

PADILLA BAY

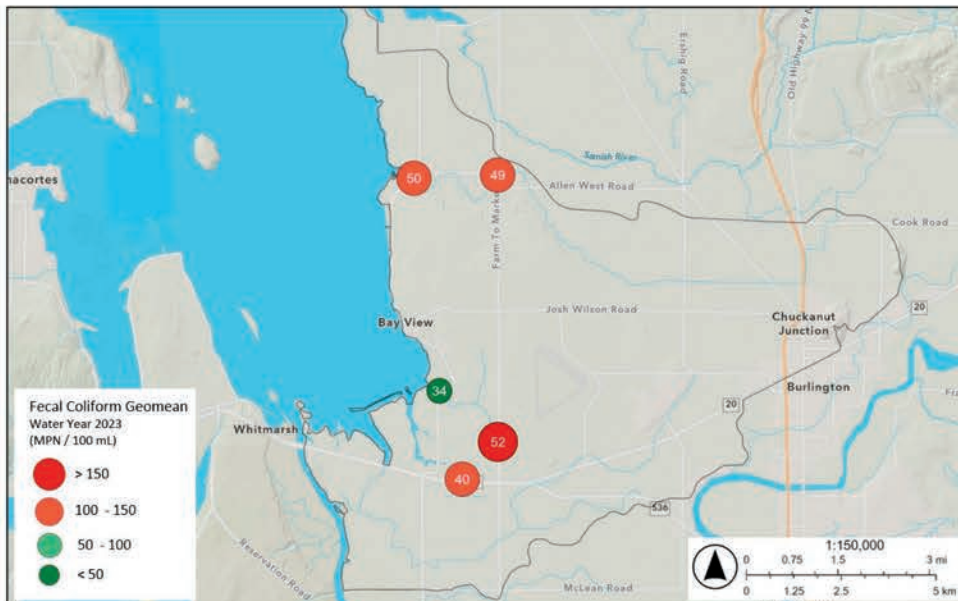
Skagit County Public Works



As the 2023 water year ends, we would like to reflect on the last year and look to the next.

Water quality results over the past year still show high levels of fecal coliform across the watershed. However, other than Little Indian Slough, our sample sites tend to meet state standards for E. coli levels. This is good news, but there's still work to do!

Protecting Padilla Bay and our waterways is a joint effort, so we want to thank all of you in our community who took steps to reduce water pollution. Read on for tips on how to work towards clean water. We look forward to another wonderful water year!



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PLUS! A mix-and-match checklist to keep your life easy and your water clean!



How to protect your septic system

Septic failures and big repairs are expensive! Here's how to avoid them:

- Get an inspection!**
Yearly inspections can stop maintenance needs from becoming expensive system failures later.
- Fix leaks!**
A leaks will waste water and stress your septic system. Check your toilet for leaks by putting a few drops of food coloring in the tank. If color shows up in the bowl in 30 minutes without flushing, you have a leak. Replacing a flapper is very easy and cheap!
- Spread out water use.**
Your septic system can only handle so much water at once, so stagger high water use activities like showers and laundry.
- Watch what goes down your drains.**
Never flush anything but pee, poop and toilet paper. Even so-called "flushable" wipes do not degrade enough in your septic system and may clog pipes. In the kitchen, keep fats, oil and grease out of the drain. They'll harden in your pipes as they cool and create blockages.

* You could get up to \$200 for septic inspection, pumping and risers via our rebate program: SkagitCounty.net/Septic



Scooping makes heaps of a difference

Dog poop is one of the main pollutants we see in our water. How does it get there? Rain!

Rain picks up dog poop from wherever it is— in your yard, on trails, at the park— and carries it to waterways that eventually let out in Padilla Bay. The diseases, bacteria and parasites in dog poop can infect anyone who plays, swims or fishes in the water. The bacteria can stay in your yard for months after the poop breaks down, too.

In the rainy season, the poop problem gets worse. More rain means more poop in the river and Padilla Bay. Make sure you're scooping your yard at least once a week and picking up after your dog on walks and hikes. All that poop should end up bagged and in the trash!

Dog owners

- Scoop, bag, and trash your dog's poop on walks.
- Scoop your yard at least once a week.

Tip: Stuff your coat pockets with extra bags in case of emergency!



What about wildlife?

Wild animals *are* a source of bacteria in our water, but other than not attracting wild animals with trash or food, there is not much we can do to stop them from pooping near waterways.

We know a lot of the poop in our local waterways is dog poop because of domestic dog DNA markers found in water samples from around the County. Still, it is important not to feed wild animals, as this leads to higher concentrations of animal poop around our water.



Anyone and everyone!

- Don't leave food outside.
- Cover and contain trashcans.
- Harvest any fruit or veggies in your yard, donate or compost extras.

The Big 3 for fall farming

Here are three best management practices that will help keep your animals healthy, your farm mud free, your pastures growing and your water clean this fall!

- Cover manure.**
Uncovered manure becomes a muddy, bacteria-rich mess that flows into our waterways. Collect and cover manure to keep your property and our water clean.
- Exclude animals from saturated areas.**
Wet areas can be problematic for animal feet and allow fecal bacteria to move more freely. You can avoid saturated areas by:
 - Pulling animals off wet pastures.
 - Temporarily fencing animals away from wet areas.
 - Routing gutters away from where animals are kept.
- Maintain your pastures.**
Maintaining a pasture height of 3 inches protects your forage's ability to regrow and your landscape's ability to slow and clean rain runoff.





Skagit County Public Works Department
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FREE farming resources

Skagit Conservation District provides funding and technical assistance for farm planning and farm improvement projects like manure bins, erosion control and heavy use areas.

www.SkagitCD.org

Natural Resources Stewardship Program provides funding and technical assistance for farm and land enhancements on streamside properties.

www.SkagitCounty.net/nrsp

Voluntary Stewardship Program provides funding and technical assistance for farm and land enhancements on properties with critical areas.

www.SkagitCounty.net/vsp

WSU Pasture Management Program is an excellent program full of educational and community resources for small farmers. Check it out!

extension.wsu.edu/skagit/pasture-management



Take our survey to help us improve the Padilla Bay newsletter!:
www.publicinput.com/cwpNewsletter



Learn More!

skagitcounty.net/cleanwater



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