

Clallam County Environmental Health
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FOR GENERAL INFORMATION:

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clallamcountywa.gov/392/Septic-Systems-On-site-Program
clallamcountywa.gov/322/Drinking-Water-Program-Laboratory
clallamcountywa.gov/569/Shellfish-Surface-Water-Quality
clallamcountywa.gov/1390/Solid-Hazardous-Waste

Inside this Issue:

• Clallam County Targets Water Pollution with PIC Program

Clallam County Environmental Health, in partnership with local agencies, is leading the Pollution Identification and Correction (PIC) Program to improve water quality in Sequim and Dungeness Bays. Now in Phase IV (2023–2026), the program focuses on identifying sources of fecal contamination—such as failing septic systems and farm runoff—through stream monitoring, inspections, and public outreach. Financial assistance and expert support are available to help property owners correct pollution sources and protect local shellfish beds.

• Check Shellfish Safety Before Harvesting

Before collecting shellfish, check the State’s online safety map or call (360) 236-3330 for current closures. Beaches may be closed due to pollution or harmful algal toxins, which can pose serious health risks. Always check conditions to harvest safely.

• BEACH Program Monitors Local Water Quality

Clallam County beaches are tested weekly each summer for bacteria through the BEACH Program to ensure safe recreation. High bacteria levels trigger advisory signs—yellow for caution, red for closure. View current conditions online or volunteer as a sampler to help protect public health.

Clean Water Herald

Spring-Summer 2025

A Clallam County Environmental Health Publication

Clean Water District Pollution Identification and Correction

Upcoming Event Thursday, May 29th from 5:30-7:30pm, at the Dungeness River Center—1943 W Hendrickson Road Sequim, WA 98382—a Pollution Identification and Control (PIC) Community Meeting, hosted by Clallam County Environmental Health, Clallam Conservation District, Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe, and Streamkeepers of Clallam County, will offer presentations on the history, and current focus, of the Sequim Dungeness Clean Water District PIC program, Clallam County’s On-site Septic System (OSS) Management Plan, available inspection and repair incentives/rebates to homeowners, and available agricultural technical assistance.

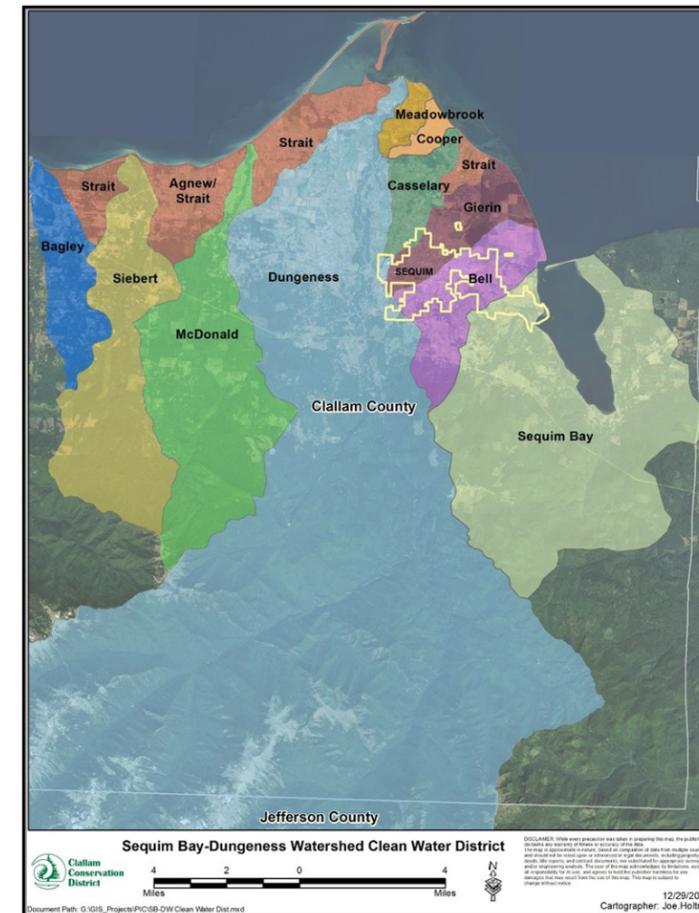
What is PIC? The PIC Program is a joint initiative coordinated by Clallam County Environmental Health, alongside partners like the Clallam Conservation District and Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe, aimed at improving water quality in Sequim and Dungeness Bays after shellfish harvesting was restricted due to rising fecal coliform levels. These elevated levels, first detected in 1997, prompted the establishment of a Clean Water District (CWD) in 2000 and Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) studies in 2002 and 2004 to set bacterial pollution reduction targets. After the TMDL was established, a Water Cleanup Implementation Plan was developed in 2004, followed by new state regulations requiring counties to manage septic systems and designate Marine Recovery Areas, leading Clallam County

to adopt a local septic management plan in 2007 aligned with the CWD. Launched in 2012, the PIC Program uses detailed water quality assessments to identify contamination sources—such as failing septic systems and farm runoff—engaging property owners with expert advice, funding for OSS repairs, and educational outreach. Now in Phase IV (2023-2026), the program is currently targeting the Upper Matriotti watershed and Highland Ditch Irrigation networks as primary Focus Areas.

How Does PIC Locate Sources of Pollution?

PIC uses a data-driven approach to tackle nonpoint source pollution affecting shellfish areas. The Trends Program monitors water quality near stream mouths, assessing fecal coliform, nitrogen, and phosphorus against TMDL and ecoregion standards. When a stream shows signs of impairment, Segmented Sampling projects are then implemented. These projects collect water samples along streams to pinpoint high-pollution Focus Areas. Focus Areas are prioritized for targeted source identification and correction, engaging property owners to address issues like failing septic systems or agricultural runoff through visual inspections and additional testing.

Trends sampling is conducted by Clallam County Streamkeepers, a community science program. For details or to volunteer, visit their website:

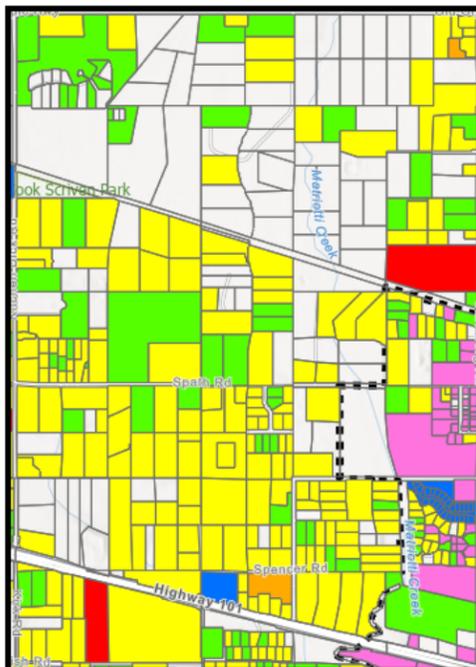
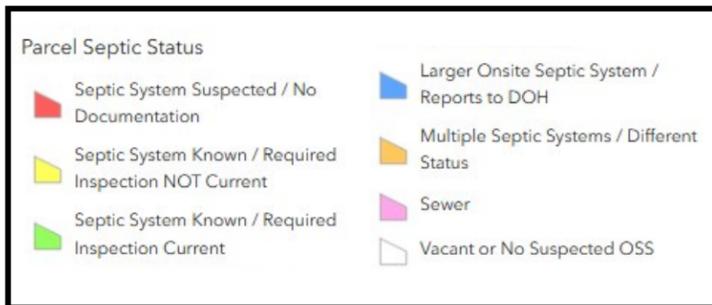


Clean Water District Pollution Identification and Correction cont.

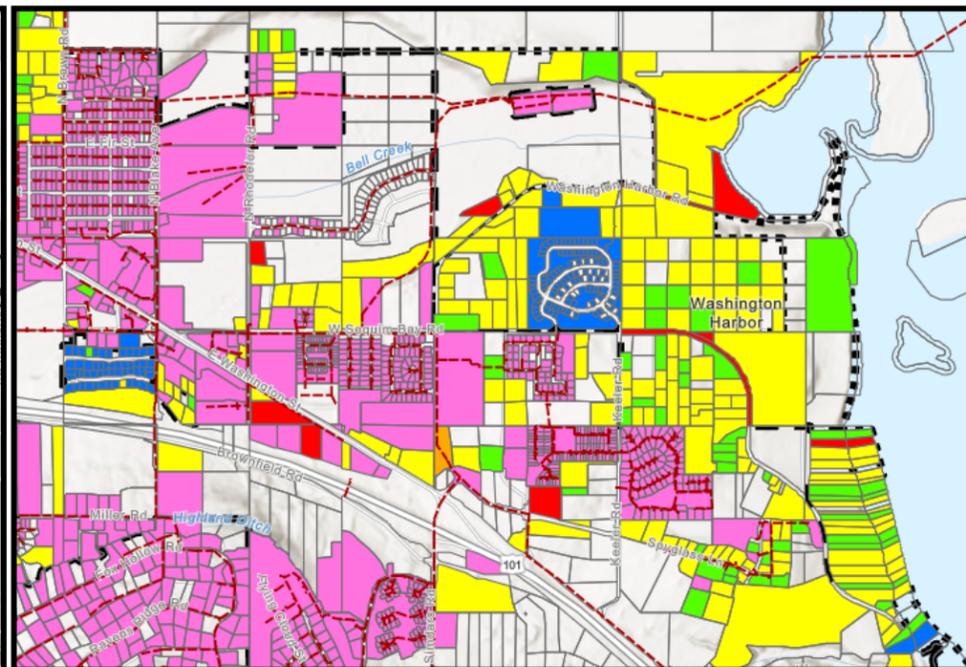
OSS Inspection Compliance Clallam County requires regular inspections of onsite septic systems to ensure they are working properly (WAC 246-272A-0270 and CCC 41.20.170[1]). These routine inspections help identify small issues early, preventing bigger and more expensive problems down the line. About half of all inspections find minor concerns that can be fixed quickly to protect health, property, and local water quality. For More information, visit:



The following maps, from the Clallam County Environmental Health Onsite Inspection Records database, depict the initial OSS inspection status (2023) for properties within the selected Focus Areas of PIC Phase IV:



Upper Matriotti OSS inspection status—2023.



Highland Ditch Irrigation Network area OSS inspection status—2023.

Correction Resources Clallam County Environmental Health offers homeowners the opportunity to apply for a rebate/incentive to get either part or all of their inspection or locate costs covered (while funds remain). To apply, contact:

Sandra White
Sandra.White@clallamcountywa.gov
(360) 417-2417

Financial assistance is available to help qualifying homeowners repair or replace failing on-site septic systems. This assistance can come in the form of Craft 3 and USDA and low-interest loans or up to 75% cost share assistance through the Clallam Conservation District (CCD). CCD also assists landowners and farm operators with agricultural pollution concerns by providing information, technical assistance and financial assistance to install and implement best management practices. For assistance navigating these resources, contact:

envhealth@clallamcountywa.gov
(360) 417-2258

Complaints can be phoned in regarding failing OSS systems:

Clallam County Environmental Health Complaints
(360) 417-2506

or, water quality pollution from agriculture sources:

Washington State Department of Ecology:
(360) 407-6300

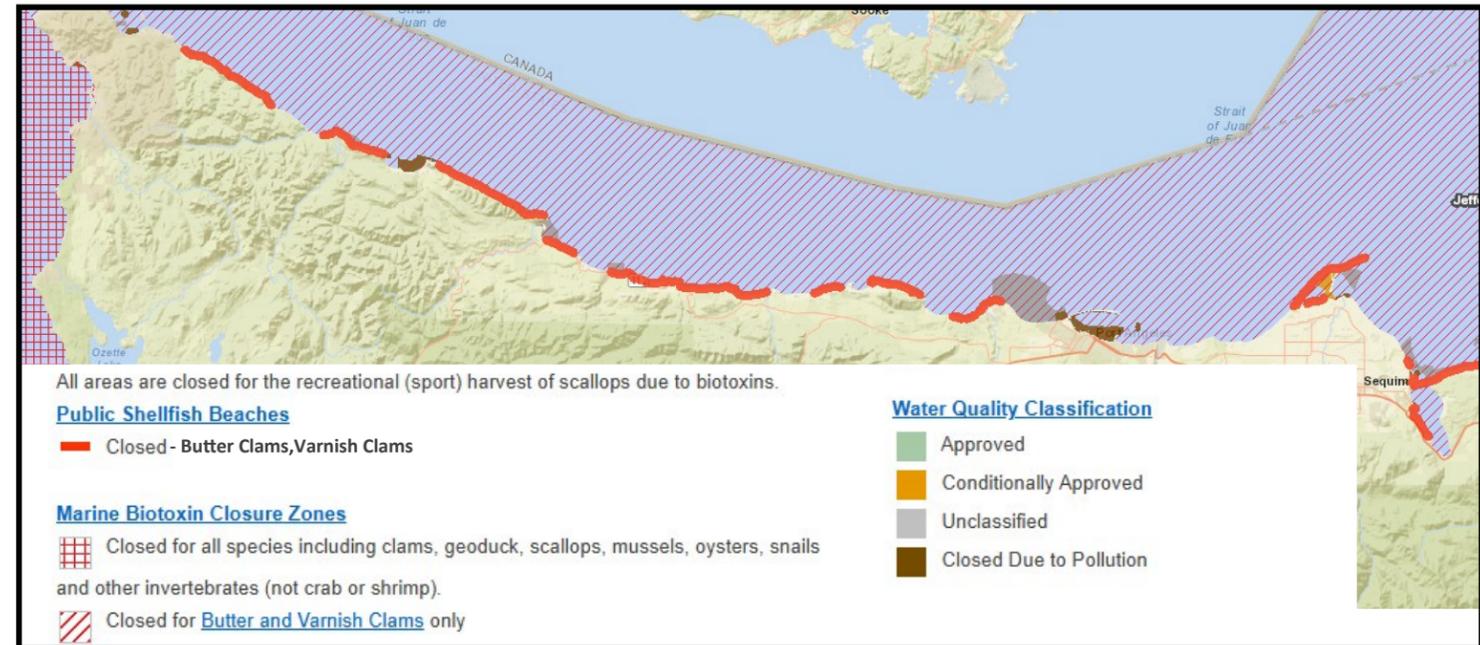
Recreational Shellfish

Before You Harvest Before heading out, it is important to check the shellfish safety map for closures and advisories on the day of harvest (<https://fortress.wa.gov/doh/biotoxin/biotoxin.html>):



If you are unable to visit the web, you can call the Department of Health at (360) 236-3330. You can also look for closure signs at public beaches. When it's not safe to harvest, we post signs to let you know.

What is Included on the Map? Shellfish harvesting closures are determined using two different safety assessments, each serving a unique purpose. The National Shellfish Sanitation Program carefully monitors shellfish growing areas for long-term water quality issues, such as contamination from septic systems, agriculture, or urban runoff. These closures are based on sustained bacterial pollution levels that pose significant gastrointestinal illness risks. In contrast, shellfish safety advisories focus on short-term risks from marine biotoxins, such as those that cause Amnesic, Paralytic, or Diarrhetic Shellfish Poisoning. These potent toxins can appear suddenly during harmful algal blooms and are not always related to pollution. Timely awareness of both types of closures is essential for preventing illness and ensuring safe shellfish consumption.



Clallam County shellfish safety status, 04/18/2025.

Swimming Beaches

BEACH Program Clallam County's marine beaches are scenic and popular for recreation, but water quality is vital for safety. To protect public health, the Washington State Department of Ecology supports water testing through the BEACH (Beach Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health) program. Each summer, Clallam County Environmental Health collects weekly samples at beaches like Cline Spit, Hollywood Beach, and Salt Creek, while the Makah Tribe conducts year-round sampling near Cape Flattery. The BEACH program monitors for enterococci bacteria—indicators of possible fecal contamination—weekly from Memorial Day to Labor Day. If bacteria levels are high, advisory signs are posted: yellow for caution, red for closure.

View current advisories online at:



Help protect public health and the environment by volunteering as a BEACH sampler. Training and equipment are provided for weekly summer water sampling. To get involved, contact:

envhealth@clallamcountywa.gov