

Progress toward meeting state standards and protecting public health



Liberty Bay streams and stormwater discharges contain levels of fecal coliform bacteria that do not meet state standards.

The Department of Ecology (Ecology) has produced a plan to implement water quality improvements for Liberty Bay and the streams that drain into it. The plan is designed to result in these waters meeting state water quality standards and being safe for public use.

Although many years of work in the watershed have resulted in improvements, some streams continue to have levels of bacteria that indicate the possible presence of other disease-causing bacteria (pathogens) in water. Stormwater runoff carries bacteria into streams, lakes, and estuaries. People can get sick if they come into contact with bacteria-laden water or if they eat shellfish from the affected waters.

Ecology measured concentrations of fecal coliform bacteria in Liberty Bay streams in 2008 and 2009. Kitsap Public Health District and other local organizations are working with Ecology to identify sources and remove them so the water will become clean. You can request current information about these activities (see “stay informed”- pg. 3).

Public meeting and comment period on the draft plan

- March 21 – Public meeting: Poulsbo Fire Department, 911 Liberty Road, Poulsbo. Open House 6:15 p.m., short underwater film presentation at 6:40 p.m., meeting at 7 p.m.
- Comment period – March 15 through April 15. See page 3: For more information, or go to website: www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/tmdl/LibertyBay/
- Copies of the draft plan are available at the reference desks at Kitsap Regional libraries in Poulsbo, Silverdale and Kingston.

Water quality implementation plans (TMDLs)

A water quality implementation plan (also known as a Total Maximum Daily Load Assessment or TMDL) describes the amount and sources of a specific pollutant in a water body, how much the waters can accept without violating clean water standards. The plan also offers solutions to reduce the pollution.

A water quality implementation plan includes the following elements.

- Measurements of a pollutant of concern in a watershed.
- A technical analysis of how much the pollutant needs to be reduced in each stream so that it will meet state standards.
- A plan that assigns actions and responsibilities to local agencies, organizations, and citizens that will make it possible to get to clean water within a few years.

Ecology works with local organizations, citizens, and governments to gather this information and prepare a plan. The plan helps these parties work as partners to bring water bodies into compliance with state water quality standards for specific pollutants of concern.

Liberty Bay Watershed Partners

Ecology's partners for the Liberty Bay water quality plan include Kitsap Public Health District, the City of Poulsbo, Kitsap County Storm and Surface Water Management, Naval Base Kitsap at Keyport, the Kitsap Conservation District (see below), the Suquamish Tribe, Washington State Departments of Transportation and Natural Resources, and other groups and individuals.

How much cleanup has already been accomplished?

Over the past five years, Kitsap Public Health District (KPHD) has located numerous failing home (onsite) septic systems and made sure they were fixed. Through a Pollution Identification and Correction (PIC) project, KPHD has located failing onsite systems; conducted shoreline surveys to identify other sources of bacteria; and worked with Kitsap Conservation District to make sure livestock owners are using best management practices to prevent animal waste from contributing bacteria to streams. In other efforts, Kitsap County and City of Poulsbo stormwater management programs have contributed to improving water quality.



As a result, much of Liberty Bay is beginning to meet state water quality standards. Substantial improvement has occurred in several creeks - Poulsbo, Big Scandia, Johnson, Bjorgen, Barrantes, Perry and other streams.

How can you help clean up Liberty Bay?

There are a number of simple, but very important ways for residents of Poulsbo and other citizens living near the bay to prevent bacteria pollution:

- Check your onsite septic system to be sure it is maintained and working properly. Contact Kitsap Public Health District (360-337-5235) for more information on how to maintain your system.

- Bag pet waste and put it in the garbage. Do not flush it down the toilet.
- If there are streams or ditches on your property, make sure there is natural vegetation bordering the stream to filter storm runoff and pollutants.
- Use proper waste management when you are boating, fishing, hunting, hiking, and camping.
- Manage any livestock by providing a way to water away from streams and ditches where their manure could pollute the water; and BE SURE to safeguard manure piles from rain and surface runoff. For free technical assistance, call Kitsap Conservation District at 360-337-7171.
- Wash cars at commercial car washes or on your lawn, where the soap and dirty wash water can act as a gentle fertilizer. (Car washes recycle wash water so it doesn't get into storm drains and drain to the bay)
- Check the street drain near your home and make sure it is not clogged with leaves or debris. Only rain should go down the drain!
- Call Kitsap One at 360-337-5777 if you see a spill or illegal dumping, during business hours. After hours, call 1- 800-OILS-911.
- Participate! Work with local government and neighborhood groups to share this information and prevent pollution.

For more information

Stay Informed! Add your name to an email list for information about the Liberty Bay Watershed TMDL (Water Quality Implementation Plan)

Ecology is working with Kitsap Public Health District, Kitsap Conservation District, the Suquamish Tribe, Naval Base Kitsap at Keyport, City of Poulsbo and Kitsap County and other organizations to develop a water quality implementation plan that will protect the health of those who boat, swim, fish, and play in and around Liberty Bay. To submit comments by April 15, or for more information please contact:

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To learn more about what you can do to protect your local waters, visit Ecology's **Washington Waters – Ours to Protect** website at www.ecy.wa.gov/washington_waters/

Special accommodations:

If you need this document in a format for the visually impaired, call the Water Quality Program at 360-407-6600. Persons with hearing loss, call 711 for Washington Relay Service. Persons with a speech disability, call 877-833-6341.

