

NEWS RELEASE

August 2, 2013

MASON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

**411 NORTH 5TH ST
SHELTON, WA 98584**

TO: KMAS, KRXY, SHELTON-MASON COUNTY JOURNAL, THE OLYMPIAN, SHELTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, NORTH MASON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, CITY OF SHELTON, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, THE SUN

RE: Potlatch State Park Closed to recreational water use

Heavy bacterial contamination due to a failing large onsite septic system is causing the closure of the Beach at Potlatch State Park to recreational marine water use. Based on estimate of tide flows and dilution with marine waters, the areas closed to recreational water use and shellfish harvesting include areas within 240 meters north and south of the point of entry of Potlatch Creek (Minerva Beach Community) into Annas Bay. This means that the area just south of the boat launch off of North Tillicum Beach Lane down to the area near the restrooms at Potlatch State Park will be closed to recreational water use until further notice. Water related activities 200 meters from shore should be safe.

Natural bodies of water can become polluted from a variety of sources. For animals and people potentially exposed to contaminated waters, the best advise is to rinse off with clean water as soon after exposure as possible. To be safest, rinse off with a potable water source after exposure to naturally occurring bodies of water.

In hot summer months, shellfish harvesting is not ideal because of the presence of diarrhea causing bacteria, *Vibrio parahaemolyticus*. Although commercial shellfish harvest is closed, many local homeowners continue to harvest and eat shellfish off their own tidelands. To prevent illness, any shellfish harvested should be kept cold and then thoroughly cooked before consumption, care should be taken to avoid cross-contamination of cooked shellfish with marine waters.

For more information call the health department Monday through Friday at 427-9670, Ext. 358, 360-275-4467 from Belfair, or 360-482-5269 from Elma.