



SKAGIT COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
1800 CONTINENTAL PLACE
MOUNT VERNON, WA 98273-5625

Postal Customer Address

CLEAN WATER IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY

We need YOUR help to clean up Padilla Bay

Resources Available to You!

Get FREE and friendly help!

Skagit Conservation District

- ◆ FREE temporary fencing
- ◆ Farm planning
- ◆ Best management practices
- ◆ Cost share
- ◆ Native plants
- ◆ Stormwater management

<http://www.skagitcd.org>

Natural Resources Stewardship Program

FREE grant funds to:

- ◆ Fence out livestock
- ◆ Remove invasive plants
- ◆ Replant natives

<http://www.skagitcounty.net/NRSP>

Financial Assistance for Septic System Repair/Replacement

If you can't afford to repair or replace your septic system, Skagit County offers grants and loans to help you. Contact the Environmental Public Health Department at 360-416-1555.

Get Smart! Workshops & Classes to Learn More

Country Living Expo & Cattleman's Winterschool

Saturday, January 28th, at Stanwood High School.

Learn about a multitude of topics, network with other small farmers, and visit with local agricultural businesses. For questions, contact WSU Skagit County Extension Office at 360-428-4270, ext. 0. or countrylivingexpo@gmail.com

Backyard Conservation Stewardship Short Course

Wednesdays, March 22-April 26, 6-8:30pm

Learn the principles of how to create beautiful landscapes that benefit humans, animals, stream health, and the environment...one backyard at a time! Registration required. Contact Kristi Carpenter at 360-428-4313 or kristi@skagitcd.org.

Skagit Conservation District Native Plant Sale

Friday March 24th and Saturday March 25th. For more information contact the district at 360-428-4313 or skagitcd@skagitcd.org

Salish Sea Stewards Training

Tuesdays, March 7-May 9, 1-5pm at Padilla Bay Research Reserve

Learn how the Salish Sea is different than Puget Sound in 40 hours of classroom and field-based training taught by local and regional experts. Topics include Salish Sea ecosystems, human interactions, current issues, ongoing recovery efforts, and how you can make a difference as a volunteer! Registration required: 360-428-1559 or rsrussell@padillabay.gov.

Septic Systems 101 - available online

Learn the basics of owning and operating your septic system to keep it working well for as long as possible. Keeping your septic system working well will save you money and help to keep surface and groundwater quality clean. <http://www.skagitcounty.net/septics101online>

D.A.S.S.H. 5K Fun Run/Walk for Clean Water Awareness

Saturday, March 4th, 2017, 10 a.m. SCEA is hosting this 5k run to raise awareness and promote the reduction of non-point pollution and clean water in the Samish watershed and surrounding areas.



SKAGIT COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS & WASHINGTON STATE DEPT OF ECOLOGY

WINTER / SPRING 2017

Hard Work for Clean Water Paying Off

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- November through May is a critical period when the risk of bacteria getting to surface waters is high because of runoff from storms. Extra care to cover manure and keep it away from roadside ditches is one of the steps needed to get to clean water.
- Even if your property is not next to a creek, stormwater runoff flowing into ditches from your property can carry bacteria to Padilla Bay.

What a difference a year can make. A year full of hard work and dedication. Bay View State Park has seen dramatic improvements in water quality—thanks in part to local volunteers, local residents and the collaborative efforts of the Skagit County Clean Water Program, Skagit Conservation District and the Washington Departments of Ecology and Agriculture.

landowners near the beach to inspect and repair four failing septic systems. That might seem like a small number, but it's clearly made a difference in the water at our local parks."

These leaking or failing septic systems were found by a combination of water quality sampling by state, county and volunteer samplers, dye testing, and by use of a dog trained to detect sewage.

You have the chance to be part of the solution. We need your help to locate and address sources of fecal pollution. Sources can include leaky septic systems, pet waste, and livestock and chicken manure. We will gladly work with landowners to find available technical and financial resources if needed to address the issue.

You can follow our progress online by checking our sampling map at www.skagitcounty.net/cleanwater. We post results every two weeks. You can also follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/skagitcountycleanwater.



Volunteers collecting samples.

We are still deeply concerned about water quality in the area and we will need to be diligent in our efforts to see continued success. There is much more work to be done, but continued improvements to freshwater drainage water quality in the Padilla Bay basin should ensure that swimming beach closures remain rare and that the shellfish growing area remains open.

Recent reports from the state Department of Ecology noted significant improvements in summer water quality. This year Bay View State Park closed only once, for five days. In addition, the State Department of Health was able to upgrade 151 acres of the Padilla Bay shellfish growing area.

"This incredible turnaround in water quality is directly tied to our septic inspection program and partnership with local homeowners," said Public Works Director Dan Berentson. "In the past year, we worked with

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Tips & Tricks to Protect Your Watershed 2
- Volunteers: Present & Persistent 2
- How Does a Septic System Work 3
- Resources for landowners 4



It's that time of year again! Our days are shorter and the rains have settled in for the season. It is during this season that our streams and sloughs fill up and we need to ramp up our efforts to prevent pollution. Since April of this year, Ecology has been conducting a study to determine the sources of fecal coliform bacteria and how it is getting into the sloughs and Bay. While the bacteria study is only halfway complete, we are starting to notice some trends throughout the watershed. As we locate sources of bacteria, we can work with home owners and business owners to find creative solutions to eliminate pollution pathways. Luckily, Skagit County is full of resources and groups to offer advice and assistance to property owners so rain events don't have to become pollution events! Check out some of your local resources on page 4.

Tips & Tricks to Protect Your Watershed

Many Padilla residents are already making changes on their property to protect water quality. There are many things you can do to improve water quality. Here are the 5 most important things you can do for clean water:

1. Be responsible for proper septic system maintenance, and make repairs when necessary. If you have questions about your septic

system (such as where it is and how to maintain it), contact the Skagit County Health Department at 360-416-1555.

2. Keep livestock away from waterways. If you have livestock, the Skagit Conservation District can help you manage your pasture and manure in ways that will improve pasture productivity and protect water quality. Contact them at 360-428-4313.

3. Pick up after pets. The poop from just 2 medium sized dogs is potent enough to pollute an Olympic sized swimming pool. Scoop the poop, bag it, and place it in the trash.

4. Plant or preserve trees and native vegetation along creeks, sloughs and the shoreline. These will help filter out pollution before it gets into water.

5. Attend workshops and neighborhood meetings, and talk to your friends and neighbors about what you are doing for clean water! Sharing your successes is the best way for others to see how easy it can be to keep our waterways safe and clean.

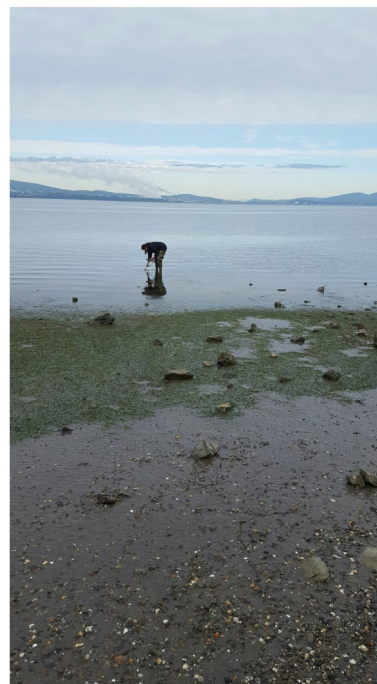


Marley Skagit County Clean Water Program Mascot

Fecal coliform bacteria come from the intestines of warm blooded animals including humans, dogs, livestock, and some wildlife. Although most bacteria in feces are harmless, fecal coliform bacteria may indicate the presence of disease-causing pathogens that can make swimming and eating shellfish unsafe.

Volunteers: Present and Persistent

By Samantha Russell, CVP Volunteer Coordinator
www.coastalvolunteerpartnership.org



The Coastal Volunteer Partnership in conjunction with Skagit County Clean Water have partnered to monitor the levels of enterococcus bacteria present during the high beach –usage time from Memorial Day to Labor Day. You may have interacted with one of the 8 incredible volunteers who donned their boots and collected weekly water samples at 5 different locations around the State Park and Boat Launch. Volunteers were trained by the Department of Ecology and fellow CVP volunteers in April 2016 on how to fill out data sheets, take salinity measurements, temperature and how to properly collect sea water and transport it safely to the lab. Each citizen science volunteer learned to connect visual observations on the beach (# of humans, birds, dogs, tidal cycle, time,

tide height, wave height, weather observations etc.) with water quality impacts. This is a huge skill living in a coastal community such as Padilla Bay. Learning how to connect cause and effect between our personal actions and their impacts on our local environment is a huge advantage to participating in citizen science projects! The importance of citizen scientists in Skagit County and beyond cannot be stressed enough. Without trained citizen scientist volunteers, scientists and policy makers will not be able to act with the most up to date information. Come get involved with the Coastal Volunteer Partnership at Padilla Bay! We offer workshops, lectures, trainings, volunteer opportunities and much more. So get down to the beach and get in on the fun today!

Did you enjoy the warm waters of Padilla Bay this summer? So did many of your friends, families, neighbors, students, pets, and wildlife. Did you ever question the safety of the water at the beach you swam at? We hope not!



Salish Sea Stewards Volunteer Training
 Tuesday's 1:00-5:00pm
 March 7 – May 9, 2017
Don't wait! Space is limited to the first 30 applicants!
 Padilla Bay Interpretive Center • 10441 Bayview Edison Road • Mt Vernon, WA 98273

40 hours of free citizen science training taught by local experts
 +10 hours of customizable hands-on trainings
 Participants return 50 hours of volunteer service in 1 year.

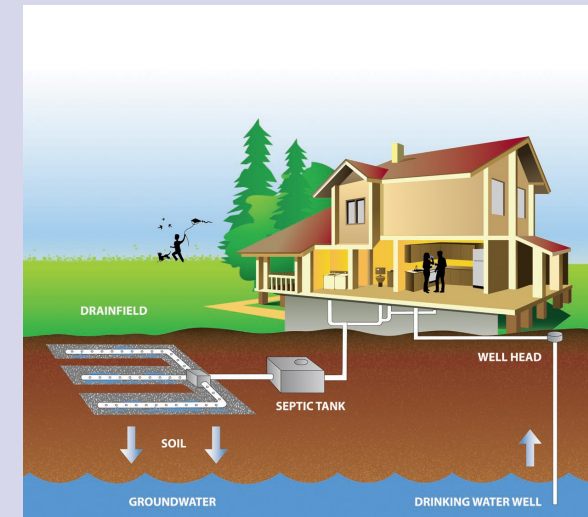
Topics include: water quality, climate change, green crab monitoring, intertidal monitoring, Salish Sea 101, forage fish sampling, marine ecology, and much more!

Applications available at: www.skagitmrc.org and www.coastalvolunteerpartnership.org
 No prior experience necessary!
 Direct questions and turn in completed applications by February 28th to Samantha Russell
srussell@padillabay.gov, 360-428-1559

How Does a Septic System Work?

A septic system is how households not hooked into sewer treat and dispose of wastewater. The typical septic tank is a large buried container that receives wastewater from your home. Heavy solids settle to the bottom becoming the sludge layer while lighter solids float to the top and form the scum layer. Risers are put in place to allow for proper maintenance and pumping of the tanks. It is important for the safety of you and your family that riser lids are properly tightened and in good condition. Most septic tanks need to be pumped every 3 to 5 years. During a routine inspection a

certified inspector can tell you if your tank needs to be pumped. The wastewater leaving the septic tank is known as effluent. The effluent leaves the tank and enters the drainfield. In the drainfield wastewater trickles out of perforated pipes laid in gravel filled trenches. Every drainfield should have a reserve or replacement area should the existing system need a repair. A well maintained septic system can provide years of reliable service. Performing routine maintenance can protect your property, your family's health, and the health of our watershed.



Rebates for Septic Inspections Are Back!



Skagit County's Public Health Department is now offering \$100 rebates to help with the cost of inspecting your septic system. Rebate forms are available here. <http://skagitcounty.net/Departments/HealthEnvironmental/onsitesewer.htm>

To get the straight poop on septic basics visit our Facebook page and view our videos at <https://www.facebook.com/skagitcountycleanwater>

