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Jim Jones, Jr. County Administrator

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April 25, 2017

Scott Chitwood, Chair DRMT
c/o Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe
1033 Old Blyn Hwy
Sequim, WA 98382

Re: Water quality improvements and pet waste stations

Dear Members of the Dungeness River Management Team:

Thank you for your March 30 letters regarding water quality improvements at Golden Sands Slough and pet waste stations at several county parks.

As you know, Clallam County Environmental Health has dramatically stepped-up its efforts in the Golden Sands area these past months. The department worked closely with the Prosecuting Attorney's office to develop a well-planned, intentional strategy of communication, encouragement and enforcement that is grounded in our ability to ultimately levy fines or other civil penalties to alter behavior if necessary.

With the deep involvement of the Clallam Conservation District, great progress is being made. Of the ten residents on holding tanks, two are in the permitting/installation stage, seven are actively working with Environmental Health but not yet to the permitting stage, and one resident has been unresponsive so far. We have also initiated communication with area residents whose existing septic systems have not yet been inspected and we expect to see increased compliance with the law.

As your letter notes the historic land-use issues in the Golden Sands area involve more than just water quality and we support Director of Community Development Mary Ellen Winborn in her desire to work broadly with all relevant partners to develop a comprehensive strategy for future land use and development in the area.

Regarding the "pet waste stations" at county parks, in several county parks the Boy Scouts installed dispensers for pet waste bags along with a sign reminding folks to pack out the used bags with them when they leave. While the volunteers did at times have difficulty maintaining a supply of bags, the real issue had to do with the collection of "used" bags.

Unfortunately, parks staff often found used bags on park grounds or worse-yet in the restrooms, sani-cans and vault toilets which caused problems for the pumping contractor as the plastic bags do not do well in sewer digesters. Bags dumped in the restroom garbage cans made the restroom smell terrible and at times made it extremely difficult for users to even walk inside. We simply weren't able to keep up with the high level of maintenance and unfortunately experience has taught us that we cannot solely rely on volunteers, especially at our more remote park locations. Currently, Salt Creek, Dungeness, and Robin Hill all have pet waste stations that are maintained on a daily basis. However, even at these locations people still toss used bags in the bushes, beside trails and over fences.

Of course, this doesn't mean that we should not work with others to develop alternative models that could prove more effective at reducing the impact of pet waste in county parks, and we will work with our County Parks Advisory Board to consider new ideas and strategies.

We appreciate the opportunity for additional dialogue. Thank you again for reaching out.

Sincerely,
BOARD OF CLALLAM COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



Mark Ozias, Chair



Randy Johnson



Bill Peach