

Portage Bay

Annual Shellfish Growing Area Review



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Area: Portage Bay

Year Ending: December 31, 2023

Classification: Approved, Conditionally Approved, Prohibited

Activities in the Growing Area in 2023

The growing area was sampled 11 times in accordance with the National Shellfish Sanitation Program (NSSP) Systematic Random Sampling method. Eight samples were collected during Open status. One sample event was missed during October due to boat and equipment issues. The Conditionally Approved area was closed from September through December for a total of 122 days. All of Portage Bay was closed for one day due to predicted flooding of the Nooksack River. The growing area was reopened immediately after the Nooksack River hydrograph crested below 19 feet. A routine three-year shoreline evaluation was completed and the Gooseberry Point WWTP is undergoing plant upgrades for NPDES permit compliance. No new or changes in pollution sources were identified. Lummi Natural Resources conducted a special study in the Conditionally Approved area to understand water quality during low salinity events in December. Two sampling events occurred during low salinity events; bacteria levels were low.

The Whatcom Clean Water Program, Whatcom County Public Works, and Whatcom Conservation District received National Estuary Program (NEP) funding for coordinating and implementing a pollution identification and control program in the watershed. Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) and Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) received NEP funding for enhanced water compliance monitoring and referral and technical assistance, with WSDA focusing on dairies and Ecology addressing nonpoint pollution stemming from nondairy agriculture. The Portage Bay Shellfish Protection District continued quarterly meetings.

Analytical Results of Water Samples

Table 1 summarizes the results of the last 30 samples collected from the area. It includes samples collected when the Conditionally Approved area was in Closed status. This summary shows that all stations meet the NSSP water quality standard for Approved classification with all data. Table 2 shows an APC evaluation of the last 15 samples collected from the Conditionally Approved stations during Closed status (September – December). Stations 50, 51, 52, and 271 in the Conditionally Approved area fail the APC standard for an Approved classification during Closed status.

Change in Actual Pollution Sources that Impact the Growing Area

We currently have no information indicating the area has any new sources of pollution.

Classification Status

- Well within the classification standards
- Meets standards, but threatened with downgrade in classification
- Fails to meet current classification standards

Remarks and Recommendations

Table 1 shows that all stations meet the NSSP water quality standard for an Approved classification. Table 2 shows that stations 49 and 272 in the Conditionally Approved meet NSSP standard during the Closed status. The area surrounding these stations should be evaluated for a change in classification, while the Conditionally Approved Area Management Plan for seasonal closure should be re-evaluated based upon results from the Lummi Natural Resources special study.

Management Plan Evaluation

1. Have all parties involved complied with the conditions of the management plan Yes
2. Has reporting been adequate to manage the conditional area..... Yes
3. Does the area consistently meet approved area criteria when it is open for harvest Yes
4. Has a field inspection of critical pollution sources been conducted Yes

TABLE 1. Summary of Marine Water Data (SRS) for the Portage Bay Growing Area

Sampling Event Type: Regulatory

Maximum Number of Samples: 30

Tides Included: All

Station Number	Classification	Date Range	Range (FC/100mL)	Geomean (FC/100mL)	Est. 90 th Percentile (FC/100mL)	Meets Standard
53	Approved	4/6/2021 - 12/12/2023	1.7 - 13.0	2.5	4.9	Y
54	Approved	4/6/2021 - 12/12/2023	1.7 - 33.0	2.7	8.5	Y
55	Approved	4/6/2021 - 12/12/2023	1.7 - 23.0	3.2	9.4	Y
57	Approved	4/6/2021 - 12/12/2023	1.7 - 17.0	2.5	5.8	Y
58	Approved	4/6/2021 - 12/12/2023	1.7 - 17.0	2.7	7.1	Y
49	Conditionally Approved	4/6/2021 - 12/12/2023	1.7 - 49.0	4.0	16.2	Y
50	Conditionally Approved	4/6/2021 - 12/12/2023	1.7 - 220.0	4.1	18.5	Y
51	Conditionally Approved	4/6/2021 - 12/12/2023	1.7 - 120.0	4.0	16.4	Y
52	Conditionally Approved	4/6/2021 - 12/12/2023	1.7 - 17.0	3.1	7.9	Y
271	Conditionally Approved	4/6/2021 - 12/12/2023	1.7 - 79.0	3.7	13.7	Y
272	Conditionally Approved	4/6/2021 - 12/12/2023	1.7 - 70.0	3.7	13.9	Y
48	Prohibited	4/6/2021 - 12/12/2023	1.7 - 23.0	2.3	5.4	Y

The standard for approved shellfish growing waters is fecal coliform geometric mean not greater than 14 organisms/ 100 mL with an estimated 90th percentile not greater than 43 organisms/ 100 mL. The above table shows bacteriological results in relation to program standards.

TABLE 2. Summary of Conditionally Approved Marine Water Data (APC) during Closed Status for the Portage Bay Growing Area

Sampling Event Type: Regulatory

Maximum Number of Samples: 15

Tides Included: All

Includes data from the Closed period (September through December)

Station Number	Classification	Date Range	Range (FC/100mL)	Geomean (FC/100mL)	% Samples > 43	Meets Standard
49	Conditionally Approved	12/11/2019 - 12/12/2023	1.7 - 33.0	4.8	0.00	Y
50	Conditionally Approved	12/11/2019 - 12/12/2023	1.7 - 220.0	6.1	13.33	N
51	Conditionally Approved	12/11/2019 - 12/12/2023	1.7 - 120.0	5.4	13.33	N
52	Conditionally Approved	12/11/2019 - 12/12/2023	1.7 - 79.0	4.6	13.33	N
271	Conditionally Approved	12/11/2019 - 12/12/2023	1.7 - 79.0	6.2	13.33	N
272	Conditionally Approved	12/11/2019 - 12/12/2023	1.7 - 49.0	4.5	6.67	Y

The above table shows bacteriological results in relation to NSSP criteria. NSSP standards for approved shellfish growing waters are a fecal coliform geometric mean not greater than 14 organisms/100 mL and an estimated 90th percentile not greater than 43 organisms/100mL.

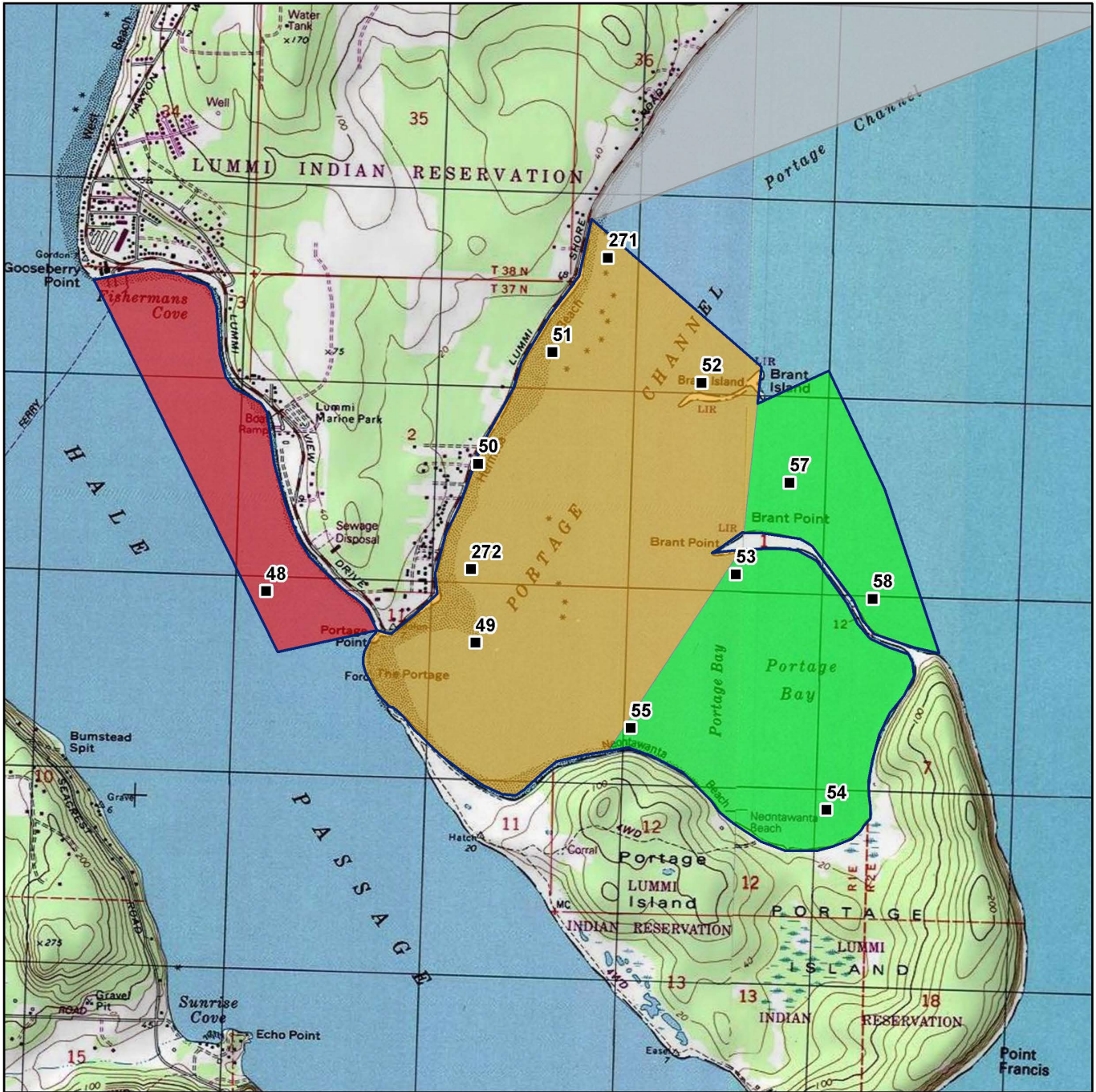
MAP 1. Portage Bay Growing Area

Portage Bay



Date Updated: 7/11/2018

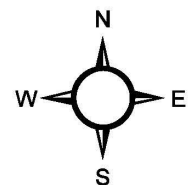
0 0.75 1.5 Miles



Classification

- Approved
- Conditional
- Prohibited
- Restricted
- Unclassified

Sampling Stations



* Some sampling stations are highlighted with grey box for ease of reading.