

SHELLFISH PROGRAM NEWS

Winter 2010

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New shellfish program staff

Rick Porso is the new manager of our Licensing and Certification Program. Rick has extensive management and technical expertise with over 22 years in public health. He graduated from the University of Washington in 1987. He spent one year as a consumer safety specialist for the federal government before starting with Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department as an environmental health specialist in the food and community safety program. He moved up the ranks to the manager for that program. Later he was promoted to senior public health manager responsible for a variety of programs including tobacco prevention, physical activity and nutrition, oral health, and food and community safety.



Rick is a Registered Sanitarian with the Washington State Board of Registered Sanitarians. He is also a Registered Environmental Health Specialist with the National Environmental Health Association. He is immediate past president of the Washington State Public Health Association, has chaired the statewide food safety committee and the food safety review council, and is a past board member of the Washington State Association of Local Public Health Officials. He is eager to use his knowledge and skills gained in local health for public health at the state level. ✦



Kelly Curtis recently joined our Growing Area Program as an Environmental Specialist. Her background and training lie in marine biology, specifically shellfish. She graduated from the University of Washington School of Fisheries and has worked as a shellfish biologist for both the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe and the Quinault Indian Nation. She also spent time with the Marine Debris program with NOAA and the University of Hawaii, and for the past two years was a navigator aboard hydrographic survey vessels searching for treasure ships.

Kelly's looking forward to being land-based again and working with our staff and industry members in her chosen field. She will be conducting water sampling, assisting with Tribal classification requests, and preparing growing area reports. ✦

Jess Silver is working in our Biotoxin Program for nine months as a Marc Hershman Marine Policy Fellow. This fellowship gives graduate students experience working with marine resource managers and policy makers. Jess recently completed her Master's degree at the University of Washington's School of Aquatic and Fishery Sciences. There she worked with the Padilla Bay Estuarine Reserve researching changes in the bacterial community associated with a non-native eelgrass species.

Jess is working with the Public Health Lab to optimize a rapid quantitative test to detect *Alexandrium catenella* (PSP) cells in marine water. This test would be used as a screening tool during the winter months



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when *Alexandrium* blooms are less frequent, and would reduce the use of the mouse bioassay in cases where *Alexandrium* cells were not detected. It would also establish the beginning of a phytoplankton monitoring program. The goal is to get this technique working this winter so that it can be used as a screening tool in 2011.

A second project involves investigating potential new and emerging biotoxins in Washington waters, specifically those produced by members of the dinoflagellate genus *Dinophysis*. These organisms have been found to produce toxins that cause Diarrhetic Shellfish Poisoning (DSP) in Europe. While *Dinophysis* is found in Washington state, we don't know if it's actively producing toxin. Jess is helping to set up a pilot study this summer to collect cell counts of *Dinophysis* in marine water and shellfish samples during blooms. Results from this study will help the Biotoxin Program determine the relative risk of DSP to consumers of Washington product. ✦

Growing area upgrades and reclassifications

Henderson Inlet

We recently upgraded about 240 acres in Henderson Inlet from Conditionally Approved to Approved. Since 2001 this area had to be closed for 5 days after significant rain events because water quality declined. Thurston County, Lacey, and local residents improved on-site sewage system management, small farm operations, control of pet wastes, and stormwater quality in the area. The upgrade became effective January 27, 2010.

Contact:

[Lawrence Sullivan](#)
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Poverty Bay

On December 30, 2009, a large portion of the southwest end of the Poverty Bay growing area was approved for subtidal geoduck harvest. Previously listed as Unclassified, the area is located in King County between Redondo and Dash Point State Park. The Redondo wastewater treatment plant outfall was extended to allow the Approved classification. The intertidal area remains closed to harvest, either as Unclassified or Prohibited because of upland pollution sources.

Contact:

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Annas Bay

We upgraded 300 acres of shellfish beds in Annas Bay in Mason County from Prohibited to Approved. Originally downgraded in 2005 because water quality standards were not being met, the upgrade is attributed to better management of farm animal waste. The reclassification was initially scheduled to take place in August but was postponed due to human waste left on the banks of the Skokomish River by salmon fishers. It became effective on November 4, 2009.

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Nisqually Reach

A small piece (12 acres) of the Nisqually Reach shellfish area was reclassified from Restricted to Approved on October 28, 2009. This is the fourth and final upgrade in classification of 1,000 acres that were initially downgraded in 1992 due to degraded water quality. Improved water quality in McAllister Creek, which enters Nisqually Reach immediately adjacent to these shellfish tidelands, is attributed to changes in agriculture practices. In addition, Thurston County Environmental Health enforced corrections of on-site sewage system failures that were impacting the area. Although this is only 12 acres, they will be intensively farmed for shellfish harvest.

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Harvester license renewals underway

If your company is licensed as a Harvester, your license expires March 31st. We sent out renewal notices to Harvester licensees along with the required renewal forms in the first week of January and again in the first week of February.

Returning your renewal paperwork quickly prevents backlog and helps us process everyone's renewal in a timely manner. Please contact us if you haven't received your renewal notice or you want to change your license type. Also let us know if you don't want to renew your license. Your company will be removed from the mailing list for future renewal notices. ✖

Contact:

[Amber Binschus](#)
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Shellstock grow-out sites

Do you transplant or move shellstock from one harvest site to another for grow-out purposes? If you do, be sure both the harvest site and the transplant site are approved and included on your company's Harvest Site Certificate.

It's fairly easy to get sites approved and added to your Harvest Site Certificate. Just fill out a harvest site application and note what the site is intended for, either direct harvest or transplant. Submit the application to us along with the other required documents listed on the form. Approval usually takes only a few days. Once the site is approved, we will add it to your list of certified sites and mail your company's updated Harvest Site Certificate to you.

If you have any questions or need help completing a harvest site application, please let us know. We're happy to help! ✖

Contact:

[Cathy Barker](#)
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Harvest Site Application form is available online

The next time you apply for a new harvest site certification, you may want to use our online form. It's posted on our website at www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/sf/Pubs/hsc-app-form.pdf. This is a fill-in pdf form that you can complete on your computer. Although we don't yet have the capability that allows you to send the completed form directly from the web, you *can* save it to your computer and then send it to us as an email attachment. If you prefer a paper copy, give us a call and we'll mail one to you. ✖

Toxic algae?

A large marine algae bloom of *Akashiwo sanguinea* in October 2009 caused a number of bird deaths and some reports of health symptoms among surfers on Pacific Northwest coastal beaches. Not much is known about the effects of *A. sanguinea* on humans, so information was collected to do a more in-depth study in case the bloom returns next fall. Staff from our office, NOAA, and CDC participated in the investigation. Nose swabs from surfers were collected and will be analyzed at a later date. Also, a survey for members of the Washington and Oregon Chapters of Surfrider's Foundation was initiated to gather health histories on surfers that were exposed to the bloom. ✖

Foam on Long Beach Peninsula was produced by an *Akashiwo sanguinea* bloom in October 2009. Photo courtesy of WA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife.



Vibrio advisory committee meeting

This group, which consists of a few of our staff, members of the shellfish industry, Tribes, and FDA met in early December and again in February regarding findings from the 2009 Vibrio Control Season. We discussed illness investigation results from 2007 through 2009 and sampling activities completed during 2009. There was also a roundtable discussion regarding voluntary activities that can be implemented in 2010 that may help reduce the number of Vibrio-associated illnesses. ✖

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Cruise Ship MOU annual meeting



Shellfish staff worked with the Department of Ecology, the Port of Seattle, and the Northwest Cruise Ship Association to review the Cruise Ship Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and to consider amendments for the 2010 season. No MOU violations were reported in 2009. Only two ships were approved to discharge continuously in 2009 and both withheld discharges near Approved shellfish beds. The number of vessels requesting continuous discharge may increase if new ballast regulations require increased storage capacity. Three proposals for stricter environmental controls were submitted during the meeting by citizen groups, none of which would appear to impact current growing area management. ✖

Pac Rim Conference in April

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Pac Rim Chair
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This year's Pac Rim Conference is slated for April 6th - 8th at the Skamania Lodge in Stevenson, Washington. This conference is a great opportunity to learn about emerging local and national issues involving the commercial shellfish industry. For more information, view the [Pac Rim Conference announcement letter](#) and the [Pac Rim registration form](#). You can also find links to these documents on the [ISSC web site](#) under "Upcoming Events." ✖

Shellfish newsletter? Really?

After a long hiatus, we are again publishing a newsletter for the commercial shellfish industry. Shellfish Program News will be published twice a year, in the spring and the fall. This first issue is a little early because we wanted to introduce new staff and pass along information we thought our readers might find interesting and useful.

We will send an announcement through the shellfish listserv whenever we publish a new issue of *Shellfish Program News*. To subscribe to the listserv go to <http://listserv.wa.gov/cgi-bin/wa?A0=SHELLFISH>. Click on "Join or leave SHELLFISH (or change settings)" and follow instructions. We use this list to distribute shellfish industry updates. You can unsubscribe at any time. We will also post issues to our website at www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/sf/sfpubs.htm.

Send comments
to the editor:

[Jan Jacobs](#)
360-236-3316

We'd like your feedback on the newsletter. What do you think of the format? Are the articles informative? Are there topics you'd like us to cover on a regular basis? Let us hear from you! ✖

Online export certificates

Companies that need export certificates for shipping product to Asian countries will soon be able to submit applications to our office online. We began this project some time ago, but it has been on hold for a while. We recently started working on it again, and now the Export Certificate System is almost ready to go live. Outside user testing is complete (thanks to the companies that participated in the testing phase!) and we are making final adjustments to the application. We plan to have the online system ready for use by April 2010. ✖

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All Dept. of Health staff email addresses follow this format:
firstname.lastname@doh.wa.gov

How to reach us

Below is a list of managers and program leads. For a complete staff roster, visit www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/sf/shellfish-staff.htm or call the main office number at 360-236-3330.

Office Director

[Maryanne Guichard](#) 360-236-3391

Managers

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[Rick Porso](#) 360-236-3302
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Program Leads

- Biotoxins
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- Inspections
[Richard Lillie](#) 360-236-3313
- Recreational Shellfish
[Greg Combs](#) 360-236-3308
- Growing Area Restoration, Marine Water Quality
[Lawrence Sullivan](#) 360-236-3320
- Shoreline Evaluations and Non-point Pollution
[Scott Berbells](#) 360-236-3324
- Tribal Liaison
[Cathy Barker](#) 360-236-3303

Website

www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/sf/default-sf.htm

