

Quarterly Summary to Washington State Department of Health On-the-Ground Efforts in the Portage Bay Shellfish Protection District 3rd Quarter of 2002

Efforts continue in the Portage Bay 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 third quarter of 2002.

Agricultural practices (Department of Ecology and Whatcom Conservation District)

- 14- dairy farm inspections completed (goal was for 23 to be completed)
- 0- Notice of Correction or Civil Penalty were issued for the Nooksack River Basin
- 0- Warning Letters were issued
- 0- Notice of Violation was issued
- 2- Administrative Orders were issued
- All but one of the dairy farms within the Portage Bay Shellfish Protection District and throughout Whatcom County has met the compliance deadline of July 1, 2002 for development of nutrient management plans.

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

- 20- OSS inspections performed- 18 loan inspections, 2 based on complaints
- 2- found to be violations, 1 abated, 1 still open

Municipal Sewer Systems (DOE, Cities of Everson, Lynden and Ferndale)

- The City of Everson STP averaged monthly fecal coliform levels (geometric mean) of 3, 5, and 8 CFU/100mL, respectively, for the months of July, August and September 2002. This continues to keep them well below their new discharge permit limit of 28 CFU/100mL.
- Everson STP replaced their 3 influent pumps in August; the pumps were over 30 years old and a little undersized for the STP's current flow.
- The City of Lynden had average monthly fecal coliform levels of 13, 3 and 5 CFU/100mL for the months of July, August and September 2002 all well below their interim limit of 100 CFU/100mL and well within the new lower limit of 28 CFU/100mL as well.
- The City of Lynden continues work on their wastewater treatment facility expansion.
- The City of Ferndale had an average monthly fecal coliform level of 10 CFU/100mL for all three months of July, August and September, all well below the limit of 28 CFU/100mL, which will be their new limit when their permit is revised in 2003.

Water Quality Monitoring (Northwest Indian College, B. Marcy/Stream Team, C. Woodward)

- *Freshwater sites*- 52 sites- monitored bi-weekly (twice a month)
 - The main-stem of the Nooksack continues to meet the freshwater standards at all 4 sites.
 - Fishtrap Creek continues to be the only creek of the eight sampled for the TMDL for the Nooksack that still is not meeting its target goals for fecal coliform.

- *Marine sites*- 3 sites- monitored bi-weekly (twice a month)
 - Site #2, #50 and #51 currently all meet the two-part standard for shellfish growing waters, although Site #2 just barely meets with a 90th percentile of 42.9.

Other Projects/Events in 2001

- **Presentation to Council**- In September, a presentation on marine resource issues in Whatcom County was given to the Natural Resources Committee of the County Council by Water Resources staff, MRC staff and Drayton Harbor Shellfish Committee and Drayton Harbor Community Oyster Farm staff. Six of the seven council members attended the presentation and were extremely interested in learning more about what is happening with various marine resource issues in Whatcom County, from the activities of the oyster farm to information on net pens to discussions on live-aboard inspections in the Blaine Marina. Discussion also included the high counts seen in Portage Bay in the month of August and what is the current status of the investigations.
- **High Fecal Coliform Count Investigation**- After DOH sampling in August found high fecal counts in the marine waters over the shellfish beds, investigations began to try and determine what the cause of these high fecal results were. Dairy farm practices, wastewater plants, campgrounds, social events, the Lynden Fair and possible CAO violations were all investigated as possible contributors to the high fecal counts. A table documenting these investigations was submitted to DOH to keep them informed of the efforts being made to determine the source. As one final follow-up to the fairgrounds, DOE is working with the City of Lynden and the owner of the fairgrounds to conduct a dye study of the drain systems, etc. at the fair to see if any lines there inadvertently weren't hooked up to the sewer system. Sampling regimes for Lummi and the NWIC have been modified as a result of the high counts to coincide with DOH sampling so we will have a better picture of what is occurring in the tributaries around the time we see any high counts in the marine waters. A response protocol is also being developed to insure that we have quick effective response in the event of any additional high counts.
- **Tenmile Creek Watershed Project**- The 3rd quarter of 2002 was a busy time for the Tenmile Creek project. Here are just some of the many activities that occurred during the 3rd quarter:
 - 2 advisory meetings were held
 - Pre-surveys were distributed to 481 landowners (within 100' of Tenmile, Fourmile or Deer Creek) in July. One hundred and nineteen surveys were returned (=25% return), which indicates the community's great interest in this process/project.
 - 29 landowner visits were performed to educate, plan, plant, evaluate progress, etc.
 - 9 sites within the Fourmile Sub-basin have landowner agreements signed and have been prepared for plantings
 - Community outreach continues with presentations to groups like the Whatcom County Agriculture Preservation Committee, articles published in local papers, displays at the Northwest Washington Fair, Eco-Expo and at the Bellingham Farmers Market Annual Salmon and Corn Festival.
 - Kelli Linville and candidate Jim Boyle toured sites in the Tenmile and Fourmile Creek to learn about the goals and accomplishments of the project.

- **Puget Sound Water Quality Action Team-** During the third quarter of 2002, the PSAT hired a full-time liaison position to represent Whatcom, Skagit and Snohomish Counties (North Sound). This position will allow more focused attention by the PSAT on smaller geographical areas.
- **Whatcom Conservation District-**
 - Lummi Nation is applying for designation of the Nooksack Basin to be one of twenty funded by EPA as part of its Watershed Initiative. If approved, the Tenmile pilot project would be funded for another 3 years and extended to include the Bertrand sub-basin as well. NWIC would receive money to continue monitoring. Lummi & Nooksack restoration crews would plant & maintain riparian plantings. Determination of fund allocation should occur around the first of the next year.
 - A new farm bill will provide approximately \$1 million for landowners in the five counties of Snohomish, Skagit, Whatcom, Island and San Juan to install BMPs. Some of these BMPS could include fencing, riparian & manure management practices.
 - The Whatcom Conservation District has completed the first cut at incorporating the AFW Ag Maintenance Manual info into its Small Farm Planning process. Four district planners and 1 NRCS planner are working through list and should have roughly a dozen plans completed by 10/30/02.
 - The Whatcom County Ag Preservation Committee & the Conservation District obtained a grant from WDOA to prepare a Comprehensive Irrigation District Management Plan for Tenmile & Bertrand Creek sub-basins. The Nooksack is one of three pilot areas for the State. If all goes well, plans should be complete by June of 2003. This will set specific performance goals related to water quality, water quantity and salmonids resources. There will be strong support from the Governor's office to get funding to implement the program from State or Federal sources.
 - Under RCW 90.64, any dairy operator can be fined \$100/month for each month that he/she is without an approved nutrient management plan up to \$5,000. Steps have been taken by DOE to impose a penalty on the one farm in Whatcom that still is without a plan.