

Skagit County completed normal ambient sampling in the Samish Basin on Tuesday, April 10th. This run was completed during a several-day stretch of dry weather, with no appreciable runoff from the land occurring. Thus it was a big surprise that numbers at Samish River/Thomas Road were through the roof. This caused an “emergency closure” of Samish Bay and recall of harvested product. Fortunately the product was caught in time and no possibly contaminated shellfish reached consumers.

These are the highest numbers we’ve ever seen at Thomas Road for a dry-weather sample. Given the lack of runoff and that the next sample spot upstream (Samish at F&S Grade Road) was essentially drinkable (4.5 cfu), it would appear that some form of direct deposit into the river occurred. Very disappointing.

Swede Creek was also very high but if it was the source of the Thomas Road contamination, we would have expected that to show in the F&S Grade Road samples which are taken about ½ mile downstream from the mouth of Swede Creek.

The County, Ecology, WSDA, and EPA are cooperating to investigate this incident.

Meanwhile, samples taken on Thursday, April 12 were well within the safe range and Samish Bay will be reopened to shellfish harvest tomorrow (April 14).

Here are the results:

Tuesday, April 10 River at 163 cfs (since adjusted by USGS to 325 cfs) and falling, rainfall 0.00”

Site Number	Result	Duplicate
Thomas Cr at Hwy 99	6.8	
Thomas Cr at F&S Grade Rd	49	
Friday Cr at Prairie Rd	4.5	<1.8
Swede Cr at Grip Rd	1600	350
Samish River at Hwy 9	2	
Samish River at F&S Grade Rd	4.5	
Samish River at Thomas Road	920	1600
Alice Bay Pump Station	4.5	
Edison Slough at School	70	
Edison Pump Station	23	
North Edison Pump Station	79	
Colony Cr at Colony Rd	11	
Parson Cr at mouth	6.8	
Samish River above Parsons Cr	6.8	
Skarrup Cr at Double Cr Ln	23	

Thursday, April 12, river at 363 cfs (adjusted) and steady, rainfall 0.23"

Location	Fecal coliform	Duplicate
Swede Creek	33	
Samish River at F&S	13	
Weir Creek	110	
EF Weir Creek	170	
Friday Creek	46	
Samish River at Hwy 99	23	22
Samish River at Gravel Pit Bridge	17	
Thomas Creek	130	
Sam Bell Road ditch	<1.8	
Samish River at Chuckanut	23	49
Samish River at Thomas Road	130	70