree Board, at neighborhood associations and at local schools, Friends of Vancouver Lake and Friends of Lacamas Lake, and providing lake water quality data. The commissioners are committed to increasing their knowledge of current stormwater best management practices through staff presentations, stakeholder workshops and professional development conferences. The pandemic

continues to have a dampening effect on the level of engagement for in-person events, but there is hope for 2023 and the increasing levels of opportunities that will become available.

## 2022 Accomplishments

### **The Clean Water Commission as a whole has:**

Created the framework to develop annual goals that align with the commission's strategic plan.

- Presented 2021 Annual Report to Council in May.
- Reviewed and gave feedback to staff on the 2022 Stormwater Management Plan, 2022 Stream Health Report and the Clean Water 6 Year Capital Plans.
- Assisted preparing 2022 Clean Water Commission Annual Report.
- Interviewed and recommended new and renewed commissioners for upcoming terms.
- Created a work group to review and draft amendments to the bylaws.
- Started to explore how to connect Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) and Environmental Justice concepts to the Clean Water Commission's mission of to collaborate with Clark County residents, government entities, businesses, and non-profit organizations to enhance water quality, improve flow, and protect the ecological integrity of our watersheds.
- Ensured that all members received Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA) training.

### **The Partnerships Work Group:**

- Identified opportunities for further communication with county engagement staff, potential partner organizations and on local projects.
- Drafted an annual mission and goals document.
- Discussed further ways of meaningfully engaging with community groups associated with environmental justice and overburdened populations.

### **The Education and Outreach Work Group:**

- Drafted an annual action plan that focuses on other educational opportunities since most of the public activities continued to be canceled in 2022.
- Planned to attend Neighborhood Associations Council of Clark County (NACC) meetings and other community events whenever possible.
- Developed a new commissioner training presentation and materials to assist with staff presentation. This will help alleviate the steep learning curve associated with the subject matter.
- Continued compiling the history of the Clean Water Commission.

### **The Research Work Group:**

- Developed a new guiding plan to look at potential research projects relating to water quality and stormwater. This plan identifies issues which can be specific in scope or very broad.
- The research group offered to assist the Columbia River Partners with developing their household lawn care and pesticide impact campaign.
- Continued to work with the Chinese American communities on the "Creek Naming" project which is focused on China Ditch and Shanghai Creek.
- Met with the County Historical Preservation Commission regarding the Creek Naming subcommittee's work and aligning it with the CHPC's goals.

## 2022 Challenges

### COVID-19 Pandemic Continues to Create Challenges

The global pandemic continued to create significant obstacles to the normal program of meetings, work groups, public outreach and any educational field trips for the commission. Most in-person public meetings were still canceled due to state health and safety guidelines for most of the year. The commission was able to hold virtual meetings which were advertised and open to the public to attend. In October, the commission started meeting in a hybrid (in-person and video) format. The commission will look at ways to increase opportunities to build upon the unique solutions that have been adopted to date.

### Other Challenges

The Clean Water Commission continues to adjust to commissioner turnover and members' ability, or lack thereof, to fully participate in more than the regular meetings. Momentum is easily lost due to the every-other month schedule, so the commissioners must take initiative to stay on track and be active in the work groups, with staff and in the community. The commission is looking for innovative solutions whenever possible.



Three new Clean Water Commissioners started in January 2022 and another in October 2021 which meant that more than half of the commission had less than one term of experience on this advisory body. To better educate the commission on the Clean Water Division, there have been staff presentations regarding education and community engagement, the Phase 1 NPDES Permit, the private stormwater facility inspection program, stream monitoring and assessment group's work which was highlighted in the Stream Health Report, the business pollution prevention program (local source control), and the 2022 and 2023 six-year Clean Water capital plans. These presentations and collaborations are expected to continue.

As members of the community, receiving timely information regarding county policy decision making and processes through traditional means has seemed to be more difficult than in the past. The commission encourages proactive communication with the public at all levels. The Clean Water Commission would like to be more proactive and informed to provide better advise to county staff and leadership. This also includes creating a greater and more diverse ability to reach more disproportionately impacted populations and focusing on the environmental justice aspect of its mission.

The multiple changes in leadership and staffing throughout the Public Works Department and the delayed hiring process for the Clean Water Division Manager position have also continued to be a significant challenge for the commission, staff, managers, and the public. The Clean Water 20-year capital plan development was delayed due to these changes. The Clean Water Commission is very concerned about the lack of adequate staffing levels in the Clean Water Division and other key positions in Public Works such as project management, engineering, inspections, road operations since many support the work of Clean Water. The staffing levels have not kept up with the astronomical increases of home and business growth in Clark County over the past decade, as well as the shear amount of infrastructure the Clean Water Division is required to build, map, inspect and maintain. This lack of staff and increased number of facilities, capital project demands, and monitoring pressures are putting a huge burden on current staff and



not allowing the department to be proactive in their approach to immediate and long term needs. The Clean Water Commission greatly supports any increased staffing capacity so that Clark County may continue to be in compliance with the NPDES Permit as the county continues to grow.

## 2023 Action Plan

### Advisory Board Action Plan

The Clean Water Commission is advocating for the County to focus policy, planning, and projects with a greater emphasis on achieving healthy watersheds. In the past, the focus has been specific project based and not using a wider lens towards impacts many individual projects can have on the entire watershed. Keeping this in mind, the Clean Water Commission will continue to develop action plans to accompany the mission statement and make sure they align with Clean Water Division's goals and mission. The Work Groups will also align their individual goals to help support the Clean Water Commission's strategic plan.

The CWC will continue to proactively expand their understanding of the Clean Water Division by inviting staff presentations to include the Clean Water Capital Plan, Clean Water Reforestation Program, and Code Compliance. The commission will also continue to encourage presentations from potential stakeholders to foster opportunities for partnerships and work to nurture positive collaboration whenever possible. They will continue to create archives and draft the advisory committee's history time allowing.

Clean Water Commission will increase visibility in the general Clark County community and supporting their strategic plan through Outreach and Partnership Work Groups' efforts. It will identify and work to influence funding and implementation of priorities in water quality research and capital infrastructure as identified by Clean Water staff and the Research Work Group.

### Partnerships Work Group Action Plan

- Increase frequency of meetings with current and potential Clark County Clean Water partners.
- Discuss opportunities to leverage funding for assets, projects, and activities with other stakeholders.
- Align annual work group goals to support the CWC strategic plan and the Clean Water Division's mission and objectives in areas such as environmental justice and lessening the negative impacts to overburdened populations.

### Education and Outreach Work Group Action Plan

- As needed, assist Clean Water staff at public outreach events and neighborhood meetings to educate the public in the importance of and the accepted practices to achieve clean water standards.
- Participate in outreach volunteer opportunities, pandemic permitting.
- Assist staff in training new commissioners and develop an educational handbook which illustrates the various NPDES permit terminology and stormwater facilities.
- Align goals to support the Clean Water Commission strategic plan and the Clean Water Division's mission and objectives.

## Research Work Group Action Plan

- Continue to research the historical origins of the local creek names China Ditch and Shanghai Creek; and with the local Chinese American partners ensure the names are appropriately respectful and reflective of the community and work towards developing meaningful community education.
- Identify areas of scientific or environmental concerns relating to water quality and stormwater which the CWC or staff could more actively pursue.
- Align work group goals to support the CWC strategic plan and the Clean Water Division's mission and objectives.

## Recommendations

Due to the rapidly increasing development occurring in the county, the Clean Water Commission recommends that the county manager and County Councilors provide greater support the Clean Water Division and Public Works Department by significantly increasing budgets and staffing levels to ensure the county can maintain NPDES permit compliance while helping to create the best quality of life for the Clark County community.

The Clean Water Commission recommends that the evaluation of potential and likely stormwater impacts, both at a project level and the cumulative impacts should be evaluated on a regional, whole-watershed basis early in zoning and land use planning activities, rather than solely at a project-by-project basis.

The commission advocates for the County and all local, state, and regional stakeholders to cooperatively work together as much as possible to lessen the negative effects of stormwater for overburdened communities, and strategically build upon the interdependent nature of this work. The commissioners would like clarification from the county manager and County Council on what their role should be in the above recommendations so that they can best provide support and guidance to the county policy makers and staff.

## Summary

The Clean Water Commission continues to define its role as a dedicated advisory board by creating targeted action plans and long-term goals, meeting with Clean Water staff on a regular basis to ensure that the board aligns its objectives to the Clean Water program goals. The commission is looking to identify new environmental justice partnerships and continued developing a respectful appreciation of our history-driven present.

## Acknowledgements

The Clean Water Commission has had a successful year of member engagement. Members were active in the community and continued to educate themselves to better serve the public. County staff attendance at meetings was informative and appreciated. The commission would like to acknowledge and thank the following Public Works and Clean Water staff for their support: Amber Emery, Ken Lader, Eva Haney, Justin Maynard, Brent Davis, Jeff Schnabel, Eric Lambert, Rod Swanson, Cary Armstrong, Rich Wanke, Marlena Milosevich, and Alice Millward.

## Appendix A: CWC Meeting Attendance

The current bylaws state that Commissioners shall attend 75% of regularly scheduled meetings and do not account for excused absences. March and October special meetings are not required attendance and are not included in required attendance percentages.

Commissioners	Jan	March	March	May	July	Sept	Oct*	Nov*	Total	%
Brendan Addis	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	A	5	83
Michelle Girts	P	A	P	A	A	P	P	P	3	50
Matt Jones	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	6	100
Marie LaManna	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	6	100
Rodger Hauge	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	6	83
Jeff Kessenich	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	6	100
Sandra Martin-Boehm	P	P	A	A	P	P	A	A	4	67
Joshua Seeds	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	6	100
Robert Trost	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	6	100

Present

Absent

Rescheduled meeting and absence not counted in total.

All meetings held via video conference from January through September due to covid restrictions.

\* Hybrid Meetings: Oct and Nov.





## Appendix B: Adopted Clean Water Commission Strategic Plan

### Mission

"The Clean Water Commission's mission is to collaborate with Clark County residents, government entities, businesses, and non-profit organizations to enhance water quality, improve flow, and protect the ecological integrity of our watersheds.

### Vision

"A Clark County with self-sustaining and healthy watersheds that benefit the county's human communities, wildlife, and environment."

### Core Values

- Stewardship
- Cooperation
- Transparency

### SWOT Analysis

*For this part, we are viewing this analysis as a note that reminds us of the opportunities and hurdles as we try to be more effective, when looking to bring on board members, and to guide our conversations and contributions.*

**Strength** - Multi-disciplinary individuals who care, with public representation from the community and watersheds across the community.

**Weakness** - Limited meeting times, bureaucratic timelines and constraints, limited influence, and overall lack of public interest.

**Opportunity** - Raising public awareness, creating partnerships, support of funding opportunities, and providing advisory input to leadership.

**Threat** - Changing regulatory environment, lack of awareness, negative public opinion, and financial limitations.

### Long Term Goals

*We have used this more as a template to steer our focus and provide guidance towards our objectives of deliverable outcomes.*

- Identify areas of need and promote collaboration in water quality programs for Clark County.
- Advance public outreach and serve as community liaisons on watershed quality issues and ecosystem impacts.
- Provide helpful advice to county leadership to improve and protect surface water and ecological health.
- Identify and support funding opportunities to promote healthy watersheds in Clark County.
- Advise staff on improving systems and programs to meet permit requirements and water quality goals in a functional and effective manner.

### Yearly Objectives Guide

It is the Clean Water Commission's target to set yearly objectives in the first quarter to direct our energies and focus on the execution of our mission and long-term goals.

## Appendix C: 2022 Clean Water Meeting Agendas

The Clean Water Commission held six regular business meeting and two regularly scheduled “special” meetings which focused on educational presentations and group work.

They were held on January 19, 2022; March 3, 2022, March 30, 2022, May 5, 2022, July 2, 2022, September 7, 2022, October 5, 2022, and November 2, 2022.

Attached are the above referenced meeting agendas.

