

**Determination of Significance (DS) and Environmental Impact Statement
Scoping Notice Under the State Environmental Policy Act**

NOTE: Public Comment Period October 3, 2012 through November 2, 2012

Description of Proposal:

At the request of the Willapa-Grays Harbor Oyster Growers Association, the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) is proposing to develop a general permit for the control of the non-native state-listed noxious weed *Zostera japonica* (Japanese eelgrass) on commercial clam beds (excludes geoducks) in Willapa Bay, Pacific County. This permit will cover Japanese eelgrass control activities that result in the discharge of the aquatic herbicide imazamox and marker dyes into surface waters of Willapa Bay. The permit would allow for the treatment of Japanese eelgrass on Willapa Bay tide flats, facilitating cultivation and harvest of clams. For more information view the website at:

<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/pesticides/eelgrass.html>.

Under the Washington State Water Pollution Control Act, a permit is required for the discharge of pollutants which may alter the biological or chemical characteristics of a water body. The proposed permit addresses these legal requirements and regulates the discharge of pollutants to protect surface water quality in Washington State.

Ecology issues general permits in place of a series of individual permits when the permitted activities are similar. Agencies that receive coverage under the general permit must comply with the terms and conditions of the permit.

Purpose of the Scoping:

Scoping is the public process in which Ecology identifies the significant environmental issues and provides notice to the public and other agencies that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is being prepared. Through the scoping procedure the public can inform Ecology early in the process of areas of concern. Interested parties can help define the issues the EIS will address, identify reasonable alternatives, and provide focus to the EIS.

Proponent:

Willapa-Grays Harbor Oyster Growers Association

Location of Proposal:

Willapa Bay in Pacific County Washington

Lead Agency:

Washington State Department of Ecology

EIS Required:

Ecology has determined this proposal (to develop a permit to allow the use of imazamox to control Japanese eelgrass on commercial clam beds in Willapa Bay) is likely to have a significant adverse impact on the environment. An EIS is required under RCW 43.21C.030 (2)(c) and will be prepared.

Ecology has identified the following areas for discussion in the EIS:

1. The potential environmental impacts of various management methods for the control of the state-listed noxious weed Japanese eelgrass in Willapa Bay.
2. Any potential human health effects from controlling Japanese eelgrass.
3. The efficacy of the various management methods on managing Japanese eelgrass.
4. Impacts of Japanese eelgrass on the environment and infrastructure if it is not managed.

Alternatives:

This draft EIS proposed to analyze five alternatives for controlling Japanese eelgrass.

1. Use of an integrated pest management approach that incorporates adaptive management principles.
2. The “no action” alternative – continuing current practices or alternative methods of farming.
3. Use of mechanical/manual methods only.
4. Use of biological methods only.
5. Use of chemical methods only (proposed action).

Call for Public Comments:

Ecology invites public comments on the proposed permit and EIS. The official scoping public comment period extends from **October 3, 2012 to November 2, 2012**. Ecology invites agencies, affected tribes, and members of the public to comment on the scope of the EIS. Ecology prefers to have comments submitted by email, but accepts all comments.

Email your comments to:

Kathy Hamel at: EelgrassComments@ecy.wa.gov

Or mail comments to:

Kathy Hamel, Permit Writer
Washington State Department of Ecology
P.O. Box 46600
Olympia, WA 98504-7600

Email or call with questions

Kathy Hamel
Telephone: (360) 407-6562
Email: Kathy.Hamel@ecy.wa.gov

To add your name to a mailing list contact:

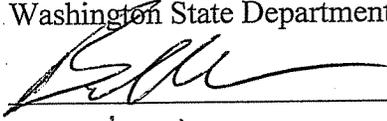
Julie Robertson
Telephone: (360) 407- 6435
Email: Julie.Robertson@ecy.wa.gov

Visit the Japanese Eelgrass Management on Commercial Clam Beds in Willapa Bay General Permit website: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/pesticides/eelgrass.html>

Responsible Official:
Position/title:

Bill Moore, P.E. Phone: (360) 407-6460
Water Quality, Program Development Services, Section Manager
Washington State Department of Ecology

Signature:



Date:

9/19/2012
