

# 2013 Report on King County's Water Quality Monitoring Program

Presented to  
Metropolitan Water Pollution Abatement Advisory  
Committee

October 23, 2013



**King County**

Department of Natural Resources and Parks  
**Wastewater Treatment Division**

# Background

- Required by 2013 King County Budget Ordinance
- Purpose
  - Conduct strategic county-wide assessment of County's water quality monitoring program
  - Provide “information, analysis and recommendations”



# Water Quality Monitoring Program

- Includes ongoing activities to assess quality of water and sediment, health of aquatic organisms, water flow
- Report describes:
  - Components of King County's Monitoring Program
  - Emerging issues monitoring may need to address
  - Coordination and cost sharing opportunities
  - Summary and recommendations

# Wastewater Service Area and Puget Sound

- Seven monitoring categories
  - Marine
  - Large lakes
  - Stream water quality
  - Stream flow and temperature
  - Freshwater swimming beaches
  - Toxics and contaminant assessment
  - Watershed impact assessment
- Funded by Water Quality Fund



# Unincorporated King County

- Four monitoring categories
  - Stream water quality
  - Stream flow and temperature
  - Groundwater monitoring on Vashon Island
  - King County's portion of the regional stormwater monitoring program required by permit
- Funded through Surface Water Management Fund



# Other Monitoring

- River flow monitoring
  - Funded through King County Flood Control District
- Marine beach bacteria monitoring
  - Funded through Public Health via U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- Urban small lakes monitoring
  - Funded through agreements with nine cities



# Emerging Regulatory Issues

- New freshwater sediment standards
  - More attention to cleanup of freshwater sites
- Human health-based water quality standards being revised to reflect higher fish consumption rates
  - May result in more stringent requirements for harmful chemicals like PCBs

# Regulatory Issues (con't)

- Incorporation of Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) into stormwater permits
  - Requires improved stormwater management
- Potential nutrient TMDL for South Puget Sound
  - Could result in very expensive requirements to reduce nitrogen discharges



# Public Health Issues

- Ongoing monitoring protects public health from:
  - Improperly functioning or failing on-site septic systems
  - Sewage overflows and spills
  - Combined sewer overflows
  - Illicit discharges
  - Contaminated swimming beaches



# Liability issues, Combined Sewer Overflows, Reclaimed Water

- No new monitoring needed
  - CSO Water Quality Assessment will support program implementation (post-construction monitoring)

# Stormwater Permit Monitoring

- Requires regional stream & nearshore monitoring in 2015
- Will be cost-shared among permitted jurisdictions
- King County participating
  - Complements, does not duplicate, King County's existing monitoring program

# Other Regional Issues:

- Stormwater retrofits
- Floodplain management
- Puget Sound recovery
- Climate change and ocean acidification

# Ongoing Coordination

- King County monitoring information shared via web, and widely used
- King County coordinates monitoring with other entities (cities, state/federal agencies, tribes)
- Interviews with cities indicate:
  - Monitoring programs not duplicative
  - Ongoing coordination, data sharing important
  - Additional cost sharing unlikely

# Summary

- Monitoring program funded from multiple sources to meet a variety of programmatic needs
- Information shared and coordinated
- Program meets current needs, will continue to evolve
- **No changes recommended at this time**
  - Potential additional monitoring activities identified for future consideration

# Questions?

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