



**To:** Clean Water Commission

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

**Date:** December 6, 2023

**Subject:** Division Report – Clean Water Commission – December 2023

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## Season's Greetings,

Can you believe it is already December?

With 2023 wrapping up and coming to a close, I have been reflecting on all of the accomplishments that the Clean Water Division has achieved this year, while looking forward to new beginnings and more exciting work in 2024 – which includes continuing to improve our engagement with the Clean Water Commission.

With these new beginnings, my personal goal as a new Clean Water Division Manager is to get to know each of you better and understand your top priorities. While I am sad to say “goodbye” to three tenured Clean Water Commissioners with terms ending – I know that “goodbye” is really just a “see you later,” as I expect your interest in Clark County’s clean water program to carry on and resonate beyond your term as a Clean Water Commissioner. I hope that each of you stay in touch with our program and continue to use your voice to elevate clean water as a top priority in the greater community.

With three vacancies, I am also excited to bring on three new Commissioners in the new year. While change is bittersweet – I am ecstatic about the quality of the applications we received this year – and hope that returning Commissioners can extend a warm welcome to our new members in January.

On behalf of the Clean Water Division – I’d like to extend a sincere thank you to Rodger Hauge, Joshua Seeds, and Justin Maynard for your time spent volunteering for the Clean Water Commission.

I also want to extend gratitude to all commissioners for welcoming me on board the last 4 months. I have now had a chance to interact with each of you – and I hope that overtime our trust and rapport continues to build – because together we have a lot of work to do. Thank you so much for your time helping me get up to speed on clean water priorities and for being patient as I continue to learn how Clean Water Division, Public Works, and the County conducts business.

What I can promise you is that with the new year - just like many of you - my heart is even more committed to carrying out clean water work. Even when times get hard, my goal is to always do what’s best for clean water with the information and resources available.

As always, my door is open if you’d like to meet one-on-one at the Public Service Center or at a coffee shop in downtown Vancouver. I am also available through email at [devan.rostorfer@clark.wa.gov](mailto:devan.rostorfer@clark.wa.gov), by phone at 564-241-0611.

With the holidays, I hope you all find time for rest and relaxation and that you each finds a chance to immerse yourself in the natural beauty of the great outdoors during winter break. Whether that immersion involves hiking a trail next to a river, heading to the mountain for skiing or snowshoeing, or observing the seasons change through frosty windows – we are so lucky to live in a place that has so many beautiful and important natural areas and waterways to protect.

**Happy Holidays,**

**Devan Rostorfer** she/her/hers  
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**Important Clean Water Milestones for 2024 (Subject to Change)**

<b>Month</b>	<b>Clean Water Division Priorities for Council</b>
<b>January 2024</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Stormwater Rate Study – RFP announced.</li> <li>● Vancouver Lake Management Plan Phase 2 – RFP announced</li> </ul>
<b>February 2024</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Clark County &amp; Camas Interlocal Agreement for Lacamas Watershed</li> <li>● Stormwater Manual Update</li> </ul>
<b>March 2024</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Clean Water Commission – 2023 Annual report, Code revisions, 2024 Workplan</li> </ul>
<b>March 2024</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Stormwater Management Plan</li> <li>● Stormwater Permit Annual Report</li> </ul>
<b>April 2024</b>	○ TBD
<b>May 2024</b>	○ TBD
<b>June 2024</b>	○ TBD
<b>July 2024</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Stormwater Manual Update begins</li> </ul>
<b>August 2024</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● New Permit Requirements begin for 2024-2029</li> </ul>
<b>September 2024</b>	○ TBD
<b>October 2024</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Stormwater Rate Increase</li> </ul>
<b>November 2024</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 6-year Capital Plan</li> </ul>
<b>December 2024</b>	○ TBD

Additional goals for early 2024 are to continue working on our Divisions’s public involvement and public participation plans, and to begin working on developing a longer-term, 20-year capital plan for stormwater infrastructure. Our Division is also hoping to invest more time and resources developing an asset management program to address challenges with aging stormwater infrastructure. Increasing our engagement with underserved and underrepresented communities in Clark County is also a top priority to provide more equitable outreach and education opportunities and to diversify and improve opportunities for the community to provide input on the Clean Water Division’s work.

## Clean Water Division Summary – December 2023

The following is an update on the current status of top projects that Clean Water Division staff have worked on between October and December 2023.

### Clean Water Commission

The Clean Water Division recruited for three open positions on the CWC through a Public Works news release and targeted advertisement on Clark County Public Work's social media account, highlighting CWC's commitment to representing and reflecting Clark County's diverse residents and watersheds. The following is a comprehensive summary of the Clean Water Division's Clean Water Commission recruitment process.

- **Press Release:** With the Division's continuing efforts to bring ethnic, cultural, and geographic diversity to the CWC, the 'request for applications' press release was modified to use more inclusive language and the distribution of the commission announcement was greatly expanded.
- **Community Engagement:** Staff sent the announcement to over 20 local agencies and organizations identified by the Clark County Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Group (CCEDIG). Staff also posted the press release on a regional diversity volunteers' website. These expanded efforts resulted in a large and more qualified applicant pool representing an excellent cross section of Clark County residents.
- **Social Media:** New this year, the Clean Water Division also paid for targeted Facebook ads and higher visibility in the community. This advertisement garnered over 10,000 interactions and reached a very broad audience.
- **Application & Interview Process:** The recruitment was published in October and was open for 30 days. The selection committee interviewed all eight candidates for three vacant position to eliminate any potential bias during preliminary resume screening. The selection committee also integrated leading practices to improve the inclusivity of interview questions, and panel members received resources on implicit bias to review prior to participating in interviews.
- **Selection Committee:** The selection committee was comprised of division manager Devan Rostorfer, staff liaison Alice Millward, and CWC Chair Matt Jones and Commissioner Josh Seeds.
- **Selection Criteria:** Desired characteristics for CWC appointment are knowledge of and/or experience with environmental issues and stormwater, knowledge and experience working with a broad range of individuals and communities with diverse racial, ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds, ability to collaborate and communicate effectively, analytical skills, understanding of governmental advisory boards, schedule availability, and willingness to learn.

### Lacamas Watershed Symposium & Lacamas Interlocal Agreement

The Lacamas Watershed Symposium was held on October 25, 2023, at the beautiful Lacamas Lodge located in the City of Camas. The symposium was attended by over 100 individuals representing local, state, and federal governments, non-profit organizations, and members of the public. The symposium [presentation materials](#) and recording ( [Part 1](#) | [Part 2](#)) are now available on the [Clark County Clean Water Commission](#) webpage.

The purpose of the Symposium was to:

- Establish shared understanding of the science and data driving management decisions in the Lacamas Watershed and Lake.
- Identify focus areas for future implementation and investment.
- Inspire a call to action and coordination.
- Confirm mutual responsibility for implementing actions to protect and restore clean water.

This symposium was hosted by the Clark County Clean Water Commission, which is a nine-member, volunteer, community advisor board to Clark County Council on issues related to Clean Water. Welcome remarks were provided by Clark County Councilor Gary Medvige and City of Camas Mayor Steve Hogan. Symposium presentations were provided by Clark County, Department of Ecology, the Lacamas Watershed Council, City of Camas, Watershed Alliance of Southwest Washington, and Clark Conservation District.

### **Next Steps**

- The Camas Lake Management Plan is now available on [egagecamas.com](http://egagecamas.com) for review and public comment. This plan will soon be submitted to Department of Ecology for final review and acceptance.
- The Department of Ecology's [Lacamas Creek Source Assessment](#), which describes water quality priorities in the watershed, should be available by January 2024. The Advanced Restoration Plan (ARP) for Lacamas Creek will kick off some time in 2024 to establish priority implementation actions to achieve clean water.
- Clark County is currently working with the City of Camas to establish an interlocal agreement for how the county and city will work together to address water quality issues in the Lacamas into the future.
- The symposium's success and next steps was also highlighted in a [press release](#).

### **Vancouver Lake Management Plan – Phase 2**

- Clark County recently confirmed with Department of Ecology that we have been awarded a \$333,000 proviso through the model toxics control operating account (MTCA) for spending in FY2024 (July 2023 to July 2025). The Clean Water Division met with Friends of Vancouver Lake to discuss the draft statement of work. Preliminary meetings were also held with Senator Patty Murray's Office and the Army Corps of Engineers. The final agreement is expected to be active in January following Council Approval for the County Manager to sign the grant agreement. An RFP for consultant services will be published by January 24, 2024.
- Priority focus areas for implementation work include reengaging the Vancouver Lake Management Plan Technical Advisory Group, developing a public participation plan and website updates, and a partnerships and funding strategy. Additionally, the SOW includes funding for lake treatment investigation and feasibility study focused on improving water quality at the public swim beach and reducing harmful algal blooms. Early scoping, permitting feasibility, and conceptual design work for flushing channel hydrology enhancements is also included along with follow-up noxious weed surveying and mapping for future follow-up treatment; and implementation of watershed management activities to address nonpoint source pollution and improve stormwater management.

### **Stormwater Rate Study**

- The Clean Water Division is facing a structural deficit in our funding by 2026 if we do not increase our Clean Water Fees. To address this issue, staff are currently scoping a stormwater rate study to be completed in partnership with Finance and Auditor staff. Clean Water Division has requested a

work session to present more information to County council. Our preliminary timeline for the stormwater rate study is as follows:

- November - January 2023 - Scoping / SOW development.
  - January - June 2024 - Rate study implementation.
  - July 2024 - Draft recommendations to Council.
  - August 2024 - Council feedback integrated.
  - September 2024 - Final stormwater rate elements adopted.
  - October 2024 - Code updates implemented; new rates incorporated for 2024.
  - November 2024 - Public outreach begins.
  - February 2025 -New rates assessed to ratepayers.
- Earning Council approval for this Clean Water Fee Study is the Division's top priority to ensure we have funds available to support the growing nature of our work, including the need for additional staff capacity, and future capital and asset management needs. Clean water staff are currently working on budget forecasts to estimate our current funding gaps, unmet needs, and compliance risks.

### **NPDES Permit & Stormwater Code and Manual Renewal**

- The Clean Water Division completed its review and comment on the [DRAFT Phase 1 stormwater permit](#) and [DRAFT 2024 Stormwater Management Manual for Western Washington](#). Scoping to update [Clark County's Stormwater Code and Manual](#) is underway. Clark County intends to hire a consultant to help facilitate the stormwater code and manual update. The RFP is expected to be published on February 21,2024, with the goal to get someone under contract to complete the work by July 2025.
- Clean Water Staff continued to provide excellent technical assistance to businesses on challenges related to pollution prevention and assistance, and pollution source control. Private Stormwater Facility inspectors also completed a majority of their stormwater facility inspections for the year with less than 5% remaining.

### **Education and Outreach**

- **Interlocal Agreement with Washington State University Extension** - Clean Water staff are in the process of updating the interlocal agreement with WSU Extension to implement the Small Acreage program.
- **LCEP Contract for Experience Vancouver Lake** - Clean water staff are renewing the [Experience Vancouver Lake](#) contract, which is a partnership between the Port of Vancouver, City of Vancouver, Clark County, and the Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership to provide education and learning opportunities for classrooms interested in learning about Vancouver Lake. Our goal is to have an updated contract in place by January 1, 2024.
- **Summary of Outreach Events**
  - Oct. 25 – Lacamas Lake Symposium
  - Nov. 9 – Clark County Green Schools Student Summit
  - Nov. 16 – Stormwater Partners Symposium
  - Nov. 29 – Clean Rivers Coalition Virtual Forum

## Water Quality Monitoring

- **Lower Columbian Urban Streams (LCUS)** - Monitoring staff built three new water stage and temperature monitoring stations for WY2024 LCUS as well as continuing the bimonthly maintenance visits and managing continuous data for the project. Water year 2023 stage and water temperature data are in the process of review and finalization of WY2023 data.
- **Wadeable Streams:** Water quality testing for the new water year 2024 begun in October. This monitoring includes our long-term index sites and our rotating panel of sites which are located in the East Fork Lewis River watershed and 3 sites located in East Clark County near Washougal. WY2023 data is currently in the finalization process.
- **Microbial Source Tracking (MST)**- Monitoring Staff have been working closely with Clark Conservation district to identify septic repair/replacement opportunities that would be good candidates for *E. coli* effectiveness monitoring. We are currently waiting on additional information for 2 potential projects in the EFLR watershed. In partnership with Clark County Clean Water, Clark Conservation district submitted a grant application to Ecology for additional funding for Poop Smart Clark in October 2023. Clean water will be performing MST in the Lacamas Watershed through this grant/Poop Smart expansion.
- **Hydrology:** Monitoring staff completed data review and finalization for WY2023 precipitation data and are currently reviewing WY2023 stage data and rating curves. Several data requests were filled during this time.

## Reforestation Program Update

The Clean Water Division began reforesting county property in 2011. To date there are 21 projects scattered throughout the county. The following is an update on the Reforestation Program and the current projects county staff have been working on in 2023.

- **Program Goal and Metrics** - The Reforestation Program established a 5-year goal (ending in 2024) to enhance 30-ac of county-owned property with native vegetation. By this time next year, 30.53-ac will have been planted by county staff and/or volunteers.
- **Active Projects** - There are several projects in the early stages of establishment, most of which are on track for meeting the overall program goal. Some planting areas within Turtle Pond and Curtin Springs Wildlife Habitat (Salmon Creek) are struggling despite routine maintenance and replanting. The lower rates are due to site conditions, such as poor soil quality and intense summer heat. The Zimmerly and Schriber (East Fork Lewis River) sites are establishing well. Plants have reached considerable size within a short amount of time.
- **Reforestation Site Inventory** - There are other agencies and non-profits (besides the Clean Water Division) restoring riparian habitat throughout Clark County. It is plausible that one group may be planning a project in the same location another group is planning their next future project. As a result, an inventory was created to (hopefully) avoid future conflicts, as well as for keeping track of completed projects.

- **Looking Ahead** - The Clean Water Division has set another goal to reforest a minimum of 30-ac of county property in the next 5-years (2029). The team is looking at a list of potential sites within the Salmon Creek Greenway, as well as a list of properties Parks is considering in acquiring in 2024-2029. The Clean Water Division is fortunate to have Noxious Weeds as a partner in Reforestation Program. This crew works hard in preparing future sites for planting and maintaining control of invasive weeds after planting to help the native vegetation establish. Together we make a great team and can successfully restore degraded riparian habitats throughout Clark County.

### **Stormwater Capital Program updates**

- **6-year Stormwater Capital Plan** – The Clean Water Commission received an overview of the 6-year stormwater capital at the October CWC meeting. A work session was held in early November to brief Clark County council on the Capital Plan, which was formally adopted by Council on November 28, 2023. This plan will guide implementation of stormwater work in 2024 and is available on Clark County’s website.
- **Active Construction Projects**
  - **Highway 99 (68<sup>th</sup> Street to 78<sup>th</sup> Street) Water Quality Retrofit** - This project was completed in late summer of 2023 to provide water quality treatment to stormwater runoff from Highway 99 between NE 68<sup>th</sup> Street and 78<sup>th</sup> Street. The project includes nearly 0.7 miles of high-traffic roadway (approximately 5.1 acres of pollution generating impervious surface) along Highway 99, which is a prime arterial that runs nearly parallel to Interstate 5 and serves as a major access to a sizable commercial area along this corridor.
  - **Mt. Vista 8 Stormwater Facility Retrofit** - The project is nearing its completion and is partially funded by Washington Department of Ecology. The project is expected to provide enhanced water quality treatment in the treatment wetland. The project will also provide flow control benefit with increased retention time that will help to reduce stream erosion in Rockwell Creek. The project will also provide habitat improvement and some other environmental benefits.
  - **Heritage Farm Wetland Restoration Phase 1** - Clark County was recently granted a one-year extension for the Heritage Farm Wetland Restoration Project. This project will provide wetland restoration along a channelized section of Cougar Creek headwaters on Clark County's Heritage Farm property. This project implements a portion of the Heritage Farm master plan and addresses a priority of enhancing and restoring headwater wetlands and their beneficial functions within the Cougar Creek watershed. Currently, the Heritage Farm wetland is at 65% design. Clark County is applied for a second phase grant to continue implementation of this project.
  - **NE Hazel Dell Avenue (78<sup>th</sup> Street to Cougar Creek) Water Quality Retrofit** – This project will design stormwater facilities to provide treatment for nearly 0.4 miles of high-traffic area (4.0 acres of contributing basin and Pollution Generating Impervious Surface, PGIS) on NE Hazel Dell Avenue that currently receives no water quality treatment and discharges directly into Cougar Creek. The project goal is to develop a design to install Technology Assessment Protocol - Ecology (TAPE) General Use Level Designation (GULD) approved basic treatment devices, and the retrofit of 18 catch basins. These facilities will provide treatment for total suspended solids (TSS) to reduce turbidity and nutrient loading, and subsequently reduce dissolved oxygen demand within the Salmon Creek watershed. Currently, Department of Ecology is finalizing the agreement. Once it is ready this will go through the County council before a final agreement is signed by the County Manager.