



Cherry Point Clam Survey July, 23 2005

What is the clam survey?

The Whatcom County Marine Resources Committee is coordinating a survey of clams along Whatcom County shorelines. These surveys will be conducted during low tide along transects - lines stretching across the tideflats from the upper beach to the water. 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.



At Semiahmoo Spit

Why is an inventory being done at Cherry Point?

Shellfish - those both recreationally and commercially harvested - are key marine resources for Whatcom County. The Cherry Point area, while not particularly known for clamming, offers pockets with potential, but involves extra effort in accessing and digging its remote cobble beaches. A survey of the Cherry Point area shoreline will help provide a better understanding of the distribution of the shellfish resource. Collectively, the clam surveys help offer a comparison of clam populations among different locations and substrate types. Surveys also document the status of newcomers such as the rapidly spreading varnish clam.



Volunteers surveying at Marine Park

This inventory will provide:

- Baseline information about the types, numbers and sizes of clams found along Cherry Point.
- Information on the type of substrate and aquatic vegetation associated with the clams of each hole.

The information will be used to:

- Describe Whatcom County's clam populations to the community and local, state and tribal agencies.
- Help identify and prioritize potential sites for enhancement or restoration of clam populations.

What other parts of Whatcom County are being surveyed?

The 2005 MRC clam surveys are exploring new territory at Birch Point, Cherry Point and Bellingham's Marine Park. (Birch Bay, Chuckanut Bay and Semiahmoo spit were surveyed in 2004.) Each area provides unique surveying experiences with diverse habitats and clam populations.

Who is involved?

The Whatcom County Marine Resources Committee is coordinating the inventory and information that is collected. The MRC has partnered with the Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association and RE-Sources for equipment and volunteer recruitment.

Community volunteers are being recruited to assist with the inventory, provide their knowledge about the resource, and to learn more about the clams of our shoreline.

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!

For registration or more information contact Doug Stark, 676-6876 or dstark@co.whatcom.wa.us
<http://www.whatcom-mrc.wsu.edu/MRC/index.htm>