Washington Shellfish Initiative

Ocean Acidification Blue Ribbon Panel

May 23, 2012

Josh Baldi, WA Department of Ecology

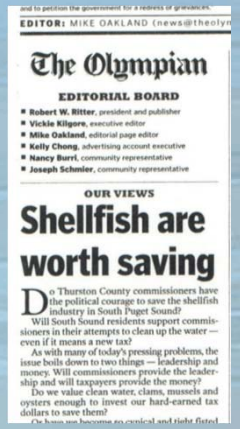
Oyster harvest Willapa Bay

Volunteers seeding clams, Twanoh SP

Clam harvesting Hood Canal

Why Shellfish?

- It's about clean water
- It's about culture and heritage
- It's about jobs and economic opportunity
- And good government can help



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OUR VIEWS

Shellfish are worth saving

Do Thurston County commissioners have the political courage to save the shellfish industry in South Puget Sound?

Will South Sound residents support commissioners in their attempts to clean up the water — even if it means a new tax?

As with many of today's pressing problems, the issue boils down to two things — leadership and money. Will commissioners provide the leadership and will taxpayers provide the money?

Do we value clean water, clams, mussels and oysters enough to invest our hard-earned tax dollars to save them?

Native Americans harvesting shellfish (NWIFC)

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

Economic Benefits

- Thriving shellfish aquaculture industry contributes 3,200 direct/indirect jobs, $270 million statewide
- Great product reputation, strong demand and significant industry investment
- ~$27 million annual payroll in Pacific & Mason Counties

Rows of clams

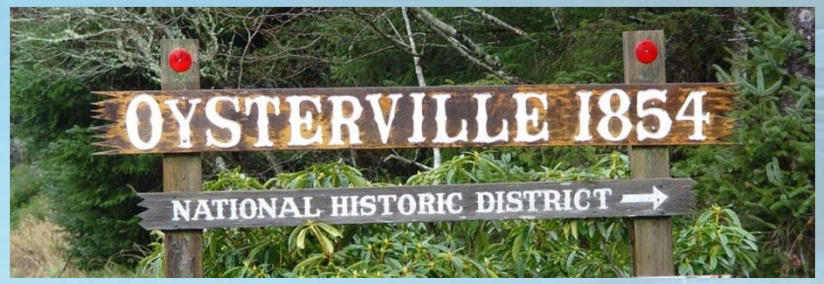
Picking oysters

Retrieving harvested oysters

Part of Fabric of the State

- Integral to Washington's history, culture & heritage
- Draw for regional tourism

Oyster Run motorcycle rally



Tour buses at Blau Oyster

WA Shellfish Initiative Actions

1. Establish a public/private partnership to improve shellfish aquaculture

2. Promote native shellfish restoration and recreational shellfish harvest

3. Ensure clean water to protect and enhance shellfish beds

Razor clam harvest on coast

Samish Bay Bivalve Bash

WA Shellfish Initiative Partnership

- Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission
- Washington Sea Grant
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- Environmental Protection Agency
- US Army Corp of Engineers
- US Geological Survey
- Northwest Straits Commission
- Whatcom County Conservation District
- The Nature Conservancy
- Puget Sound Restoration Fund
- Pacific Coast Shellfish Growers Association
- Puget Sound Partnership
- Office of Regulatory Assistance
- Department of Natural Resources
- Department of Health
- Department of Fish and Wildlife
- State Parks Commission
- Department of Ecology

WA Shellfish Initiative: Next Steps

- WSI Implementation Plan
- Puget Sound Action Agenda
- Grow the Initiative (e.g., grant opportunities)
- More info: http://www.psp.wa.gov/shellfish.php

Razor clam harvester

Willapa oyster harvest

Little Skookum shellfish worker