

Quarterly Summary to Washington State Department of Health On-the-Ground Efforts in the Portage Bay Shellfish Protection District 4th 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 fourth quarter of 2002.

Agricultural practices (Department of Ecology and Whatcom Conservation District)

- 9- dairy farm inspections completed (goal was for 23 to be completed)

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

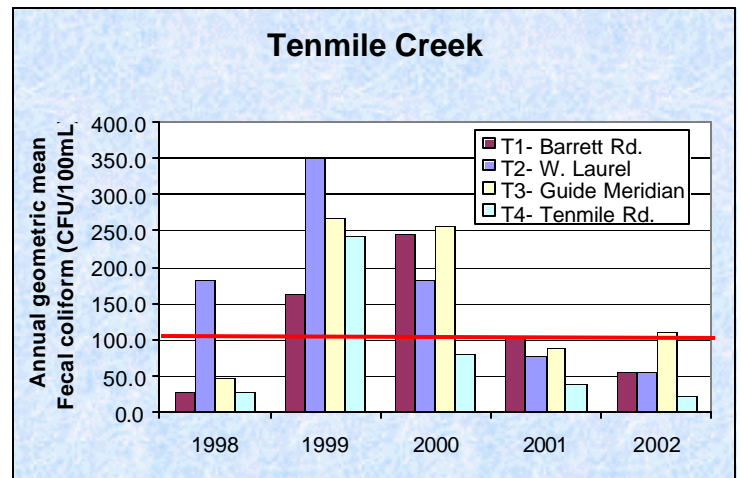
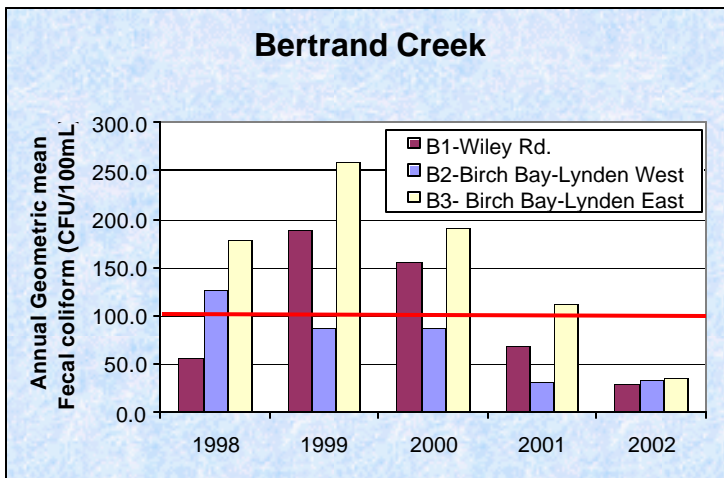
- 8- OSS inspections performed- 7 loan inspections, 1 based on complaint
- 2- found to be failing, both have been repaired

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

- The City of Everson STP averaged monthly fecal coliform levels (geometric mean) of 3, 7, and 3 CFU/100mL, respectively, for the months of October, November and December 2002.
- The City of Lynden had average monthly fecal coliform levels of 13, 7 and 4 CFU/100mL for the months of October, November and December 2002.
- The City of Ferndale had an average monthly fecal coliform level of 13, 29 and 16 CFU/100mL, respectively for the months of October, November and December.

Water Quality Monitoring (Northwest Indian College, B. Chisholm/Stream Team)

- *Marine sites*- 3 sites- monitored bi-weekly (twice a month)
 - Sites #50 and #51 continue to meet the two-part standard for shellfish growing waters. Site #2 continues to struggle to meet the standards and at the end of 2002 it is not meeting both parts.
- *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 finally met its TMDL target goal in the last quarter of 2002. The other seven creeks are meeting their target TMDL goals as well.
 - The freshwater systems continue to show improvements in water quality. The graphs below provide a visual display of what has been happening in two of the creeks over the past few years.



Other Projects/Events in 2001

- **High Fecal Coliform Count Investigation-**

- Work continued in the fourth quarter of 2002 to try to identify the source of the high counts seen in Portage Bay in August. The Department of Ecology, Whatcom County Water Resources, the City of Lynden and staff from the Lynden Fairgrounds worked together to dye test the storm drains and sewer lines in the fairgrounds in December. The results of the study showed that the systems at the fairgrounds appear to be hooked up properly, indicating that this was not a source for the high fecal counts. County Health staff met with the owner of the port-a-potties that were used at the fair. The owner showed County Health his system for handling the waste from the units and Health checked out the septic system and did not find any problem with it.
- Whatcom County Health Department visited several campgrounds located along the Nooksack River or its tributaries to determine whether a faulty on-site septic system from one of these areas could have contributed to the high counts seen in Portage Bay. County Health staff visited Hidden Valley RV Park, Windmill Inn, Berthusen Park and Lynden KOA campground. Site walks and discussions with owners revealed no problems on any of these properties.
- A couple of other potential sources were identified during the course of our investigations. Ferndale Foods is a meat processor and there were concerns that they could have been in violation. DOE has looked at their records and says they are not the source.
- The Northwest Holiness Center is a church camp in Ferndale that had a retreat during the beginning of August. County Health is following up with this facility to insure that there aren't any problems there, but it was noted that there is a farm between the center and the river, so it is also unlikely that this could have been the source of the high counts.
- While work continues to identify possible pollution sources in the watershed, the committee feels that it is highly unlikely that any source of the high counts will ever be determined.

- **Tenmile Creek Watershed Project-** The Tenmile Creek Project continues its efforts at community-based watershed improvement. Here are a few of the activities that occurred in the last quarter of 2002:

- 2 neighborhood meetings were held

- Pre-surveys that were distributed to landowners in July were reviewed and the data was entered, correlated and analyzed. Information gathered from the surveys will be a starting point for quarterly newsletters.
- 12,000 seedlings have been ordered for the coming year's planting. The trees were donated through efforts of WSU Cooperative Extension and Whatcom County and Blue Heron Farm is providing storage space for the plants.
- 10 landowner visits occurred in the last quarter of 2002
- Worked with Whatcom Ag Preservation Committee and WSU Cooperative Extension to organize a session at the Salmon Summit 2002. Presented the Tenmile Pilot as part of the session. Worked to coordinate the evening community event associated with the Salmon Summit.
- Work continues with local schools to involve students in the process of watershed restoration. Horticultural classes have help transplant native plants along Fourmile Creek. Efforts are underway to get classes involved in plantings and growing seedlings for the project.
- Talks have occurred on developing the CIDMP (Comprehensive Irrigation District Management Plan) for the Tenmile Creek and the Bertrand Creek Watersheds.
- **Puget Sound Water Quality Action Team**- 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.