

Semiahmoo Spit Clam Inventory

July 16 & 17, 2004

What is the Clam Inventory?

The Whatcom County Marine Resources Committee is coordinating an inventory of clams in the mudflats along Semiahmoo Spit. The inventory at Semiahmoo will be conducted along 15 to 20 transects running from the shoreline to the water at low tide. Volunteers will be digging sample holes every 40 feet along each transect and identifying, measuring, and counting the different types of clams they find in each hole. All of the clams will be returned to the survey hole.



Why is the Inventory Being Done?

Shellfish - those both recreationally and commercially harvested - are key marine resources for Whatcom County. In many Whatcom County shoreline areas, native clams may serve as indicator species and help us gain an understanding of the health of the shellfish resource, water quality impacts, and harvesting impacts. Historically, certain areas of Semiahmoo Spit have been popular for recreational and tribal shellfish harvesting. Drayton Harbor has been closed to shellfish harvest for nearly a decade. The recent upgrade in Drayton Harbor has reopened some of these popular areas. Yet, the upgrade is a conditional opening and still will not allow harvest after large storm events. In addition, only portions of Drayton Harbor have been upgraded. There is still more work to be done to improve and protect water quality.



This inventory will provide:

- Baseline information about the types, numbers and sizes of clams found along Semiahmoo Spit.

The information will be used to:

- Describe the clams that are found along Semiahmoo Spit to the community, visitors, and local, state, and tribal agencies.
- Work with the community to provide more information to residents and visitors about how to protect this valuable resource.
- Help identify potential sites for enhancement or restoration of clam populations.

Who is Involved?

The Whatcom County Marine Resources Committee and Drayton Harbor Community Oyster Farm are coordinating the inventory and information that is collected.

Community volunteers are being recruited to assist with the inventory, provide their knowledge about the resource, and to learn even more about clams along Semiahmoo Spit.

Tideland property owners that are affected by the location of the transects are being contacted to request permission to conduct the surveys and to answer questions about the MRC and the project. We hope many of the tideland owners will join us for a day on the tideflats!



<http://www.whatcom-mrc.wsu.edu/MRC/index.htm>