A DETERMINED COMMUNITY RECOVERING SHELLFISH BEDS

DRAYTON HARBOR, PUGET SOUND

PRIME PUGET SOUND SHELLFISH BEDS, TOO POLLUTED TO USE

A seed of hope, a bed of oysters, and an ocean of determination inspire a community to clean up a long-polluted harbor. Washington state is the nation's largest commercial producer of oysters, clams, and mussels, and Puget Sound is prime shellfish territory. But in Drayton Harbor, near the city of Blaine, shellfish harvest was not an option—and it wasn't for lack of shellfish. It was because the harbor lacked just one key ingredient: clean water.

Shellfish growers estimated that a clean Drayton Harbor could produce $2 million in oysters each year on just 100 acres, but beginning in 1988 water pollution caused by human and animal waste had so polluted than o clois was discouraging news indeed. Community leaders wanted to know why the pollution was happening and what they could do about it.

CLOSED DUE TO POLLUTION

1988 water pollution caused by human and animal waste had so polluted the area that the Washington State Department of Health began to close shellfish beds to harvest.

Drayton Harbor, photo credit: Jon Bridgman

Closed shellfish beaches can be caused by many sources of pollution including:

Illegal discharges from boats

Farms with poor stream management

Leaking septic tanks

MANY CAUSES CLOSED THE BEDS

In 1998, 21-percent of septic systems were failing along the Drayton Harbor shoreline. Breaks in aging sewer lines also were a problem, as was the nearby marina where some boaters were dumping human waste. Pollution from Dakota and California creeks was caused by failing septic systems and poor livestock practices. As more and more sources ng septic systems and poor livestock practices. As more and more sources of pollution were identified, a solution seemed almost out of reach.

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THE DRAYTON HARBOR COMMUNITY STUCK WITH IT

2001
Community gathering sets recovery in motion

2002
Funding by PSRF

2003
Oyster planting

2004
Community gathering sets recovery in motion

2016
Oyster harvest celebrated!

RECOVERY EFFORTS TAKE ROOT

By 2004, the oyster bed seeded with hope produced a new crop of harvestable, marketable oysters. Water quality continues to improve and the harve classified as "approved" for harvest. A large area of Drayton Harbor was recovered and year-round harvests resumed for the first time in 22 years. The community held a major celebration in December 2016.

HARVESTING MARKETABLE OYSTERS AND NEW JOBS

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"…after 25 years of clean up, the news came that 810 acres of shellfish beds had been reclassified as "approved" for harvest."

Photo left: Caption that conveys how this person is now employed because of this effort

Photo right: Caption that conveys a personal connection to the restoration efforts.

RESTORING SHELLFISH **ACROSS PUGET SOUND** IS A PUGET SOUND PARTNERSHIP STRATEGIC INITIATIVE

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO RESTORE SHELLFISH IN PUGET SOUND?

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