

Shellfish Protection District Annual Reporting Form

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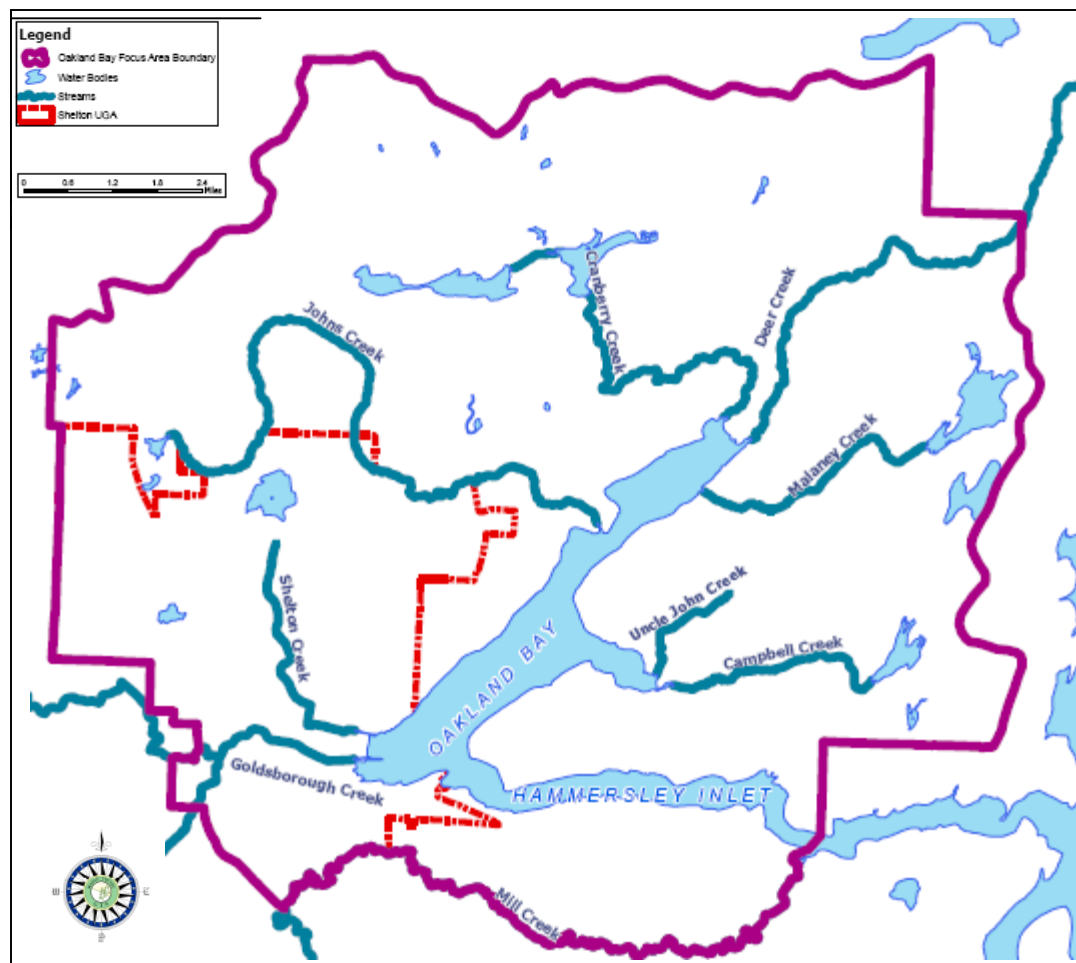
County Name: Mason

Name and Area of Shellfish Protection District:

The Oakland Bay Clean Water District is located in south Puget Sound. There are nine major creeks in the district: Deer, Cranberry, Campbell, Johns, Uncle John, Malaney, Shelton, Mill and Goldsborough. Portions of the drainages of these creeks, together with the shoreline drainage have been used to define the shellfish protection district. See Figure 1. The Oakland Bay Action Plan has additional land use, harvesting and demographic information for the area. The plan can be found at:

http://www.co.mason.wa.us/forms/Env_Health/oakland_bay_plan.pdf

Figure 1



Shellfish Program Elements:

The overall goals of the shellfish program are to take immediate steps to reduce water pollution, meet state and federal water quality standards, and ensure that water quality improvements are maintained. This will be achieved through a ten point Action Plan Strategy (APS). The APS can be found at

http://www.co.mason.wa.us/oakland_bay/pdfs/2009_Oakland_Bay_Action_Plan_Strategy_update.pdf

Goals, Performance Measures and Targets:

The APS was developed by the Oakland Bay Clean Water District Advisory Committee. The advisory committee provides coordinated management of the water resources of Oakland Bay and makes recommendations to the Oakland Bay Clean Water District Board of Directors on behalf of the members and member organizations. A list of the member organizations can be found at

http://www.co.mason.wa.us/ac/oakland_bay/members.php

The Oakland Bay Clean Water District Board of Directors has appointed this group.

Briefly the goals of the ASP are to:

1. Identify Responsible Lead Agencies, Action Steps and Performance Measures
2. Identify District Boundaries, Oversight and Finance
3. Develop and Implement Public/Private Partnerships, and a Public Involvement Plan
4. Monitor Water Quality, Conduct Shoreline and Upland Surveys, and Conduct Research
5. Identify and Remediate Agricultural Sources
6. Identify and Remediate Onsite Septic System Sources
7. Identify and Remediate other sources
8. Identify Land Use Policies and other Statutory Interventions that will Protect, Restore and Preserve
9. Key Enforcement Elements
10. Program Evaluation

The APS is updated semi-annually. To update the APS each agency, business or organization that leads a task fills out a task list update. If a task has been completed the agency can fill in information about when, how and what the results were. There is also a section in the task list update to change the timeline or explain goals that have not been achieved. The advisory group reviews the task list updates and the completed tasks are moved to the completed task section of the APS. The incomplete tasks that have exceeded the timeline are discussed. Either the task is extended or if there are obstacles a task may be reevaluated. It is anticipated that this process will continue at each APS update. The task list update and review is an adaptive management process.

What work have you done or approaches have you used that have proven to be particularly successful in moving your program forward?

Holding regular meetings and the APS have both been key factors in progress. The commitment to regularly meet and discuss the work to be done has been very important in this clean water district because it has developed better working relationships. Through regular meetings coordination and consensus building have occurred. Conflict between different stakeholders is still there, but also the commitment to work through it.

Educational funding has allowed the Oakland Bay group to conduct social marketing research in areas the group identified as highest priority for community education efforts: septic system operation & maintenance (O&M) and agricultural waste practices. The research was used to develop an Oakland Bay Watershed Social Marketing Plan. This will allow more effective educational work because the information can now be tailored to address issues that are important to Oakland Bay. Some of the future education work identified in the APS is funded and some is not. Hopefully having a research based social marketing plan will make grant applications more competitive for future applications.

The past successes of the Mason County O&M program has been built on. We have continued regular O&M education workshops for homeowners, providing at least six a year through a contract with Washington State University (WSU) extension. Attendance has been steady or growing. A septic tank pumping discount has been provided to workshop attendees courtesy of the local septic pumpers. In addition, a septic riser/ effluent filter rebate program provides encouragement for owners of older septic systems to make upgrades to their septic system that will make O&M easier. Regular reminder notices have been sent to systems that are overdue for O& M. Funding has been put in place for this year and next to provide timely health department follow-up on systems that have problems noted in their pumper or O&M reports. One additional task, scanning septic design records into a database, had been started. All Oakland Bay marine shoreline parcels and some lake shoreline and upland parcels will be included in this project next year, ultimately all systems will be included. Information on the installation year, location > or < 100 feet from the shoreline and type of system is included. Septic design records will eventually be accessible to the public through the county website. This will make gathering septic information prior to O&M easier for homeowners, O&M service providers and realtors in the future.

Recreational opportunities on the Oakland Bay shoreline are growing. Currently public access is limited to two small waterfront parks, and one semi-developed Department of Natural Resources (DNR) area. There is one undeveloped park that is slated for future development work. Port of Shelton is also working on funding a project to make their marina area more pedestrian friendly. The Cascade Land Conservancy and Capitol Land Trust have worked on a number of land acquisitions in the area. Some of these acquisitions may allow greater public access to Oakland Bay.

If you didn't meet your targets, what challenges are you facing and what changes do you need to make to achieve better results?

Water quality has improved in upper Oakland Bay. The challenge is that we are unsure what has caused the improvement. Numerous sanitary surveys and dye traces have been conducted in the area around the downgrade. One failure was found. In addition, septic owners in the area have been educated about the importance of O&M. It is not known if any of this has any direct bearing on water quality improvements, though it certainly could. It is currently hypothesized that bacteria in the sediment may, under certain environmental conditions, cause the high levels of bacteria in the water column. Research to test this hypothesis was conducted during the summer of 2009. Results were inconclusive. Additional testing is needed.

Long term funding for continued water quality work is needed in order to assure that water quality improvements are maintained. In the past water quality work has been done in the Oakland Bay area, but then, due to lack of funding, water quality work ceased and some of the problems have redeveloped. Work is being done to secure long term funding.

Public involvement is needed to build on the social marketing work in the area. Interested citizens are vital to the increased well being of Oakland Bay. Attendance at the annual Oakland Bay open house decreased this past year, perhaps partially due to a newspaper oversight. Public comment has led the group to theorize that the event's focus on learning creates the belief that it is class-like and need only be attended once. Changes to the event are in the discussion stage. Mixing in more fun activities is being considered.