

Please note:
*These will be reviewed by the
Drinking Water Protection
Plan Team.*

Yachats DWPP Public Meeting Notes 9/21/2020 @ 11 am

73 participants logged on at peak, including Suzanne de Szoeko and Leah Cogan from GSI

Note: quorum of City Council members online, but just listening

Highlight indicates areas to follow up with DWPP team

Today's presentation covered the background of the Drinking Water Protection Plan project and risks identified and prioritized so far. For further details, please refer to the presentation slides. For reference, the risk levels as of today are identified below.

Residential

Construction/development: high

Septic systems: medium

Landscape care: medium

Wells: medium

Property management (streamside vegetation/beaver habitat): high

Agricultural

Crops: medium

Animal grazing: medium

Pesticides and herbicides: medium

Forestry

Timber harvest: high

Access roads: high

Pesticides and herbicides: medium

Natural Disasters

Earthquake: medium

Wildfire: high

Insect outbreak: low

Heavy precipitation: high

Drought/low flows: high

Climate change: high

Saltwater intrusion: low

Public Comment/Questions and Responses

- Is there a way to get a summary of this meeting?
 - The recording will be posted online.
- How is the risk level determined?
 - We first looked to the typical risk levels for the types of risks identified for the area based on the guidance document provided by DEQ. Local knowledge and expertise were used to adjust these risk levels higher or lower than the guidance document levels.
- How soon will the recording be available and where will it be accessible?
 - It will be posted online on the DWPP webpage in the next couple of days.
- Are there any risk issues related to current infrastructure?

- This plan does not specifically address infrastructure risks although we acknowledge they need to be considered. The City is now updating its Water Master Plan which will focus on infrastructure and will address those risks, so the process is occurring in a different venue.
- For forestland, did you include aerial spraying as a risk? I would consider it a high risk.
 - The team didn't explicitly consider aerial spraying, but ranked pesticide and herbicide use in general as medium. We will discuss comment with the team.
- With regards to residential housing risk, is there a different approach looked at between in-town vs. on the hillsides?
 - At this point the plan does not address details of how development occurs; it's a higher level view. This may fit into the WMP or other planning processes. If areas are identified as a greater risk to drinking water sources, such as hillsides, addressing this may be part of the strategy section.
- Interactions of risks can happen across categories.
 - Multiple strategies may be developed to address interacting risks.
- What about wind as a risk for downed trees and infrastructure damage?
 - We may add this to heavy precipitation as part of storm events or as a separate risk.
- Years of drought cause vegetation to become susceptible to pests and disease. Pests and disease kill vegetation which increases fire risk.
 - These interactions are recognized and we will develop strategies to address interacting risks.
- Can we know the names of local members of the DWPP team?
 - We will check with the City and potentially make the list available.
- Glad to see that you have included the variability of climate threats within a given year - drier summers and wetter winters.
- Insect outbreaks are ranked as a low risk. Right now there is an aphid outbreak because the winter weather has not been cold enough to limit them. Over the last five years, they have been impacting conifers jeopardizing their growth and stressing them. If this continues, the trees will die, and fire and erosion will be paramount.
 - We will discuss this comment and ranking of insect outbreaks with the team.
- Is there a map/table that shows watershed land ownership for the four water sources, - i.e., public vs. private, and will there be an existing land use map in the plan?
 - These maps will be in the plan and could potentially be provided sooner.
- I believe that the City has a potential tie to the South Lincoln County Water District. Will this asset be included in your assessment?
 - This connection may be included in part of a strategy to address a risk or in the contingency plan, as well as in the City's WMP.
 - Another comment confirmed the existence of the tie.
- Whose interests are represented in the planning: business/agricultural vs. residents?
 - These interests are represented by the individuals participating, including the Yachats Water Committee, View the Future, OR Department of Agriculture, and Lincoln Soil & Water Conservation District, among others. We want feedback from all interested individuals from any groups as well as residents, so please share the presentation and webpage with other interested parties.

- What is the timeline for completing the plan?
 - The second public meeting is scheduled for April 2021. The DWPP will be revised as needed in May and presented to the City Council for approval. The final plan will be sent to DEQ for approval in June 2021.
- Is there any residual radioactivity from the Fukushima nuclear disaster several years ago affecting Oregon coast watersheds?
 - Unknown, we will check with team members for more info.
- I'm wondering how the earthquake/tsunami risk came to be rated medium. Earthquakes will down trees, cause landslides, cause propane tanks to explode, etc. Local tsunami will inundate all rivers for miles upstream, demolish infrastructure, etc. Distant tsunami is somewhat different scenario but still severe.
 - We will discuss this comment and ranking of earthquakes with the team.
- Will there be a more fine-grained multi-risk rating system?
 - A more detailed rating system is not planned at this time. The rankings are more general, non-quantitative, and are based on local expertise. We will develop strategies to address the risks taking this into account.
- Are the slides you presented also going to be posted on the City website?
 - Yes, a PDF of the presentation will be posted.
- Yachats residents pay high water rates and hotels/motels and apartments pay a much lower rate. I believe this causes a great deal of water waste/lack of conservation on behalf of visitors/apartment residents. All parties using water from Yachats sources should pay the same rates. Would this result in a significant savings of our water resources?
 - Some strategies to address risks may contain conservation actions including rates. This may also be part of other planning processes such as WMCP.
 - Additional comments were submitted to clarify the rate comment. All water users, whether commercial or residential, pay the same volumetric rate for water. Larger meters pay a higher base rate based on meter size. City Council has a water rate study underway.
- Drought risk assessment question: low flow due to less rainfall will cause turbidity and lower ability to store water. We regularly see issues crop up in the Yachats River. I assume the section regarding finding ways to continue water delivery under those circumstances will be part of this plan.
 - Yes, finding ways to address these risks will be included, and finding ways to ensure water delivery in the event of one water source being unavailable will be part of the contingency plan.
- It would be helpful to communicate risk in terms of two components: frequency and magnitude. For example, tsunami risk has extremely low frequency with high magnitude impact.
 - This is a great way to characterize the risks, and we will bring it up with the team for discussion.
 - Another comment was submitting agreeing that this would make the risk assessment process more fine-grained.
- What steps will be taken to ensure the longevity of this plan? Will iterative review be built into the plan to ensure it stays valid over the years?

- Longevity is important to the planning process. Funding has been secured to set up the plan. The strategy section may include strategies for securing future funding to update the plan as needed.
- How important is it for the governing leadership to sign off on this plan?
 - The plan will be presented to the City Council for approval and then sent to the state for its approval.
- What is the status of the Yachats River today? Is sedimentation or herbicide the biggest issue?
 - Unknown, but DEQ identified water quality impairments in the Lower Yachats as dissolved oxygen and temperature, and in the Upper Yachats as dissolved oxygen, temperature, and E. coli. The river is monitored, but it is not a current source of drinking water for the City.
- How engaged is state forestry in ensuring that private forestry follows guidelines?
 - Unknown, we will discuss this with the team.
- Will a water tank similar to those in the Midwest be considered as a solution to limited water supply?
 - This idea may be discussed in the contingency plan. In general, storage and infrastructure will be discussed in the WMP.
- One issue with the Yachats River is that there are many “straws” in it but no metering. We do not know how much water is actually being taken from the Yachats River and tributaries.
 - The region’s Watermaster tracks usage by those with water rights. We will need to discuss the extent of metering with the team.
- There has been a dramatic increase in new building and construction of new houses within the city limits of Yachats. Will the city’s administration and planning department take this into consideration, and will building permits reduction help this problem?
 - There may be overlap with other city processes. We will develop strategies to address impacts from housing development and will keep this comment in mind.