



JEFFERSON COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

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Pollution threatens shellfish in Mats Mats Bay Moored boats a possible threat in Mystery Bay

Jefferson County – Two commercial shellfish growing areas are faced with pollution threats – Mats Mats Bay and Mystery Bay. The Washington Department of Health recently placed both bays on their 2008 threatened shellfish area list.

“JCPH is committed to working to keep these areas clean and productive,” said Environmental Health Director Andrew Shogren. “While these two bays face different challenges – I’m confident by working together we can keep these bays open for commercial shellfish.”

JCPH recently received a grant from the Washington Department of Ecology Centennial Clean Water Program to begin the Mats Mats Bay Water Quality Improvement Project. This project has two goals – the first is to prevent the further downgrade of a threatened commercial shellfish growing area caused by nonpoint pollution. The second is to improve water quality by implementing best management practices for on-site sewage systems and agricultural practices. The project is expected to start in early 2009.

In Mystery Bay, water quality remains a concern. “Fortunately, Mystery Bay has met state water quality standards. However, we remain concerned about the potential pollution from the large number of boats that are moored in the bay,” said Shogren. “Early action – before there is a pollution problem in Mystery Bay – will be the key to keeping the shellfish growing areas open and productive.”

JCPH will continue to monitor the water quality in Mystery Bay. JCPH will also continue to work with other county agencies, state agencies, local shellfish growers and Native American tribes to find a solution. In Fall 2007, Jefferson County Board of Commissioners moved forward and established a Clean Water District. The District, which encompasses all of eastern Jefferson County, will work to protect water quality and tideland resources.

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