Protecting Puget Sound Through Funding and Implementing Septic Programs

Department of Health, Office of Shellfish and Water Protection

Ag/WQ Advisory Committee – February 19, 2015
Working to protect and improve the health of Washington State

Office of Shellfish & Water Protection Mission
Improve the health of people in Washington State by ensuring:

- shellfish are safe to eat,
- beaches are safe for swimming, and
- on-site sewage and reclaimed water systems are properly managed.
Classification of Harvest Areas

- Designated “shellfish authority” responsible for classification of commercial harvesting areas

- Areas must meet strict marine water quality standards and undergo an assessment of pollution sources

- Classifications “Approved,” “Conditionally Approved,” and “Prohibited”

- Unclassified areas have not been evaluated
• 2,736 acres improved
• 4,609 acres impacted

• Success masked by large downgrade in Samish and Portage downgrade (approx 4,500 acres)

• Water quality improvement can take years
  o Hood Canal 9 – 25 years
  o Oakland Bay – 25 years
  o Portage Bay – 9 years
Puget Sound
Wastewater Infrastructure

- Centralized Wastewater Treatment
  - 100 municipal wastewater treatment plants (WWTP)
    - Regulated by Department of Ecology

- Decentralized Wastewater Treatment
  - 290 large on-site sewage systems (LOSS)
    - Regulated by Department of Health
  - 600,000 on-site sewage systems (OSS or septic)
    - Regulated by Local Health Jurisdictions (LHJs)
Marine Recovery Areas and Other Designated Areas in Puget Sound for On-site Sewage Systems

Samish Island
Genesis of Septic Finance Project

- EPA National Estuary Program Funding (started 2010)
- Puget Sound Environmental Health Directors Ranked Regional Priorities (2011)
- Puget Sound Action Agenda (2012)
  - Septic finance programs listed as priority actions
Advisory Committee Members

- County Commissioners (2)
- Environmental Health Directors (3)
- City Treasurer (1)
- Washington Realtors Association (1)
- Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe (1)
- Building Industry Association of Washington (1)
- Washington State Local Public Health Officials (1)
- Washington Environmental Council (1)
- Shellfish Industry (1)
- Washington On-Site Sewage Association (1)
- Puget Sound Partnership (1)
- Department of Ecology (1)
Percent of Unmet Need

Current Expenditures and Unmet Need by County, 2013

Snohomish  Clallam  King  Island  Kitsap  Thurston  Skagit  Jefferson  San Juan  Mason  Pierce  Whatcom

Current Expenditure  Additional Need
Septic Financing Bill Summary

- Establish a $30 minimum annual fee
- Require Puget Sound counties to update management plans every 5 years
- Authorize regional septic low-interest loan program
- Develop standards and guidance on program elements
- Encourage pollution identification and correction (PIC) efforts
Conclusion

- We’re working on all pollution sources
- Working to build sustainable funding for local non-point source programs
- We’re making EPA investments in local non-point source programs and providing incentives
- The work is unending and we’re always looking at making lasting changes
Thank You
Any Questions?

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