

*Drayton Harbor Community Oyster Farm Update
Fall 2013*



As summer winds down let me take a minute to catch every one up on the farm activities the past two months. We completed our harvest in early June and spent the last two months tending our FLUPSY, a simple floating seed nursery moored at the end of gate 3. The first small 2mm seed arrived in the middle of May and to date we have successfully

reared approximately 300,000 oysters to a size large enough to be moved to the farms beds in Drayton Harbor. These are now in vexar mesh bags secured to a mile of ground line and the oysters continue to grow at an amazing pace. We are hoping a few of these will be large enough at the end of October to provide petites to our patient members before the bay is seasonally closed due to unpredictable winter water quality. More on this below.



Besides the flupsy, another new adventure centers around the restoration of our native Olympia Oyster. We are partnering with the Puget Sound Restoration Fund in this effort and have 200,000 very small Oly's growing in the FLUPSY and another 40 bags of cultched seed(oysters attached to shell)stacked on the tidelands waiting to spread on a portion of the farm's lease in the spring.

Water quality continues to be the major obstacle to farm operation. Drayton Harbor is a true gem, growing seed and oysters grow like no other place I have farmed yet unpredictable winter fecal coliform levels keep the bay closed during prime oyster eating time. Geoff Menzies and many of you have spent the past two decades working to secure



the Bay's shellfish legacy and this work will continue. Besides the ongoing fecal monitoring work of the WA Department of Health, County and Tribes, a new initiative, Whatcom Clean Water, will bring new energy to the effort to identify and remove sources of contamination. This winter we will work with Whatcom County on water quality sampling in the bay as well the lower reaches of California and Dakota creek in efforts to identify and remove



sources of fecal contamination plaguing Drayton Harbor and Portage Bay, Whatcom County's two commercial shellfish growing areas.



Community outreach continues to be a big and an essential part of the farming day. Our two month presence at the Bellingham Farmers Market and the recent Drayton Harbor Days weekend offered endless opportunities to connect with community members and talk oysters. Julie Hirsch's Salish Sea curriculum program brought over a hundred fifth grade students to the Beauty for a floating experience around the sorting table. Having the FLUPSY moored at gate 3 has brought the farm to Blaine's backdoor and generated almost daily discussions with passing



recreational and commercial boaters. Other connecting opportunities are just around the corner with this week's Water Weeks farm tours and the Whatcom Clean Water Community meeting held September 10 in Lynden.



Interns from Bellingham Technical College Fisheries Program continue to play an increasing role in the Drayton Harbor Community Farm. Many of you have had the pleasure to meet Jim, Rianna, Jackie, and Wyatt; BTC students we owe a ton of gratitude to for truly going the extra mile in supporting our efforts. A vision shared with BTC is that the Drayton Harbor Farm becomes a major component of the Tech College's Fisheries Program, providing opportunities for students to engage in all aspects of shellfish culture, from water quality sampling, seed production, native oyster restoration, farming and product sales.



It is not too early to renew your CSA memberships which may be purchased at the Puget Sound Restoration Fund web site <http://www.restorationfund.org> or easier yet simply goggle Drayton Harbor Community Oyster Farm and scroll to the bottom of the page for membership information. If you have an uneaten oyster balance remaining in your 2013 account, have no worry.. we will be carrying this over into the 2014 season. Thanks for your continued support and patients and please do

not hesitate to contact me with your question or concerns.

Gratefully

Steve Seymour