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Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference

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Engaging the community in Drayton Harbor's comeback story

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Engaging the Community in Drayton Harbor's Comeback Story



Betsy Peabody
Puget Sound Restoration Fund



1999: A Galvanizing Moment

- | Rich history of tribal, recreational & commercial shellfishing
- | Total harvest prohibition in 1999
- | Collective sense that problems were too tough to solve

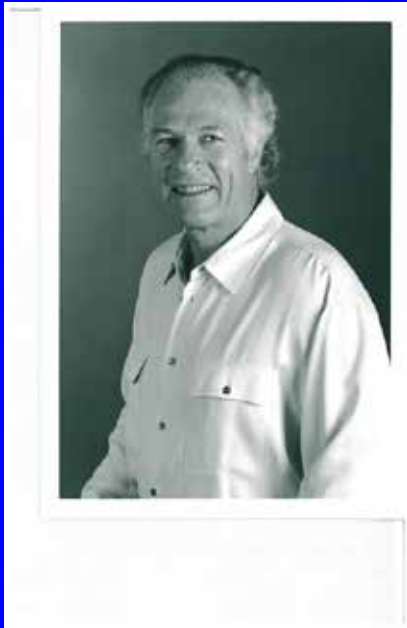


Facts – Then and Now

- | Population in Puget Sound is growing.
- | Shellfish growing areas are lost to pollution.
- | Community needs to be engaged effectively to maintain and restore growing areas,.
- | Multiple strategies are needed.

New Strategy for Drayton

- Engage the community in food gathering as a way to drive water quality improvements & complement agency water quality efforts.



Genesis of Idea

- | Shellfish growers all believe that their bay is the most beautiful and productive bay on earth and they fight to protect it;
- | If community could have this same experience, they too might advocate fiercely for clean up.



Drayton Harbor Community Oyster Farm: 2001-2013

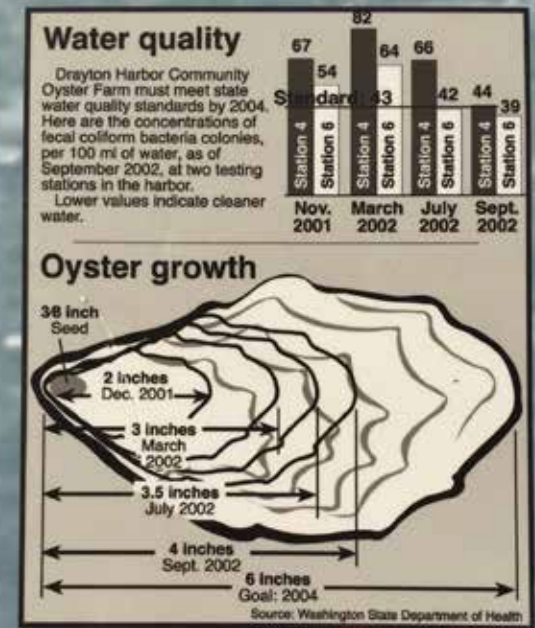
Goals:

1. Involve community in planting and raising oysters to invest them in health of bay
2. Tackle sources of pollution that prohibit harvesting
3. Re-open Drayton Harbor to commercial, recreational, and tribal shellfish harvesting



Community Oyster Farm: Timeline

- | 2001: Plant seed
- | Find and fix pollution sources
- | Meet water quality standards
- | Demonstrate community commitment
- | Publish 1/4 updates in *Bellingham Herald*
- | 2004: Celebrate w/community harvest



Source: *Bellingham Herald*

Pollution Control & Other Projects

- | Shoreline sampling
- | Video inspection
- | Marine sampling
- | Marina circulation studies
- | Boating education
- | School tours
- | Garden of the Salish Sea – all Blaine students since 2012

Re-connecting with Marine Food



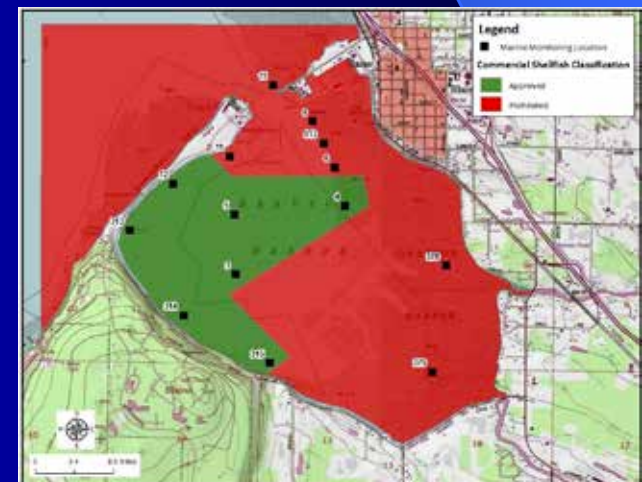
Food:

- Creates common ground
- Connects us to the natural world.
- Gives us a **REASON** to protect the environment.



Engaging people makes a difference

- | 2004: 575 acres conditionally reopened and celebrated with a community harvest
- | 2016: 810 acres fully approved
- | Communities play a critical role in multi-faceted efforts to restore shellfish growing areas.



The Ultimate Comeback

- | In 2014, the Drayton Harbor Community Oyster Farm officially transitioned into a commercial venture – achieving the original goal of restoring commercial, tribal, and recreational harvest.



Win/Win Strategy

Community Oyster Farm:

- | Makes resource & issue real to people
- | Creates a timeline & focus on cleanup

Community:

- | Has chance to re-connect to the bay
- | Gets to experience the best of this place

Agencies:

- | Get stronger community backing for pollution control efforts



Shared Vision

| A healthy productive ecosystem

| Waters that support harvest

| A “Swimmable, Fishable, Diggable Puget Sound...”
with people still digging



Thank you to Everyone Involved!!!

Funders:

- | Trillium Corporation
- | Puget Sound Action Team
- | The Russell Family Fdn
- | Whatcom Community Fdn
- | Horizons Foundation
- | Whatcom County
- | City of Blaine
- | Semiahmoo First Nation
- | Environment Canada
- | NOAA

In-kind Supporters:

- | Volunteer Tideflat farmers
- | WA Department of Health
- | Dept. of Natural Resources
- | Growers (Blau, Rock Point, Acme, Penn Cove, Taylor)
- | Port of Bellingham
- | Shellfish Protection District
- | Star Fish Co.
- | WA Dept of Ecology
- | EPA