

PUGET SOUND

National Estuary Program

ELD WATERSHED VOLUNTARY SEPTIC INSPECTIONS

Compare rates of current septic inspections after implementing a voluntary septic inspection program in Eld Inlet to an existing mandatory septic inspection program in Henderson and Nisqually Marine Recovery Areas.

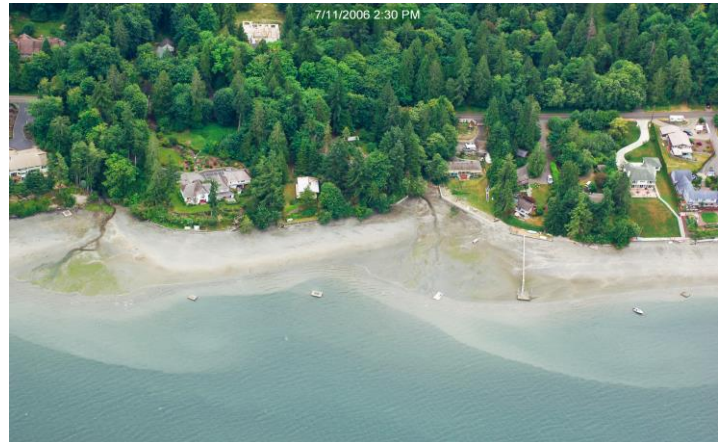
What We're Doing

This is a pilot project to implement a voluntary program of enhanced education and outreach in Eld watershed encouraging residents to inspect their septic system at least every three years.

- Check status of current septic inspections in the watershed at the beginning of the project, every 6 months for the project duration and at the end of the project.
- Develop an educational packet, traditional & social media outreach, and supporting materials to encourage septic inspection and providing tools to minimize barriers.
- Mail every property owner with a septic system a packet during the project.
- Offer at least 10 septic self-inspection certification classes.

WHY IS THIS ISSUE IMPORTANT

While Eld Inlet, an important shellfish growing area, currently meets clean water standards, 23 of 25 marine stations show declining water quality due to fecal coliform bacteria. Past sanitary surveys showed septic failure rates between 17-26% in areas of the inlet and current records show only 26% of septic systems without mandatory inspection requirements have been inspected or maintained by a professional within the last 3 years. Unmaintained or poorly maintained septic systems can leak sewage into the environment causing water quality problems and result in shellfish harvesting restrictions.



WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Learn where your septic tank, drainfield, and reserve area are located.
- Inspect your septic system annually, and pump when needed.
- Practice water conservation and spread out water use to avoid overloading your septic system.

ABOUT THURSTON COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES DEPT.

The Environmental Health Division of Thurston County Public Health & Social Services Department has the responsibility to ensure that all of the approximately 53,000 on-site sewage treatment systems (septic systems) are functioning properly.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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