



# News Release

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Cathy Wolfe  
District One  
Diane Oberquell  
District Two  
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District Three

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** Tuesday, February 19, 2002

**Contact:** Mark Swartout, Natural Resources Program Manager, 360-709-3079

## **PHASE ONE OF SHELLFISH PROTECTION PROGRAM BEGINS**

OLYMPIA – Thurston County is seeking citizen volunteers to serve on committees for two Shellfish Protection Districts. Thurston County Commissioners in December adopted ordinances creating the two districts at Henderson Inlet and the Nisqually Reach. Stakeholder groups are now being formed to guide the planning for water quality recovery efforts in the two areas.

In the fall of 2000, the State Health Department closed a total of 83 acres in the two areas to shellfish harvesting due to contamination. Additional acreage was subsequently placed on conditional closure, meaning shellfish may not be harvested after heavy rains. The creation of the Protection Districts is mandated by state law and helps set the framework for the planning and recovery efforts.

Natural Resource Program Manager Mark Swartout says, "Setting up two, 11-member stakeholder groups is the first step in the recovery process. We will have representatives of commercial farmers, shellfish growers, developers and the cities of Olympia and Lacey. But we also need citizens from the two districts to help with the planning effort. Residents from Lacey, Olympia and the unincorporated area are invited to send in a letter of interest to serve on one of the stakeholder groups."

Letters of interest should include-

- Name, address, phone number and e-mail address.
- Information on why the person is interested in taking part and what they can bring to the group that would help accomplish restoration of the shellfish beds.

Those interested must be able to devote enough time for at least monthly meetings and time to review materials. They should be able to appreciate diverse points of view and have the ability to help resolve complex issues. More information can be found on the county web site at - <http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/shellfish/>

Letters must be postmarked by March 11, 2002. They can be sent to-  
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Thurston County  
Office of Program and Budget Development  
Natural Resources Program Manager  
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