Shellfish Harvest at Dosewallips State Park

Local News

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OLYMPIA, Wash. - A part of the Dosewallips State Park tidelands is being opened for recreational and Treaty Tribes’ commercial shellfish harvest for the first time in more than 20 years.

The newly opened 70 acres of tidelands was closed for shellfish harvest in 1987 due to elevated levels of bacteria from large numbers of seals on the Dosewallips tidelands. Seals don’t appear to be impacting marine water quality in the area now, and other pollution sources have been cleaned up. The area that is being re-opened is marked by orange plastic stakes. Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Skokomish Tribe will survey clam and oyster populations on the newly opened area this summer to plan for the 2011 shellfish season.

“It’s great to see the improvements in water quality that have occurred in this area,” said Bob Woolrich, growing area manager for the state Department of Health. “Dosewallips is a popular destination in our state for outdoor recreation.”

“These additional acres offer recreational shellfish harvesters increased opportunity on an excellent oyster and clam beach on Hood Canal. Improvements in water quality are a win-win for the clam and oyster fishery, and the environment,” said Camille Speck, biologist from Fish and Wildlife’s Point Whitney Shellfish Laboratory.

The area near the mouth of the Dosewallips River will remain closed because of high bacteria levels that occasionally flow down the river. Delays in improving the wastewater treatment system at Dosewallips State Park are also a concern around the mouth of the river.

The best way to be safe when harvesting shellfish is to “Know Before You Dig” (www.doh.wa.gov/shellfishsafety.htm)