

Hood Canal Environmental Council

Fall 2017 Newsletter

Protecting Hood Canal since 1969

INDUSTRIAL AQUACULTURE COMING TO A BEACH NEAR YOU?



Geoduck farm in Hood Canal - PVC pipe in eelgrass

HCEC was one of 16 co-sponsors of an excellent conference (“Changing the Nature of Puget Sound: the impacts of industrial aquaculture”) organized by the Association of Bainbridge Communities (ABC), which focused on the damaging effects of geoduck farming practices. The conference is online here:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL8aEQh80CJt8k-qweSb98kIu_AYUc803y

In geoduck farming the beaches are “sanitized” of all small creatures, upwards of 43,560 PVC tubes per acre of beach are covered by netting that traps birds and creatures, and harvesting of the geoducks is done by high-pressure hoses that liquefies the beaches to quick sand 3-feet deep. For an overview see:

https://1drv.ms/b/s!Atlve3_QPpmIgbNUGTQW-XhG7hK5yA

Here are some recommendations from that conference to help oppose industrial aquaculture in our beautiful inland sea: (1) Buy and eat only wild fish and shellfish at home and in restaurants; (2) Let Gov. Inslee and Rep. Derek Kilmer know of your opposition to this environmentally-degrading business, but do commend Gov. Inslee for placing a moratorium on fish net pen applications following the escape of Atlantic salmon from a damaged pen; (3) Encourage Hilary Franz, Commissioner of Public Lands at the Washington

Dept. of Natural Resources, to set limits on conversion of the state-owned tidelands to industrial aquaculture.

Shellfish growers successfully lobbied our congressional delegation to influence the Army Corps of Engineers to allow former sites to be farmed again where eelgrass now exists. See: https://1drv.ms/f/s!Atlve3_QPpmIgbNWrCpMwEyJYG_4Kw

Governor Inslee enthusiastically promotes Washington geoduck products for China where it sells for \$100 or more per pound, and the Dept. of Ecology promotes industrial geoduck farming. Geoduck farming has gained a massive foothold in southern Puget Sound and is creeping northward. Some property owners lease their tidelands to shellfish companies to help pay their property tax, but Mason County tideland owners who don’t intend to farm geoducks may see tax increases anyway: [It's Just Beginning: Mason County Tideland Owner Complains of Higher Valuations - Thank Taylor Shellfish and Mason County's Shoreline Master Program](#)

In Jefferson County, geoduck farms may not need a permit if they were operating prior to February 2014, when the new county Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) took effect; thus, three farms in Squamish Harbor at Shine on Hood Canal currently operate without a county permit. Geoduck farms starting up or significantly expanding after February 2014 do need a permit, but no permits have been issued. An applicant who filled out an application prior to the new SMP claims a "vested right" exemption from the permit requirement in the new SMP, and is appealing the county's ruling that a proposed new geoduck farm in Squamish Harbor needs a permit. Kudos to the Shine/Squamish Harbor group for their diligent work to protect that area.

Please report any applications for industrial shellfish farming in Hood Canal to our president, Donna Simmons nana@hctc.com.

GUILLEMOT COVE NATURE RESERVE

Last May, the HCEC Board of Directors was approached by a group of landowners concerned about the decision by the Kitsap County Parks Department and the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife to allow public shellfish harvesting within the Guillemot Cove Nature Reserve. This issue raises a number of questions regarding the kinds of activities that should, or should not, be allowed in a nature reserve and whether the reserve's owners and managers have an obligation to honor the original intent of the reserve's founders.

Located on the east side of Hood Canal, Guillemot Cove was formerly called Frenchman's Cove after a colorful character, Henri Querrete, who lived there from 1914 until his death. The 158 acres was acquired by Kitsap County in 1993 from the Reynolds Family at a bargain sale price, with the understanding that it would be managed in a way that would protect this extremely sensitive site for the enjoyment of future generations. Another 25 acres has since been donated by the Great Peninsula Conservancy, bringing the total reserve's acreage to 183. This includes a quarter mile of waterfront.

When the reserve was established in 1994, the Guillemot Cove Stewardship Committee (GCSC), made up of local citizens (3 of whom are current HCEC members), was created by the Kitsap County Parks Department. The "Operational Policies" produced by this committee established the kinds of activities that would be allowed or prohibited. One of these rules states that "no clam digging or shellfish harvesting of any kind" would be allowed. Further, the Guillemot Cove Rules listed in the 1994 Kitsap County Parks brochure includes the statement that "Shellfish harvesting of any type is prohibited." The GCSC also recommended organizing the Friends of Guillemot Cove Nature Reserve which is still operating today.

Local citizens with property adjacent to or near the nature reserve worry that after the tribes exercise their treaty rights to harvest their share of shellfish on the beach, the lack of monitoring or enforcement may lead to public recreational harvesters taking more than their limits and damaging the beach. They suggest that, after the tribal harvest, the remaining shellfish should be used only for natural reseeding. Kitsap County Parks recently held a public meeting to discuss the issues and take comments from concerned citizens. As of this writing, it is not known what action, if any, the county will take.

The HCEC board has continued to assist in any way we can toward making sure that the environmental integrity of the reserve is protected and that the founders' intent to protect the shoreline from recreational shellfish harvesting is honored.

For more information about the Guillemot Cove Nature Reserve and the ongoing citizen efforts, contact John Frink at frinkjs@gmail.com.

US NAVY JETS IMPACT FOREST LANDS

A lawsuit challenging the U.S. Forest Service's decision to issue a special use permit to the U.S. Navy to expand its electronic training exercises over the Olympic National Forest (ONF) was brought by the Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics (FSEEE) in late September. The permit would allow the Navy to park three mobile electronic transmitters in 11 locations on ONF forestland, the Salish Sea, and the Pacific Coast Marine Sanctuary that would engage in exercises with radar-jamming growler jet pilots from Naval Air Station Whidbey Island. These exercises would operate 12 hours a day for up to 250 days a year. According to the Navy, these flights are already being conducted over the Pacific Coastal area, but the use of mobile transmitters is designed to make these exercises more realistic.

HCEC expressed strong opposition to this plan in its comments on the US Navy Growler Draft Environmental Impact Statement early this spring. Our concerns include unacceptable noise levels, impacts to areas outside the Navy's study area, and impacts to threatened and endangered species. In addition to the FSEEE, a number of other environmental groups are also opposed to the plan, including the Olympic Forest Coalition, the Washington Forest Law Center, the Marbled Murrelet Survival Project (and its member organizations), the West Coast Alliance, Save the Olympic Peninsula, Olympic Park Associates, and the National Park Conservation Association.

For more information about the FSEEE lawsuit, go to <https://www.fseee.org>. For general information about the Navy's growler jet training proposal go to <http://westcoastactionalliance.org>

Comments on Mason County's Draft Shoreline Master Program were submitted to the Washington State Department of Ecology (WDOE) on behalf of the HCEC and the West Sound Environmental Council (WSEC) in July of this year. The comments submitted separately by former board member, Monica Harle (included as an attachment), were adopted by reference as those of HCEC and WSEC. Our recommendations were (1) to require that all aquaculture activities in saltwater must avoid impacts to eelgrass and kelp beds to the maximum extent practicable; (2) to require that conversions from existing non-geoduck aquaculture to geoduck farming within existing farm boundaries must obtain a Conditional Use Permit; and (3) to align Mason County's SMP with those adopted by Jefferson and Kitsap Counties, which call for less intense geoduck aquaculture and tighter restrictions and conditions. Generally speaking, we were asking that the county's SMP rewrite reject any attempt to favor commercial aquaculture over other interests, thereby encouraging more balanced shoreline ecosystems and restoring safeguards to ensure no net loss of nearshore habitat for all species, including salmon.

Unfortunately, Mason County did not propose any changes, and the WDOE did not require changes, with respect to HCEC's and Ms. Harle's comments. Regarding our request that Conditional Use Permits be required for conversions from existing non-geoduck aquaculture to geoduck aquaculture, the county responded by stating that "Conditional Use Permits are required for new commercial geoduck aquaculture only. Where the applicant proposes to convert existing non-geoduck aquaculture to geoduck aquaculture, the requirement for a Conditional Use Permit is at the discretion of local government."

The WDOE approved the county's SMP, with changes, on August 29, 2017. Mason County has formally adopted the SMP and the updated regulations took effect October 2, 2017.

Questions about the Mason County SMP may be directed to Rick Mraz, WDOE Shoreline Planner at rmra461@ecy.wa.gov or Kell Rowen, Mason County SMP Planner, at krowen@co.mason.wa.us.

Jefferson County's decision-making process regarding the proposed Black Point/Pleasant Harbor Master Planned Resort (MPR) is now entering its 12th year. As the process drags on, the HCEC continues to be involved and to seize every opportunity to express its opposition to this ill-conceived proposal. We firmly believe that if approved, this development would result in unacceptable environmental, social and economic impacts at the local level as well as alter the largely undeveloped rural character of the overall Hood Canal watershed. Unfortunately, our repeated objections to the proposal have fallen on deaf ears, and our position is unchanged. We will continue to oppose the Canadian-based Statesman Group's proposal and to advocate for more locally-oriented development of the Black Point/Pleasant Harbor area consistent with existing and allowed uses.

At this time, Jefferson County appears to be a step closer to finalizing documents that could lead to approval of the MPR development. The county's Department of Community Development (DCD) is currently revising two key documents. Drafts of the Development Agreement, which is the primary vehicle to ensure compliance with the conditions established by the county and the Development Regulations must be finalized before submitting them to the Jefferson County Board of County Commissioners. As of this writing, no date has been set for release of the draft documents, which will trigger a 45-day public comment period.

There are still roadblocks ahead for the county, including continuing opposition from the Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe, lingering concerns expressed by some Planning Commission (PC) members, staff changes at the county DCD and the PC and increasing public opposition. Frustration over continuing delays in the approval process is growing, particularly for the county, which currently needs more staff time devoted to updating its Comprehensive Growth Management Plan.

HCEC's support for the local citizen organization, The Brinnon Group, whose members would be the most directly affected by construction and operation of the proposed MPR, remains strong. For this reason, we are asking our members to support the organization in any way they can. To learn more about the issues involved, we encourage everyone to check out its website at www.brinnongroup.org/take-action/. Donations would be especially appreciated, as the Brinnon Group considers its options if the proposed MPR is approved, including the possibility of a legal challenge. Checks to The Brinnon Group may be mailed to P.O. Box 572, Brinnon, Washington, 98320-0572.

Update on Kelp Investigation at Hood Head Mariculture Site

Submitted by Betsy Peabody, Executive Director, Puget Sound Restoration Fund

Recent research shows that Hood Canal has the highest concentration of CO₂ on the west coast (UW/NOAA). Solutions for reducing carbon are badly needed, but so too are on-the-ground strategies for mitigating the effects of excess carbon in marine systems. A kelp investigation funded by The Paul G. Allen Family Foundation is currently underway at Hood Head to document seaweed cultivation as a potential strategy for mitigating corrosive seawater conditions that result from excess CO₂.

In 2017, Puget Sound Restoration Fund outplanted 2,490 meters of seeded sugar kelp at a mariculture demonstration site and aquaculture farm off Hood Head in north Hood Canal. Sampling conducted February through June documented an average of 139 kelp plants per meter in early April. At peak biomass in early June, 19.4 MT of kelp biomass was growing at the demonstration site. Carbon content of the kelp was 20.4% of the total dry mass sampled, and mean Nitrogen content was 2.1% of the total dry mass sampled. In mid-July, 6.35 MT (14,000 lbs.) of kelp (wet weight) was harvested, thus permanently removing carbon and nitrogen from Hood Canal. The kelp was delivered to an organic farm on Whidbey Island where Dr. Beth Wheat, a UW Professor and marine ecologist, will involve students in conducting direct soil enrichment and compost trials to trace the journey of these micronutrients from sea to land.

On the water quality front, scientists from UW, NOAA, and DNR deployed instruments to monitor pH and carbonate chemistry. Modelers at SSA incorporated kelp production data into a kelp computer model, and NOAA divers conducted dive surveys to document fish and invertebrate presence. Analysis of Year 1 sampling results will continue through the fall.

Propagation, cultivation and scientific assessment will be repeated in 2018.

PIC PROGRAM IDENTIFIES AND CORRECTS FAILING SEPTIC SYSTEMS IN HOOD CANAL

There are more than 32,000 on-site septic (OSS) systems in Hood Canal. Most of them are located near waterbodies and 40% of them are over 30 years old. Finding and correcting systems that are failing and contributing to water quality degradation in Hood Canal has been the goal of state and local government agencies, tribes, environmental groups and others for many years.

All too often, a lack of funding, competing priorities, lack of political will or other constraints have prevented health departments from carrying out successful programs. Fortunately, there is a cooperative and ongoing effort which began in 2012 to coordinate a program to identify fecal pollution sources and initiate the necessary cleanup work. The Hood Canal Regional Pollution Identification and Correction (HCRPIC) Program is being spearheaded by the Hood Canal Coordinating Council (HCCC) which represents the three Hood Canal counties and two Native American tribes. This 3-phase program has funding through March of 2019 from the Puget Sound National Estuary Program (NEP). However, federal funding for future programs is always uncertain given the politics of the federal budget.

At its August meeting, HCEC board members were briefed on the progress of the HCRPIC Program by HCCC Executive Director, Scott Brewer, and program coordinators, Kitsap County Environmental Health Specialist, Leslie Banigan, and HCCC Watershed Planning and Policy Coordinator, Haley Harguth. In phase 1 and 2, program coordinators developed the collaborative framework and monitoring plan, identified and ranked priority shoreline areas to locate the most urgent shoreline areas, developed an education and outreach program, conducted nutrient and other studies, and used GIS mapping. During phase 2, more than 66 miles of shoreline were sampled, 778 landowners were consulted, 76 failing OSS systems were identified, 92 OSS system repairs were completed or in progress, and 46 vouchers were utilized to assist landowners with the cost of maintenance or repairs. Phase 3 will be guided by the results of phase 2 and involves further shoreline sampling, water quality monitoring, and investigation and correction of “hotspots” (high pollution areas).

One of the biggest reasons for the success of this program has been its emphasis on outreach and education, which encourages landowners who have concerns about their OSS systems to allow site visits by health specialists. The program utilizes a number of methods to motivate landowners, including a \$200 rebate for OSS system maintenance. A successful model used in the past offers low interest loans to repair or replace OSS systems through non-profit funding sources.

The HCEC strongly supports the HCRPIC program. We have agreed to take whatever action we can to promote this innovative effort, including lobbying the Trump administration to keep the National Estuary Program in the federal budget for future programs. We urge our members and others to do the same. For more information about the HCRPIC program, contact Leslie Banigan at leslie.banigan@kitsappublichealth.org or Haley Harguth at hharguth@hccc.wa.gov.

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The Board of Directors meets the third Wednesday of each month. If you would like to attend, call Donna Simmons at (360) 877-5747.

A TRIBUTE TO ALICE HARRIS



Alice Harris, an HCEC Board member for many years, died at age 95 on Sept. 13. She and husband Jack lived on the North Shore of Hood Canal for 57 years where they raised their two daughters, Connie Anderson and Diana Sargent. Alice loved Hood Canal and always seemed to add wisdom to the HCEC Board's thinking. She will be missed. Those of you who have, in the past, received your HCEC newsletter by mail can be grateful to Alice for helping to ready them all for mailing. Alice made a difference in the world for North Mason High School students as high school secretary for 17 years, the North Mason Timberland Library, and in caring about women's issues, environmental issues, and Hood Canal. She did her part for what she believed in. The HCEC Board hopes to commemorate her in some way on Hood Canal. Memorial donations would be welcome.

Alice's vacancy on the Board leaves a position to be filled by someone (like you) who also loves Hood Canal and cares about its environmental wellbeing.

HOOD CANAL ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL YEARLY MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION

Individual \$10 _____
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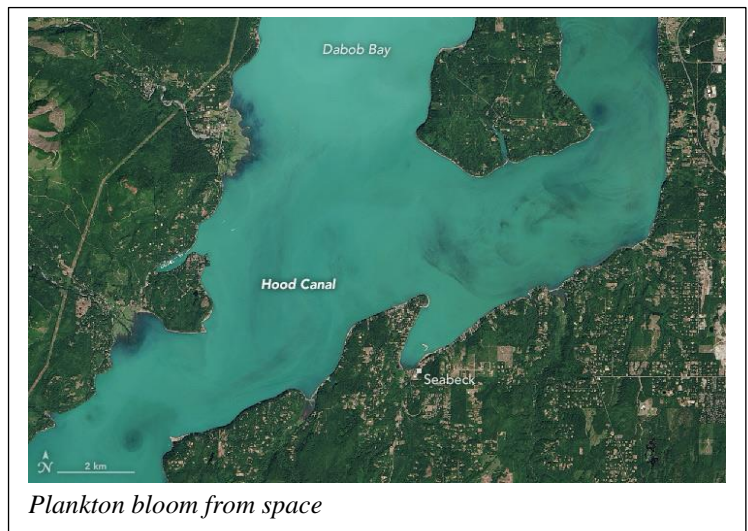
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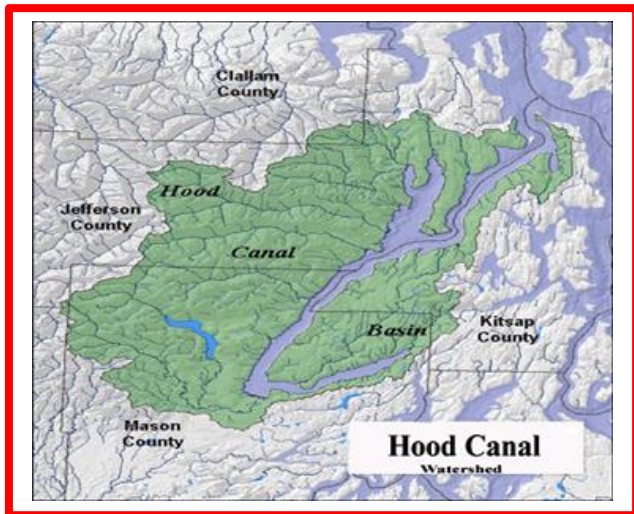
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This newsletter and back issues can be read online at <http://www.hoodcanalenvironmentalcouncil.org>.

Plankton Abloom in Hood Canal

The [Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer](#) (MODIS) on NASA's [Terra](#) satellite captured the top image on July 31, 2017. This wide view shows the extent of the bloom visible at the water's surface.