

FACT SHEET

SKAGIT COUNTY CLEAN WATER PROGRAM

In 1995, the Skagit County Commissioners created the CLEAN WATER (SHELLFISH PROTECTION) DISTRICT (Skagit County Code Chapter 6.68) in response to the State Health Department's closure of shellfish harvesting in Samish Bay and concerns about water quality throughout Skagit County. The 1995 response was successful in repairing failing sewage systems in the Blanchard and Edison communities and initially improving water quality in Samish Bay. Unfortunately by 2004 decreasing water quality trends throughout the County were again threatening shellfish harvests not only in Samish Bay but also other tidelands areas throughout the County. Increased regulatory mandates related to water quality and water resource protection required the County to develop a strategy to identify and fund essential water quality improvements activities.

The plan that emerged from this effort was called the Clean Water Program (CWP). The CWP was published for public review and comment and after conducting a public hearing the Skagit County Commissioners amended County Code SCC 6.68 and adopted the CWP on December 20, 2005.

The CWP identifies and supports the following essential activities and programs:

- Skagit County Department of Public Works: Water quality monitoring, habitat monitoring, lake management administration, salmon habitat recovery projects, marine resources administration
- Skagit County Health Department: Onsite sewage program, water quality compliance
- Skagit County Department of GIS/Mapping: Support services
- Skagit Conservation District: Existing and future agricultural practice support programs
- Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group: Habitat protection and restoration support
- Skagit Watershed Council: Lead Entity for watershed health, habitat protection and riparian habitat restoration project coordination
- Skagit Conservation and Education Alliance: Watershed Protection Plan(s) implementation and water quality education

The total cost for these essential activities is estimated at \$999,000 annually. Funding for the CWP is determined annually as part of the County budget process. For 2007 the County adopted budget approved the following 2007 CWP assessments which are estimated to generate \$785,000:

- Parcels containing single-family residences (including accessory dwelling unit): \$21.55 per parcel
- Parcels containing duplex, triplex, or fourplex residential units (multi-family): \$26.56 per parcel
- Parcels containing apartments of more than four residential units, commercial, industrial, farms, or institutional establishments: \$.007 per impervious surface square foot
- County Roads: \$.00265 per impervious square foot

Additional information about the CWP, including appeals pertaining to rates and service charges, is found in Skagit County Code Chapter 6.68. The Skagit County Code can be viewed on the Skagit County web site at: skagitcounty.net (follow code link at bottom of opening web page).

Any questions please contact Tom Karsh, Special Projects Administrator at (360) 419-3373 (tomk@co.skagit.wa.us)