PUGET SOUND
National Estuary Program

WHATCOM COUNTY POLLUTION IDENTIFICATION AND CORRECTION

Whatcom County works with local, state, tribal, and federal partners to monitor water quality, identify pollution hot spots, and provide technical assistance and incentives to landowners to improve water quality.

- Priority drainages are identified through water quality monitoring.
- Community education is provided to build knowledge of the sources of bacteria and solutions.
- Landowners with non-dairy farm operations are contacted to offer technical assistance through a partnership with the Whatcom Conservation District.
- Incentives for septic system operation and maintenance, manure management, dog waste pick up and other solutions are provided.
- A regulatory backstop is the final tool for parcels with violations where changes were not made through the outreach and incentive program.



WHY IS THIS ISSUE IMPORTANT

- Whatcom County has three shellfish growing areas with harvest closures due to poor water quality.
- Only 30% of freshwater sampling sites were meeting standards for fecal coliform bacteria in 2016. However, many of these sites are improving.
- Water quality improvements in creeks and rivers lead to improvements in marine water and upgrades of shellfish areas.
- Reopening shellfish beds benefits the community. In 2016, harvest restrictions were removed from 810 acres in Drayton Harbor providing year-round harvest for the first time in over 20 years.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Keep animals and manure out of waterways and away from saturated ground.
- Follow the 4**R**s of manure nutrient stewardship- use the **R**ight fertilizer source, at the **R**ight rate, at the **R**ight time, and in the **R**ight place.
- Evaluate and properly maintain your septic system.
- Use pump out stations for your boat or RV.
- **Scoop** pet waste, **Bag** it, and **Toss** it in the garbage.
- Plant or preserve native vegetation along creeks, ditches, and shorelines.
- Secure garbage and pet food to keep wildlife wild.
- Get involved. Attend public meetings to discuss issues and work on solutions. Volunteer on stream teams or at work parties.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

http://www.co.whatcom.wa.us/1072/Water-Quality

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PUGETSOUND PARTNERSHIP · EPA United States Environmental Protection Agency · Washington Stormwater · Washington State Department of Natural Resources · Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife · Washington State Department of Health · Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission · Department of Ecology State of Washington · Department of Commerce Innovation is in our nature.