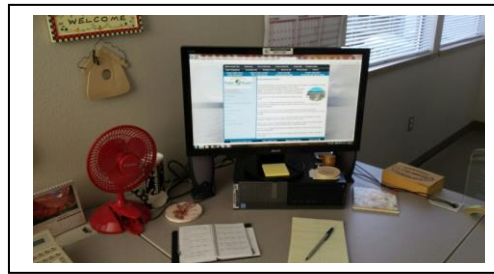


**From the Desk of the  
Environmental Health Manager  
February & March 2018**

For Board of Health March 27, 2018



The Environmental Health Section has had a busy two months. Much of our focus has been on water quality with the development of statements of work for two new shellfish protection districts (SPD) in Annas Bay and North Bay. Both new SPDs are a challenge in the fact that one area, Allyn, is on public sewer and the other, Annas Bay, is influenced by the Skokomish Reservation lands.

Work has started in the area of Hammersley Inlet that experienced Noro Virus outbreaks over the past few winters. The City of Shelton Wastewater Treatment plan was tested by City staff, Department of Health Staff and representatives from the Food and Drug Agency. Katie Otanez from our office helped in one of the boats during the dye test – it was a miserable cold, wet day. We are waiting for results of the study. Early comments indicate that the sewage treatment plant is doing its job very well.

Fortunately, we have been able to secure grant funding to perform water quality work during 2018 and into the first quarter of 2019. Recent media reports indicate that funding from the EPA to areas including Hood Canal may be cut by up to 90 % in 2019. We are working with the BOCC to secure adequate, sustainable funding for our water quality work because our shellfish industry depends on it. We are also working with the commissioners to develop a Mason County Shellfish Initiative fashioned somewhat after the Governor's State Shellfish Initiative.

Onsite permits continue to come in at a pace almost double last year's "year to date" numbers. Food inspections are not only shared with the media (published in the Journal) but are now easy to locate on the county web site. With the Legislature approving the capital budget, we are once again receiving our funding for the solid waste program. Funding was reduced in the appropriation, but we are receiving it and can ramp back up to about 2/3 position support. Maria is still doing the Group A sanitary survey program to round out her position.

The state Department of Health is working with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to perform water fixture lead testing in schools. We will be notified when they come into Mason County to sample and will receive copies of the results. EH staff will be collecting water samples, soil samples and dust samples at the homes of children with high blood lead test results – historically 0-4 cases per year.

As many of you already know I announced my retirement effective July 1, 2018 – last day of work is Friday, June 29th. I will be working with Dave to make a smooth transition for the department. I have been working with staff to help them see the bigger picture of Environmental Public Health and where they and their programs fit. They are a talented group of professionals who will provide services, technical assistance and guidance to our citizens into the future. I am leaving the section in good hands.

Today's Environmental Health Issues are Tomorrow's Public Health Issues