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Citizen science demonstrates need and importance at Whatcom County beaches

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WHAT IS THE SURFRIDER FOUNDATION?  
The Surfrider Foundation is a grassroots non-profit environmental organization that works to protect and preserve the world's oceans, waves, and beaches. Through a network of chapter activists, Surfrider has several programs to support their mission, including the Blue Water Task Force (BWTF).

WHAT IS THE BLUE WATER TASK FORCE?  
BWTF is a volunteer run water quality monitoring and education program that has over 35 chapters operating to protect public health across the nation. The program has grown significantly over the past several years, with over 5,000 samples taken in 2016. Our local chapter has been monitoring Bellingham’s most popular beaches for over 10 years.

WHERE WE MONITOR:  
- Nooksack River Delta  
- Locust Beach  
- Little Squalicum Beach  
- Padden Creek  
- Mud Bay  
- Larrabee State Park

WHY DO WE MONITOR?  
To engage our local citizen scientists on the current status of water quality at our most popular beaches in Bellingham, help prevent illness, find local sources of pollution, and increase public awareness on water quality issues in Whatcom County. Clean water is a crucial component to our region's economy. In 2015, water recreation in Whatcom County had the highest expenditure, with approximately $132 million in annual spending (Earth Economics, 2015).

SURFRIDER BEYOND BWTF:  
- Ocean Friendly Restaurants  
- Beach Cleanups at Locust Beach  
- Fundraising events  
- Beach Trash Art Gallery  
- Kayaking and surf trips  
- Storm drain marking

REFERENCES:  