

WASHINGTON SHELLFISH INITIATIVE

January 2016

Washingtonians make hundreds of thousands of trips each year to the coast to harvest razor clams. Tribes have harvested shellfish for generations upon generations, feeding their communities with healthy protein from Puget Sound and coastal shores. The shellfish industry is a foundation of Western Washington's rural economy and an integral part of our state's heritage.

Indeed, Washington leads the nation in farmed shellfish production, with approximately 10,500 metric tons of oysters, clams and mussels harvested in 2013. In recent years, this yield contributed \$184 million in economic benefits. Washington shellfish growers employed more than 1,900 employees and created 810 indirect and induced jobs across the state.

Our shellfish — a well-deserved source of pride for local growers — are sought by consumers around the world. Shellfish are also a key part of our marine ecosystems, providing habitat and helping filter and cleanse water. For all these reasons, shellfish are an extraordinary state resource.

The Washington Shellfish Initiative



Thousands of acres of shellfish beds that are closed due to pollution need to be cleaned up, and at least two native shellfish species that are either significantly diminished (Olympia oysters) or imperiled (pinto abalone) need to be restored.

To accomplish these actions, Washington must renew its protection, restoration and enhancement work as well as expand public education on the importance of our shellfish resources. These efforts will pay off in more recreation opportunities, additional clean water jobs, and healthier coastal marine waters and Puget Sound.

The Washington Shellfish Initiative is an innovative partnership among state government, federal government, tribes, the shellfish industry and nonprofit organizations to promote clean water commerce, create family-wage jobs and elevate the role that shellfish play in keeping our marine waters healthy.

Launched originally in 2011 following the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Shellfish Initiative, Governor Jay Inslee is launching the second phase of the initiative in January 2016.



Jay Inslee
Governor

A history of accomplishments

Through solving water pollution problems, 2,429 acres of commercial shellfish beds have been opened in Oakland Bay (Mason County), Quartermaster Harbor (King County), Belfair (Mason County), Kingston (Kitsap County) and Dungeness Bay (Clallam County) in just the past four years.

In May 2014, NOAA and the Puget Sound Restoration Fund opened a native shellfish restoration hatchery to grow baby Olympia oysters and pinto abalone. This hatchery sets the stage for larger-scale restoration of native species.

The Washington State Blue Ribbon Panel on Ocean Acidification created a comprehensive strategy for addressing ocean acidification in Washington's marine waters.

Governor Inslee and the Legislature created the Marine Resource Advisory Council and the Washington Ocean Acidification Center to advance this strategy. Washington is leading the nation — and garnering international attention — in addressing ocean acidification.

The Shellfish Interagency Permitting team developed



instructions for permit applications and mapped out the permitting steps to assist applicants and permit reviewers in navigating the permitting process.

The Clean Vessel Program paid for the replacement and installation of sewage pumpouts for boaters at 31 locations around Puget Sound and on the coast, which prevents sewage from polluting our waters.

Washington State Parks, along with a number of community partners, hosted six ShellFest events, which connected communities with the unique shellfish resources on their shorelines.

Phase II goals

The Washington Shellfish Initiative advances our goals of healthy, abundant shellfish resources for a thriving shellfish aquaculture industry, tribal ceremonial and subsistence harvest, and recreational harvest. By cleaning our waters, improving permitting processes and restoring native shellfish, we strengthen local economies and create more resilient, healthier coastal communities. Among the initiative's goals are:

- » Ensuring clean water.
- » Embracing strategies to address ocean acidification's effects on shellfish.
- » Advancing shellfish research topics.
- » Improving the permitting process to maintain and grow sustainable aquaculture.
- » Restoring native shellfish.
- » Enhancing recreational shellfish harvest.
- » Educating the next generation about shellfish.

Working together through this initiative, we can grow nutritious food, clean up Puget Sound and promote this irreplaceable resource to local communities and world markets.

The Washington State Shellfish Initiative, led by Governor Jay Inslee, is a convergence of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Shellfish Initiative and the state's interest in promoting the environmental, economic and cultural importance of shellfish.

For more information visit, <http://bit.ly/WAshellfishinitiative>.