

What is in Our Water?

Padilla Bay and its freshwater streams and sloughs have high levels of bacteria known as **fecal coliform bacteria**. As their name suggests, fecal coliform bacteria are most commonly found in the guts, and therefore feces, of humans and warm-blooded animals. These bacteria are of concern because they are known to travel with other pathogens and diseases that make people very sick. It also suggests that human and animal waste is entering and polluting the waters of your community.

Water cleanup plan

For the health of the community and the environment, federal law requires the Department of Ecology to develop a cleanup plan to reduce pollution to levels that are safe for people and animals to use the water for its designated purpose. This plan is called a Total Maximum Daily Load – or TMDL.



The Department of Ecology will work with Skagit County Public Works and local and state Health officials to track down bacteria sources and their pathways to water. We will work closely with the community and interested participants to develop a realistic plan to reduce bacteria sources.

WHY IT MATTERS

Padilla Bay is a popular destination for tourists and locals. Padilla Bay's shallow beaches and gorgeous views are enough on their own to draw a crowd, but the National Estuarine Research Reserve adds a special draw to curious individuals and future scientists. Because of the bay's popularity for swimming and playing, it is especially important to keep its waters safe and clean.

Contact information

Danielle DeVoe
425-649-7036
Danielle.DeVoe@ecy.wa.gov

Accommodation Requests

To request ADA accommodation including materials in a format for the visually impaired, call Ecology at [425-649-7000].

Persons with impaired hearing may call Washington Relay Service at 711. Persons with speech disability may call TTY at 877-833-6341.

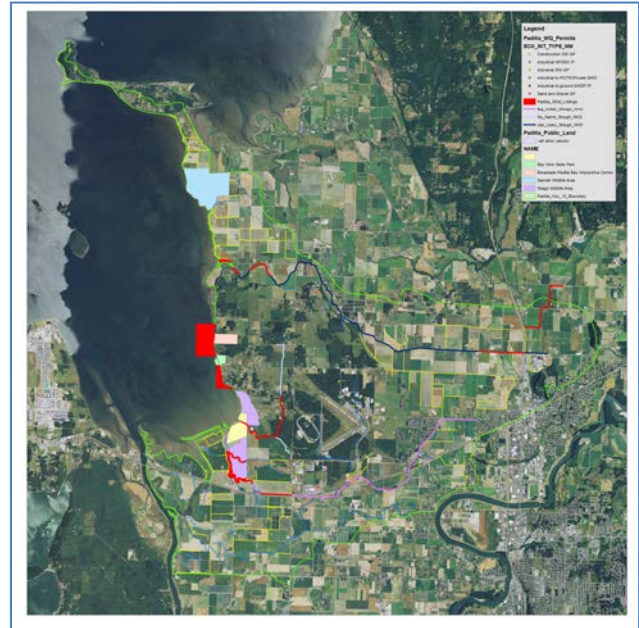
Where are the bacteria coming from?

That is what Ecology and our partners will try to figure out!

Bacteria and harmful organisms can enter water through runoff from roads, yards and fields. When it rains, bacteria that has been collecting on the ground latches onto the water droplets and is then carried to the nearest ditch or stream where it then makes its way into the Bay.

Some potential sources of bacteria and pathogens are:

- Septic tanks that don't function properly.
- Animal (large or small) manure too close to the water or on areas that slope towards ditches.
- Agricultural practices that lead to manure getting into the water.
- Large gatherings of animals near water, often times due to human activities that supply food sources to pests.



Padilla Bay study area; outlined in green

What's next?

Right now, we are about to enter our information gathering phase. We will collect water samples and talk with community members in an effort to learn more about your watershed and the challenges you face in water management. We would love the chance to talk with you! Please join us at the Padilla Bay National Estuary Reserve for our open house and public meeting on **October 1, 2015 at 6:00 PM** to learn more.

Public Meeting

Padilla Bay National Estuary Research Reserve
10441 Bayview Edison Road
Mt Vernon, WA 98273

October 1, 2015

6:00 - 6:30 PM open house
6:30 - 7:30 PM presentation