



A Newsletter, to inform and update you about your Clean Water District



To: Watershed Resident

Dungeness Bay Study released

by WA Dept. of Ecology

By Val Streeter

The Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) is almost ready to submit the Dungeness Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Study and related Water Clean-up Plan to the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This study is based on the work of Dr. Jack Rensel, an oceanographer who studied circulation patterns and bacteria levels in the Bay from October 2001 through September 2002. The results of his study were announced in the Summer 2003 Clean Water Herald.

Ecology's TMDL study determined how much bacteria would need to be reduced in order to restore commercial shellfish harvest in Dungeness Bay. To meet shellfish growing standards

and Clean Water Act standards, reductions in bacteria are needed in several parts of the Bay, including the ditches that drain to it (see figure below). For most of Dungeness Bay, the critical period is November to February, when bacteria levels are highest. For 6 of the 7 ditches that drain into the Bay from the Marine Drive area, bacteria values were higher when the ditches carried stormwater than during irrigation season when the irrigation ditches carry Dungeness River water. Near the mouth of the Dungeness River, bacteria reductions are needed year-round in the Bay.

After the TMDL and Water Clean-up Plan are submitted to US EPA, the next step will be to revise the Clean Water

Strategy, adopted by Clallam County at the formation of the Sequim-Dungeness Clean Water District. This revision will incorporate new information from the Dungeness Bay TMDL, as well as the already completed Lower Dungeness Watershed TMDL. Public comment will be encouraged to refine and add detail to the existing Clean Water Strategy.



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Contact:

Clallam County Environmental Health
223 E. 4th St./P.O. Box 863
Port Angeles, WA 98362-0149
(360) 417-2258
Valerie Streeter, Water Quality Planner
Clallam County Environmental Health
(360) 417-2543
vstreeter@co.clallam.wa.us
Clallam Conservation District
(360) 452-1912 ext. 5
Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe
(360) 681-4631

Questions? Comments? Confused?

Call Val Streeter for the straight scoop and we'll include questions and answers in future updates.

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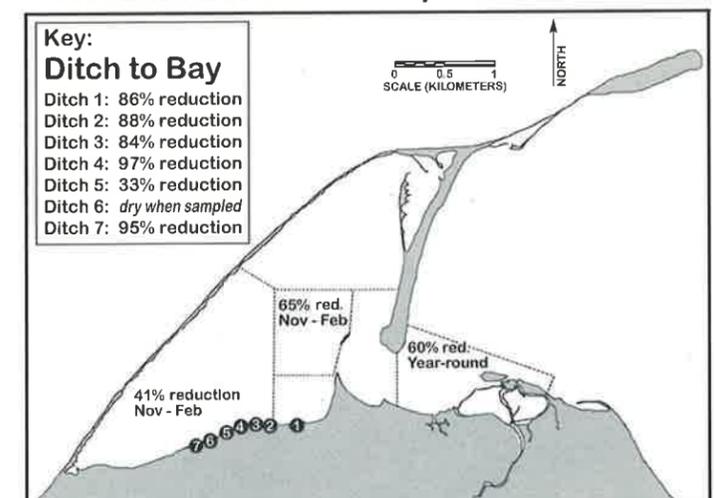
Calendar of Events

Event	Date/Time/Fee	Location
Sequim's Annual Spring Clean-up For city residents, see www.ci.sequim.wa.us for details on what will be accepted.	April 21-24 8 AM - 3 PM	City Shop 169 W. Hemlock St. 683-4908
Port Angeles Dump Day Donations accepted. Call 417-4873 for details on what will be accepted.	April 25 (tentative) 9 AM - 3 PM	City Landfill 3501 W. 18th 417-4873
Dungeness River Management Team Contact Shawn Hines at (360) 681-4664	2nd Wednesday of each month 2-5 PM	Dungeness River Audobon Center 2151 W. Hendrickson Rd
Groundwater Sampling for Nitrates in Agnew and Carlsborg	April/May 2004	Call 417-2377 to participate
Septics 101 681-4076	April 7 (6-8 PM) May 5 (6-8 PM)	Dungeness River Audobon Center 2151 W. Hendrickson Rd
Bird Walks 681-4076	Every Wednesday 8:30 - 10:15 AM	Dungeness River Audobon Center 2151 W. Hendrickson Rd
Nature Photographs & Poetry by Gunnar & Frances Fagerlund	April 9-11, Fri-Sun 8:30 - 10:15 AM Sat, 10 AM-4 PM Sun, 12-4 PM	Dungeness River Audobon Center 2151 W. Hendrickson Rd
StreamKeepers Training Starts (Clallam Co.'s Volunteer Stream Monitoring Program)	June 2004	Contact StreamKeepers @417-2281



Bacteria Reduction

Needed to Meet Water Quality Standards



Help offered to Septics of Concern

By Janine Reed

If you received a letter from Clallam County notifying you that your property is a septic of concern, don't be shy! There is money waiting to help you!! Septic of concern properties are those that have an older septic system, a history of previous repairs, or no record on file of a septic system. These septic systems are most likely in need of some sort of maintenance. Clallam County, through a grant, has money to help you get an inspection and upgrade your septic system. There is money to pay for inspection costs, up to \$200.00. Inspections could consist of locating your system (if it is hard to find), digging up your tank, and the actual inspecting of the tanks and drainfield. Money is also available to help pay to install risers or to help pay for part of the cost of pumping your tank, up to \$80.00. Be aware that an inspection is required before any money can be reimbursed for pumping or riser installation. Before you act, be sure to contact Janine Reed at 360-417-2593 to get all the details on this reimbursement program.



Sword Fern

Who Would Have Known

By Hansi Hals

Since I work in watershed restoration, I hear lots of talk about the importance of routine maintenance for septic systems. It comes up frequently, because faulty operation or full septic tanks can be the source of fecal coliform bacteria contamination to fresh and marine waters. So, a proud septic owner myself, I finally telephoned the pumping company. I got a tip from a friend for a reputable pumping company, and within a day the truck pulled into our driveway (with an extra hose to reach our system way out yonder). The next hour was particularly informative and satisfying. The business owner and operator had clearly been pumping/ inspecting/ maintaining septic systems for a long time. Like a wildlife biologist inspecting scat to determine the health of an animal and its diet, he assessed our lifestyle, including our habits – such as, how much detergent is used in the washer, powder or liquid (liquid recommended, although we use those ceramic bead magnets, which is even better), and whether we put the bacon pan fat down the drain, etc. I was both interested and amused – he even guessed the date the tanks were last pumped to the year, and also when we had made a minor upgrade to our old septic system.

It is a fine feeling knowing that the septic system is operating well and that the tanks have been pumped. It is a surprise to hear that to “eat well and get plenty of exercise” also keeps your septic in good health, but apparently it does help with the bacterial breakdown of waste. It reminds me of going to the dentist – a clean bill of health is a boost, but a potential problem detected now is a blessing.



Indian Plum

Another Tale from the Tank

By Lyn Muench

In spite of a decade of water quality work, I was a “postponer” - always finding some excuse not to get my septic system inspected. Truth to tell, I was afraid of the whole process. Would I have to hire a backhoe? I waited too long, and on a dark and cold December night, after emptying a long hot bath, my septic system backed up. Lucky me it was bath water and not something worse! So when we called a County-approved septic pumper, I was not only worried but also embarrassed. There was no need to worry - the gentleman was cheerful, sympathetic, informative, brought a shovel and got right to work. He shared his assessment of our lifestyle - pretty good all around - and predicted that we would not need another inspection for five years. He replaced a baffle, and put in risers so we can check ourselves in the meantime. Our lesson from the experience is: JUST DO IT !



Salal

Running Fast and Dirty

By Val Streeter

More than just getting our feet wet, the puddles and streams created by rainfall can also carry pollution. Water is very effective at breaking down, dissolving and carrying all types of pollutants: Fido's morning dodo, herbicides, pesticides, oils and grease, dirt, etc. Since water runs downhill, this “stormwater” ends up in ditches, streams, rivers and eventually bays or the Strait of Juan de Fuca. We are finding more and more problems are exacerbated by stormwater. The Dungeness Bay Study found that the ditches that drain from Marine Drive have the most bacteria during the winter or the rainy season. Although these ditches don't carry as much water as the Dungeness River, which also flows into the Bay, they can impact the water quality along the shoreline, where people are most apt to walk, wade or harvest shellfish (which is not recommended). This last winter flooding was an issue in the Meadowbrook Creek area. I heard many complaints from neighbors in that area.

What can we do about stormwater? We can't stop the rain (nor do we want to)! First of all, we can avoid polluted stormwater by reducing pollution. If it's not out there, then the stormwater can't pick it up and carry it away. This means picking up after our pets, managing livestock manure properly, maintaining our septic systems, paying attention to when we apply herbicides and pesticides and how much, and fixing oil leaks in our cars as soon as possible. Second, stormwater can be cleaned naturally. Soil is a great filter because of the microscopic bacteria that view some of the pollution as food. The trick is to slow down the water so that it filters into ground rather than taking part of the ground with it (i.e., muddy waters). Native vegetation is excellent at slowing down stormwater. Lawns are better than pavement, but are still considered impervious surfaces according to some studies. Wetlands are great filters of stormwater!

Fortunately for us, the Clallam Conservation District can offer assistance to landowners interested in managing their stormwater. They have plenty of experience in stormwater and are already studying the stormwater water problems in the Marine Drive area. Just recently, the Conservation District submitted a grant to figure out the best approach to managing stormwater in the area from Meadowbrook Creek to Casselary Creek. The Clallam Conservation District can be reached at: (360) 452-1912 ext.5.

Shellfish Closure Areas In Dungeness Bay



Washington Department of Health (DOH) has closed an additional area to Dungeness Bay based on 2003 water quality information. Although DOH regulates commercial shellfish harvesting, recreational harvesters of shellfish (clams, oysters, mussels) have the same risk of disease, due to bacterial levels in the water.

Clallam County Environmental Health needs your help to conduct a study on groundwater contamination in Agnew and Carlsborg. This study will determine the extent of groundwater contamination by measuring nitrate and bacteria concentrations in well water. If you have a water well, live in either the Agnew or Carlsborg areas and are interested in participating, please call 417-2377 to hear more details on what is required.

