



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Join the Shellebration—Third Year of Open Shellfish Harvesting in Drayton Harbor

Join your community and celebrate healthy waters and fresh harvest! The public is invited to attend the Drayton Harbor Shellebration on Friday, December 13 from 4:00 – 6:00 p.m. at the H Street Plaza located in downtown Blaine, WA. This free event will include refreshments, oyster samples courtesy of the Drayton Harbor Oyster Company, and the presentation of community awards. Community awards ceremony will take place at 4:30 p.m. This event will be outdoors so please dress to stay warm and dry.

December 1st marks the three-year anniversary of lifted shellfish harvesting restrictions on 810 acres of shellfish beds in Drayton Harbor. This year we have even more of a reason to celebrate! This past October, shellfish harvesting restrictions were lifted on additional 765 acres of Drayton Harbor for commercial harvest as a result of improved water quality.

Drayton Harbor is an ideal location for growing shellfish and historically provided a productive source of oysters and clams for commercial, tribal, and recreational harvest. In the 1990s, increasing levels of fecal coliform bacteria in the harbor led to shellfish harvesting restrictions and closures to protect public health. In response, the community has been working hard for over 20 years to improve water quality.

Actions taken to improve water quality in the watershed include:

- Establishing the Drayton Harbor Shellfish Protection District
- Evaluation and repair of septic systems
- Consistent use of marina pump out stations
- Investments in wastewater and stormwater management systems
- Improved pasture and manure management
- Planting trees and shrubs along waterways
- Picking up pet waste

Continued community participation in these and other pollution prevention actions is needed to ensure clean water to keep the shellfish beds open and local waterways safe. Thanks to everyone for doing your part to keep the water clean. For more information about Drayton Harbor water quality and what you can do to help keep waterways free of bacteria pollution

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visit the Whatcom County Public Works – Natural Resources website at www.whatcomcounty.us/1072/Water-Quality. Much of the current water quality work is funded by the National Estuary Program.

Recreational harvest is only open in the Drayton West area. If you plan on harvesting shellfish, remember unsafe biotoxin levels can affect shellfish even when water quality is good. Call the shellfish safety hotline at (800) 562-5632 before you dig or visit www.doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/Shellfish. For information on recreational shellfish harvesting rules visit <http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/shellfish/>.



Julie Hirsh receiving the Drayton Harbor Watershed Steward Award at Shellebration 2018
Photo by Gabriella Mednick



Oyster harvest from Drayton Harbor served at the Drayton Harbor Shellebration 2018
Photo by Gabriella Mednick

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