

Quarterly Summary to Washington State Department of Health On-the-Ground Efforts in the Drayton Harbor Shellfish Protection District 4th Quarter of 2002

Efforts continue in the Drayton Harbor Shellfish Protection District to affect change in the water quality over the shellfish beds and throughout the district as a whole. The following is a summarized list of activities that have occurred in the district over the fourth quarter of 2002.

Agricultural practices (Department of Ecology and Whatcom Conservation District):

- 0- dairy farm re-inspections completed

On-site Septic Systems (County Health and Human Services)

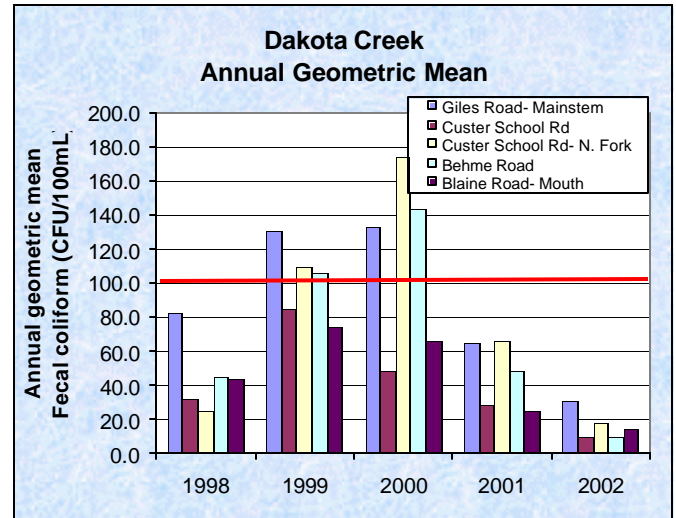
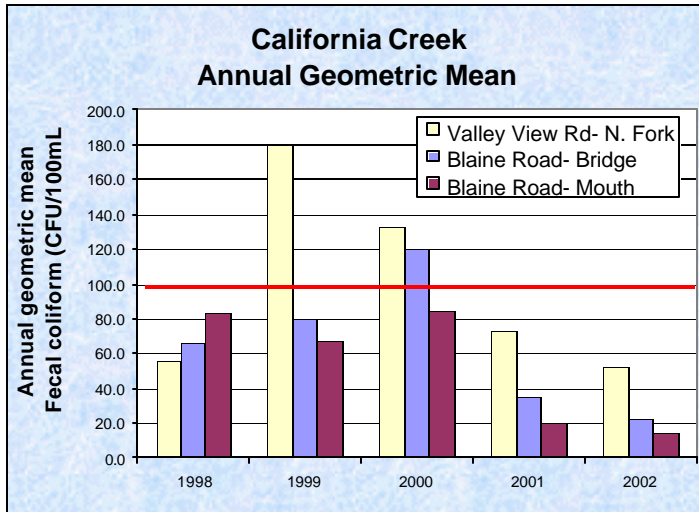
- 8- OSS inspections performed - 6 loan inspections, 2 based on complaints
- 3- found to be failing, 1 abated, 2 in the process of being repaired

Municipal Sewer Systems (City of Blaine, DOE)

- The City of Blaine STP operators completed their annual maintenance on the RBC, clarifiers and blower system.
- The chlorinator and automatic switchover were overhauled and the chlorinator underground injector vacuum line was replaced.
- Work continues to identify and correct problems with I & I in the system. Leaking manholes have been identified and repaired and drainage was improved on 10th St.
- Blaine was awarded a \$250K grant from HUD to develop a comprehensive sewer plan. They are working with Birch Bay Water and Sewer District to select the engineering firm to oversee this process. This selection will be made in early February 2003. Planning is expected to take two years, but some projects may be cued up in the coming year. For example, west Blaine sewage (Semiahmoo area) may be redirected via a new network of pipes south to the Birch Bay sewage treatment plant and work will likely begin on adding wet weather storage along Marine Drive.

Water Quality Monitoring (Northwest Indian College)

- *Freshwater sites*-11 sites monitored monthly
 - The freshwater systems continue to show improvements in water quality. 2001 and 2002 were dry years and this lack of precipitation, and therefore runoff, have no doubt played some role in the improvement in water quality, but it is felt that efforts to develop and begin implementation of nutrient management plans for dairy farmers as well as other community-based projects focusing on water quality have also had an effect on water quality in these watersheds. The two graphs provide a visual display of what has been happening in the creeks over the past few years.



Other Projects/Activities in 2002

- Puget Sound Restoration Fund Grant-

- **Blaine Marina Activities**

Signage: A total of eight signs warning boaters not to discharge sewage in area waters were installed at the entrance to Drayton Harbor, at the entrance to Semiahmoo Marina, near DOH station 5 in Drayton Harbor and at five locations in the commercial portion of Blaine Marina. This was a partnering effort with Horizons Foundation, the Port of Bellingham, Blaine Seafood Processors, Whatcom County, the Semiahmoo Marina and the Community Oyster Farm.

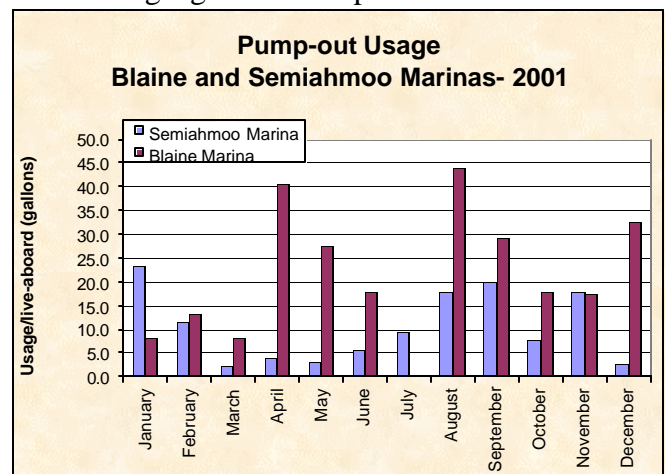
Education Materials from Shilshole Marina: Various water quality-related documents used by Shilshole Bay Marina were shared in their entirety with Alan Birdsall, Port of Bellingham. The documents included the:

- Declaration of Intent (great overview of marina water quality impacts that can be associated with boating activity)
- Shilshole Bay Marina Best Management Practices (excellent section on sewage and gray water management)
- Authorization to Live Aboard (excellent section on description of sewage disposal system and documentation of periodic usage of pump-out facilities)

Summaries of these documents have also been shared with the Shellfish Committee. We have encouraged the Port of Bellingham to consider this language for incorporation into their existing marina documents.

Live-aboard pump-out usage: Records were collected on monthly live-aboard status during 2001 at the Semiahmoo Marina. This information was added to a spreadsheet showing monthly pump-out usage from this marina. This information was compared to pump-out usage and live-aboard status in Blaine Harbor during 2001.

The Semiahmoo Marina records reflected the seasonal nature of boating activity. A total of 1358 gallons were pumped from this marina during 2001. There was an average of 12 live-



aboard boats in this marina for the year. Monthly usage averages ranged from a low of 2 gallons/ boat to a high of 20 in the peak summer season. The higher count in the summer months no doubt reflects increased boating traffic and therefore increased pump-out usage. In general, the pump-out usage at the Blaine Marina relative to the number of live-aboard vessels was higher. It was encouraging to see significant use of the pump-out facilities at this marina. There are now 50 live-aboard boats in the Blaine Marina. During 2002, pump-out usage ranged from 7 to 41 gallons per boat, peaking in August, which reflects the increased boating activity at that time and suggests visiting boats are making use of the facilities. (Excel spreadsheets can be made available for both marinas).

- **Community Oyster Farm-**

- The Community Oyster Farm continues to educate people to the efforts to re-open Drayton Harbor to shellfish harvesting through its quarterly article in the Bellingham Herald newspaper. This partnering with the Herald has allowed the Community Oyster Farm to stay visible and get the word out on all of the various activities and efforts that are being undertaken to try and improve water quality in the shellfish district.
- Geoff Menzies gave a presentation to the Puget Sound Council in November of 2002. His presentation covered the efforts in Drayton Harbor since the first closure occurred in 1995. Geoff also provided the Council with suggestions on how they can help with future efforts. The Puget Sound Council was broadcast on the local news station (TVW), which provided another opportunity to get the information out to a larger audience.

- **Port of Bellingham-**

- Port staff and the Department of Ecology have held meetings with the commercial seafood processors, fuelers and commercial fishermen to discuss best management practices for their activities and operations within the marina and harbor. Lease renewal agreement documents will have language that addresses discharge of pollutants to surface water and information on best management practices will be distributed to those utilizing the commercial portion of the marina.
- The Port finished the work on the entrance to the marina during the last quarter of 2002. The new structure allows for more movement and mixing of waters under the wall. It is hoped that the improved circulation will help with water quality in this area.
- The Port is currently working with several sub-contractors under a Centennial grant to develop environmental education materials, such as a marina pledge booklet, and to get local residents and businesses to take the Pledge.
- Several Environmental Compliance Assessment Program (ECAP) visits were completed in the commercial portion of the Blaine marina during the last quarter of 2002.
- The Port agreed to partner with the Whatcom County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) to look at pollution issues, particularly in the commercial portion of the marina, and come up with viable management options to be implemented to reduce or eliminate these sources from impacting the water quality of the marina and the harbor. If the proposal is approved by the Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC), work on this project will begin in the first quarter of 2003.
- **Mutt Mitt Program-** Based on the number of mitts used from October through December 2002, roughly 1.0×10^{12} fecal coliform bacteria were removed from the system before they could enter the harbor waters during this time period.

- **Puget Sound Action Team (PSAT)**- The Puget Sound Workplan was completed at the end of 2002 and now has to go before legislature for approval. The work of the PSAT during the fourth quarter of 2002 has focused on education and community outreach. The PSAT is helping with several conferences and outreach programs coming up in 2003- the Puget Sound Research Conference and “Healthy Home and Garden Tour” by Sustainable Connections are two examples.
- **Shared Waters Roundtable** – Work continued on the circulation study with Hay and Company Consultants, Inc. The Drayton Shellfish Advisory Committee Chair and Whatcom County staff have continued to provide data and input to Hay and Company to assist in the U.S. portion of the model. The model will study the impacts the Nicomekl, Serpentine and Little Campbell rivers in B.C., the Blaine wastewater treatment plant, and Dakota and California Creeks in Washington State. The final report should be out in the first quarter of 2003.
- **DOE Wetlands Report**- In 2002, PSRF and Trillium Corporation partnered with Ecology’s wetland restoration program to identify key wetlands in the watershed for restoration activities. The primary goal of the program is to restore wetland area and function in key areas as a strategy to increase residence time in the upper watershed. The report on the study done in the Dakota Creek and California Creek watersheds is under internal review within Ecology, but has had significant input from Whatcom County Conservation District, the Shellfish District and County Planning staff. Hal Hart, Planning Director for Whatcom County, will convene stakeholders by March of 2003 to begin implementation of recommendations from this report.
- **PSRF Shoreline Sampling/County-wide Pledge Program**- Stormwater samples have been collected since September 2002 along the urban shoreline of east Blaine as part of the County-wide Pledge Program. Results from this sampling indicate lower fecal coliform concentrations than were observed during the same period in 2001. Temperature, TSS (total suspended solids), and flows were also recorded. Preliminary results (Year 1) of this 2-year Pledge water quality sampling program will be written up in the spring of 2003.