

Rocky Bay

Annual Shellfish Growing Area Review



Prepared By: Scott Chernoff

Area: Rocky Bay

Year Ending: December 31, 2023

Classification: Approved, Conditionally Approved, Restricted, Prohibited

Activities in the Growing Area in 2023

The growing area was sampled a minimum of six times in accordance with the National Shellfish Sanitation Program (NSSP) Systematic Random Sampling criteria. Stations 21, 22, 25 and 780 were sampled 12 times. All samples at Station 25 were collected during Open status. The Conditionally Approved area was closed four times for a total of 24 days due to rainfall (≥ 1 inch in 24-hours). All of Rocky Bay was closed once for seven days due to excessive rainfall (≥ 3 inches in 24-hours). During October, the Department changed the closure period in the Conditionally Approved Area Management Plan from a 5-day closure to a 6-day closure at Station 25 due to SOP GA-CA-03 showing that a 6-day closure period is necessary for waters to return to background fecal coliform levels following 1-inch of rain in 24-hours.

The Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, Pierce County Surface Water Management, and Pierce Conservation District continued pollution identification and correction activities in the watershed. The Rocky Bay Shellfish Protection District continues to meet quarterly.

Analytical Results of Water Samples

Table 1 summarizes the most recent 30 samples collected from each of the sampling stations. All stations meet the NSSP standard for an Approved classification. However, there are only five samples in the dataset collected during rainfall closures in the Conditionally Approved area. Before a reclassification can be considered, more samples need to be collected following rainfall exceeding one inch in 24 hours.

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 standards for an Approved classification and the area is correctly classified. The Department should target sampling following rainfall to fully understand the impact of rainfall on Station 25 prior to reclassification. Station 22 in the Restricted area should be evaluated for reclassification to the Conditionally Approved. The Department should continue to collaborate with Pierce County to identify and correct sources of pollution in the Rocky Bay watershed.

Management Plan Evaluation

1. Have all parties involved complied with the conditions of the management planYes
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 Rocky 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
19	Approved	1/24/2019 - 11/1/2023	1.7 - 33.0	2.2	5.4	Y
21	Approved	7/29/2021 - 12/13/2023	1.7 - 33.0	2.9	10.2	Y
23	Approved	1/24/2019 - 11/1/2023	1.7 - 49.0	2.6	8.0	Y
24	Approved	1/24/2019 - 11/1/2023	1.7 - 49.0	3.9	16.4	Y
26	Approved	1/24/2019 - 11/1/2023	1.7 - 94.0	2.3	6.4	Y
29	Approved	1/24/2019 - 11/1/2023	1.7 - 79.0	2.8	10.6	Y
34	Approved	1/24/2019 - 11/1/2023	1.7 - 7.8	2.0	3.1	Y
25	Conditionally Approved	7/29/2021 - 12/13/2023	1.7 - 17.0	2.8	7.7	Y
780	Prohibited	7/29/2021 - 12/13/2023	1.7 - 49.0	5.9	24.2	Y
22	Restricted	7/29/2021 - 12/13/2023	1.7 - 79.0	4.5	20.7	Y
812	Unclassified	1/24/2019 - 11/1/2023	1.7 - 7.8	2.0	3.4	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.

MAP 1. Rocky Bay Growing Area

