



2024 Environmental Health
Annual Report

May 2025

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Mission

The Clallam County Environmental Health Division's purpose is to assist in the protection of our community's health through the prevention and control of environmentally related communicable diseases and through the minimization of exposure to environmental health hazards.



Vision

1. Assessing the community's environmental health needs and developing quality, science-based programs in response to these needs
2. Monitoring the community's environmental health status and improving existing services based on changing conditions
3. Providing accurate information and quality educational outreach programs to our community
4. Advocating the principles and values of public health
5. Responsible and professional enforcement of public health regulations
6. Professional conduct that inspires excellence in communication, problem solving, cooperation, teamwork, and public health service
7. Making a positive difference within our community through coordination and collaboration with the public, industry and service organization

Executive Summary

Clallam County Environmental Health (CCEH) is proud to present the 2024 Annual Report. The purpose of the report is to provide information on CCEH and the descriptions of the specific programs and activities. It covers the Drinking Water Program, Food Safety and Living Environment Program, On-Site Septic Program, Solid and Hazardous Waste Program, Water Quality Program, and Administration. Each section provides information on staffing, routine activities, and 2024 highlights and challenges. Data is presented for each section.

The revenues collected for EH in 2024 were \$1,547,494. The revenues are a combination of program fees, grants, and general funds. The expenditures for EH in 2024 were \$1,445,631. The largest expenditure was for staff which accounted for 82% of the budget. There are fourteen staff within CCEH. There are Environmental Health Specialists, Customer Service Specialists, a Database Technician, and a Director.

Here is an overview of the CCEH work conducted over the past five years in CCEH and consistent information collected. In 2024, lab sample volume increased, Onsite Septic (OSS) permitting remained steady, report counts decreased, more inspections in the food program, and more complaints investigated than previous years.

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Water Availability Requests Processed	222	261	275	287	345
Total Samples Processed in Drinking Water Lab	2,611	2,827	3,028	4,912	3,845
Food Service Permits (Permanent and Temp)	360	406	509	589	613
Food Service Inspections (Permanent and Temp)	165	119	117	248	334
Food Service Plan Reviews	23	29	47	52	54
On-site Permits	323	431	295	301	294
O&M Reports Received	3,762	4,024	4,290	3,337	3,908
Compliance OSS Inspections-Countywide	28.3%	32.0%	32.5%	29.2%	28.6%
Solid Waste Permits Issued	13	13	13	13	13
Solid Waste Inspections	40	39	33	37	30
EH Complaints Investigated Combined	128	138	125	222	218

CCEH completed required regulatory work, complaint investigations, and public outreach and education in 2024 to protect public health and the environment.

Clallam County Environmental Health

Clallam County Environmental Health (CCEH) is the local health jurisdiction (LHJ) in Clallam County who enforces environmental health laws and policies. CCEH programs include drinking water, food safety and living environment, onsite septics, solid and hazardous waste, water quality, and administration.

Environmental health is the science and practice of preventing human injury and illness and promoting well-being by identifying and evaluating environmental sources and hazardous agents, and limiting exposures to hazardous physical, chemical, and biological agents in air, water, soil, food, and other environmental media or settings that may adversely affect human health (*National Environmental Health Association, 2022, [link to page www.neha.org](http://www.neha.org)*).

Environmental Health (EH) staff work with the community to engage with professionals in the areas of drinking water, food service establishments, onsite septics, solid waste facilities, and water quality. The staff works with the public providing information on onsite septic systems, restaurants, air quality, drinking water, and water quality. EH staff serves all residents of Clallam County, including the residents of incorporated cities of Forks, Port Angeles, and Sequim.

Environmental Health Authority

The authority to enforce environmental health regulations at a local level comes under the Health Officer's authority, [RCW 70.05.070, Local health officer-powers and duties](#) (Dr. Allison Berry, MD, MPH) and under the local Board of Health (BOH), [RCW 70.05.060, Powers and duties of local boards of health](#). There are eleven members of the BOH. The BOH is comprised of the three County Commissioners, a city representative, tribal representatives with seats for each of the four tribes, a healthcare provider, a consumer of public health, and one community stakeholder.

Clallam County Department of Health and Human Services and Environmental Health are funded through Clallam County. The County provides all funding, budgeting, and employee support. The County government is overseen by the three Board of Commissioners, with a County Administrator under the authority of the Clallam County Charter. For more information go to, [Clallam County Home Rule Charter](#).

For enforcement of Environmental Health codes, Clallam County Code [Title 41 Board of Health Regulations](#), we use established policies and procedures. When a case continues to escalate, EH works with the Clallam County Prosecuting Attorney's Office.

Regulation Information

CCEH enforces both Washington State and local environmental health codes. These codes are mandated by Washington State Legislature and the Washington State Board of Health (SBOH). The Washington State environmental health codes include Washington Administrative Code (WAC) in title 173 which are Washington State Department of Ecology codes, and in title 246 which are Department of Health codes. The WACs can be found, [Washington Administrative Code](#). WACs are specific laws. Local codes are Clallam County Code (CCC). Additionally, the rules that govern the laws are the Revised Code of Washington (RCW). The RCWs can be found, [Revised Code of Washington](#).

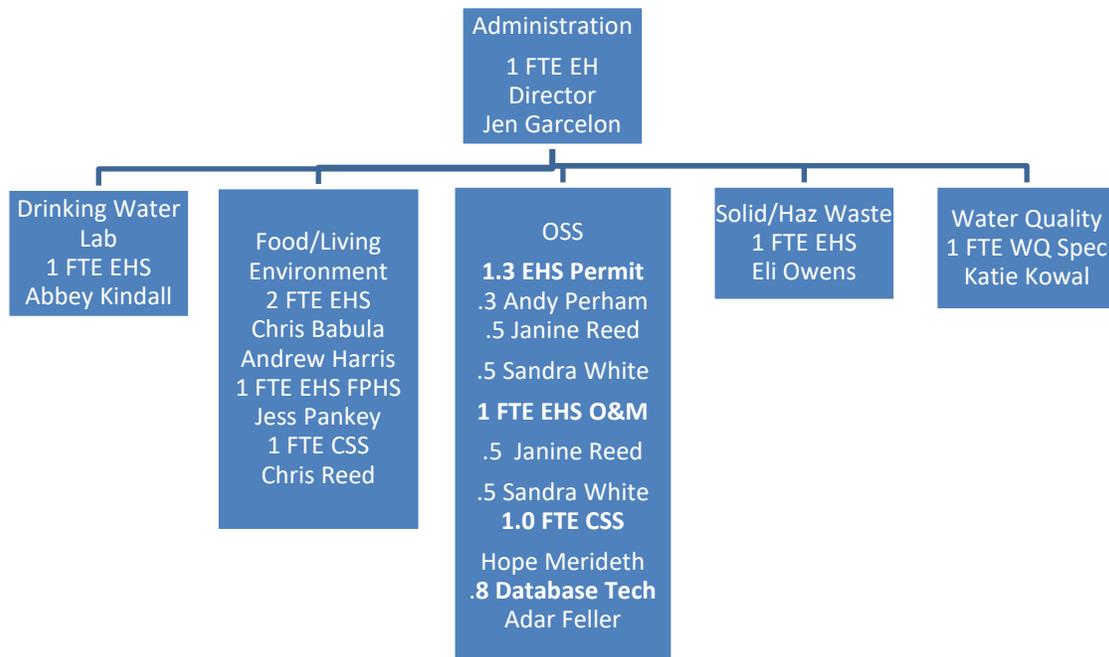
The table below outlines the major State and local EH codes.

Environmental Health Regulations

Program	Code	Name
Drinking Water	WAC 246-290	Group A Public Water Supplies
	WAC 246-291	Group B Public Water Systems
Food Safety	WAC 246-215	Food Service
	WAC 246-217	Food Worker Cards
	CCC 41.40	Rules and Regulations Governing Food Service Establishments
On-Site Septic	WAC 246-272A	On-Site Sewage Systems
	CCC 41.20	On-Site Sewage System
Schools	WAC 246-366/366A	EH and Safety Standards for Primary and Secondary Schools
Solid Waste	WAC 173-304	Minimum Functional Standards for Solid Waste Handling
	WAC 173-350	Solid Waste Handling Standards
	WAC 173-351	Criteria for Municipal Solid Waste Landfills
	CCC 41.11	Solid Waste Regulations
Water Recreation	WAC 246-260	Water Recreation Facilities

Staffing

In 2024, the Environmental Health section has a team of 13 staff, with 12.1 FTE. The team includes the EH Director, 7.3 FTE Environmental Health Specialists (EHS), 2.0 FTE Administrative/Customer Specialists, 1.0 FTE Water Quality Specialist, 0.8 FTE Database Technician, and 1.0 EH Director. During the 2024 budget planning process, in November 2023, two vacant Environmental Health positions were indefinitely deferred (1 EHS and 1 CSS). The EHS position was reinstated in the 2025 budget.

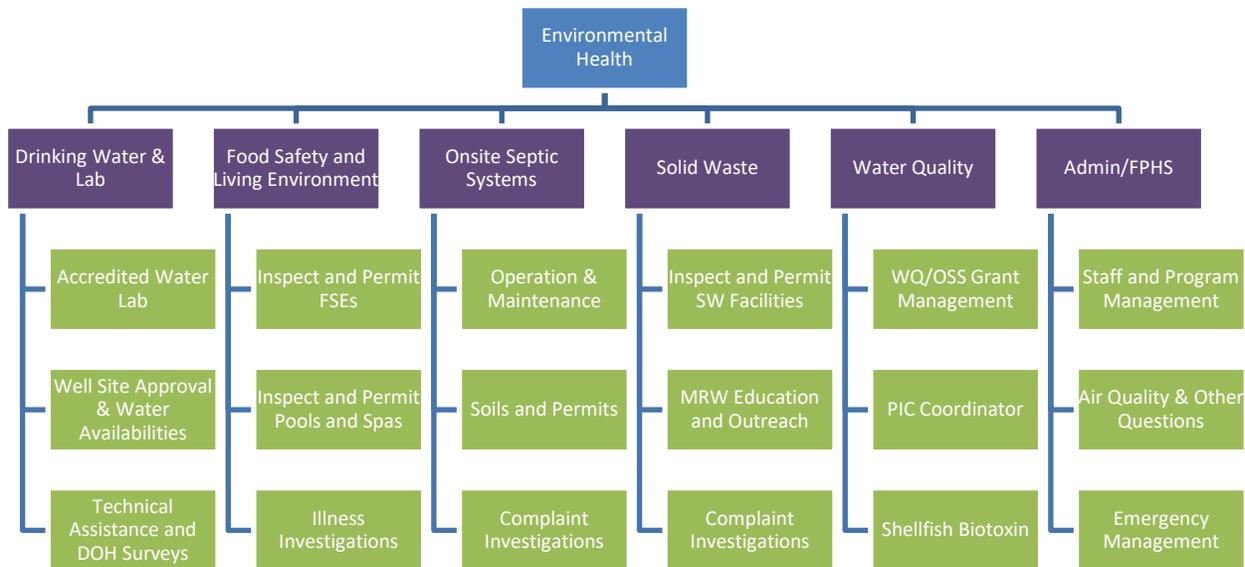


Staff are in two separate locations, the main Courthouse Building at 4th St and at the Health and Human Services (HHS) Building on 3rd Street in Port Angeles. The drinking water laboratory is located within the Courthouse.

Clallam County Environmental Health Program Organization

Clallam County Environmental Health is divided into six program areas: the Drinking Water Lab, the Food Safety and Living Environment, the Onsite Septic System, Solid and Hazardous Waste, Water Quality, and Administration programs.

The Drinking Water Program includes an accredited drinking water lab for nitrate and bacteria testing maintained by an Environmental Health Specialist who also provides well siting and proof of potable water reviews, and DOH water system surveys. The Food Safety and Living Environment Program permits and inspects food service establishments as well as pools and spas. The Onsite Septic System (OSS) Program is largely divided between the permitting and operation and maintenance programs. The OSS permitting program processes OSS permits. The O&M program works to normalize routine OSS inspections and provide outreach and education. The Solid Waste Program permits and inspects facilities and conducts outreach and education. The Water Quality Program oversees water quality monitoring, protection, and restoration projects; it is the main point for water quality grants in Onsite Septic Systems, Pollution, Identification and Correction (PIC). The Administration Program oversees all EH and emerging programs, like foundational public health services (FPHS), emergencies, and animal vectors.



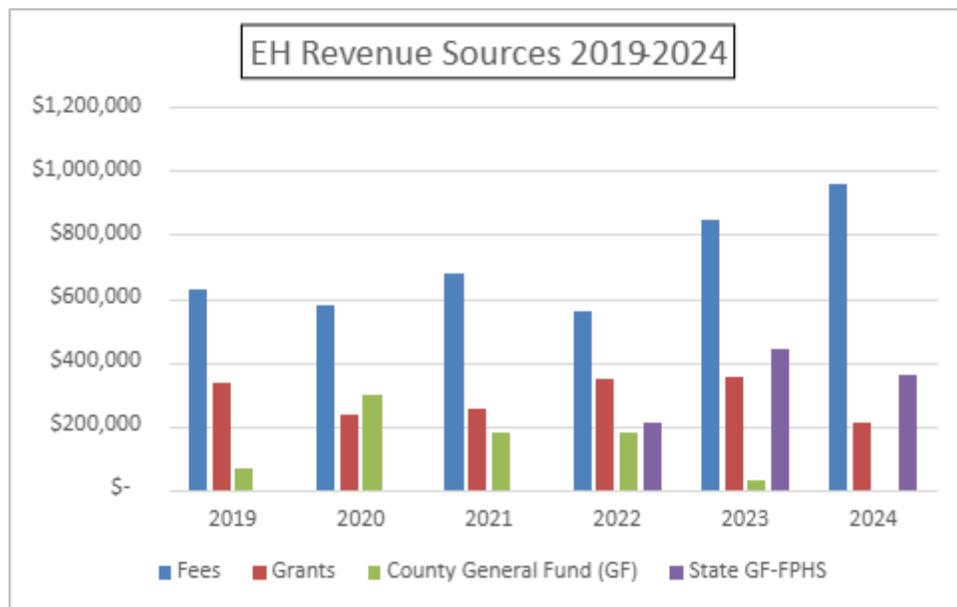
Environmental Health Budget

Environmental Health is funded through a variety of sources, including fee for service, grants, and Clallam County general fund. Since 2021, Washington State Legislature started to allocate Foundational Public Health Services (FPHS) funds for Environmental Public Health programs; this adds an additional revenue stream.

The program fees are categorized in four areas, in order of the amount generated per year. These include onsite septic, food safety and living environment, drinking water laboratory, and solid waste. EH manages 10-14 grants per year. In 2024, EH received 10 grants in total, 8 grants from Washington State Department of Health and 2 grants from Washington State Department of Ecology. The remaining revenue comes from the Clallam County General Fund and FPHS. A small percentage, <0.1% of revenue includes fines and other revenue.

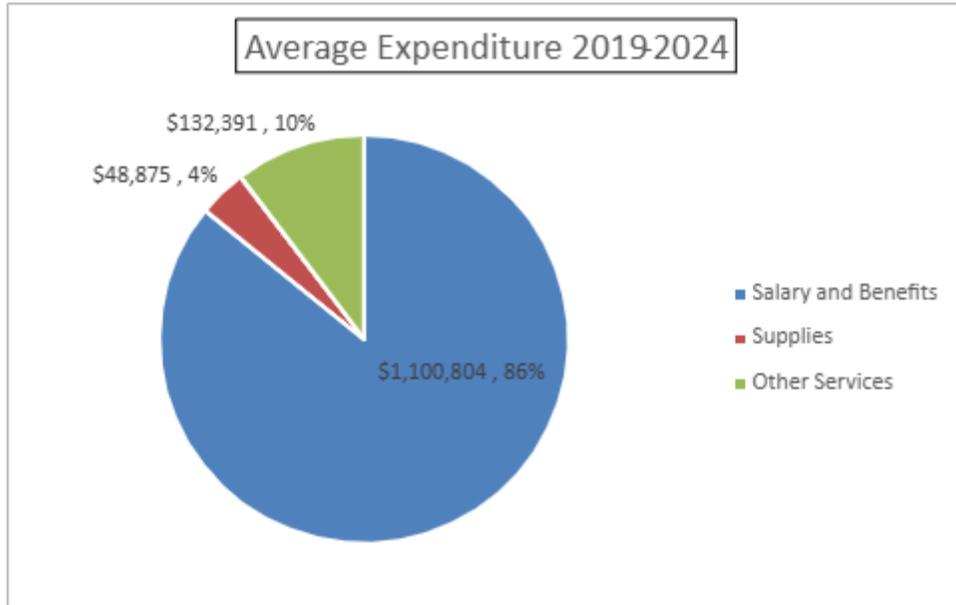
There is variation in all revenue categories over the years. The program fees generated vary based on the housing and building markets for onsite septic permits. The grant revenue is also variable since some of the largest grants are competitive, must be different scopes of work, and not guaranteed. Grant payments sometimes come in large amounts in the next fiscal year which accounts for some of the variation.

The graph below shows the revenue categories from 2018-2024. The largest revenue category for Environmental Health are fees for service, for example, onsite septic permit, food service operating permit, or drinking water sample. The jump in fees collected in 2023 is due to the Operation and Maintenance (O&M) Fee being collected for the first time; the O&M fee revenue is ~\$260K. Grants have primarily been the second largest revenue category during five of the past six years. Starting in 2022, EH was allocated Foundational Public Health Service (FPHS) funds. These are funds allocated from the State Legislature for foundational public health services. The FPHS funds are expected to continue at a base level and steadily increase over time. FPHS funds are an important part of the EH budget.

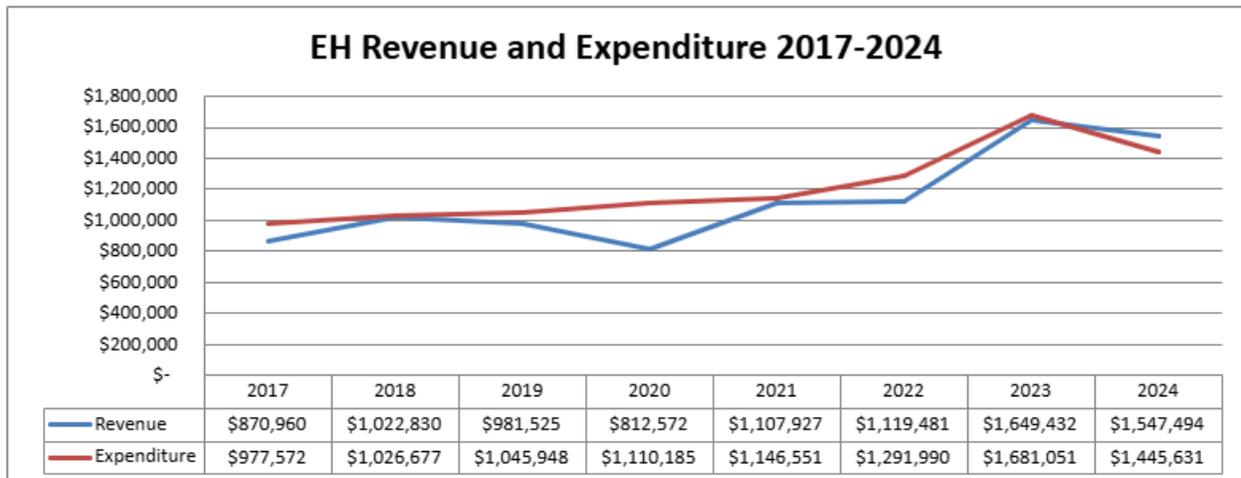


The EH expenditures are primarily in three categories: salary and benefits, supplies, and other services. Supplies include general office and operating supplies and small tools for each program. Other services include contracts with other agencies, advertising, postage, training, registration, and license renewals.

The graph below shows the average expenditure over the past five years in the county budget categories.



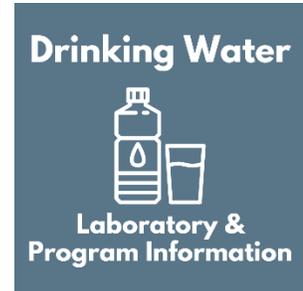
The chart below shows the past eight years' Environmental Health revenue and expenditure from 2017-2024. The expenditure figures do not show general fund contributions, so the gap between funding is covered by general fund. Additionally, the budget does not include County indirect costs.



The 2025 budgeted revenue is \$1,841,394 and the budgeted expenditure is \$1,824,006. These are direct program costs and do not include indirect costs from other general fund departments, like Human Resources, Information Technology, etc.

Drinking Water Lab

The Clallam County Environmental Health Drinking Water and Laboratory Program is responsible for the regulation of drinking water sources in Clallam County through sanitary surveys, technical assistance, and complaint investigation. The program also operates and manages the County's accredited environmental health water laboratory to provide routine and investigative water testing for public and private water systems in Clallam County. The drinking water program operates under the authority from WAC 246-290, WAC 246-291, WAC 173-50, and RCW 19.27.097.



Staffing

The Drinking Water and Laboratory program is staffed by one Environmental Health Specialist (EHS) and supported by two administrative staff. Staff and the drinking water laboratory are in the Clallam County Courthouse in Port Angeles.



Abbey Kindall

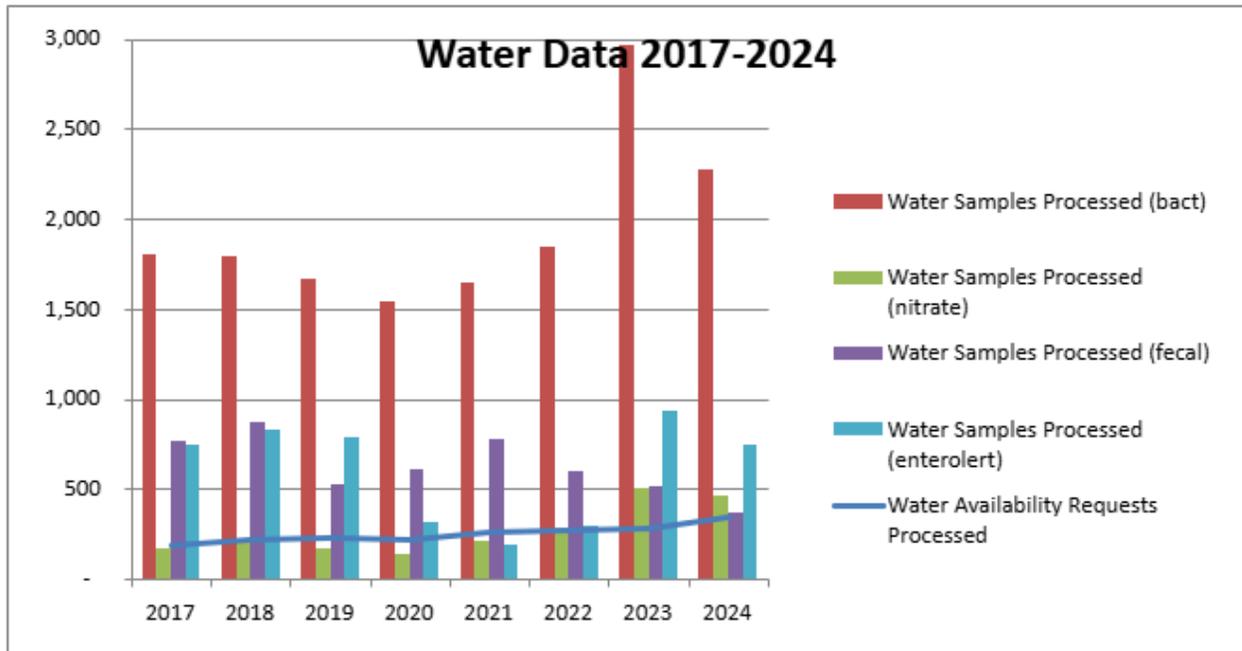
Routine Program Activities

Hope Merideth and Chris Reed answer calls, answer questions, and receive water samples for and from the public in relation to public water systems and private wells. The Drinking Water Program EHS analyzes drinking water tests for public and private water systems. The drinking water EHS also performs regular quality control measures to assure Ecology accredited, high quality water testing practices. In addition to lab work, the drinking water EHS regulates public water systems by verifying new connections and providing technical assistance for owners, operators, and consumers. They process two types of permits, well site approvals, before wells are drilled and water availabilities, to confirm whether a site has approved drinking water. Grant activities include conducting 8-12 sanitary surveys of Group A water systems for DOH's ODW Program.

Between Memorial Day and Labor Day, we work to sample and analyze water samples at Salt Creek, Hollywood Beach, and Cline Spit for Ecology's [BEACH program - Washington State Department of Ecology](#). The BEACH Program monitors the safety of saltwater swimming beaches. The Lab also analyzes the Makah BEACH samples year-round.

The EHSs attends conferences, webinars, and meetings with Department of Health, Department of Ecology, and the Dungeness Water Trust to broaden knowledge, understanding, and learn new legislation and processes pertaining to state and local regulations for potable water to better service the people of Clallam County.

The table below shows the drinking water lab activities from 2017-2024.



2024 Program Highlights

In 2024 the water lab continued to process the second most number of lab samples with 3,845 lab samples. The EH and PH teams came together to fill in gaps while Abbey was out of the office for almost six months. Hope managed and triaged hundreds of public inquiries and lab-related communications. Public Health loaned staff to help fill in with lab analysis (Stephen Basubas) and paperwork (Kim Warren).

2024 Program Challenges

The biggest challenge was when Abbey Kindall was out at the end of June on leave and there was one laboratory back-up at the time. Sandra was the only back-up because Katie Kowal had left in May. Jennifer and Jessica filled in as back-ups. After a few weeks, Stephen Basubas from Public Health assisted two times a week in the lab through the end of the year. Abbey returned to the office in the Fall with part-time hours throughout the remainder of the year.

We have also lost volunteers for the summertime BEACH sampling. The [BEACH Program](#) monitors the safety of three saltwater beaches in Clallam County from Memorial Day to Labor Day. Thankfully, the Department of Health allowed Ben Majors to help EH with Beach monitoring and with some technical assistance during the summer.

Food Safety and Living Environment

The Clallam County Environmental Health Food Safety and Living Environment Program is responsible for working with the public, local and state organizations, businesses, community partners, food service establishments (FSEs), food service workers and owners or operators of water recreation facilities to protect public health. We work to prevent the spread of communicable diseases, including foodborne and waterborne illnesses through our education, inspection, plan review and permitting responsibilities.



Environmental Health's School Safety Program is in development. Our program currently responds to and investigates reports of illness and potential safety hazards occurring in public and private schools, kindergarten through high school. These reports involve issues such as air quality, playground safety and food safety. Environmental Health Specialists review plans of all new and remodeled school sites and provide a safety inspection upon request.

Staffing

2024 was a year of getting back to normal for the Food Safety and Living Environment Programs. The team consists of three Environmental Health Specialists, one primary Customer Service Specialist, and help from the Database Technician and the second CSS.

Chris Reed entered her fourth year with the Living Environment Program as the primary Customer Service Specialist for the program; she is typically the first person the public has contact.

Jess Pankey, funded through FPHS, worked to coordinate strategizing EH policy development, researching successful enforcement and compliance policies and programs that strengthen stakeholder engagement and participation, generating letter templates for consistent education and plan review documentation, generating enforcement letter templates, and assisting with the review of the HSCLoud database implementation. She also served as a liaison between Environmental Health and Public Health for communicable disease investigations. Jess is a Registered Environmental Health Specialist (REHS).

Andrew Harris, an EHS, worked within the Food and Living Environment Programs working on plan reviews, temporary permits, and routine inspections in Port Angeles, Forks, and the west end. He has been with Clallam County since 2019, after 20+ years working in the food industry.

Chris Babula is the most recent EHS hire in September 2022. He came to the department with lots of experience. Chris is a registered environmental health specialist REHS. He has worked in the environmental health field for over twenty years. He also works on plan reviews, temporary permits, and routine inspections in Port Angeles and Sequim.

The three EHSs and CSS bring a combined total of over 45 years' experience as food safety professionals to the program, with another 30 years combined time spent in the industry. This experience brings together a team that adapts quickly to change, recognizes the importance of strategic partnerships and working relationships and prioritizes clear and consistent communication to promote health.

Jessica Pankey and Chris Babula have their registered environmental health specialist (REHS) certification from Washington State Board of Registered Sanitarians.



Jessica Pankey



Andrew Harris



Chris Babula



Chris Reed



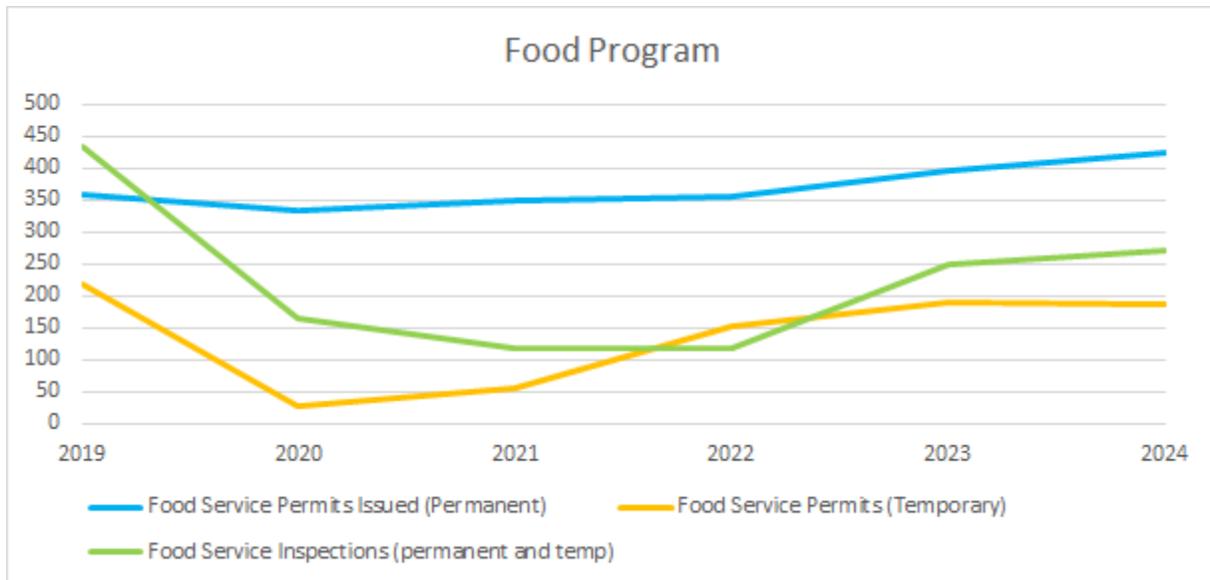
Adar Feller

Routine Program Activities

Environmental Health Specialists Andrew and Chris B. take the lead with plan review, routine FSE inspection and complaint investigation activities. They stay connected using cell phones, tablets, online resources and the FSE database.

The Plan Review for new or changing FSEs requires multi-agency coordination and a high-level working knowledge of building, planning, zoning, plumbing, worker and customer safety, current best practices, and mitigation strategies relevant to the proposal. An application will begin the approval process after it is checked for completion at the time it is received and entered into the FSE database, HS Cloud.

Routine inspections or site visits incorporate regulatory compliance checks with education about current risk factors using scientific observation, educational resource distribution and WAC 246-215 to identify mitigation strategies and incorporate evidence based strategies to promote public environmental health. A large part of these visits include time spent providing realistic solutions or corrective actions to change behavior associated with the spread of disease. Inspections are documented in the field with software using the state inspection form designed to prioritize tracking of the leading contributing factors associated with the spread of disease as identified by collaborative workgroups. These work groups include the CDC, FDA, academia, industry experts, regulatory authorities, and safety advocates. These groups work to analyze outbreak and illness data, regulatory observations of industry practices, and the research of academia and communicable disease epidemiologists to educate operators about effective strategies and focus on correction of the most critical issues to prevent disease.



FPHS

Outlining Foundational Public Health Services for Environmental Public Health was the primary focus for Jessica Pankey’s daily activities in 2024, this included strategizing EH policy development, researching successful enforcement/compliance policies, researching programs that strengthen stakeholder engagement/participation, generating letter templates for consistent education and plan review documentation, generating enforcement letter templates, and assisting with the review of the HSCloud database implementation. She worked on communication improvements, steadily encouraging the discussion for team procedures, generating documents for the FSE application and guidance documents, incorporating check points in the approval process, preparing weekly program meeting agendas, responding to food safety planning and permitting questions, coordinating with public health and communicating with the public, food workers and health care workers.

2024 paved the way towards strengthening the partnership between Public Health and Environmental Health. The leadership of the Health Officer, the Public Health Nurse Manager and the Environmental Health Director in conjunction with the technical expertise of Department of Health Foodborne Illness, Healthcare Associated Infection, Environmental Health Food Safety, Laboratorians and Communicable Disease Epidemiologists gave the Environmental Health Specialists “on the ground” the ability to conduct investigations and report through WDRS to the Washington State Department of Health CD/Epi teams, as needed.

2024 Program Highlights

Internal and External Communication

The Food team made continued progress with internal and external communication using Microsoft Teams. We developed a system to track the progress of Plan Review and Temporary Applications,

respond to requests for information, share project updates and support each other with online discussion to provide consistent, clear communication efficiently promoting health in our community.

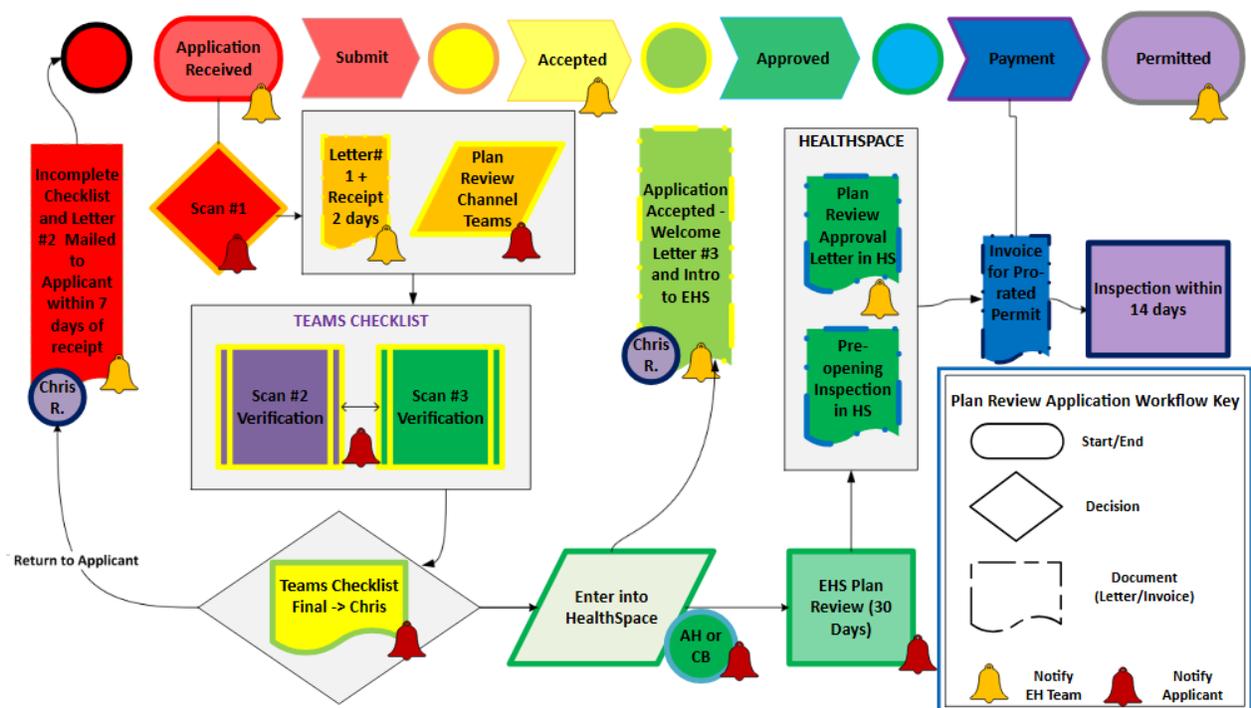
Outbreak response

In 2024, there were twenty foodborne illness investigations (FBI). An FBI entails the Living Environment team collaborated with the Public Health team to focus on developing a Standard Operating Procedure related to an outbreak response. As part of a Clallam Emergency Preparedness exercise, we identified the strength, skill set and abilities of each HHS team member, mapping out an outbreak scenario and our efforts to disrupt disease transmission in our community. We participated in weekly meetings with the Communicable Disease Public Health professionals and developed an HHS Environmental Health/Public Health Liaison to respond efficiently to a Public Environmental Health emergency.

We participated in a Joint Advisory Workgroup for Local Health Jurisdictions in advance of Washington State Department of Health’s promotion and coordination of the statewide Foodborne Illness Notification System (FINS). We learned how to access the REDCap system to survey Clallam-associated notifications about food safety concerns or illnesses.

Plan Review Process

We are dedicated to reducing illnesses in Clallam County, and we believe that prioritization and commitment to safe food handling begins with leadership. We work carefully with our new Food Establishment Leaders (Operators) during the Plan Review process to identify potential risks by evaluating the menu, the style and type of food service, the equipment, the infrastructure, including verification of an approved water system and an adequate on-site septic system, if needed. We incorporate environmental controls and processes to mitigate that risk. Consistent communication and predictable workflows are an important part of our interaction as a team and with the public. Our Plan Review Application process includes verification of eligibility to move on to the next phase, often involving partners in other Environmental Health programs, Building Officials, Labor and Industry partners, technical experts at the Department of Health and coordination with other Local Health



Jurisdictions.

Fee Schedule and Category Update

2024 also brought an opportunity to evaluate our program fees and assign fees that reflect the resources we devote to preventing disease in Clallam County. We were also able to re-design our Food Establishment Categorization process and streamline the evaluation of each facility based on the Food and Drug Administration recommended Risk-based system. We also worked with stakeholders to identify and implement a system to permit Temporary Food Establishment operators for up to six different events with one application. We updated our application and guidance documents and worked to update our permit database, HealthSpace Cloud, to reflect the changes in permit types and the associated fees. Our annual permitting process requires excellent communication about establishment requirements and permit categorization despite the challenges with our current payment system. These improvements enhanced program efficiency and communication throughout the renewal process.

Two of our Environmental Health Specialists, Chris Babula and Jessica Pankey, are Registered Environmental Health Specialists, requiring Continuing Education hours. Those credentials were maintained in 2024. Andrew Harris achieved a new credential for our program. Andrew has earned the status of a Certified Professional of Food Safety from the National Environmental Health Association. Congratulations, Andrew!

Onsite Septic Operation & Maintenance Program

The Clallam County Environmental Health Onsite Septic Operation & Maintenance (O&M) Program is responsible for preventing premature failures by normalizing regular inspections, tracking O&M activity including failures and assisting with various grant tasks. The O&M inspection program is required by WAC 246-272A-0270 and CCC 41.20.170. Each septic system must be inspected annually or every three years, depending on the system.



There are approximately 20,000 known septic systems in Clallam County. As of 12/30/23, there are 20,224 known OSS in Clallam County with 994 assumed systems for a total of 21,218. In the Marine Recovery Area (MRA) there are 12,730 known septic systems, with 171 assumed, for a total of 12,901.

The O&M inspection program is required by WAC 246-272A-0270 and CCC 41.20.170. Each septic system must be inspected annually or every three years, depending on the system.

Staffing

There is 1.0 EHS FTE in O&M. Due to staffing needs, the Sandra White works ½ time O&M and ½ time permitting, with Janine Reed also ½ time O&M and ½ time OSS permitting. Hope Merideth helps with public questions at the front counter and on the phone, works at outreach and education events, and mails postcards. Adar Feller is our Database Technician and creator for the department, any information needed is on her to find. Andy Perham works in failure tracking and is reliably constant for the department.



Hope Merideth



Adar Feller



Janine Reed



Sandra White

Routine Program Activities

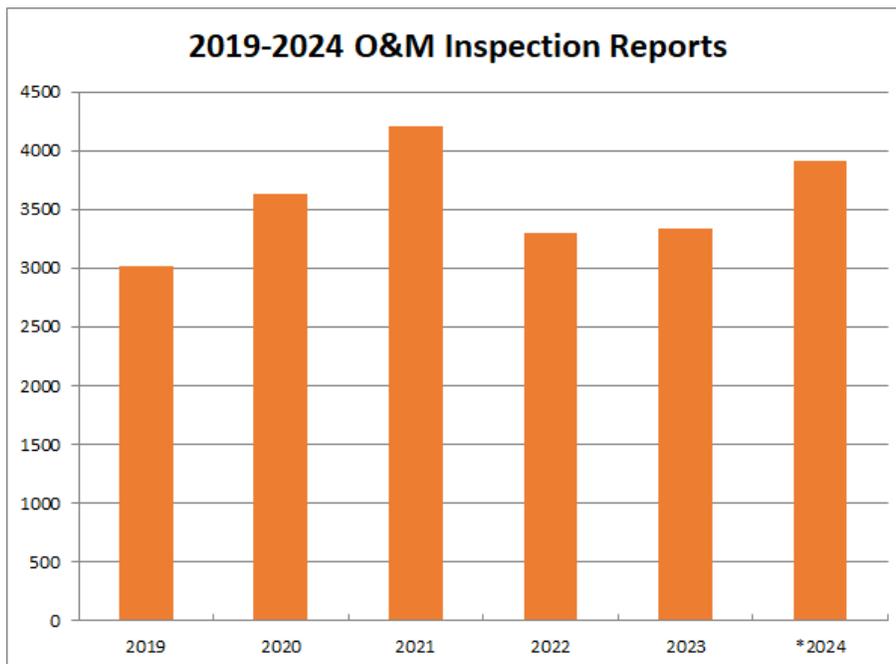
The main priority of the O&M Program is to normalize routine septic inspections. Routine O&M program activities include mailing septic inspection compliance (SIC) letters to homeowners as well as friendly postcard inspection reminders, and lots of opportunities throughout the year for public outreach. Areas of SIC are currently targeted through a combination of pollution identification projects and sensitive locales of citizen and/or staff concern.

Due to limited staffing, there has been little time for enforcement of the SIC Program with only postcard inspection reminders sent. Postcards provide a friendly reminder that inspections are due without initiating formal enforcement compared to the geographically targeted SIC multiple letter process that leads to more septic inspection compliance.

O&M Program responsibilities also include the implementation and management of the homeowner Do-It-Yourself (DIY) inspection program, public outreach on best practices of septic system ownership and inspection compliance along with the review and follow-up and tracking of deficiencies and failures reported on professional inspections.

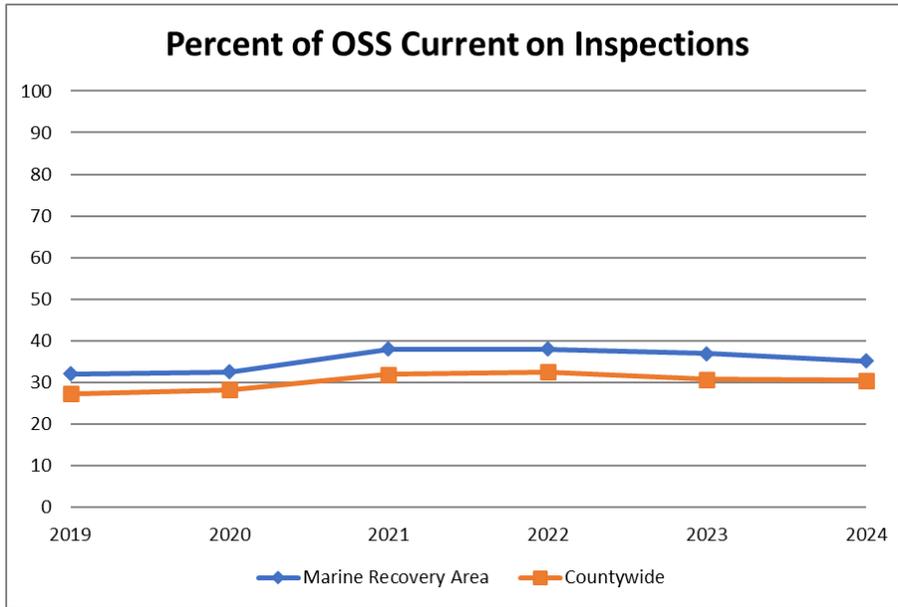
Public outreach events and classes are held throughout the year. Spring and fall Septic 101/201 classes are held free of charge for the community. Septic 101 is a basic overview for the public to understand how their septic system functions and the reasoning behind state mandated inspection requirements as well as knowledge assistance for basic care of their systems. Septic 201 provides more in-depth information and allows the public to inspect their own systems. This DIY inspection program relays immediate in-class positive verbal feedback. Septic compliance is our goal, to obtain this the environmental health staff diligently work on inspection status, failure status', code compliance, corrections and public outreach.

O&M Inspection Reports



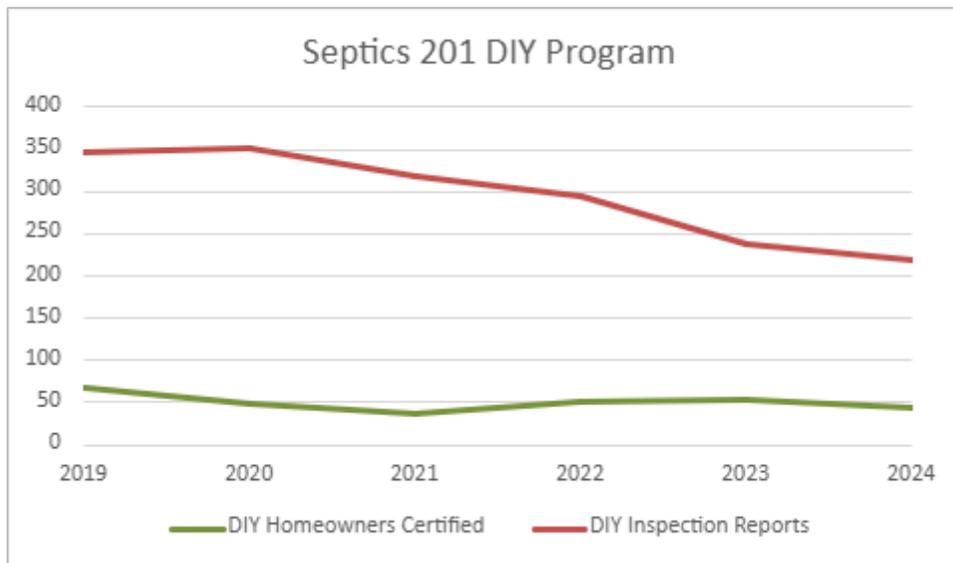
During the database transition inspection report total numbers are more difficult to confirm. *Some reports may have been counted more than once.

% OSS Current on Inspections graph



The septic system inspection compliance program remains a low priority while short staffed and the percentage of septic systems current on inspections in the MRA has decreased.

Homeowner participation in Do-It-Yourself (DIY)



EH held two DIY in person classes in 2024, and certified 22 new DIY participants. The current total # of certified DIY inspectors is 1,162. The DIY database is no longer fully functional - see challenges.

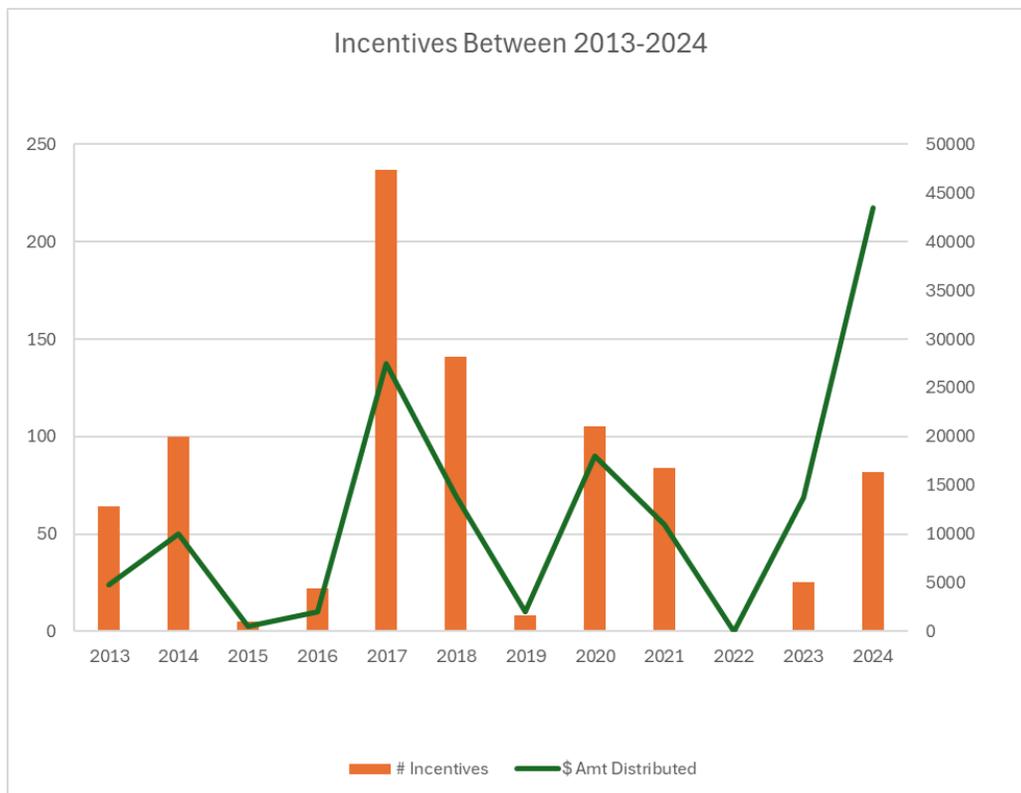
2024 Program Highlights

Incentive/Rebate Program

In 2024, the incentive/rebate program helped 82 people. EH distributed \$43,432 in funding. The OSS Operation & Maintenance (O&M) Assessment fee covered 32 projects and distributed \$19,832. Using DOH OSS Local Management Plan (LMP) funds, 50 projects were completed with \$23,630.

Almost 70% of those septic systems that were inspected needed maintenance such as pumping, risers installed or more-including electrical work. The LMP grant help fund inspections and pumping, with reimbursements capped at \$800 (the cost of inspections and pumping). The OSS O&M Assessment fee has been utilized to assist lower income properties that have accrued higher maintenance costs, with a few exceptions going as high as \$1,751. For those with the higher range of reimbursement, minor repairs were necessary to return the septic system to a functioning status.

Sandra set up Personal Service Agreements for OSS providers who were able to help those with no funds get their systems pumped and inspected. Eighteen projects were managed with OSS providers. These projects allow the OSS providers to be paid directly by the County, so the homeowner does not have to come up with funds to be reimbursed later.



Cost-Share Programs

EH sent 17 referrals to Clallam Conservation District. Nine out of the 17 approved for cost-share. Craft3 funded 11 loans to Clallam County homeowners.

Public Outreach & Why is it Important?

Public outreach events such as Home and Building Shows, environmental events such as River Fest, as well as our Septic 101 and DIY 201 classes are a vital way of connecting directly in person with our community. These public outreach events not only allow us to get much needed information out into the community, but also help the public familiarize themselves with the people behind the program. These events provide the public with an opportunity to meet the Environmental Health staff in person, which provides a humanitarian connection. This face-to-face interrelation helps feed the need for knowledge and assistance, creating an understanding of why our department does what it does and the importance behind it.

SEPTIC 101 & 201 CLASSES

The new Rainshadow Hall classroom at the Dungeness River Center is a great space to host in-person classes with plenty of room for folks to spread out and technology to support presentations.

In 2024, three Septic 101 classes were held educating 75 homeowners, and two Septic 201 classes trained 22 homeowners.



Outreach events

EH had booths at several outreach events. The 2024 Spring Builders Expo, The Spring 2024 Home Show as well as 2024's Dungeness River Fest which is geared towards classrooms for the local schools. The flush/don't flush game was a hit at each event. In Spring, EH assisted at the HHS Kids Education Event and at Jefferson Elementary School.

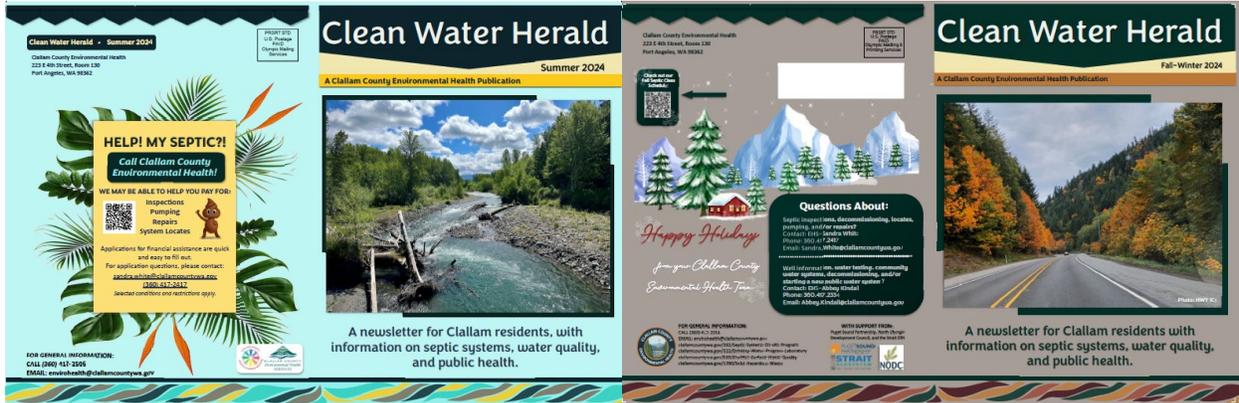
Industry Meetings for O&M providers

Two OSS industry meetings were held in 2024. The September meeting introduced the new Citizen Self Service public portal for finding documents online and eventual online applications as part of the EPnL database transition. EH sponsored a Washington Onsite Septic System Association (WOSSA) class for the industry.



Clean Water Herald

Two issues of the Clean Water Herald were mailed to Clallam County residents in June and October 2024. The Fall mailing was partially funded by Puget Sound Partnership and North Olympic Development Council.



Other activities related to O&M

Throughout the year, staff drafted Facebook, radio ads and Instagram posts encouraging owners to get inspections done.

CCEH participated in Septic Smart week the third week in September by hanging a street banner in Sequim, prepared social media posts, and took Septic Sam "at work" photos.



2024 Program Challenges

Staff shortages and the transition to new technology were the biggest challenges in 2024 for the O&M program. When Water Quality Specialist (WQS) left in May of 2024, the OSS staff had to pick up the extra work that the WQS would assist with such as participating in the CWWG and Strait ERN meetings. In addition, tracking inspection reports and failures was difficult due to Permit Plan no longer communicating with Online RME. EH also had staff out on extended sick leave for periods of time that required job duty shuffling and with O&M being lowest priority, this program had a greater lack of attention than others.

The DIY certification website no longer updates with current inspection data so that the registration process for owners with property inside the MRA may not allow eligible systems to pass and all DIY inspection data must be manually entered in the new database.

Onsite Septic Permitting Program

The Clallam County Environmental Health Onsite Septic Permitting Program is responsible for assuring that septic systems are designed, installed, and maintained in ways that meet State and local standards. Staff receive permits at the EH counter, performs data entry of all permits, soil reports, waivers, complaints from professionals and the public. In July 2024, the EPL database went live to accept permits online. EH waited to allow the public to submit payments online, thus permit online, so during the second half of 2024, CSS entered permit information into the new database as well as the old Permit Plan for a few months.



We enforce Washington State Administrative Code (WAC) 246-272A and Clallam County Chapter 41.20 onsite septic codes by conducting soil evaluations in field and reviewing and approving septic permit designs. We also investigate complaints about sewage surfacing and will send correspondence regarding failures and onsite permitting requirements.

The Onsite program is also tasked with regulating septic system failures which come to our program either through public complaints or industry inspections. Our in-house enforcement protocol is followed during compliant investigations and failing septic system investigations. The protocol includes guidance on site visits, enforcement correspondence, and the use of administrative penalties. On rare occasions and after our enforcement efforts are exhausted, an enforcement case will be referred to the Prosecuting Attorney's office. Time spent on any given enforcement case may vary and is primarily based on the cooperation and motivation of the violator. A lengthy case may involve multiple written letters, phone correspondence, emails, site visits, and working with septic industry on the best solutions for repair. Financial assistance programs are available for low-income property owners that need assistance with funding for a repair septic system. Craft 3 offers low interest loans, and the Clallam Conservation District offers cost share assistance. Our program is diligent in making these programs aware to the property owner, and our staff are eager to assist in getting financial assistance when needed.

Staffing

On-site staffing was scarce in 2024. There are two ½ time OSS permit staff, one ¼ time staff in failure tracking/permitting, one CSS, and one 0.8 GIS/database technician.

Janine Reed has remained ½ time in on-site permitting in 2024 working primarily to approve and finalize septic permits & Planning projects (Lot Alterations and Conditional Use Permits) along with code & policy update projects. Janine is a Registered Sanitarian (RS) and is the only full-time EHS with an Onsite Inspector Certificate of Competency.

Sandra White worked ½ time in on-site permitting program primarily working in the field conducting soil evaluations (site registrations), installation inspections, and complaint visits. She continued to learn from Janine as she prepares to take the Onsite Inspector Certificate of Competency test in Spring 2025.

Andy Perham continues to work part-time as an EHS with an Onsite Inspector Certificate of Competency. He often works on failure enforcement and some septic system permitting processes. He has been assisting Hope and Sandra learn some of the ways of researching state codes and procedure guidance.

Adar Feller tried to keep the numbers and data rolling for reporting as best as she could while infrastructure continued to be unsupported. She assisted with training new employees on data entry and Quality Control (QC) to keep the data wrangled but it has been very difficult during this time of technology and database transitions. She has had multiple challenges to face and is invaluable to the EH team in her willingness to be the main person to facilitate our data needs and communicate our needs to IT and GIS staff.



Janine Reed



Andy Perham



Hope Merideth



Adar Feller

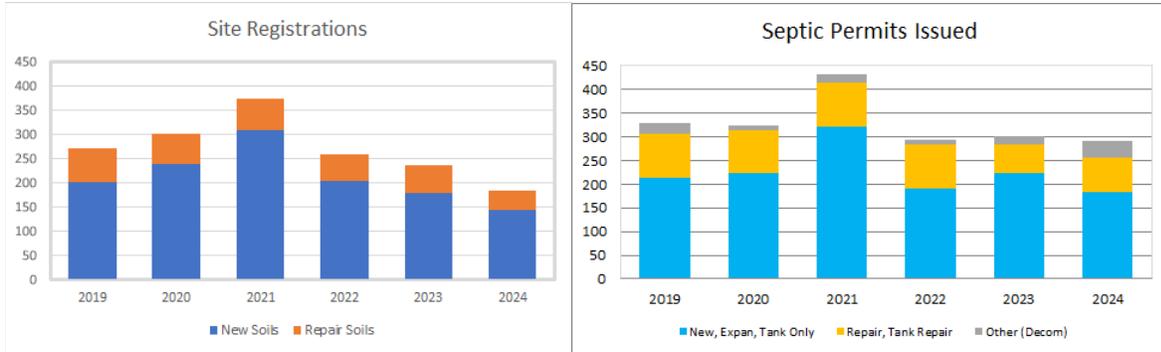


Sandra White

Routine Program Activities

Routine program activities include, complaint and failure investigations; septic code compliance inspections, priority is sewage on the ground and pursuing correction of the failure; OSS permitting and the extensive process that goes with it; soils evaluations; septic system install inspections; Building Department reviews for OSS requirements to approve issuance and final inspection; DCD collaboration in Project Review, LDV, BLA and other governmental actions; licensing of pumpers, installers, and O&M providers; and, writing policies and regulations. Updating policies from draft to final form to take to BOH. Updating CCHR to reflect new WAC 246-272A update that goes into effect in 2025.

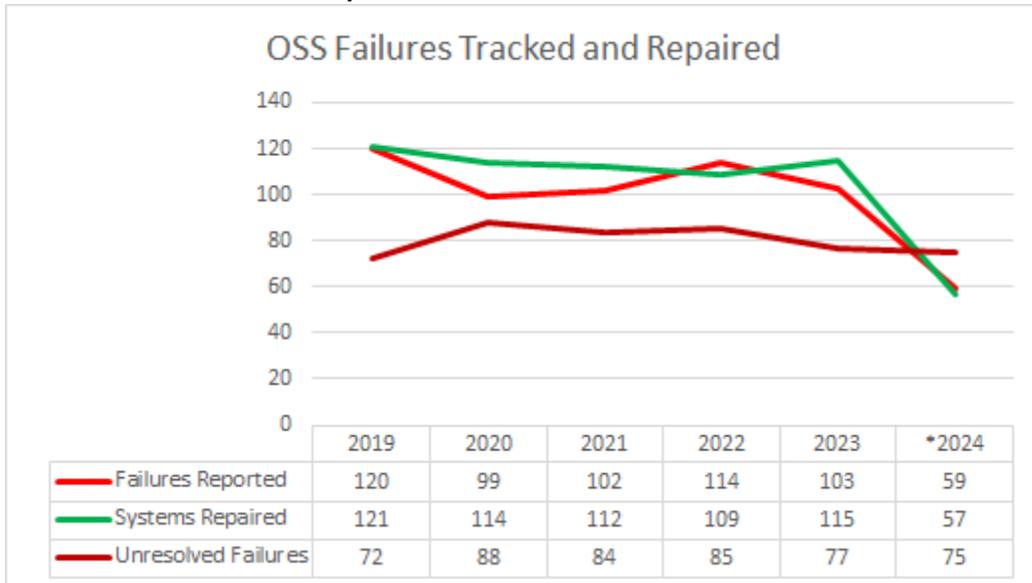
In 2024, the septic permitting section saw a decrease in site registration requests compared to 2022 as new projected development continued to stagnate. There are also fewer undeveloped lots. The total number of septic permits issued has remained constant for the past three years. In 2024, EH performed 185 soil inspections for site registrations and issued 294 septic permits.



Complaints

In 2024, EH received over 59 new Onsite complaints and resolved 103 complaints.

OSS Failures Tracked and Repaired



In 2024, EH resolved 103 failures. There are 75 unresolved failures remain/most are either unoccupied or in process of being repaired. There were 61 repairs in the Marine Recovery Area.

PIC area and difficult repairs completed:

- 3 total Sherbourne Road repairs- still working on one to complete
- Bean Road direct discharge
- Old Olympic failure resolved, was a challenge with owner having no money or income for repairs
- Collins Road failure completed, the sewage from that system more than likely went out to the Bay with the tides weekly if not daily.
- XX Wilcox Ln Sequim, WA 98382 in Jamestown area
- XX FAT CAT LN Unit: SFD Sequim, WA 98382 along Matriotti
- 1XX LONG CREEK LN SEQUIM, WA 98382 near Matriotti

2024 Program Highlights

The 2024 OSS permitting program highlights include finishing repairs on 2 out of 3 failures on Sherborne Road and working with the DOH LOSS Program to resolve a commercial LOSS malfunction pump and surfacing sewage.



The photo on the left shows surfacing sewage and the photo on the right shows the area fenced with lime applied to the surfacing sewage to allow time for the system to dry out and reduce people and animals being exposed to raw sewage.

Finding Failures

While mowing the right of way, a County Roads crew found direct discharge pipe into Bean Road ditch. The ditch emptied into Lincoln Park ponds creating serious public health threat. The owner was unaware that pipe was there. The OSS system was repaired through Craft3 and CCD funding.

2024 Program Challenges

The primary challenges in the OSS permitting program are the database transition and staffing. In July 2024, EPL, the new permit database for DCD, PW, and OSS went live. The Permit Plan database was used throughout 2024, even though it's been unsupported since 2012. During this transition, staff focused on Tyler EPL database development-led primarily by Adar.

Lack of OSS permitting staff was a huge challenge for continuity of the program, for morale, for burnout, for back-ups when a staff has planned vacation time or is sick. With two staff allocated .5 FTE in permit time, it makes it difficult to conduct permitting and enforcement activities.

Additional Enforcement Challenges

Other challenges include people living in RVs or tiny homes without an approved septic system. The photos below on the left show a Park Model placed without any permits or approved drinking water source. The photo on the right shows an RV without septic. EH receives numerous reports regarding people living in RVs without approved septic.



Unapproved expansions

An RV park with a grocery store continues to be an enforcement issue for Onsite. In 2019, they expanded to add 20 more RV spots without septic approval which makes them a Larger On-Site Septic (LOSS) due to an increase of flows over the original permit of 3,480 gpd. The DOH LOSS program does not have the ability to enforce their LOSS requirements, so it falls on EH to assess fines and try to get compliance that way. EH will be considering revoking the septic permit for the site since she has added sites over the original 40 which makes the current permit invalid. The Conditional Use Permit (CUP) requires them to follow local septic and drinking water rules.

Solid and Hazardous Waste Program

The Clallam County Environmental Solid and Hazardous Waste Program is responsible for assisting with, and responding to, solid and hazardous waste issues within Clallam County. There are 13 permitted solid waste facilities in Clallam County. EH enforces solid waste codes with authority by WAC 173-304, WAC 173-350, WAC 173-351, and CCC 41.11.



Staffing

Hope Merideth and Chris Reed are the Environmental Health Administrative and Customer Service Specialists who receive calls, answer questions, and log solid waste complaints brought in by the public. Eli Owens is the Environmental Health Specialist who investigates complaints, enforces violations, issues facility permits, reviews environmental reports, and inspects permitted facilities.



Eli Owens



Chris Reed

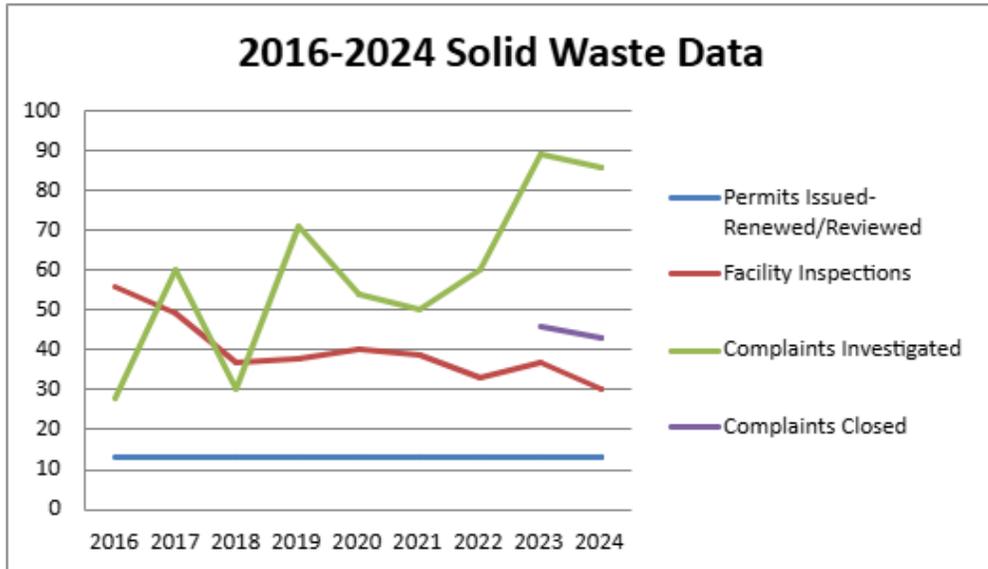


Hope Merideth

Routine Program Activities

Routine program activities include business assistance, resident assistance, facility inspections, complaint investigations, complaint enforcement, issuance of permits, review of permits, review of new facilities or modification of existing facilities, updating the County website, public outreach and education, working in partnership with DCD's Code Enforcement, working in partnership with the septic team, working in partnership with the Sheriff's Department, working in partnership with the Cities of Sequim, Port Angeles, and Forks, and contributing to the Solid Waste Advisory Committee.

In 2024, 86 solid waste complaints cases were investigated with 43 cases getting closed, 13 Solid Waste Facility Permits renewed, and 30 Inspections of permitted solid waste facilities. The table below shows the number of solid waste permits, inspections, and complaint cases investigated from 2016-2024. The graph on the next page shows the number of solid waste permits, inspections, and complaint cases investigated from 2014-2024.



2024 Program Highlights

In September, EH hosted a Forks Household Hazardous Waste Event in partnership with the City of Forks. The Event collected 3,850 pounds of Household Hazardous Waste and 2,500 pounds of paint. 72 households participated in the event.



An important highlight is continuing our positive relationship working with DCD Code Enforcement and the Sheriff's Office through joint investigations and productive inter-department meetings.

2024 Program Challenges

Working with a dying database (Permit Plan) while building a new database (Tyler) made tracking of numbers quite difficult. This is still a challenge and will likely continue to be for some time.

Finding solutions for abandoned RVs continues to be a challenge.

Water Quality Program

The Clallam County Water Quality Program is responsible for managing reporting and deliverables for several grants, coordinating current work and future steps for the Clallam County PIC program, and for responding to public inquiries and providing guidance related to local water quality concerns, primarily due to pollution. Current grants within the Water Quality Program include the DOH Recreational Shellfish Biotoxin Program, which monitors Clallam County beaches for biotoxin pollution in support of safe recreational shellfish harvesting, the DOH and DOE Pollution, Identification, and Correction (PIC) grants, which work to identify and correct sources of fecal coliform pollution in the Dungeness and Sequim Bay watersheds in support of reopening commercial shellfish acreage, and the DOH OSS LMP IMP grant, which supports the management of an internal septic record database, as well as internal and public facing tools for data accession, and septic education and outreach.



Staffing

The Water Quality Program is staffed by the Water Quality Specialist and receives staffing support from the On-Site Program (PIC field sampling, DOH Biotoxin Program) as well as the Food Program and Solid Waste Program (DOH Biotoxin Program). Katie Kowal was the WQS until mid-May. The position was vacant throughout the rest of the year. Andrew and Eli maintained shellfish sampling and PIC monitoring.



Katie Kowal



Andrew Harris



Eli Owens



Adar Feller

Routine Program Activities

The Water Quality Program supports the DOH Biotoxin program, coordinating and participating in sampling at several sites along Clallam’s northern coastline, and providing pollution related safety guidance to the public in the form of press releases and posting closure signs at beaches commonly used for recreational harvesting. Support for the Biotoxin program also includes coordination and support for four volunteers throughout the year.

The Water Quality Program also acts as lead for the Clallam County PIC program, working in partnership with Clallam Conservation District, the Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe, Clallam County Environmental Health On-Site team, and Streamkeepers. As lead, the program manages PIC focus area and sampling site selection, sampling efforts, quarterly Clean Water Work Group partner meetings, and referrals to appropriate entities regarding potential impacts to water quality related to agricultural, septic, or property/land use concerns.

Due to staff turnover and lack of funding, the *Clean Water Herald* has not been produced for several years. With stable funding provided by the OSS Assessment Fee, it became a combined goal for the Water Quality and O&M Programs to again begin distributing CWH. This publication allows CCEH to directly communicate with residents across the county about OSS care and maintenance and water quality stewardship. It is a friendly, approachable way to build positive relationships with the community we serve, and ultimately supports a healthy public and a healthy environment.



2024 Program Challenges

The Water Quality Program has one staff member, whose time in 2024 was divided among grant management, the PIC Program, the O&M Program, the Cost-Share Program, and county-wide water quality work (Recreational Shellfish and limited scope lake/creek studies outside of the MRA). This limited the ability to devote time to identifying county-wide water quality needs, conducting deeper work with the PIC program, determining needs for future work, applying for grants, and the overall long-term sustainability of the Water Quality Program.

Environmental Health Administration and Other Programs

The Environmental Health Administration Program oversees the Environmental Health staffing management and program activities. The Environmental Health Director coordinates EH staff and programs. Other Environmental Health programs include emergency preparedness, FPHS, and vector surveillance.

Staffing

The primary staff in the EH Administration Program is the Environmental Health Director, Jennifer Garcelon. She has a REHS and a master's degree in public health.

Routine Program Activities

The Environmental Health Administration program consists of supporting Environmental Health staff and programs, and budget oversight. There are thirteen EH staff, including the EH Director. The EH Director is responsible for program staff hiring, staff support, and annual evaluations. The EH Director works closely with the Health Officer, HHS Director, HHS Deputy Director, and Fiscal Specialist. The EH Director is responsible for presenting any Environmental Health local ordinance, program updates, or policy changes to the Board of Health.

The Environmental Health team meets weekly as a whole group. The food team meets weekly; the onsite team meet every other week; the drinking water team meets monthly; and other programs meet as needed. The EH team meets with the Health Officer monthly, as well as the Prosecuting Attorney's Office monthly.

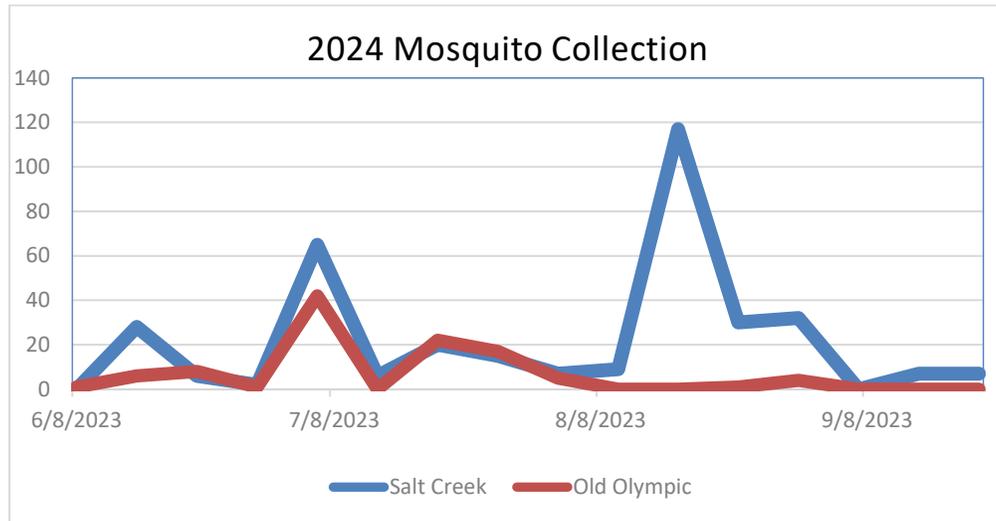
Routine program activities include updating codes and policies. In May 2024, the Board of Health approved a new Environmental Health fee schedule. The new fee schedule was developed with assistance from the Finance Office who had completed a detailed review of revenues by program. Four options were presented to the Board of Health for review and discussion. The Environmental Health fees had last been increased in 2018.

The EH Director works closely with the statewide EH Directors' (EHD) group coordinated by Washington State Association of Local Public Health Officials (WSALPHO). The group meets monthly to discuss emerging issues, regulations, and coordination with state agencies like Department of Health, State Board of Health, or Department of Ecology. The group meets in person in June and October annually. Jennifer is the chair of the EHD solid waste and workforce development subcommittees. In October 2022, she was elected as on the EHD Board and in 2024 was the current president. It is a three-year term.

Other EH programs include FPHS planning, emergency preparedness, and vector surveillance. In emergency preparedness, staff works with Clallam County Department of Emergency Management on planning and response on disasters including windstorms, wildfire smoke, floods, landslides, or power outages that affect drinking water, onsite septic systems, food safety, or solid waste systems.



With vector surveillance, EH works with Public Health when there has been rabies exposure. EH will work with the State Public Health Laboratory (PHL) for shipment of animals that require testing. During the summer 2024, Eli collected mosquitos for West Nile Virus (WNV) surveillance. There were two collection sites that are collected weekly. The mosquitos were shipped to the PHL where they are speciated and tested for WNV. There was no WNV detected in any of the 2024 mosquitos submitted.



2024 Program Highlights

One of the biggest highlights of 2024 includes the strength of the Environmental Health staff and their commitment to working together. The team banded together to keep the pace of plans, permits, and water samples. It took some cross training and adjustments to routine activities, but services levels to the public were maintained.

Another highlight was transitioning to a new permitting database. As we move into the 21st century and away from paper files, there are different electronic databases available for workflow and programs. In 2024, Clallam County departments worked with Tyler Enterprise Permit Licensing (EPL) as the database to replace Tidemark Advantage (a.k.a. Permit Plan). EH used Permit Plan for onsite, drinking water, solid waste, and complaints. The database went live in July 2024. Applicants can submit electronic applications for water availabilities and well site approval on EPL.

2024 Program Challenges

Staffing continues to be the biggest challenge throughout Environmental Health. Two positions had been deferred in November 2023, and the WQS resigned in May 2024. Those positions remained vacant throughout 2024. In late June, the drinking water EHS was out on medical leave, so everyone pitched in to keep the lab going.

The challenge of the new database included some bumps in the road during implementation. EH was not able to accept online payments, so the EH programs were delayed on using the online system. It is exciting to have these new databases, but it requires 10-20 hours per week to work on database transition. This requires staff to delay other projects since the staff time requirement was not planned.

Conclusion

In 2024, the Clallam County Environmental Health team worked on mandated environmental health programs. They worked together as a team to accomplish a lot. The drinking water, OSS, and solid waste programs maintained service levels. The food program adapted to new industry needs and different service levels. The water quality program worked to fulfill grant requirements and work with partners on water quality projects. The administration program worked on new foundational public health service funding and public health emergencies.

Environmental Health followed their mission to protect the community's health through the prevention and control of environmentally related communicable diseases and through the minimization of exposure to environmental health hazards. EH implemented their vision to work together to provide responsible and professional enforcement of public health regulations, advocated the principles and values of public health, conducted themselves to inspire excellence in communication, problem solving, cooperation, teamwork, and public service. They worked to make a positive difference within the community through coordination and collaboration with the public and industry.

The team takes pride in its 2024 achievement!

