



WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF
Natural Resources

Peter Goldmark - Commissioner of Public Lands



**Mystery Bay:
A Collaborative Approach to Managing
Vessels and Commercial Shellfish**

**Brady Scott,
Aquatic District Manager**

**Washington Department of
Natural Resources**





Mystery Bay-

**The place, the issue, the story
and the lessons learned:**

**The collaboration and management
strategies used to accommodate diverse
uses by vessels and commercial shellfish
activities in Mystery Bay**





Collaboration Strategies:

- 1. Utilizing neutral facilitation**
- 2. Creating shared understanding**
- 3. Using a stakeholder group with capacity to achieve results**

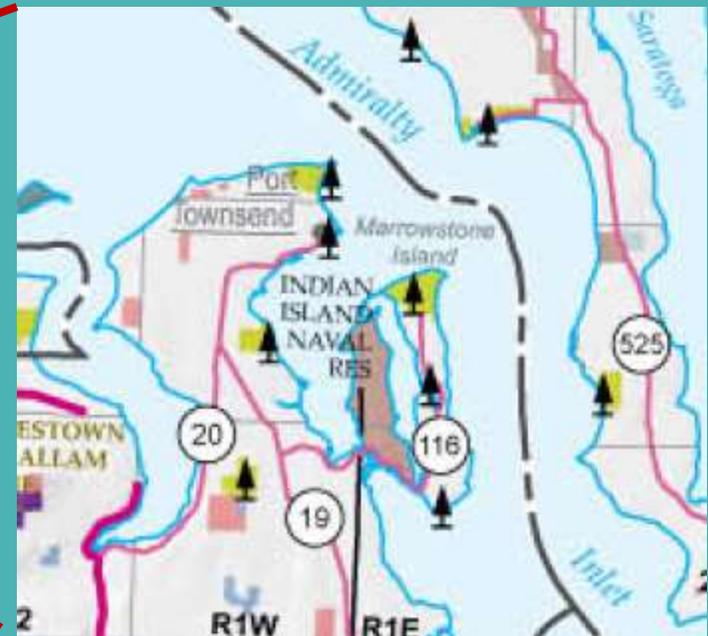
Management Strategies:

- 1. Using existing regulatory structure**
- 2. A volunteer approach to compliance**
- 3. Creating a shared management responsibility**



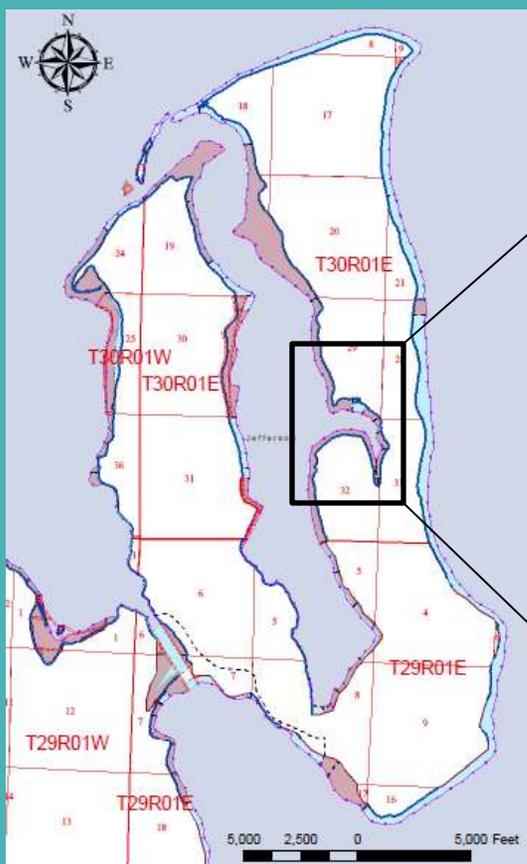


The Place





The Place





The Place



**View from west at
high tide 1977**



**View from south at
low tide 1994**





The Issue

1. Sustainable commercial and tribal shellfish harvest



National Shellfish
Sanitation Program



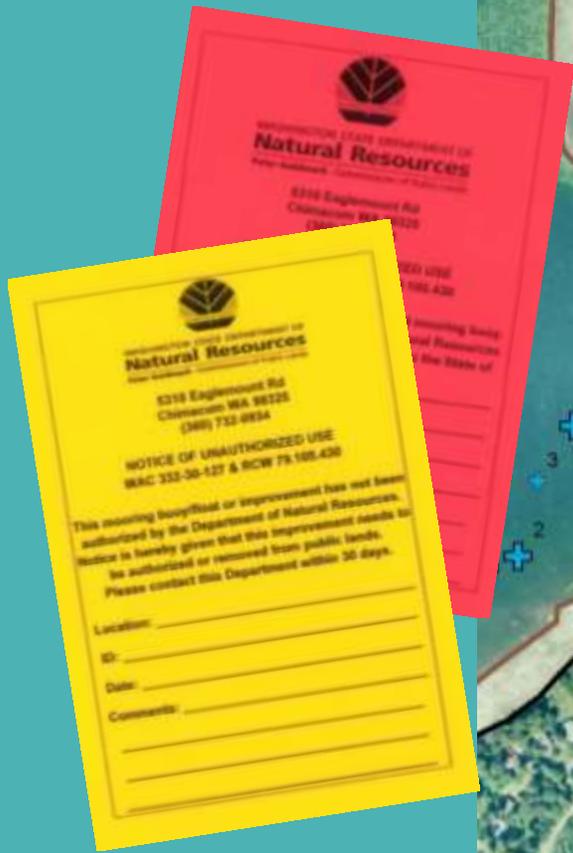
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The Issue

2. Vessel use





The Issue



Pollution eats away at area shellfish beds

BY JOHN DODGE
THE OLYMPIAN

BELLEVUE — Some 60 percent of Puget Sound's prime commercial shellfish growing areas are showing signs of bacterial contamination, according to data presented Monday at the 2001 Puget Sound Research Conference.

chairwoman of the Puget Sound Action Team, which spearheaded the conference.

The sound's problems are many and obvious, said Elliott Norse, a marine ecologist who founded the Redmond-based Marine Conservation Biology Institute. "There's too many of us, we consume too much and we don't value nature

Can we in Puget Sound have our oysters and eat them too?

By NANCY MCKAY and BILL DEWEY

In recent weeks, Washington oysters have been celebrated and praised by chefs and food editors around the country — as well as by our own local "celebrities" who shucked and slurped the prized oyster at Anthony's Restaurants annual Oyster Olympics in Seattle.

Nearly a quarter of a million people harvest shellfish each year from public beaches in Puget Sound. Washington state is the nation's leading producer of farmed oysters, clams, mussels and other shellfish — making our humble bivalves significant both culturally and commercially.

But the picture is not all rosy. Clean water is the single most important factor for growing shellfish that are safe to eat. In many areas around Puget Sound water quality is deteriorating — so much in some areas that shellfish harvesting is no longer permitted.

For example, Drayton Harbor in Whatcom County, north Skagit Bay in Skagit County, Port Susan in Snohomish County, and Lilliwaup Bay in Mason County have been taken out of production. In many other bays harvest and market

restrictions are in place.

The state Department of Health monitors water-quality conditions at 83 commercial shellfish growing areas and at many public shellfish beaches around the state. Each year the department issues an "early warning system" report listing areas that may face future harvest restrictions because of pollution. The list was released earlier this month.

Acreage in some growing areas, like Samish Bay in Skagit County, has been partially restored — but remaining acreage is on the threatened list again this year.

Twelve Puget Sound shellfish-growing areas are on the list this year. Over the past five years, 25 areas have been identified as threatened — all of which still have water-quality problems requiring ongoing attention. Eight now have restrictions or closures in place. Acreage in some growing areas, like Samish Bay in Skagit County and Lynch Cove in Mason County, has been partially restored — but remaining acreage is on the threatened list again this year.

Clearly, our responses to past warnings have not been adequate. We are not making the connection between our actions and the loss of our shellfish beds. And we are not taking action quickly enough.

This is a crisis in the making. We applaud the local officials and citi-

zens who have shown leadership in restoring shellfish areas. But too few are taking the steps needed to preserve this unique and precious resource.

Protecting our prized shellfish means protecting water quality in our watersheds. Our own activities are the sources for the pollution harming these shellfish beds; therefore the responsibility for cleaning up the pollution also rests with us.

City and county officials need to prevent new development from encroaching on sensitive shellfish areas. They need to adopt and fund effective programs to treat and eliminate storm-water runoff, manage on-site sewage, and properly handle farm-animal wastes.

Puget Sound citizens can help by inspecting and properly maintaining their septic systems, reducing storm-water runoff from their property, preventing pet and farm wastes from entering the water, and supporting local efforts to protect water quality.

With better pollution prevention, more aggressive actions to restore closed areas, and a concerted effort by everyone who lives, works and plays in the Puget Sound basin we can keep those oysters on the half-shell and give the next generation something special to celebrate.

Nancy McKay is chair of the Puget Sound Action Team (www.wa.gov/puget_sound) and the Puget Sound Council. Bill Dewey, a member of the Puget Sound Council, works for Taylor Shellfish Co. Inc. and has served as president of the Pacific Coast Oyster Growers Association.

4/28/01 Skagit Valley Herald



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The Story 2008

- **Department of Health notifies agencies**
- **Monthly meetings**
- **Characterizing and understanding the problem**
 - **Legal framework?**
 - **Inventory of uses?**
 - **Carrying capacity?**
 - **Solution?**





The Story 2009

- **Department of Health proceeds with shellfish harvest closure for outer Mystery Bay**
- **Public meeting**
- **Government to Government meeting**
- **County moratorium issued**
- **Renewed stakeholder meetings led by Office of Regulatory Assistance**





The Story 2010

- Draft management plan developed
- 2nd public meeting held
- Management plan finalized
- Implementation ensued
- Mystery Bay reopened to shellfish harvest





The Management Plan

1. Shellfish management
2. Permitting and enforcement
3. Transient vessel management
 - Voluntary no anchor zone
4. Outreach and education
5. Monitoring and notification
6. Adaptive management





Mystery Bay- The Lessons Strategies for Successful collaboration

1. Utilizing neutral facilitation



**Consider need for neutral
facilitation role early in
the process**

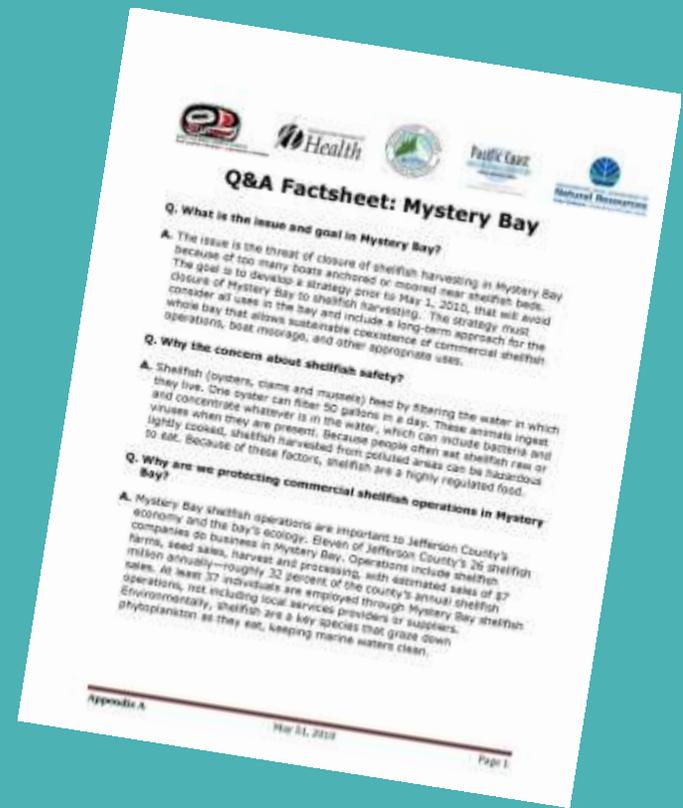




Mystery Bay- The Lessons Strategies for Successful collaboration

2. Creating shared understanding

**Knowledge is power;
collective knowledge is
empowerment**





Mystery Bay- The Lessons Strategies for Successful collaboration

3. Developing a stakeholder group with capacity to achieve results



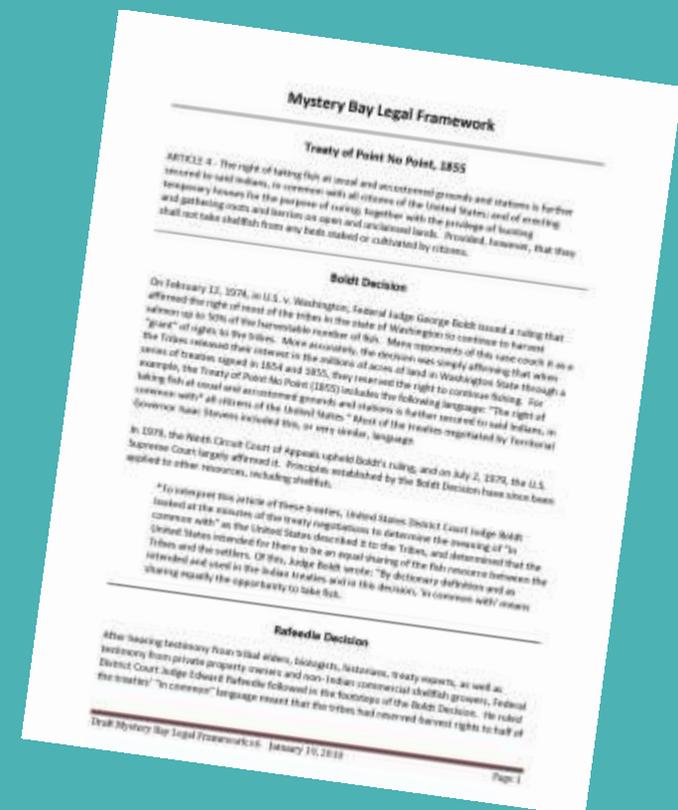
**To whom does this
matter? Ensure their
involvement**



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1. Using existing regulatory structure

Try using existing tools
before spending time
creating new ones

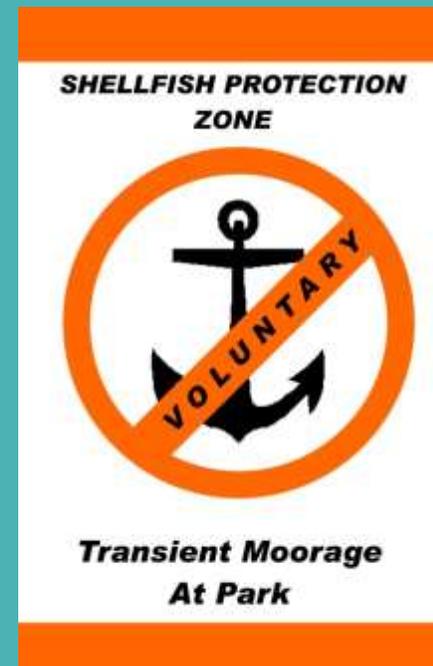




Mystery Bay- The Lessons Strategies for Successful Management

2. Incorporating a Non-regulatory Approach to compliance

**People want to do the
right thing; sometimes
you just need to ask**





Mystery Bay- The Lessons Strategies for Successful Management

3. Reaching out the public to create a shared management responsibility

**Involve people not only in
the process, but in the
solution**





Can we in Puget Sound have
our oysters and eat them too?

YES



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Finding Balance Mystery Bay

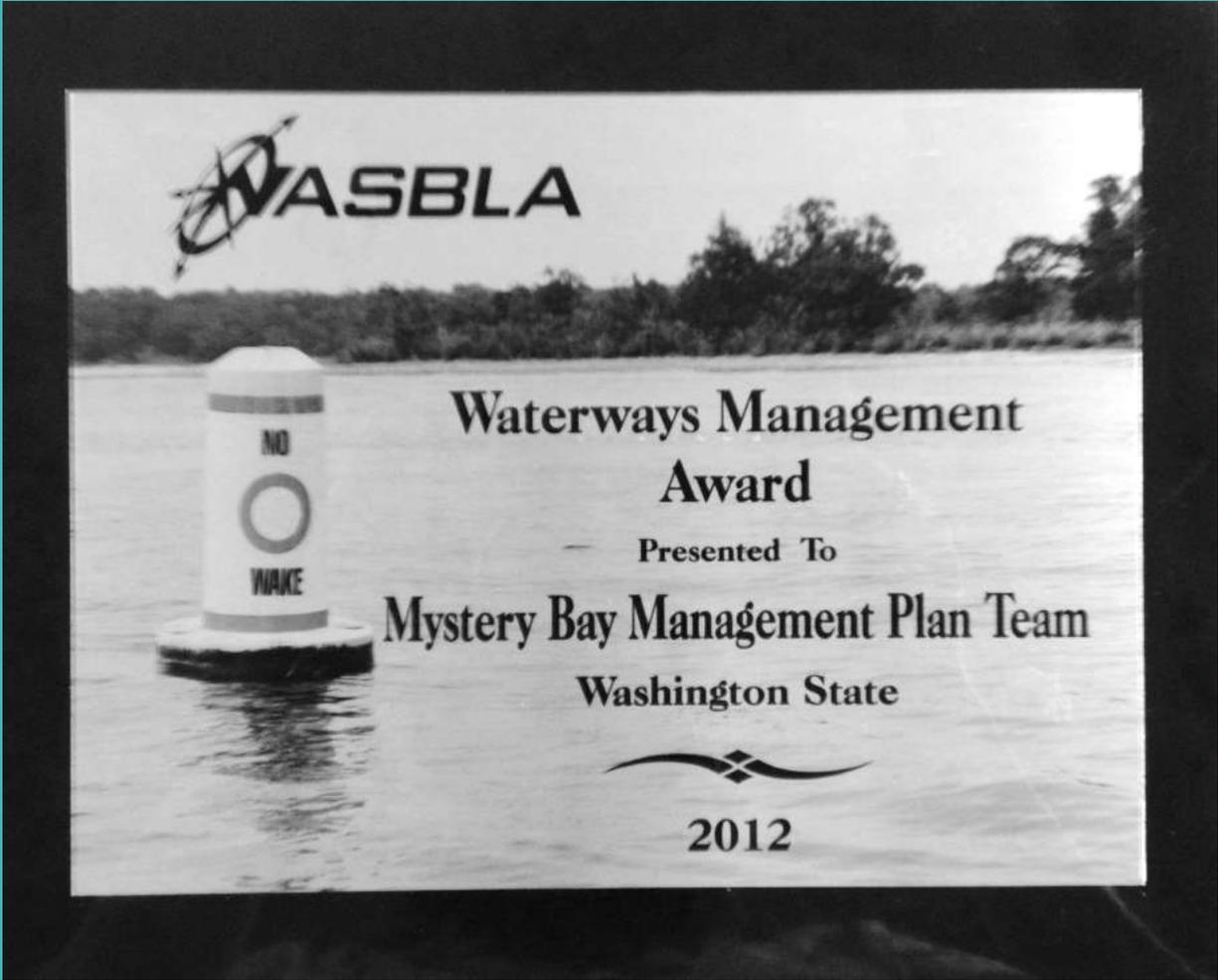


**Jefferson County Marine Resources Committee
Leaping Frog Films**



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Mystery Bay-
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the issue,
the story
and the lessons learned:





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**To whom does this matter?
Ensure their involvement**





Management Strategies:

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Try using existing tools before spending time creating new ones

2. A volunteer approach to compliance

People want to do the right thing; sometimes you just need to ask

3. Creating a shared management responsibility

Involve people not only in the process, but in the solution





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