

Washington Shellfish Initiative: Coordination and Progress

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Overview

- Shellfish in Washington State
- Overview of the WA Shellfish Initiative and Initiative accomplishments
- Phase 2 of the WA Shellfish Initiative

Washington Shellfish

- Washington leads the nation in production of farmed clams, oysters, and mussels
- Est. total economic contribution of ~\$270 million annually
- Shellfish is a critical subsistence, ceremonial, and commercial resource for Washington Tribes
- Tourists and residents purchase over 300,000 licenses to harvest clams and oysters annually

Washington Shellfish

- Approximately 125,000 shellfish harvesting trips made to Puget Sound Beaches and 244,000 digger trips for razor clam harvests on the WA coast annually
- The shellfish industry is a large employer in rural western Washington counties and shellfish-based tourism is critical for coastal and rural economies as well

Washington Shellfish Initiative

- NOAA Fisheries' National Shellfish Initiative announced in June 2011
- Washington Shellfish Initiative launched December 2011 by Governor Gregoire
- Many partners involved from state, local, federal, tribal, shellfish industry, non-profit, and other agencies/organizations.



Washington Shellfish Initiative

- Nexus of ecological and economic benefits
 - Clean water
 - Addressing ocean acidification
 - Aquaculture permitting processes improvements
 - Native shellfish restoration
 - Shellfish research, education, and outreach

Kenneth K. Chew Shellfish Hatchery Opening – native shellfish restoration



Photo credit: NOAA NMFS



Photo credit: Dannie Oliveaux, Port Orchard Independent

Samish Basin:

keeping shellfish beds open by reducing fecal coliform bacteria

Protecting and restoring Puget Sound
Effective Investment

A look at successes and lessons learned



The Samish watershed has had problems with bacteria pollution for decades. Bacteria in the river, other streams and the bay frequently reach levels too high for safe shellfish harvesting (and eating) and safe family recreation. Samish shellfish harvest is valuable to the region, and worth approximately \$3 million each year. High fecal coliform levels curtailed shellfish harvesting on 4,000 acres of Samish Bay in spring 2011.

More than 20 government, business and nonprofit organizations have come together as part of the Clean Samish Initiative to improve water quality in the Samish watershed and Samish Bay. The Samish Basin is a rural, lowland watershed with small farms, low-density residences and commercial agriculture activities surrounding it.

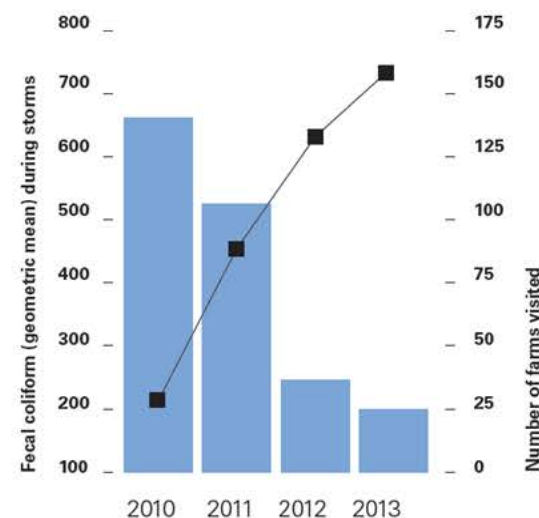
What worked

- ▶ Working with farmers to reduce sources of manure running into streams during storms
- ▶ Applying manure as fertilizer during dry periods
- ▶ Training volunteers to sample fecals so that shellfish beds could open sooner after rain
- ▶ Fencing livestock out of and away from streams
- ▶ Cost sharing to implement farm plans

Since 2010, fecal contamination reduced by 80% at the most downstream site.

Confirmed shellfish bed closures declined from 80% 2010 to 50% in 2013

Samish River at Thomas Road



PugetSoundPartnership

LEADING PUGET SOUND RECOVERY

*More in depth information on the
Samish Basin is available at:*

www.psp.wa.gov/effectiveinvestment/samishbasin.pdf

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Addressing ocean acidification

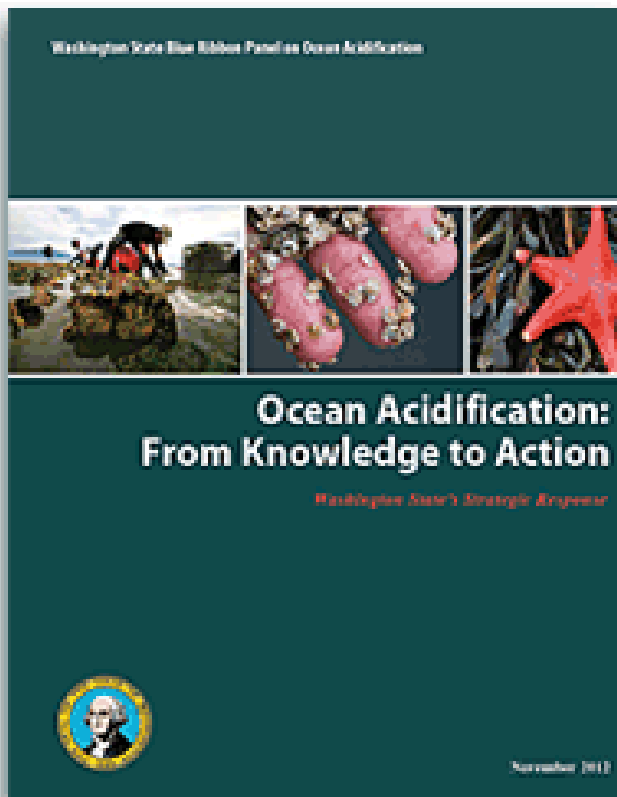


Photo Credit: Anna Bukowski, Office of the Governor

Ocean Acidification Impacts on Shellfish



Marine Resources Advisory Council

- To maintain a sustainable coordinated focus on ocean acidification;
- To advise and work with the Washington Ocean Acidification Center on the effects and sources of ocean acidification;
- To deliver recommendations to the Governor and Legislature on ocean acidification;
- To seek public and private funding resources to support the Advisory Council's recommendations; and
To assist in conducting public education activities regarding ocean acidification.

Washington Shellfish Initiative – Phase II

- Process to develop phase II:
 - Meetings with stakeholders to understand shellfish-related issues, including coast focused meetings
 - WA Shellfish Initiative Advisory Group input
 - Working with WSI implementers to determine funding, feasibility, and next steps
 - Phase II roll out early 2015

Washington Shellfish Initiative – Phase II

- Establishing comprehensive Pollution Identification and Correction programs to protect and upgrade shellfish growing areas
- Advance Shellfish Interagency Permit team efforts
- Marine Resources Advisory Council – advancing ocean acidification research, monitoring, and adaptation
- Outreach and education to outer coast communities and visitors about water quality
- Continue work to re-establish sustainable breeding populations of Olympia oysters in 19 priority areas

Washington Shellfish Initiative

- Shellfish policy advisor role
 - Advising Governor Inslee on shellfish-related issues and ocean acidification
 - Coordinate implementation of the WSI
 - Coordination across state agencies and other partners on issues related to ocean acidification, water quality - shellfish growing areas, aquaculture permitting
 - Shellfish policy development



Thank you!

Questions?

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