

We seem to be in a pattern where the Samish gets a lot more rain than surrounding locations and is off the “radar” of the Seattle weather folks, but on the real weather radar you can see for yourself that it is often still raining, or raining harder, in the Samish than at other Western Washington locations.

Despite all the rain this week, Samish sampling results were fairly low in most cases. No samples were taken during the flood on Monday, January 17, as it was a County holiday and the only person available (that would be me) was spending his holiday in the Emergency Operations Center. Samples were taken from the Samish River at Thomas Road on the downside of the hydrograph on Tuesday (1-18) and on the rising leg of the hydrograph on Friday (1-21). A full suite of Samish Basin samples, including PIC sites, was obtained on Thursday (1-20) as part of the county’s normal ambient sampling run.

Here are the results, in reverse chronological order:

Friday, January 21: Samples taken at about 1200 cfs river flow, in the middle of a rise from 750 cfs to 2,000 cfs after about 1.0” of rain in the previous 24 hours:

Location	Site No.	Fecal coliform, cfu/100 mL
Samish River at Thomas Rd	32	23
Samish River at Thomas Rd	32	80

Thursday, January 20: Thomas Road samples taken at about 750 cfs, near the beginning of a small river rise associated with about 0.25” of rain

Location	Site Number	Fecal Coliform, cfu/100 mL
Mainstem, upstream to downstream		
Samish River at Hwy 9	11	2
Samish River at upper Prairie Rd	SAM3PR	2
Samish River above Parsons Creek	SAMPAR	2
Samish River at Double Creek Ln	SAMDCL	4
Samish River at 1st Prairie Rd	SAM1PR	9
Samish River at Grip Road	SAMGRIP	8
Samish River at F&S Grade Rd	SAMFS	8
Samish River at Hwy 99	SAMH99	13
Samish River at Chuckanut Drive	SAMCD	30
Samish River at Thomas Rd	32	70
Tributaries, upstream to downstream		
Parsons Creek at mouth	PAR	ND
Skarrup Creek at Double Creek Ln	SKAR	30

Swede Creek at Grip Rd	8	30
Thomas Creek at F&S Grade Road	4	30
Thomas Creek at Hwy 99	3	23
Friday Creek at Prairie Rd	6	23

Tuesday, January 18: Samples taken on down leg of hydrograph after 4000+ cfs flood event 1/17

Location	Site Number	Fecal Coliform, cfu/100 mL
Samish River at Thomas Rd	32	30
Samish River at Thomas Rd	32	23
Samish River at Farm-Market Rd	SAMFM	80
Samish River at Farm-Market Rd	SAMFM	50

It's notable that no sample from the Samish at Thomas Road read more than 80 cfu/100 mL, despite plenty of rainfall and a number of sampling events. Also note the very low readings basin-wide on 1/20. Although we usually see low numbers in mid-winter due to continual cleansing of the landscape, the 1/20 results are remarkably low. It is my pleasure to remind us all that ND (in Parsons Creek) means Non-Detect. This indicates that the fecal coliform count in that sample was less than 2 cfu/100 mL and therefore below the detection limit of the method.

Friday's relatively low numbers allowed the state to reopen Samish Bay on Saturday after the automatic closure on Friday spurred by the rise of the river.