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Media Contact: Melissa Morin, Communications Specialist

Phone: (360) 778-6022, (360) 594-2504

E-mail address: mmorin@whatcomcounty.us

Biotoxin Levels Drop, Beaches Open for Shellfish Harvesting

BELLINGHAM— Biotoxin levels have recently decreased throughout Whatcom County. As a result, the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) has lifted the biotoxin closure for the recreational harvest of molluscan shellfish for all Whatcom County beaches, and all beaches are now open for shellfish harvesting. Molluscan shellfish include clams, mussels, oysters, and scallops.

Biotoxin levels can change rapidly. Shellfish harvesters are advised to “Know Before You Dig” before harvesting shellfish anywhere in Washington State. Current biotoxin and pollution closures can be found at the DOH website www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/sf/biotoxin.htm or by calling the DOH Biotoxin Hotline at 1-800-562-5632.

Algae that contain marine biotoxins cannot be seen and must be detected by laboratory testing. Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning biotoxin and other naturally occurring biotoxins are not destroyed by cooking or freezing. Shellfish sold in restaurants and retail markets have been tested before distribution and are safe to eat.

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