Transboundary cooperation to reduce bacterial pollution in Washington's lower Nooksack Basin

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Transboundary Cooperation
To Reduce Pollution In Washington’s Lower Nooksack Basin

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Lower Nooksack River Watershed

Portage Bay Shellfish growing area for Lummi Nation
Fecal Coliform Bacteria
Indicator of Pathogens
Approximately 800 Acres of shellfish harvest restricted due to poor water quality - April-June & October-December
Whatcom Clean Water Program (WCWP)
Extensive sampling at our international boundary shows fecal coliform bacteria contributions from Canada in the Bertrand and Fishtrap Creek watersheds. This is impacting water quality in currently being considered for downgrade. Clearly, there are also sources in the U.S. portion of these watersheds that still need to be addressed; however, at times, bacterial pollution coming across the border is at levels that would make it difficult to reopen the Portage Bay shellfish harvest areas regardless of our efforts to deal with U.S. sources.

Whatcom Clean Water Program partners have already made contacts with the B.C. Ministry of Environment and although Ministry staff is sympathetic to the issue, there was a limit on what they could do to accommodate our concerns. The State of Washington has a cooperative agreement with the Province of British Columbia, and we urge you to invoke its provisions to establish a transboundary task force to address the bacterial pollution in surface water as has been done in the past over the high nitrates in our shared groundwater aquifer.
Original Environmental Cooperation Council (ECC) Structure

BC Premier
- Deputy Minister of Environment

WA Governor
- Director, Dept. of Ecology

ECC

High Priority Issues -> Task Forces
- Abbotsford-Sumas Aquifer Nitrates
- Georgia Straight/Puget Sound
- Nooksack River Flooding
- Columbia River Watershed
- Air Quality
Environmental Cooperation Council
WA-BC Nooksack River WQ Task Group

Principles
- BC Ministry Environment
- WA Department of Ecology

National Observers
- Environment and Climate Change, Canada
- US Environmental Protection Agency

State & Provincial Partners
- WA Dept. of Agriculture
- WA Dept. of Health
- WA Governor’s Office
- BC Ministry of Agriculture
Common Understanding Issues
Common Understanding of Legislative framework and BMPs
Assess Gaps
Recommend Action

Courtesy of
www.cornwalls.co.uk
Demonstrate Cooperation
Narrow scope
Fixed time
Constrained Budget
Thank you!

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Department of Ecology
www.ecy.wa.gov