

# WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF HEALTH

## Health Impacts of Climate Change Community Storytelling Panelist SBOH Public Meeting November 8, 2023



**Sue Sullivan**, Environmental Health Manager

Sue Sullivan is the Environmental Health Manager for Whatcom County Health and Community Services. Originally from NY, Sue graduated with a Bachelors in Env. Science from SUNY Plattsburgh and received an MBA from Western Washington University. She is a collaborative leader with 2 decades of experience in occupational health and safety and environmental health in higher education before moving over to Whatcom County's Health and Community Services in 2021.

Sue currently lives in Bellingham with her partner, two daughters and their dog Thompson. She is a foodie, enjoys all things nature, and venturing out to music shows.

### Whatcom County Health Department

The Whatcom County Health Department serves Whatcom County by advancing equity and partnering with their community to promote health through policy and systems improvement; prevent disease and injury; provide accurate and reliable health communication, information, and data; prepare for and respond to emergencies; and preserve a healthy environment where everyone can thrive.

The Health Department recently created their strategic plan for 2023-2027 which is built upon the foundation of community engagement through other recent or ongoing outreach by the department. In addition, staff at all levels of the department, along with community partners and key leaders participated during the process to offer insights and feedback.

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**Elaine Harvey, Watershed Department Manager**

Elaine Harvey currently works for the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission as the Watershed Department Manager and has also previously worked for Yakama Nation Fisheries since 2006. Elaine is also a citizen of the Kamiltpah (Rock Creek) Band of the Yakama Nation. She was the manager for the Rock Creek Fish and Habitat Project for 13 years and served as the Hydro Systems Oversight Coordinator and Environmental Coordinator at the Yakama Nation Fisheries. She was also a Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fisheries Commissioner for the Yakama Nation and serves as an Executive Board member for the Columbia Land Trust.

Elaine dedicates her career to conserving and enhancing the First Foods for the Yakama Nation during a time of warming climate conditions. Her work includes enhancing streams for all native aquatic resources in many streams, riparian corridors, and wetlands in the streams in the Rock Creek, Klickitat, White Salmon, and Yakima drainages. She also actively works with national forests to protect and enhance huckleberry habitats in the various huckleberry fields utilized by the Yakama Nation. Elaine works with her tribal departments to improve root gathering areas for tribal members on the Yakama reservation. She also is dedicated to sharing her traditional knowledge with the younger generations of the Yakama Nation.

### Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (CRITFC)

CRITFC brings tribal views to the table in an effort to ensure that salmon are provided the respect accorded by tribal cultural beliefs and required under law. It also allows the tribes to develop common strategies to educate non-Indians on the importance of salmon to the environment, culture, economy, and ultimately the entire region's wellbeing. No other entity in the Columbia River Basin acts with such a purpose. The organization provides support as requested to each of its member tribes' fisheries programs to support their efforts to restore salmon and watersheds within their own territories. CRITFC, together with its member tribes' fisheries programs, enables the tribes to advocate views and protect treaty rights at all levels. In working to restore salmon and rivers, its work benefits all the citizens of the region. By accepting the challenge of restoring salmon to the rivers and streams and implementing the treaties, the four tribes acting together through the of the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission have turned the tide and restored the commitment that tribal people expected under their treaties. CRITFC also does work in a myriad of other topics including climate change.

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**Paulina Lopez**, Executive Director

Paulina has over 25 years of experience working on issues of civil rights, social environmental justice, equity, education, and diversity. Paulina is keenly in tune with the strengths and challenges of this community as it moves toward environmental health and social and climate justice. Paulina is a highly regarded organizer, facilitator, community and policy strategist, movement builder focused on building systems of power and shifting power outward to those most impacted by injustice and oppression. Developed consulting with governments, organizations, community, and foundations to identify ways to shift power dynamics and develop frameworks for collaborative co-creating and transformative governance.

Through this work and her leadership in social, environmental, and racial justice organizations, Paulina has developed expertise in multi-sector stakeholder engagement, networks, collaborative problem solving, and building power with BIPOC communities of color, immigrants, and refugees. Paulina emigrated to the U.S. from Ecuador and has made Seattle her home for the past 18 years. She first joined DRCC/TAG as a volunteer, advocating in her community for access to a safe, clean environment for South Park's families. She holds a master's degree in Human Rights Law from St. Thomas University

### Duwamish River Community Coalition

The Duwamish River Community Coalition was established in 2001 to provide resources, knowledge, and action to create just environmental futures. It represents an alliance of community, tribal, environmental, and small business groups that have been impacted by the pollution of the lower Duwamish River. Their Mission is to elevate the voices of those impacted by the pollution of the Duwamish River and other environmental injustices to help establish a clean, healthy, and equitable environment for people and wildlife. The coalition promotes place-keeping and prioritizes community capacity and resilience. Additionally, the coalition has done work in the areas of climate justice, youth leadership, advocacy, and clean air.

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**Ryan Oelrich, Executive Director**

Ryan Oelrich has been a citizen of Spokane since 2000 when he attended Whitworth and then Gonzaga University. He's been the executive director of multiple organizations in Spokane including Priority Spokane, The Ambassadors Foundation, and Quest Youth Groups as well as a small business owner. He's a Culture of Health Fellow with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and has an MA in Leadership and an MBA. He was awarded the Peirone Prize for service in 2016 and was voted "Best Philanthropist" by Inlander readers in 2017. In 2019 he was selected as one of eight "Difference Makers" by the Spokesman Review and has received congressional recognition for his work on poverty and homelessness issues. Oelrich has presented at conferences and trainings across the United States and in China, Costa Rica, and Sweden.

Also an artist, Oelrich built a life size model of a Hobbit house that's become a regional attraction. Oelrich has founded 3 nonprofits focused on youth issues, and he's an advocate for increased collaboration and coordination which was the subject of one of his TEDx talks. Ryan is married to his best friend and partner, Robert Thompson, and they have two delightful dogs together.

### Priority Spokane

Priority Spokane is an endeavor to create a vibrant future for Spokane County by implementing community-defined goals. It is through collaborative and focused efforts on improvements that Spokane County will be a flourishing community for all who live and work there. In 2004, Eastern Washington University's (EWU) Institute for Policy and Economic Analysis commenced the Community Indicators Initiative (CII). This initiative involved the collection of data – or indicators – to assess the state of the Spokane community in terms of economic vitality, education, health, environment, and numerous other factors. A group of community leaders involved in the CII process recognized the value of the indicators for identifying priority community problems and for measuring change on these issues over time. These leaders represented local government, businesses, nonprofit organizations, and local funders. With the vision to prioritize community action to measurably improve the community, these leaders officially launched Priority Spokane in 2008. Currently their top 4 priorities are to Provide greater access to mental health services/resources to improve public safety; Expand childcare capacity to boost the economy; Expand the tree canopy to enhance the environment; Explore alternative housing such as shared equity, tiny homes, co-housing, etc. to address housing issues.