



April 20, 2017

GRAYS HARBOR COUNTY

STATE OF WASHINGTON

NORTH BEACH SHELLFISH PROTECTION DISTRICT NOTICE OF WATER QUALITY ACTIVITIES

WHAT DOES THIS NOTICE MEAN?

If you are receiving this notification our records indicate you own property within the North Beach Shellfish Protection District (SPD), a coastal area sensitive to the impacts of polluted waters. This area has been prioritized for the purpose of evaluating potential sources of fecal bacteria.

Recreational and commercial razor clam digging is one of our greatest cultural assets and critical to the local economy. The Pacific Coast, as a regulated growing area, is monitored for water quality by the Washington State Department of Health (DOH). That work makes sure that clams are only harvested from areas that meet or exceed public health standards to help ensure they remain safe for human consumption. Occasionally areas are listed as "threatened" or "downgraded" which can lead to harvest restrictions due to the impacts from upland sources of bacterial pollution, including failing on-site sewage systems (OSS). Because the Washington State Department of Ecology (ECY) has general oversight of our state's water quality, they were recently tasked with sampling area rivers, creeks, and other drainages in order to pinpoint locations that warrant additional evaluation to determine possible sources of pollution. With the results of their study now available, ECY has provided funding for the county to evaluate these prioritized areas (for more information see web link at the end of this notice).



WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT?

Waters become polluted from feces which can carry harmful bacteria, parasites, and viruses. Sewage created from human activities contain disease causing organisms that are especially concerning given they are quicker to colonize (or infect) other people. Grays Harbor County Code (GHCC) and state of Washington Administrative Code (WAC) assign property owners the responsibility of operating, monitoring, and maintaining their septic system (GHCC Section 8.16.160(4)). This includes the need to conduct a complete evaluation of components and/or property to determine functionality, maintenance needs, and compliance with regulations and any permits at least once every three years for gravity systems or annually for all other systems.

For the reasons noted above we will be contacting property owners in order to help rule out area septic systems as a source of fecal pollution. Examples of activities we will be carrying out are noted below. We need and appreciate your help to complete this important work to help ensure our beaches continue to thrive.

- **Door to Door - Staff will be in the area until the end of June establishing contact directly – if no one is home we will leave a packet along with our contact information. We ask that you please review the information packet and contact us to schedule a site visit. Field staff will have photo identification and will be driving exempt license vehicles clearly marked as county vehicles.**
- **We WILL NOT be asking you to uncover your tank nor do we have an expectation that you'll have documentation to demonstrate compliance with operations and maintenance requirements noted above.**
- **We WILL be asking that you allow us to make a superficial evaluation of the areas where system components are located. Inspectors will fill out an inspection checklist and you will receive a copy of the checklist along with a copy of the record drawing (as-built) of your system, provided one is on file with our office.**
- **If a problem is discovered with your system, often it can be remedied with simple maintenance such as having the tank pumped and/or dislodging a clogged line etc.**
- **If repair work is necessary Grays Harbor residents now have the option of working with a unique lender (Craft3) who specializes in offering low interest loans that help preserve water quality. More information is available on our website or by calling our office.**

HOW CAN YOU GET MORE INFORMATION?

It is our intent to include as much information as possible about this project on the website. Please visit the website first in order to find out details and answer your questions. If you don't find what you are looking for feel free to contact our office via email or phone listed below.

1. **GHC Website: http://www.co.grays-harbor.wa.us/departments/public_services/environmental_health_division/shellfish_protection_district.php**
- OR
2. **Google search: "Grays Harbor County Shellfish Protection District"**
- OR
3. **Navigate to our webpage by visiting the Grays Harbor County main web page then go to: DEPARTMENTS→PUBLIC SERVICES→ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DIVISION→SHELLFISH PROTECTION DISTRICT**
- OR
4. **Email us: EHD@co.grays-harbor.wa.us**
- OR
5. **Call us: [360-249-4222](tel:360-249-4222) and ask about "the county water quality project on the North Beach" and leave a detailed message with your contact information and nature of your question.**

WE LOOK FORWARD TO PARTNERING WITH AREA RESIDENTS TO ENSURE A SAFE AND HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT FOR EVERYONE WHO LIVES, WORKS, AND PLAYS ON OUR BEACHES. THANK YOU!