

## **Ecology Seeking Public Comment on Updates to State Shoreline Rules**

### **Local News**

Posted by: David Haviland

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OLYMPIA, Wash. - The Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) is seeking public comment on a proposal to change five state Shoreline Management Act rules - including new guidance designed to address controversy surrounding commercial geoduck aquaculture in the intertidal, or shallower, areas of Puget Sound. "The proposed geoduck aquaculture rule simply makes permit processes consistent across all jurisdictions - hopefully creating a fair and equitable playing field for our state's vital shellfish industry and shoreline residents," said Gordon White, Program Manager for Ecology's Shorelands and Environmental Assistance Program. White said the new draft geoduck aquaculture rule is based on a 2007 legislative mandate directing Ecology to provide guidance to local governments on addressing commercial geoduck aquaculture in their shoreline master programs.

In developing the proposal, Ecology considered comments and recommendations from the state Shellfish Aquaculture Regulatory Committee, a broad-based committee created by state lawmakers that met for 18 months from 2007 through 2009. The committee included representatives from shoreline property owners, the shellfish industry, local governments, state agencies and tribal governments. Ecology's draft geoduck aquaculture rule would grandfather 237 existing sites covering about 360 acres - unless there would be a change in planting or harvesting geoducks that creates a new shoreline impact. Growing geoduck for personal consumption and recreational harvesting of wild geoduck are exempt from the new rules. "The proposed rule changes will help address potential controversy by making it clear that local governments must plan ahead for geoduck aquaculture projects," White said. "Planning ahead provides each local government and community an opportunity to help avoid disputes before they occur." Ecology also is proposing to change how and when local governments can make small changes, called limited amendments, to their existing shoreline master programs. The draft rule would clarify when and under what circumstances these can occur. It would discourage local governments from making changes while they are comprehensively updating their existing shoreline programs. Several other draft rule changes are designed to clean up outdated provisions, including updating the rules to match state law. Ecology will conduct four open houses and public hearings for the draft rules. During the open houses prior to each hearing, the public can ask questions and get an overview of the proposed changes. The open houses and public hearings are scheduled for: \* Wednesday, Sept 8, 2010, in Moses Lake - Open house at 6:30 p.m., followed by 7 p.m. public hearing at Big Bend Community College, Masto Conference Center, 7662 Chanute St. N.E. \* Monday, Sept. 13, 2010, in Everett - Open house at 6 p.m., followed by 7 p.m. public hearing at Everett Station, Weyerhaeuser Room, 3201 Smith Ave. \* Tuesday, Sept. 14, 2010, in Lacey - Open house at 6 p.m., followed by public hearing at 7 p.m. at Washington Department of Ecology Headquarters Building, downstairs auditorium, 300 Desmond Drive S.E. \* Wednesday, Sept. 15, 2010, in Aberdeen - Open house at 6 p.m., followed by public hearing at 7 p.m. at Grays Harbor Community College, Bishop Center, 1620 Edward P. Smith Drive. Ecology will take public comments on the proposed rules until 5 p.m. Monday, Oct. 18, 2010. Written comments and questions should be

submitted to Cedar Bouta, Department of Ecology, P.O. Box 47600, Olympia, Wash. 98504-7600.  
Comments can also be submitted electronically at  
<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/shorelines/smp/rulemaking.html>, sent  
via email to [ShorelineRule@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:ShorelineRule@ecy.wa.gov), or faxed to 360-407-6902.