

# WHATCOM CLEAN WATER PROGRAM



A partnership to reduce fecal bacteria pollution to Whatcom County waterways

The Whatcom Clean Water Program formed in 2012 to coordinate the fecal bacteria pollution reduction work of local, state, tribal, and federal agency partners. To reach clean water and safe shellfish harvest goals, program partners work together to:

- ⇒ Monitor water quality, analyze data, and communicate results.
- ⇒ Contact landowners to offer help to find and fix preventable fecal bacteria pollution sources.
- ⇒ Offer educational opportunities and work with residents to put in place and maintain water quality protection measures.



## **Whatcom County Public Works, Natural Resources** (360) 778-6230

Water monitoring, data management, education, Pollution Identification and Correction (PIC) program – Public Works non-regulatory staff lead monitoring, data management, and PIC program-related education efforts. Staff identify properties that may benefit from help to correct preventable bacteria pollution sources from animal manure or from failing septic systems. Staff also work to reduce and prevent bacteria pollution from pet waste and urban wildlife.



## **Whatcom County Health Department, Environmental Health** (360) 778-6000

Septic Systems - Whatcom County Health Department administers Whatcom County's On-site Sewage System (OSS) program and has regulatory oversight for septic systems in Whatcom County. Staff provide homeowner education, technical help, and notification regarding proper septic system operation and maintenance. Staff also enforce codes and investigate septic-related complaints.



## **Whatcom County Planning & Development Services Department (PDS)** (360) 778-5900

Critical Areas Ordinance (WCC: Title 16.16) compliance - PDS regulates land use in unincorporated Whatcom County, including ensuring that farms comply with the Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO). PDS approves farm plan applications submitted for compliance with the CAO through Whatcom County's Conservation Program on Agriculture Lands (WCC 16.16. Article 8).



## **Whatcom Conservation District (WCD)** (360) 526.2381

Farm planning assistance, educational opportunities, data management, mapping, volunteer coordination - Non-regulatory staff offer free and confidential technical help and possible financial assistance to residents who want to improve farm practices and benefit water quality. WCD hosts farm management educational workshops, tours, speaker series, and other events.



## **Washington State Department of Agriculture, Dairy Nutrient Management Program** (360) 902-1928

Dairies, Dairy Nutrient Management Act (RCW 90.64) compliance - Dairy Nutrient Management Program regulatory staff inspect dairy facilities and provide technical assistance to dairy producers. Staff monitor water quality and follow a referral process to communicate to partner agencies about possible manure-related discharges and complaints regarding dairy and non-dairy agriculture properties.



## **Washington State Department of Health, Office of Environmental Health & Safety** (360) 255-4408

Marine water quality and shellfish, National Shellfish Sanitation Program (NSSP) compliance - Office of Environmental Health and Safety (OEHS) staff use NSSP guidance to monitor and classify marine waters for shellfish harvesting. OEHS staff coordinates Whatcom Clean Water Program work among local, state, tribal, federal, and Canadian provincial agencies.



## **Washington State Department of Ecology, Water Quality Program** (360) 255-4400

Non-dairy agriculture, Water Pollution Control Act (RCW 90.48) compliance - Regulatory staff monitor water quality, identify sources of preventable fecal bacteria pollution from non-dairy agricultural properties, and offer residents technical help to fix pollution sources. Staff may use enforcement authority when a landowner is unwilling to act to fix an identified and preventable fecal bacteria pollution source.



## **Additional Program Partners**

**Tribal:** [Lummi Nation](#); [Nooksack Indian Tribe](#)

**State:** [Puget Sound Partnership](#); [Washington State Conservation Commission](#)

**Federal:** [Environmental Protection Agency](#); [Natural Resources Conservation Service](#)

## Working together to clean up our water

Everyone can help prevent fecal bacteria pollution to water from human, farm animal, and pet sources. Fixing those preventable pollution sources helps our families and animals enjoy clean and safe water both upstream and downstream.

Clean water flowing through communities helps protect people's health and achieve and maintain approved, year-round shellfish harvest downstream. When we all do our part to prevent fecal bacteria pollution to local waters, we can reach our goals of clean, safe water to support community needs.

### What can we do to help ?



### Learn More!

[www.whatcomcounty.us/1072/Water-Quality](http://www.whatcomcounty.us/1072/Water-Quality)

Visit for links to interactive water quality maps, Frequently Asked Questions, and Pollution Identification and Correction program details.

See Washington State Department of Agriculture's water quality story map [here](#)

Visit Whatcom County's *Finding and Fixing Problems* page [www.whatcomcounty.us/2171/Finding-and-Fixing-Problems](http://www.whatcomcounty.us/2171/Finding-and-Fixing-Problems) for ways you and your neighbors can help reduce fecal bacteria pollution.

- Keep livestock waste out of saturated pastures and out of waterways. Whatcom Conservation District (WCD) offers free, non-regulatory technical assistance to improve pasture health and protect water quality. Contact WCD at 360-526-2381.
- Maintain and repair your septic system according to code and system requirements. Contact Whatcom County Health Department for guidance at 360-778-6000.
- Pick up after pets. Scoop your dog's poop, bag it, and place it in the garbage to keep the fecal bacteria from washing into the water.
- Avoid attracting urban wildlife such as raccoons and rats by securing your trash can lids and limiting access to pet food.
- Plant and preserve trees and native plants along ditches, creeks, streams and marine shorelines. Native vegetation enhances and maintains a natural system's ability to filter pollutants. Attend public meetings and educational events in your area to discuss water issues and work on solutions.