

## **DNR files the State's answer and counterclaim in Taylor Shellfish lawsuit**

### **Local News**

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OLYMPIA - Yesterday, the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) filed its answer to a lawsuit filed by Taylor Shellfish in Thurston County Superior Court. Taylor Shellfish Co. is suing DNR for not carrying forward a combined settlement and issuing a lease agreement that would have allowed the company to harvest geoducks on state land on which they were illegally trespassing. The terms of the controversial lease were negotiated by outgoing Commissioner Doug Sutherland and signed a day before he left office.

DNR's full answer and counterclaim can be found online at [www.dnr.wa.gov/Publications/em\\_taylor\\_dnr\\_counterclaims.pdf](http://www.dnr.wa.gov/Publications/em_taylor_dnr_counterclaims.pdf). The following is a brief summary of some of the State's responses and counterclaims: · DNR asserts that State ownership of the tidelands is clearly evident. · DNR seeks damages for Taylor's illegal trespass on state-owned aquatic lands. · Surveys support State ownership of the trespass areas. The settlement, which set the terms for a lease, was signed during the environmental review process and the public comment period for the lease in question. "Commissioner Goldmark's goal is to resolve this issue as quickly as possible," said Aaron Toso, Communications & Outreach Director.

**DNR manages aquatic lands as a public trust** Washington's 2.6 million acres of state-owned aquatic lands--including the bedlands under Puget Sound and the coast, many beaches, and navigable natural lakes and rivers--are managed by DNR as a "public trust" for the people of the state. DNR leases aquatic lands to public and private users both for water-dependent uses, such as boat moorage and shellfish cultivation, and for non-water-dependent uses such as restaurants and office buildings.