

# PADILLA BAY PARTNERSHIP

Skagit County Public Works



## Dog poop in the yard - a stinkin' problem!

Got a dog? When your dog poops in your yard, what do you do? Is your answer to leave it be or toss it over the fence where nobody can see it? If so, we'd like you to consider changing that plan.

Dog poop is raw sewage. It is NOT fertilizer. Like human poop, it's full of pathogens that can transmit disease to your family, your dog, and other animals. Some pathogens remain infectious for YEARS.

Rainwater picks up what it touches, like poop, and carries it to our local creeks and beaches. Even if you're not near a creek, runoff carries poop and pathogens there. More than once, we've found dog poop is the cause of high bacteria in the water.

Kids play in creeks. Pets play in creeks. And everyone loves a trip to the beach. So if you're not cleaning up that poop, you're exposing yourself and your whole community to pathogens.

Please do your part to be PoopSmart, and scoop the poop. Find out more at [poopsmart.org](http://poopsmart.org).



## INSIDE:

Clean Samish Initiative succeeds in improving water quality  
Page 2

Saving your wallet and your sanity with the Skagit Conservation District  
Page 2

Fix septic system problems before they become expensive failures  
Page 3

Partners try new and innovative source tracking methods  
Page 3

FREE Resources!  
Page 4



## Water quality improves in Padilla Bay

We are pleased to report that, with the help of residents like you, we've reduced bacteria levels in Padilla Bay. When we started this work, the swimming beach at Bay View State Park was closed for up to a third of the season because of poop in the water. In 2018, the beach was clean and open all season long!

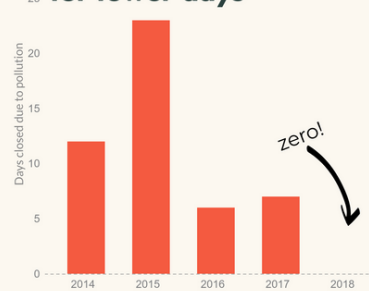
Most septic systems in the area are up to date on inspections, and we've found and fixed 27 failed systems. Local farmers are getting in on the action, too. From commercial livestock operations to small farms with just a couple of animals, we're pleased to report that significant corrections have been made, and many more are in the works.

Thank you to all residents of the Padilla Bay watershed who have made changes to protect the health of our community! We certainly have more work left to do, but we are deeply grateful for the wonderful people who are doing what it takes to keep us all safe and healthy.

# PADILLA BAY WATERSHED

## SUCCESSES 2015-2019

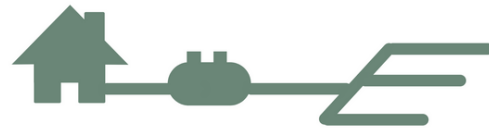
### Bay View State Park swim beach is closed for fewer days



The swimming beach at Bay View State Park used to be closed for up to a third of the summer due to pollution. Now, the beach is only rarely closed. In 2018, the beach was safe for swimming during the whole summer. In 2019, there was one short closure in the spring.

## 27 Failed septic systems found

A failure is defined as sewage ponding or surfacing on the ground.



## Large and small farms identified with manure problems 34

Problems vary property by property, but have included muddy pastures, fences too close to ditches and streams, mishandled manure, and too many animals for the size of the property.



## 10 Farms made corrections to reduce their risk of polluted runoff

### Free local hay!\*



\*From your own land when you use rotational grazing

## Saving your wallet (and your sanity) with help from the Skagit Conservation District

Feed bills. Vet bills. Not to mention the time that mud adds to chores! It's expensive to have a small farm.

Did you know that you can save yourself money and time by changing the way you manage your pastures? Winter is the best time to have SCD visit your farm so they can see the problems and offer solutions. Their services are FREE, confidential, and they may even be able to help with free grant funds to fix problems! Find them at [skagitcd.org](http://skagitcd.org), or 360-428-4313.

## Fix septic system problems before they become expensive failures!

Everyone knows a septic system failure is expensive to fix. So why don't more people fix the cheap, little problems before they turn into big, expensive ones?

We get it. There are more fun things to do with your money. But, just like an oil change for your car, money spent now will save you a lot later on. Whether it's getting your system pumped or fixing a broken baffle, don't forget and leave yourself with a big, smelly mess.

You can find all our best maintenance tips (and a few groan-worthy puns) at [poopsmart.org/septic](http://poopsmart.org/septic).



## Partners try new and innovative source tracking methods

With the help of grants from EPA, Skagit County and its partners are exploring new and innovative techniques that may prove to be helpful in understanding where pollution is coming from.

We are continuing to partner with the University of Washington Center for Urban waters to develop a way to look for chemicals in the water (like caffeine or veterinary drugs) that might give us an idea of where pollution is



Dr. Andy James from the University of Washington joined in several sampling events.

coming from. Because this is brand new science, it's taking some time and experimentation to get it right. We hope that the next few years of work will result in a tool that will be helpful for us, and for the rest of the Puget Sound region.

We're also partnering with the EPA Region 10 Manchester Laboratory on a two year project to use DNA to identify sources. We plan to start in the fall of this year. We tried this method in 2010, but the science was still very new and our results were not as reliable as we had hoped. Though there are still many questions about the method's reliability, projects around the region are showing that it is worth trying again. We'll keep you posted on the results!



We're working with labs at EPA and the University of Washington.



Skagit County Public Works Department  
1800 Continental Place  
Mount Vernon, WA 98273

## Classes, Events & Resources

### Septic Systems 101 Online

Learn the basics of owning and operating a septic system to keep it working well for as long as possible.  
[skagitcounty.net/Septics101online](http://skagitcounty.net/Septics101online)

### Septic Systems 201 (In-person only)

Save money on inspections by learning how to inspect your own septic system (simple gravity systems only). Classes are taught several times a year. Join the wait list at [skagitcounty.net/Septics101online](http://skagitcounty.net/Septics101online)

### Skagit River Salmon Festival

Sept 7, 11am-6pm, Edgewater Park, Mount Vernon, \$5 adults, kids are free. Don't miss one of the best festivals the Skagit Valley has to offer!

### Watershed Masters Training

Wednesdays, Sept 25-November 23, 6-9pm, Padilla Bay Research Reserve. Learn from local experts about water quality, marine life, salmon, stream ecology, geology, climate change, and more. More info at [skagitcd.org](http://skagitcd.org).

**PoopSmart.org:** A centralized source of information for homeowners. Find how to get information about your septic system, money-saving tips for small farmers, and more!



**Learn More!**  
[skagitcounty.net/cleanwater](http://skagitcounty.net/cleanwater)

Find us on   
@SkagitCountyCleanWater

 **YouTube**  
[bit.ly/CleanWaterYouTube](http://bit.ly/CleanWaterYouTube)