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**Contact Person: Tom Kunesh  
Environmental Health Supervisor**

**360 676-6724**

**WHATCOM COUNTY RECOMMENDS THAT CITIZENS TEMPORARILY HALT RECREATIONAL SHELLFISH HARVEST**

**WHATCOM COUNTY** – The Whatcom County Health Department has recommended that citizens temporarily discontinue recreational harvest of molluscan shellfish due to potential contamination from flooding. Molluscan shellfish include clams, mussels, and oysters.

Heavy rainfall has pushed rivers and streams above flood stage. Flood waters flowing into recreational shellfish harvesting areas may be contaminated with raw sewage and animal waste from property damage upstream. Molluscan shellfish feed by filtering water and may concentrate harmful bacteria and viruses from contaminated water.

“The Washington State Department of Health Routinely orders **commercial** growers to discontinue shellfish harvesting in areas affected by heavy rains,” according to John Wolpers, Environmental Health Manager with the Whatcom County Health Department. “We want to warn **recreational** harvesters about this potential health risk so they can take precautions to protect their health.”

This recommendation will remain in effect until further notice.

**###END###**