

Thurston County Marinas Hazardous Waste Collection Pilot Project

Executive Summary

August 2004

The boating community commonly uses hazardous products to maintain vessels resulting in the generation of hazardous waste. Often these products and wastes are stored on boats, or in sheds close to the shore. If a container of marine varnish or engine oil were to rupture or spill, these substances would have a direct route into the water. In order to reduce the risk of such an event, the



Thurston County Business Pollution Prevention Program developed a boat-related hazardous waste collection pilot project to provide means for disposal of unused hazardous products or accumulated hazardous wastes at four local marinas.

Each marina was provided with a green hazardous waste collection bin stocked with gloves, overpack containers, hazardous waste labels and pens, and customer service surveys. These collection bins were sited in visible and secure locations at each marina. Boaters were asked to label and place hazardous wastes in the collection bin, and complete a short survey evaluating this service. Marina staff locked the collection bins during non-business hours and notified county specialists when the bin was full. Specialists emptied the collection bins and transported the wastes to HazoHouse, Thurston County's moderate risk waste collection facility, for disposal with other household hazardous waste.

Two separate collection strategies were used over the course of this pilot project: a short-term, two-week collection event, and a long-term, eight-month collection service. The two-week collection event occurred in October 2003, and was advertised by adding flyers into the marinas' billing for two consecutive months. The inserts informed customers that totes would be available during a specified time frame and encouraged their use while preparing boats for the off season. The long-term collection event was conducted with similar advertisement through the end of May 2004.

A list of best management practices was developed and inserted in May billing statements. These management practices outlined ways to reduce the amount of hazardous products stored on vessels, as well as tips on preventing releases of hazardous materials during routine boat maintenance.

The entire pilot project collected over 3,300 pounds of boat-related hazardous wastes and a limited amount of hazardous wastes brought from households. The two-week

collection event took in about 7% of the total weight collected for both events. Since the long-term event was about sixteen times longer than the two-week event, the rate of collection was about equal.

When the project was evaluated it was determined that for the customer, an ongoing hazardous waste disposal site was a better option than occasional short-term collection events. Customers completing surveys at the collection bins all noted their appreciation for this service, and one respondent characterized it as “handy.” For the marinas, there was only slightly more management required to safely conduct an ongoing collection service than a couple of annual collection events. Another positive for ongoing collection was that fewer household wastes were collected, which reduces the potential for incompatible material storage.

When comparing the two collection strategies, county specialists concluded that an ongoing waste collection encouraged prompt waste disposal, and effectively reduced the amount of waste stored near the shoreline. Beyond achieving the goals of the project, the collection program was openly accepted by users, and would likely be used even if it required a small monthly fee.

Though the pilot project concluded at the end of May 2004, the hazardous waste collection service will continue to be available at three participating marinas. The marinas will privately manage the collection service and transport the collection bins to HazoHouse when full. County staff will be available to provide additional technical assistance to these marinas.

These commitments reflect the success of this pilot project and mark new partnerships established in the continuing effort to protect water quality in Puget Sound. This pilot project was an innovative way to reduce wastes in sensitive shoreline areas and raise awareness about spill prevention.

For more information about this pilot project, please contact Patrick Soderberg, Thurston County Business Pollution Prevention Program, at 754-4111 ext. 7273.