



CITY OF BAINBRIDGE ISLAND

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 1, 2009

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Island Shorelines Show Improvements, Additional Challenges

Bainbridge Island, WA, September 1, 2009 – The Washington State Department of Health Office of Shellfish and Water Protection (DOH) has reclassified three portions of island shoreline for shellfish harvest as a result of a routine review of water quality conditions in the Port Orchard Passage area.

A stretch of the island's western shoreline between Point White and Crystal Springs south of Baker Hill Road has been upgraded from "prohibited" to "approved" for shellfish harvest. A 1.2 mile stretch of shoreline adjacent to Crystal Springs Drive north of Baker Hill Road and a 0.6 mile stretch of Agate Passage shoreline along Henderson Road north of Ralston Road have been downgraded from "approved" to "prohibited" due to the presence of elevated concentrations of fecal coliform in freshwater drainages. Common sources of fecal coliform include failing sewage systems, wildlife and pet waste.

The Sanitary Survey of Port Orchard Passage, in which the DOH announced the changes in classification, credits the improvement in water quality between Point White and Crystal Springs to shoreline sampling and mitigation efforts conducted by the Kitsap County Health District with support from the City's Water Resources staff. "This is good news; it tells us our efforts to identify pollution sources and work with residents to mitigate water pollution problems can be effective," said Cami Apfelbeck, the City's Water Resources Specialist.

Similar shoreline surveys by the Health District are in progress along the downgraded sections along Crystal Springs Drive north of Baker Hill Road and Agate Passage, and drainages of concern have already been identified. "We know where the "hot spots" are, and we have some limited funds to locate and fix sources," said Stuart Whitford, Kitsap County Health District Pollution Identification and Correction Program Manager. "The City, the County and the Health District will be meeting soon to discuss necessary additional funding to fully address the problem, including the potential creation of a shellfish protection district."

A classification of "prohibited" for a fourth stretch of shoreline in Fletcher Bay has also been lifted due to pollution identification and correction efforts by the Health District and the City in this area. However since there have been no harvest site requests within the bay and no ambient marine water sampling, the area has been designated unclassified.

Geoduck tracts will not be affected and will remain approved for harvest.

The changes in classification are a response by the DOH to a comprehensive review of pollution conditions and marine water quality data compiled in both the 2009 Shoreline Survey of the Port Orchard Passage Shellfish Growing Area (DOH, March 2009) and the sanitary survey (DOH, May 2009). As a service to island residents, the City is making both reports available on its website. For details on the reports and reclassifications, please contact Kay Rottell, Public Health Advisor of the Washington State Department of Health, at (360) 236-3318.

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