



LONGLINES

Volume 26 No. 3
Summer 2023



GETTING READY TO GATHER!



120 State Avenue NE
#142
Olympia, WA 98501
www.pcsga.org
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(360) 754-2744

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What the Tide Brought In

Summer is here, and that means you are busy keeping up with demand and juggling farming with kids who are home from school, family vacations, and all the other chaos that comes with this season. It also means that conference planning is in full swing. Make sure you register ASAP to secure the early bird reduced rates.

We have an amazing conference planning committee who have been hard at work to make the magic happen. The team has collected a lot of great science and policy talks and a great tradeshow lineup. An area where we would love to see more participation is grower talks. It is critically important for growers to engage by sharing lessons learned, exciting innovations, and most importantly—sharing stories and perspectives. Please visit our conference page or call our office if you are a grower or member interested in presenting a talk.

One of the topics we will be presenting at the conference is our Environmental Codes of Practice (ECOP) update. As part of our Builder's Initiative Grant project, we are working with an advisory committee consisting of Board and Grower Members to ensure the ECOP is aligned with current science and regulations. The next phase will be to develop training and implementation tools to make it easier to use. We will be sending out a survey this summer to collect your input on the ECOP and better understand what tools and resources will be most useful for you to put it into action. Please be on the lookout for that email. We would love your thoughts and perspectives to inform the toolkit development.

I hope that all of you are able to get some well-deserved down time this summer to refresh and spend quality time with your families. I look forward to seeing you at the Conference in Seaside, Oregon in September!

Kim Thompson, Executive Director, PCSGA



Registration Now Open for the 77th Annual Shellfish Growers Conference & Tradeshow

Hosted by Pacific Coast Shellfish Growers Association and
National Shellfisheries Association – Pacific Coast Section

**September 19–21 2023, Seaside Civic &
Convention Center, Seaside Oregon**

PCSGA Board Meeting and Annual General Meeting: Sept. 18

Conference & Tradeshow Schedule

- Sept. 18th** PCSGA Board Meeting
PCSGA Annual General Meeting
Schley Golf Tournament
FIRST EVER! Pickleball Tournament
- Sept. 19th** Conference and Tradeshow Opening
- Sept. 20th** Grand Awards Banquet
- Sept. 21st** Conference and Tradeshow Close

Monthly Ecosystem Service Photo Contest Winners



April Winner: Derek King, Crescent Gummel utilising an empty oyster shell as habitat for laying and guarding eggs.



May Winner: Gerardo Leon Romero, This is from one of our oyster beds where we re-seeded several years ago. What was muddy substrate has now turned into a living host area for different species of aqua life. This is a group of Sea Slugs *Onchidoris bilamellata* and their eggs that look like ribbons.



June Winner: Lisa Carleton-Long, Midshipmen like to use our Cultch seed bag pallets out in the bay as their nursery. Parents set their eggs everywhere! They have a safe environment to hatch and grow up in.

Revision of PCSGA's Environmental Codes of Practice (ECOP)

With funding from the Builder's Initiative we have embarked on the process of revising our Environmental Codes of Practice (ECOP). The ECOP was intended to serve as a road map for implementation of PCSGA's Environmental Policy, developed by growers and first published in 2001. As a PCSGA member you may or may not be intimately familiar with the ECOP, which was last updated in 2019.

The original Environmental Policy set forth general principles for shellfish farming operations, which encompassed these primary areas:

- Environmental Stewardship and Responsible Management
- Environmental Excellence
- Regulatory Compliance
- Waste Management
- Sharing Resources

Given the vast differences in farming operations from region to region, and even from farm to farm, these codes were designed to allow for flexibility in individual farm management plans and farming practices

The goal of the current revision process is to bring the ECOP up-to-date with regulations that have changed since 2019, and revise the ECOP format to make it more accessible to growers. This revision process is led by a committee of PCSGA grower members and aided by consultants from Plauché & Carr, Confluence Environmental Company, and the Pacific Shellfish Institute.

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Benefits of the Environmental Codes of Practice (ECOP)

Innovations developed over the years by shellfish growers have made it possible for them to stay in business despite significant challenges. Increasing development of the shoreline, loss of approved growing areas due to pollution, limited and diminishing natural resources, and an increasingly complex regulatory environment all contribute to a climate that makes conducting a shellfish aquaculture business challenging.

Increasingly, local and state agencies are developing best management practices for aquaculture as a way to streamline permitting processes and appease concerns expressed by stakeholders and opposition groups. The ECOP is an important tool to help the shellfish growing community develop science-based best practices and provide greater assurances that their operations will maximize the many benefits that shellfish farming provides to society and the environment while minimizing risks.

Some of the ECOP's important benefits to the industry include:

- Shellfish farmers can use the ECOP as a guide to establish best management practices (BMPs) that actually work on farms instead of waiting for government agencies to develop and impose practices, based on real and perceived risks, that may or may not be feasible.
- New shellfish growers looking to develop their own operating procedures and BMPs can use the ECOP as guidance.
- Some agencies will accept a grower's acknowledgment of use of the ECOP to satisfy operational procedures required to meet specific permit conditions so the grower applicant doesn't have to create their own.
- Because the ECOP is rooted in strong science and updated periodically, growers who use the ECOP to develop best practices will have greater assurances that their operations are current and, so long as they are also ensuring they are in compliance with regulations, their operations will be more defensible in the event that their operations are targeted by opposition groups.

A vertical rectangular advertisement for K&L GATES. The background is a photograph of a rocky shoreline with green seaweed. A solid blue rectangle is at the top, containing the text 'K&L GATES' in white. Below this, another solid blue rectangle contains white text. At the bottom, a smaller blue rectangle contains more white text.

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A vertical rectangular advertisement for CONFLUENCE ENVIRONMENTAL COMPANY. The background is white. At the top, there is a red dotted line. Below it is the company logo, which consists of a stylized red and blue wave or eye shape above the word 'CONFLUENCE' in blue, with 'ENVIRONMENTAL COMPANY' in smaller blue text below it. Below the logo, there is a red italicized line of text. This is followed by a list of services, each preceded by a blue asterisk. At the bottom, there is a red line of text with a website and a phone number, and a red dotted line below that.

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Help Inform ECOP Outputs and the Future of PCSGA!

In addition to making the ECOP current, we are also looking to develop tools and resources that make the ECOP more accessible and easier for shellfish grower members to use. We need to hear from you to make the best use of resources and develop a usable product. In addition to insights on ECOP, the survey includes some questions to help us better understand your perspectives and priorities for PCSGA membership so we can adapt accordingly.

We greatly value and rely on your input to ensure our programs and Association priorities best serve our members. Feel free to contact us if you have any questions.

Survey link: <https://tinyurl.com/5n7bpuph>



Pacific oyster at Westcott Bay Shellfish Company. Photo by: Sam Klein.



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Shellfish Growers Climate Coalition

"I hope our stories about how climate change is impacting shellfish farms will move policymakers to act."

— Bill Dewey
Taylor Shellfish Company

Help us protect the shellfish we love and the waters that sustain them at nature.org/shellfish4climate

Farmer's Corner

The second annual Blaine Oysterfest was held on May 20th and was a success! Situated on the Washington state border with Canada is the idyllic city of Blaine. Our member, Drayton Harbor Oyster Company operates in the nearby harbor and puts on this event with the Blaine Chamber of Commerce. They were working hard all day to shuck and grill oysters for the crowd.



Mark Seymour, Drayton Harbor Oyster Company cooking up some delicious oysters.



Along with other vendors, PCSGA's Stewardship Officer, Sam Klein, had a booth at the event to educate the public about the importance of shellfish farms to the state.



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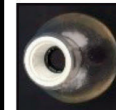
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Welcome to the PCSGA team, Alicia!

Welcome our new Office Manager, Alicia Burns. Alicia has lived in Washinton her entire life and enjoys all the beauty this state offers. She enjoys being outdoors hiking, farming, and gardening. She and her husband have a small farm where they raise cattle and grow their own hay. She has two beautiful daughters Grace age 21 and Olivia age 15 who farm alongside them.

Alicia will play an important role in keeping PCSGA's office running smoothly. Her email address is: aliciaburns@pcsga.org. We're excited to have her here and look forward to working with her.





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Four of Alicia's cattle on her farm near Mud Bay, Washington. Photo by: Alicia Burns.

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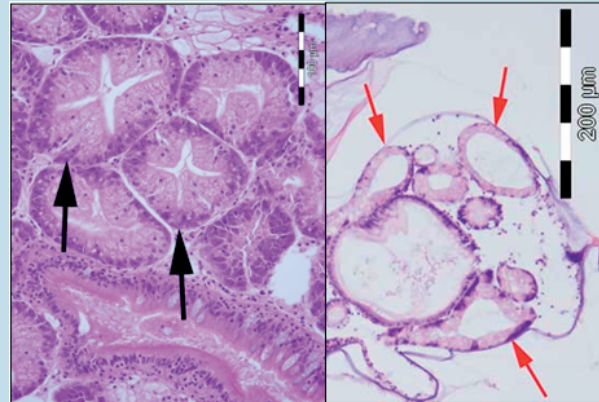
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Free Oyster Health and Condition Evaluations!

The Pacific Shellfish Institute (PSI) and Aquatechnics have funding to provide oyster health and condition evaluations to shellfish farms. Training is also provided to appropriately collect and submit these samples. If you suspect stressed or dying (gaping) oysters on your farm please contact for more details:

Ralph Elston: 360-649-4704,
ralph@aquatechnics.com
Or Andy Suhrbier: 360-280-1517,
suhrbier@pacshell.org



Histological images of normal digestive tubules (left, black arrows) and abnormal tubules (right, red arrows) indicative of markedly reduced feeding. This phenomenon is found in some cases of triploid summer mortality.

PSI also has an anonymous oyster mortality reporting form found here:

<https://www.pacshell.org/triploid-oyster-health.asp>

This information will be used to understand trends in oyster mortality that can hopefully lead to solutions.



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A Day with Jim Hayes, Oyster Legend of Hood Canal

By: Sam Klein, PCSGA



New oyster shucking facility. Photo by: Sam Klein.



Jim showing some seeded cultch. Photo by: Sam Klein.

On a sunny spring morning I went out to Seabeck, WA to visit Jim Hayes of Hood Canal Oyster Company. I had heard of his legendary work seeding Pacific oysters along Hood Canal. He told me that he put his farm up for sale and I wanted to learn more of his story before the farm changed hands.

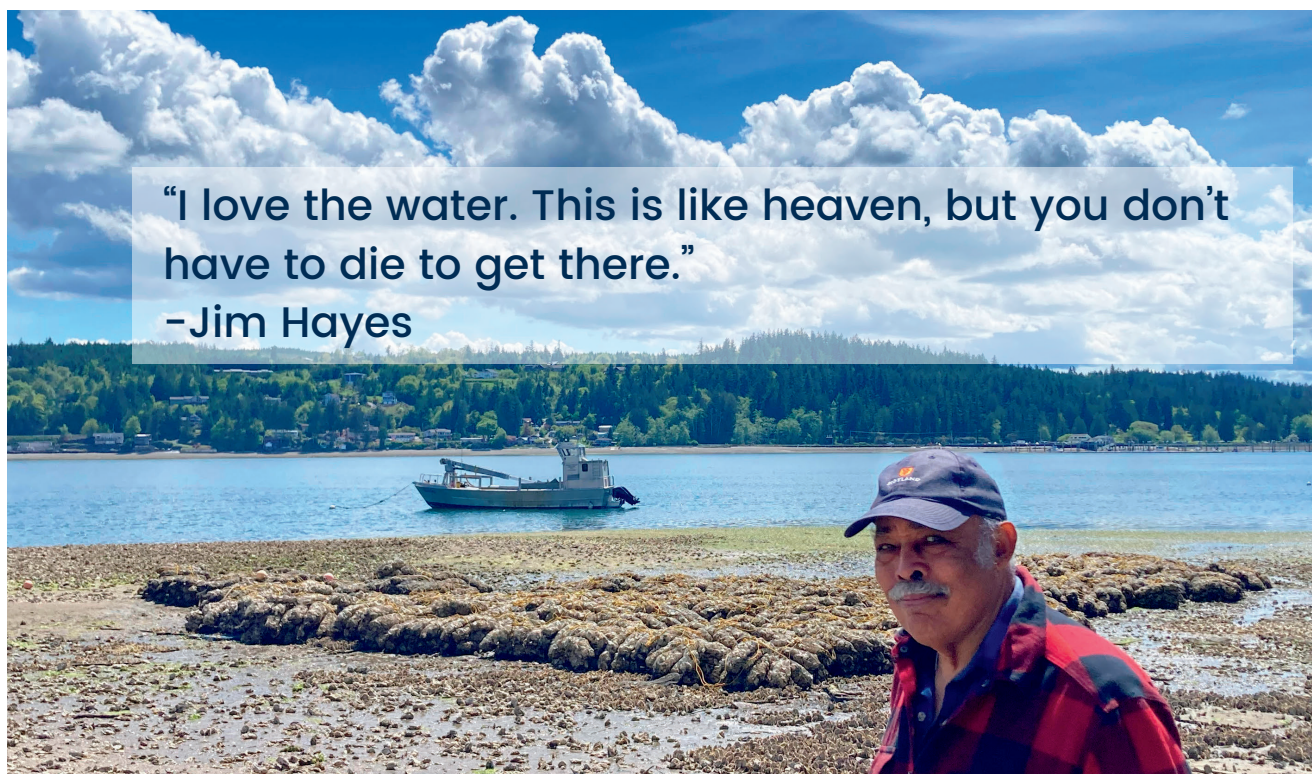
Jim came to Washington in the 1960s on an exchange program and lived with a host family who had oyster lands. He grew up on a farm in Mississippi. His mom was a sharecropper and they grew cotton, corn, peanuts and sorghum.

He got into the oyster business because he saw some men harvesting oysters from his foster family. The men said they had harvested 50 bushels and at the time they were paying \$2 for a bushel of oysters. But Jim explained "I knew what a bushel was because I had been a farmer and they were the biggest 50 bushels I had ever seen. I told the lady I was staying with, Dorothy, that they were cheating her. They came again the next day, and I watched them. I asked them how many bushels you got? They said 50. But I said no it looks like 100 so they gave me \$200 and I gave that to my foster mom, and she told me to look into the oyster business."

Then Jim started the oyster company. He explains that he graduated from Olympic College in 1972 and was the first in his family to get a college degree, from there he went on to become an engineer in Vietnam and went on to help build bangor when they first started making submarines and spent 10 years in construction.

I asked Jim what major changes he has seen in the oyster industry over his career. He described that "I haven't seen any major changes in the ecosystem. I have done the same thing year after year. I go and collect the shell. I go to the neighbors and offer to clean up their shell for them." However, the government changes have impacted him, that he "would rather do the seed, but Army Corps is making it really hard. Before I didn't have to get a permit from the health department. But once they told me I had to get it, it didn't cost much."

In addition to propagating and selling oysters commercially, Jim has also done work spreading shell and seeding tidelands for the State, tribes and restoration projects.



Jim Hayes standing on his farm in Seabeck, WA. Photo by: Sam Klein.

For Olympia oyster restoration projects, he shared that he has “done the work to transport oysters from point A to B. We went all the way up to Bellingham to get seed. Betsy (Puget Sound Restoration Fund) is doing something really great by putting something back into the system. They seeded the shell then I transported it.”

He explained that “ever since day one of seeding state beaches, if the low tide comes out 100 ft, I go 150 ft out and drop a load of oysters. I’ve done that all over Puget Sound for 40 years and those last! I tell them don’t let the start fish get you. It’s kind of my Johnny apple seed thing.”

Looking to the future of Hood Canal Oyster Company, Jim is selling his newly built oyster shucking plant, boat, tidelands and the house on the property. “This is a goldmine here, the plant down there is all set up for shucking and smoking salmon” he said. Along with selling the business, Jim is also offering to share his extensive knowledge of catching seed and growing oysters with the new owners. “I really want to get a family in here, a Mexican, Chinese, or Vietnamese family. An American family. I will show them how to get seed. The canal propagates really well but doesn’t grow as fast as the south sound. I do natural set. I have two tanks down there and was going to use them to grow singles. I just like to work 100% with mother nature.”

Jim’s attitude exemplifies why many of us love the world of shellfish farming. He is very willing to share his knowledge and teach people who are new to the industry about how to grow oysters. He stresses the importance of learning the cycles of the ecosystem and letting mother nature do the rest to grow sustainable food. He loves what he does saying “I love the water, where I come from it is all dirt. This is like heaven, but you don’t have to die to get there. If you really love it the rewards will be there for you.”

His farm and facilities are listed on John L Scott real estate:



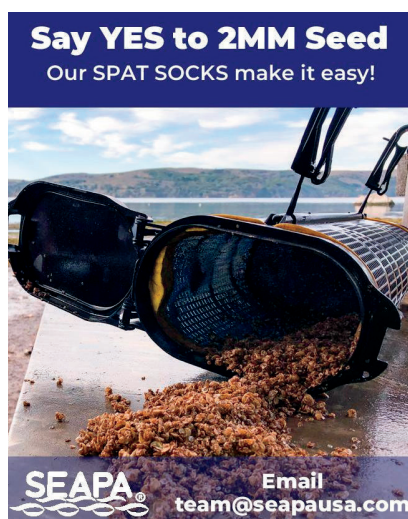
How to Prepare for a Successful ELAP Application

By: Kaitlin Davies, FPAC-FSA, WA

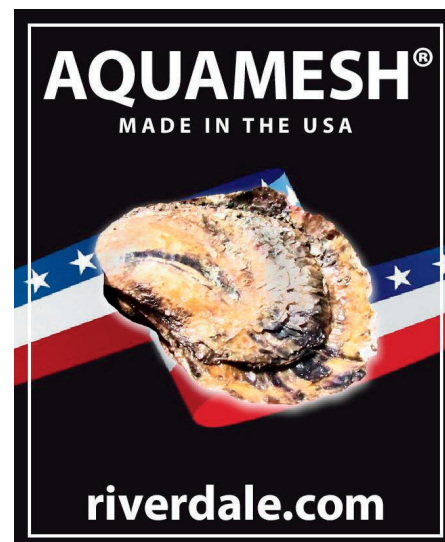
In 2021, an unprecedented heat wave combined with very low tides shook the northwest shellfish industry. The Emergency Livestock Assistance Program (ELAP) was the Farm Service Agency's attempt to help, but it fell short of what was needed. Here are some tips to help improve your experience with ELAP while the Agency works to improve the policy to better fit the industry.

Deadlines:

1. The Acreage reporting deadline is on Jan. 1 every year. Though these are called "acreage reports", think of them more like an inventory report. You report to FSA the number of acres of open water where you grow your shellfish and provide us with a snapshot of how many oysters you have on your farm at that time. Acreage reports are provided on the FSA-578 form can be submitted up to a year late if you pay the cost of a site visit (minimum cost is \$46). If you submit your report prior to any disaster, the report can be used as evidence of the pre-disaster inventory you claim on your ELAP application.
2. The Notice of Loss (CCC-934 page 1) must be submitted to the office within 30 days of a loss becoming apparent to you. Notices of Loss can be submitted by phone, email, mail, or in person. You will need to know the type of weather event that caused the loss, the date of the event, the date you became aware of the loss, and the physical location of the loss. The loss does not have to be extreme! You can submit multiple Notices of Loss over the course of the year. As long as the total losses exceed normal mortality, you may still be eligible for payment.
3. The final deadline is Jan. 30 of the subsequent year for the Application for Payment and all supporting documentation to be filed. This includes the CCC-934 pages 2 and 3, proof of your pre-disaster inventory, proof of the loss, and proof of your post-disaster inventory.



An advertisement for Freshtag labels. The header features the "Freshtag™" logo and "From Vitsab®" with the tagline "The sign of freshness". The main text states: "Freshtag™ Time/Temperature Labels Calibrated to mirror bacteria growth - or customize for your temperature profile". Below this are four categories of labels with corresponding icons: "For Perishable Catering Products", "Validates Caviar Freshness and Quality", "Engineered to C bot toxin for ROP/MAP", and "Cold Chain Monitoring for Shellstock". A paragraph explains: "Using spotlight technology, Vitsab Freshtag™ labels stay green for most of their life. They turn yellow then red, like a spotlight, if temperature abuse per formulation is detected". At the bottom, contact information for Mark Winowich is provided: "Mark Winowich Director, Business Development", "Phone: +1(206)962-0437", "www.vitsab.com", and "mark.winowich@vitsab.com". A QR code is also present.



The supporting documentation requirements for ELAP are stringent. It is imperative that you keep good records regarding the number and size of the shellfish you farm in order to qualify for ELAP. Ideally, you should be able to provide this information recorded within a month prior to the date of the disaster. A subsequent inventory report should be provided showing the number and size of shellfish remaining after the disaster. As long as these records are kept as part of your normal operation and not recorded in order to apply for ELAP, they may be accepted as "reliable proof of beginning and ending inventory". Other records such as seed and harvest records, insurance documents, acreage reports, etc. can also be considered acceptable as long as they fully support the quantity and size of the oysters claimed on the Application for Payment.

Lastly, the County Committee is the local authority who makes ELAP and other program determinations. Elections for Mason/Kitsap and Grays Harbor counties are being held in November this year. If you would like to nominate someone or yourself, please reach out to your county office and ask for an FSA-669A Nomination Form and return it to the office by August 1, 2023. More information about ELAP and County Committee elections can be found at Farmers.gov.



Nyle Taylor showing off some virginica oyster seed. Photo by: Sam Klein.

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New Electronic Data System for Shellfish

Modern and simple data reporting for Washington shellfish producers is on the horizon.

State agencies required to collect harvest data are coordinating with shellfish trade associations, non-regulatory agencies, and the Pacific Shellfish Institute (PSI) to develop a new electronic data system. The system will consolidate multi-agency reporting and improve consistency. This is a “win-win” for shellfish managers, farmers, and harvesters.

Accurate production data is critical to support economic sustainability of shellfish farming. This information is integral to assessing changes, opportunities, and impacts on the shellfish producing sector. State and national supporters and policy makers need volume and value numbers to characterize the scale and significance of shellfish to our region and U.S. seafood production.

Accurate information has been lacking for decades, hindering U.S. aquaculture growth and programs to aid economic relief following catastrophic events like natural disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic. Production data are also vital for consumer and market evaluations, and prospective investments in the shellfish producing sector. Data is also needed for outreach programs that educate the public and policy makers.

Production information is an important component of telling the story of shellfish as a natural resource. Volumes and value demonstrate the significance of shellfish like oysters, mussels and clams to our coastal communities and U.S. seafood production.

This effort is funded in part by NOAA National Sea Grant under #NA21OAR4170088. The team has carefully considered confidentiality and is seeking widespread buy-in from stakeholders. Have feedback? Contact project lead Bobbi Hudson, PSI Director, at bobbi@pacshell.org.



New PCSGA Public Comment Toolkit

Our coasts are getting more crowded and public opposition to coastal development is growing. Those who have been navigating the permitting process have gone through public comment periods and have seen the volume of opposition statements increase. This doesn't necessarily reflect the perspectives of the broader community, but the louder voices of opposition tend to dominate the narrative. PCSGA has created a Public Comment Toolkit to make it more convenient for grower members to support each other and help balance the narrative about aquaculture by ensuring that the positive benefits of our industry are represented in public comments.

The toolkit will be available on our Grower Member webpage under 'Public Comment Toolkit' in the menu. Grower members will have to sign in to access the webpage. Let us know if you need assistance accessing your login information.

Any PCSGA member in good standing can submit a project for fellow members to consider supporting. If you have a project in the public comment phase, please send it to KimThompson@pcsga.org.

Top photo of Westcott Bay Shellfish Company. Photo by: Sam Klein.



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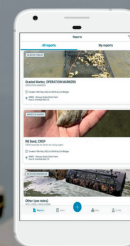
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Restoring an Olympia Oyster Reef in Little Skookum Inlet, WA

By Sam Klein, PCSGA

John Adams and his family run Sound Fresh Clams & Oysters, a shellfish farm in Little Skookum Inlet. They sell their shellfish every weekend at the Olympia farmer's market. Olympia oysters, affectionally called Olys, are Washington's only native oyster species and in the last hundred years their populations have declined greatly. Since 1995 John has tried different techniques to revive historical Olympia Oyster beds at the mouth of the inlet, however natural sets have not occurred consistently.

In 2021 and 2022 they worked with The Nature Conservancy's (TNC) Supporting Oyster Aquaculture and Restoration Program (SOAR). SOAR worked to buy oysters from farmers to offset the lack of sales during COVID.

The SOAR program purchased around 6,000 Olys from Bruce Brenner of JJ Brenner Oyster Company and Mary Bennett from Wallin's Oysters and Clams to be harvested and transplanted to John's beach. They are now a permanent spawning population and in 2021 they had a spawn of ten spat per meter. They will continue spawning and adding to the wild population. In 1995 when they first started working on this, their survey at the site came up with 200 animals total. Now they are working on getting the population up to 400 animals per meter, which would restore historical densities to the area and provide benefits to the ecosystem.

In 2021 TNC opened their call for projects under the SOAR Resiliency Fund and John and his team jumped at the chance to continue his work to enhance the native oyster population. With this grant funding the company re-established their Oly nursery, buying equipment to support oyster setting and nursery growth and buying seed from Taylor Shellfish to fill in gaps in natural recruitment. In addition, they are working to track water conditions that influence the population and build awareness about Olys and pride in the South Puget Sound community.

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Olympia oyster bed on John's farm. Photos by: John Adams.



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Looking to the future John really hopes this work will establish a robust wild population in Little Skookum Inlet, adding that “they belong here! They are ecologically consistent with what is supposed to be here.” He explains further that “we have a shell midden on the property, you can see the evidence that Olys have been in this area for a long time, and you can see the link between people that lived here and what grows in the water.”




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Sound Fresh Clams & Oysters is just one of PCSGA's members that has done incredible work with TNC's SOAR funding. Earlier this year TNC announced that through a partnership with The Pew Charitable Trusts that they have secured a further \$6.3 million for these programs. The Purchase Program and Shellfish Growers Resiliency Fund will begin accepting applications later this year. For the latest information, visit nature.org/SOAR. Growers interested in participating in either program can email soar@tnc.org.

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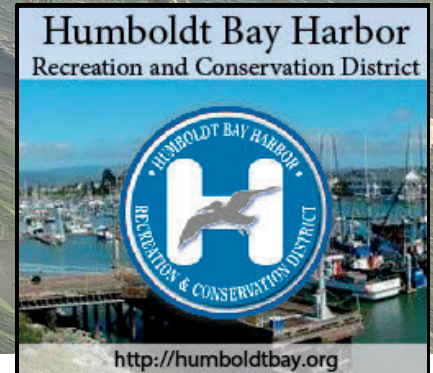
James Taylor
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jtaylor@englundmarine.com

New PCSGA Research Priorities

The research committee and board have updated PCSGA's research priorities for 2023. The purpose of this document is to encapsulate current areas where PCSGA and membership need further study to solve problems that the industry is facing. It is also used to identify funding opportunities that best match up with industry needs and assist PCSGA staff to align letters and other kinds of support to best represent PCSGA interests.

- Ecosystem Services Provided by Shellfish Farms
- Increased Sustainability of Shellfish Gear
- Quantify Effects of Macroalgae Removal from Shellfish Ground
- Shellfish Breeding for Increased Production, Sustainability and Resilience to Climate Change
- Ecological Relationships and Functions of Shellfish Farms and Eelgrass Beds
- Public Health and the Shellfish Industry
- Increasing Social License to Operate
- Workforce Development and Retention

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Calendar of Events

August

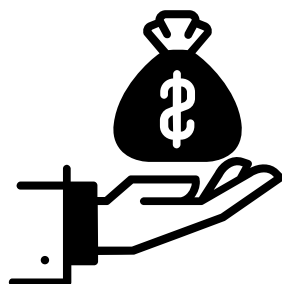
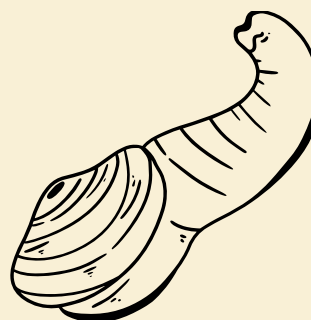
- 5: National Oyster Day
- 15: Ecosystem Services Photo Contest Submission Due
- 22: PCSGA Board meeting - via Zoom
- 23: PCSGA Grower Field Day, FLUPSY and Floating Bag Farm Tour, Oakland Bay

September

- 18: PCSGA Annual General Membership Meeting and Board Meeting - in-person
- 19-21: 77th Annual PCSGA NSA-PCS Shellfish Conference and Tradeshow, Seaside, OR

October

- 6-8: Shelton Oysterfest
- 14-15: Bellingham Seafeast
- 15: Ecosystem Services Photo Contest Submission Due
- 17: PCSGA Board Meeting - via Zoom
- 26: PCSGA Beach Cleanup



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www.pcsga.org

This fund provides financial assistance to members of PCSGA for expenses related to educational opportunities, experimental practices, and attending PCSGA events such as the Annual Conference or Walk the Hill in Washington, DC.