



# Adventures in Community Dialogue: Advisory Groups, Surveys, and More





# Presentation Outline

- Study Background
- Public Involvement Activities
  - Phase 1 – Getting Started
  - Phase 2 - Scoping
  - Phase 3 - Implementation

**Outfall**



**Plant**



# Budd Inlet Reclaimed Water Plant





## Martin Way Reclaimed Water Plant





## In the News...

Drugs found in fish across  
nation (Associated Press)

Drugs, household chemicals are a  
risk 'we haven't fully begun to  
understand' (The Olympian)

Emerging Environmental Contaminants:  
Much Debate, Little Consensus (W&ET)

LOTT to test water for  
pharmaceuticals (The Olympian)



# Study Background

- Community concerned about the fate of pharmaceuticals and personal care products
  - Are compounds removed from reclaimed water?
  - Is it safe to recharge reclaimed water to groundwater?
- Lack local data to answer these questions
- Long-range plan depends on expanded recharge



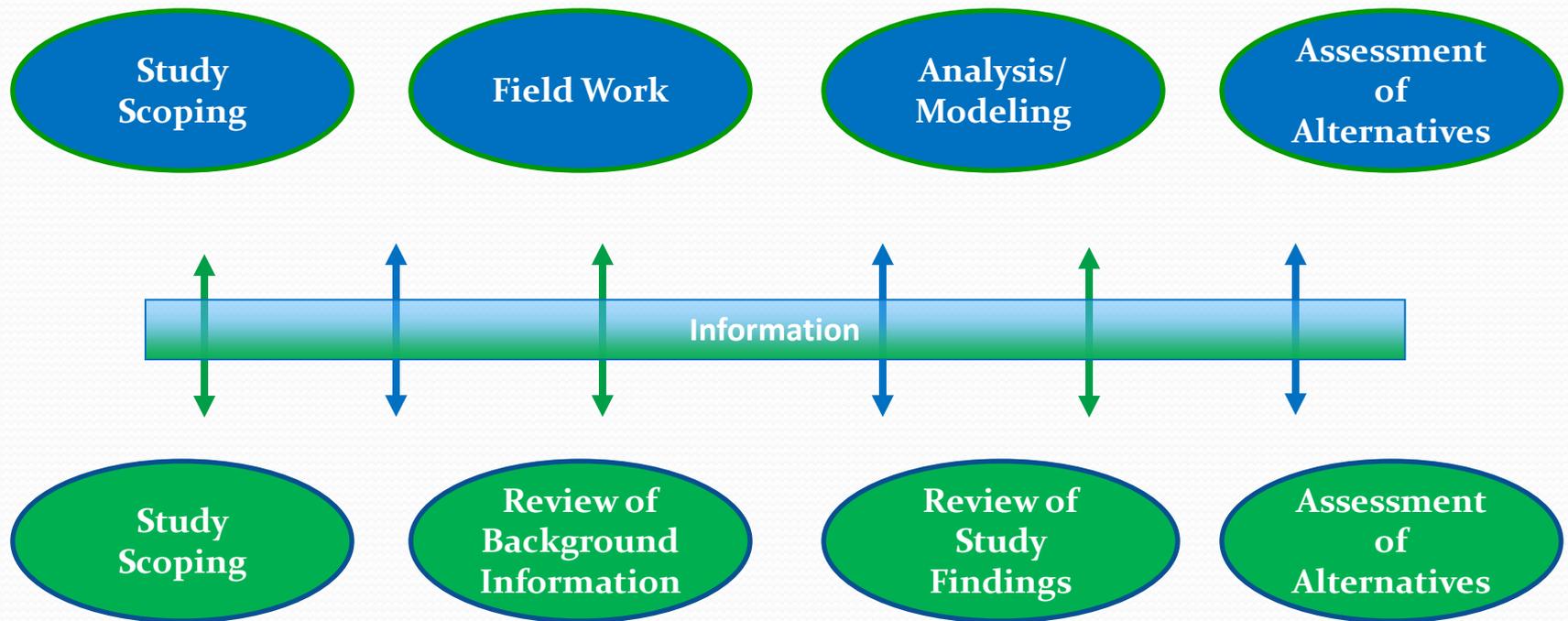
# Groundwater Recharge Scientific Study

## Study Goals

- 1) Improve scientific understanding of local groundwater, reclaimed water and compounds of potential concern
- 2) Foster meaningful community-wide dialogue about these issues
- 3) Provide scientific data and community perspectives to help policymakers make informed decisions
- 4) Ensure the scientific study and public involvement processes are credible, objective, transparent

# Study Structure

## Science Track



## Public Involvement Track

# Proposed First Steps

- Gain understanding of public opinion
  - Structured interviews
  - Random sample telephone survey
  - Citizen focus groups
- Develop a comprehensive public involvement plan



**Board of Directors reaction:  
Something is missing!**

# Community Advisory Group

- Mission:

- Develop understanding of community concerns
- Ensure those concerns are addressed
- Guide effective public involvement efforts

- Selection Process

- Objective and inclusive
- Intent - complete selection in 6 weeks, get going in October 2012
- 39 applications/staff review/board selection
- Reality – took twice as long as expected, first meeting was December





# Community Advisory Group

- Role:
  - Become familiar with reclaimed water, related issues
  - Identify questions related to using reclaimed water to recharge groundwater
  - Advise about effective ways to address questions and issues
  - Assist with preparations for public opinion research
    - Recommend interview question areas
    - Suggest stakeholders to be interviewed
  - Recommend ways to effectively engage the public

# Community Advisory Group

- Phase 1 Meetings:
  - Background context
    - i.e. why recharge with reclaimed water?
  - Technical presentations
    - i.e. what do we know currently about PPCPs in reclaimed water?
  - Discussions about public opinion research
    - Developing survey tools
    - Reviewing results
  - Discussions about public involvement
    - Suggestion for public involvement tools and activities





# Community Advisory Group

- Challenges:
  - Background context
    - i.e. why recharge reclaimed water?
  - Technical presentations
    - i.e. what do we know about presence of PPCPs in reclaimed water?
  - Discussions about public opinion research
    - Developing survey tools
    - Reviewing results
  - Discussions about public involvement
    - Suggestions for public involvement tools and activities

# Public Opinion Research

- Telephone Survey
  - Random digit dial within general service area
  - 400 respondents, reflective of census data
- Key Findings
  - Water quality is top environmental concern
  - High awareness that groundwater is drinking water source
  - Low initial concern about recharging with reclaimed water
  - Concern about recharge increases as information about compounds/contaminants increases



# Public Opinion Research

- Structured Interviews

- 53 community leaders
- 1 – 1.5 hours each



- Findings

- Higher awareness about recharge than general public
- High awareness/concern about contaminants
- Good advice regarding questions/public engagement

# Community Advisory Group

- Key Outcomes of Phase 1:
  - Quality public opinion research tools
  - Comprehensive Public Involvement Plan
  - Extensive list of community questions
- Advisory Group Outcomes:
  - Common level of understanding re: issues
  - Coming together on role of the group
  - Higher level of confidence in study team



# Lessons Learned from Phase 1



- Everything takes longer than you plan!
  - Especially selection of advisory group members
- Be willing to circle back and revisit key questions
- Give it some time to gel
  - Takes time to get everyone on same playing field
  - Takes time for group to get comfortable



# Phase 2



# Phase 2 Study Scoping

## Key Question Areas

- 1) What is in our water (reclaimed water, wastewater, drinking water, local surface and ground waters) and where does it come from?
- 2) Where does recharged water go (and how quickly), and how does the quality of recharged water change when underground?
- 3) What are the risks associated with recharging groundwater with reclaimed water?
- 4) What are the costs and benefits of the various uses of reclaimed water and their associated levels of treatment?

*(distilled from over 85 questions/concerns)*



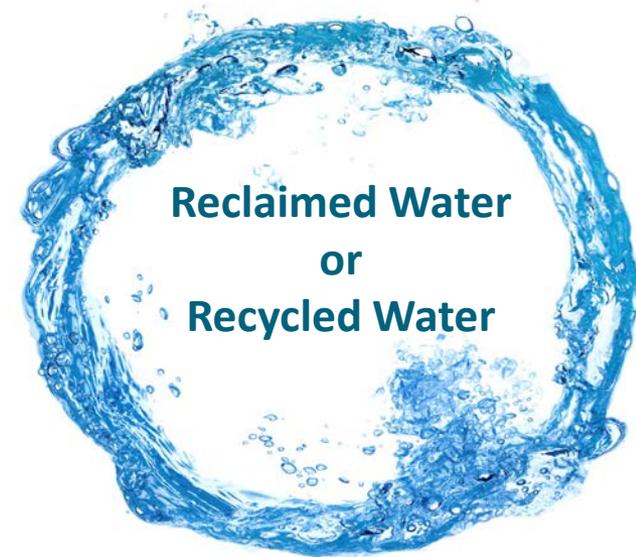
# Community Advisory Group

- Phase 2 Meetings:
  - Preparations for public workshops
    - Review of draft presentations and displays
    - Staffing assistance for workshops
  - Discussion about draft study framework and scope
    - i.e. does the approach address community questions/concerns?
  - Technical presentations
    - i.e. interested in more detail – risk assessment, tracer study and hydrologic modeling
  - Discussion of Peer Review results
    - i.e. does Peer Review Panel feel technical approach is sound, credible, objective

# Phase 2 Public Involvement

- Focus Groups
  - 3 focus groups
  - Tested various terms and phrases
    - Pharmaceuticals and Personal Care Products (before and after treatment)
    - Reclaimed Water
    - Groundwater Recharge
  - Tested the narrative about the study
  - Changed name of the study and the way we describe it!
  - Now the:

***Reclaimed Water Infiltration Study***



# Phase 2 Public Involvement

## • Public Workshops

- 2 workshops – October and December
- Confirm community questions have been identified
- Introduce the study framework and scope
- Gather feedback at workshops and online
- Modest attendance

but rich feedback



The infographic is titled "Public Engagement" and is divided into several sections: "Community Advisory Group", "Community Questions and Concerns", "Public Opinion Research", "Focus Groups", "Key Questions", "We need your feedback", and "Get Involved". It includes text descriptions, small images of people and documents, and a list of key questions and feedback requests. The LOTT logo is at the bottom left and the HDR logo is at the bottom right.

### Public Engagement

#### Community Advisory Group

An advisory group of local citizens was formed to gain an understanding of community perspectives, ensure the study is designed to address community concerns, and identify effective ways to engage the public throughout the study. The group currently has 13 members, and meets once every two months.



#### Community Questions and Concerns

One of the first steps of the study involved identifying questions and concerns that the community has regarding infiltration of reclaimed water to groundwater. Through various meetings and surveys, a list of more than 83 questions was developed. These questions generally fall into one of four categories, as stated below:

To develop the study framework, each of these four question areas was used to establish the main components of the study. Study objectives and activities relating to each component are being identified based on the broader list of community questions.

#### Public Opinion Research

Two types of opinion research have been conducted to identify community questions and concerns related to infiltration of reclaimed water to groundwater. One-hour, in-person interviews were conducted with 53 community members. A random sample telephone survey was conducted with 400 community members.



#### Focus Groups

Three focus groups consisting of 34 community members were held to identify clear, understandable ways to talk about the very technical subjects associated with the study. Based on their input, the name of the study was changed to Reclaimed Water Infiltration Study.



#### Key Questions

- What is the current quality of our local waters: groundwater, surface waters, drinking water, wastewater, and reclaimed water?
- What happens to reclaimed water that is infiltrated to groundwater: where does it travel and how quickly, and how does the quality of the water change over time?
- What are the relative risks of replenishing groundwater with reclaimed water?
- What are the costs and benefits of various approaches for treating and using reclaimed water?

#### We need your feedback

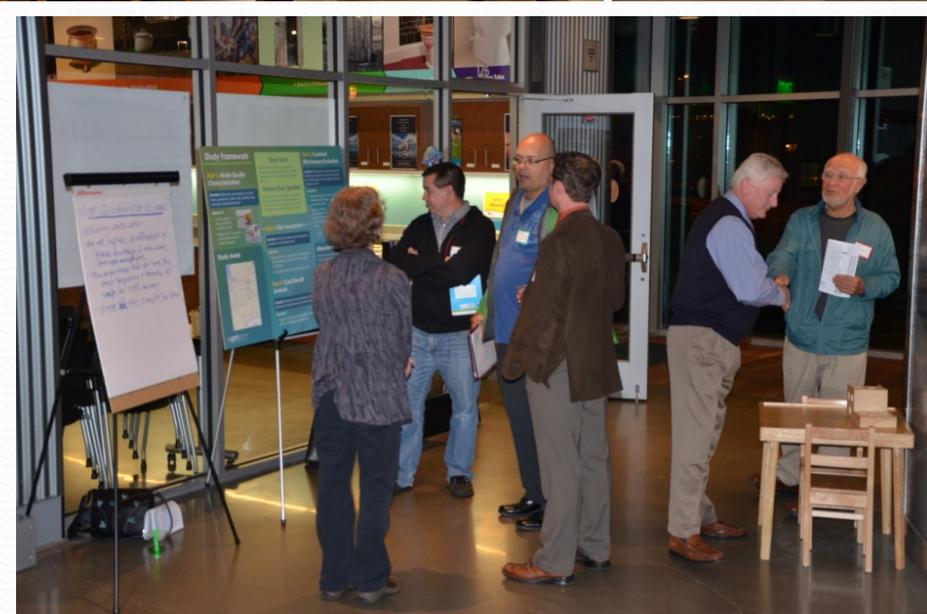
- Do you have any other questions or concerns to add to the current list?
- Does the draft framework address your questions and concerns?
- Are there specific activities you would like to see included in the study?

#### Get Involved

- Participate in a discussion group tonight (at 7:45 pm)
- Leave a written comment on a comment card
- Attend the Public Workshop on December 9
- Request a presentation for your neighborhood or community group about the study
- Visit LOTT's website [www.lotteleanwater.org](http://www.lotteleanwater.org)
- Call LOTT at 360-528-5719
- Get on the study mailing list

**LOTT** *Living On The Trenches*  
Local Organic Treatment Technology

**HDR**



# Phase 2 Outcomes

- Key Outcomes of Phase 2:
  - Engage the community in scoping
  - Find a balance between:
    - Addressing varied public questions/concerns
    - Establishing a scope for technical work that answers the primary study question
- Advisory Group Outcomes:
  - Active role in preparing for workshops
  - Growing understanding of technical concepts
  - Confidence in the credibility of the final scope





# Phase 3

# Community Advisory Group

- Phase 3 Role:
  - Field trips and hands on learning opportunities
    - Existing infiltration facility
    - Field work of study
    - Future infiltration sites
  - Regular meetings
    - Fewer in 2014 & 2015, ramping up in 2016
    - Hear about study findings
    - Help develop public engagement materials and activities
  - Support public engagement activities
    - Encourage people to attend and get involved
    - Attend, staff, make presentations at Public Workshops



# Phase 3 Public Involvement

- Revamp web presence
  - Streamline content
  - Videos of frequently asked questions
- Source control campaign
- Partner with local media
- Partner with community groups
  - Presentations at standing meetings
  - Co-sponsor special events/forums
  - Newsletter articles
- Public workshops or community cafes
  - Present study findings
  - Encourage community conversations





Questions?