

SMP FACT SHEET #5

Aquaculture

Aquaculture & Washington State Law

Aquaculture is the farming of fish, shellfish, or other aquatic plants and animals. Local examples include geoducks, clams, and oysters.

- The WA Department of Ecology (Ecology) lays the framework for how aquaculture is regulated.
- Washington law considers aquaculture an activity of statewide interest, that with proper management can result in long-term benefits to shorelines. Aquaculture is considered a preferred use when consistent with control of pollution and prevention of damage to the environment.
- Counties cannot prohibit aquaculture or geoduck production; however, they do regulate how and where it occurs with their local Shoreline Master Program.

Aquaculture & the SMP

- The Ecology Shoreline Master Programs Handbook, used to update the County's SMP, draws on research and findings from the WA Governor's Office, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the state Noxious Weeds Control Board, the federal National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit program, WA Department of Natural Resources, Puget Sound Restoration Fund, and Pacific Shellfish Institute.

Aquaculture & Permitting

- Aquaculture is regulated by many agencies. Each producer is required to obtain federal, state, and county permits that may include health certifications, aquatic farm permits, clean water permits, aquatic land leases, fish transfer permits, tribal harvest notifications, Endangered Species Act consultations, food processing permits, and more.
- Permit requirements include standards related to managing noise, light, aesthetics, plastics, public access, and water quality.

Recent Case Law

- Aquaculture operations have been the subject of much case law in Washington State.
- Thurston County is monitoring emerging case law to ensure that the SMP meets all applicable regulations and is legally defensible.

www.ThurstonPlanning.org



Shoreline Master Program (SMP)

***NOT YET ADOPTED - OPEN FOR PUBLIC COMMENT.**

ASK STAFF

Thurston County's SMP covers most shoreline building projects.

Contact Us about your site and which permits may still be required.

READ THE CODE

Title 19

TC Current Shoreline Codes

FIND IT ONLINE

Shoreline Master Program Webpage