



Dungeness River Management Team
Cooperative Management of Our Watershed's Resources
Coordinated by Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe and Clallam County
1033 Old Blyn Highway • Sequim, WA 98382 • (360) 683-1109

November 21, 2011

Clallam County Board of Commissioners
223 East 4th St., Suite 4
Port Angeles, WA 98362

Sheila Roark Miller
Clallam County Department of Community Development
223 East 4th St, Suite 5
Port Angeles, WA 98362

RE: Importance of maintaining the Streamkeepers

Dear Commissioners and Ms. Roark Miller:

Recent reports indicate in response to the current budget shortfall, the County Director of the Department of Community Development (DCD) has made the difficult decision that DCD cannot afford to fund its program called Streamkeepers. At the November 9, 2011 meeting of the Dungeness River Management Team (DRMT), the members decided to submit a written request seeking your reconsideration.

DRMT asks that the County DCD Director and Board of Commissioners develop a plan to retain this program. Streamkeepers has gained considerable recognition for its ability to train volunteers to provide vital, credible watershed data - as well as participate in special projects. Indeed, the program manual and Quality Assurance Project Plan for Streamkeepers are considered "model" documents and account for why the work and results of the program staff and volunteers are so highly regarded. Due to proven consistency and reliability, Streamkeepers' work has been instrumental in the making of important management decisions.

With over 150 active volunteers who "contribute" time and effort equivalent to about 2.5 staff - the Streamkeepers program provides valuable baseline and ongoing data about the condition of our County's watersheds. Ending this program could lead to a loss of valuable data for tracking watershed health. Since 1999, the Streamkeepers program has developed customized field sheets, and "...a computerized database that includes not only monitoring results, but also

information about data quality, sampling sites, samplers and their training levels, digitized photographs, and links to geographic information systems.” While some data summaries are on the County’s website, some data, yet to be entered, is kept at the County’s Streamkeepers’ office. Indeed, Streamkeepers staff has current plans to enter about ~1.5 years of important data that has already been collected into the database. If this data is not entered, this would amount to a waste of thousands of volunteer hours that have already been donated in the field and in IT/database format revision efforts. Also, what happens regarding the planned role for using our Streamkeepers in stormwater management efforts –as listed (21j) in the Strait ERN Priority Actions 9/2011draft? The Clean Water Work Group, a subcommittee that reports back to DRMT, also relies heavily upon Streamkeepers in assisting with water quality monitoring projects.

For all of these reasons, the concern of DRMT is not “can our County afford to keep Streamkeepers?” The DRMT believes Clallam County cannot afford to lose Streamkeepers. Please consider the proposed “Streamkeepers Lite” or a reassignment of or sharing of the program to/with other departments. For the work already done, and yet to be done, Clallam County Streamkeepers must be retained.

We appreciate your reconsidering this issue. Members of the Dungeness River Management Team believe it’s very important to foster citizen-level interest in watersheds. Streamkeepers is a well-established means for making that happen. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Scott Chitwood, Chair, on behalf of the Dungeness River Management Team
(membership listed below)

Clallam Conservation District (Advisory)
Clallam County
Clallam PUD #1 (Advisory)
City of Sequim
Dungeness Beach Association
Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge (USFWS) (Advisory)
Dungeness-Quilcene Watershed Planning
Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe

North Olympic Land Trust
Protect the Peninsula's Future
Riverside Property Owners
Sequim-Dungeness Water Users Association
Sports Fisheries
US Forest Service (Advisory)
WA Department of Fish and Wildlife
WA Department of Ecology