



State of Washington

## DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

Mailing Address: 600 Capitol Way N - Olympia, Washington 98501-1091 - (360) 902-2200, TDD (360) 902-2207

Main Office location: Natural Resources Building - 1111 Washington Street SE - Olympia, WA

### DETERMINATION OF NONSIGNIFICANCE (DNS)

**Name of Proposal:** NATIVE OYSTER HABITAT ENHANCEMENT IN LIBERTY BAY

**Description of Proposal:** Olympia oyster habitat enhancement will add settling structure to nearshore regions of Liberty Bay, providing the means for extant populations of native oysters to expand their numbers and range near both Scandia and Dogfish Bay. Larval production in Dogfish Bay, Keyport, and Scandia is known to exist. A healthy population of native oysters – including multiple age classes – occupies U.S. Navy property at Keyport, and many more oysters can be found amongst Pacific oyster shell piles, left behind by an old oyster farming operation, near Scandia. Puget Sound Restoration Fund has also found single oysters in suitable habitat on the eastern side of Dogfish Bay and on a breakwater at the Poulsbo Marine Science Center. The pattern in Liberty Bay is clear: where there is structure – including shell material, large rocks, and even cement – there are native oysters.

What this suggests is that structure, not larval production, is the limiting factor in the return of Liberty Bay's historic native oyster population. The best thing we can do to aid in their comeback is to provide what many areas of the Bay are currently lacking – substrate on which native oyster larvae will settle. Olympia oysters are somewhat picky in their habitat requirements, almost never surviving on mud, sand, in heavy currents or wave action, or in areas of high silt deposition. They do, however, readily attach to oyster shell. Baseline monitoring of the proposed restoration site by Dr. Jonathan Davis revealed a number of native oysters already thriving on old piles of Pacific oyster shell, and a pilot habitat enhancement project undertaken by PSRF in May 2005 has succeeded in recruiting additional native oysters from waters near Scandia.

With this in mind, Puget Sound Restoration Fund, Dr. Davis, the Suquamish Tribe, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), Hood Canal Oyster Company and the U.S. Navy have undertaken a collaborative effort to expand available habitat for Puget Sound's only native oyster in Liberty Bay. Spreading additional Pacific oyster shell over 2 acres of state-owned tidelands near Scandia and .5 acres in Dogfish Bay in 2007 will greatly increase settling structure, and will take advantage of the Bay's large volume of native oyster larvae currently unable to find enough places in which to settle and grow to maturity. The expansion of a filter-feeding, reef-building species will improve habitat, nutrient cycling, and water quality in a bay that is sorely in need of attention – but certainly not beyond our capacity to restore. If the effort continues to be successful, enhancement will be expanded to 7-8 acres of adjacent state-owned tidelands in Liberty Bay and approximately .5 to 1 acre in Dogfish Bay.

**Proponent/Applicant:** Puget Sound Restoration Fund, 590 Madison Ave. N,  
Bainbridge Island, WA 98110

**Location of Proposal, including street, if any:** Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife tidelands in Liberty Bay , Scandia, Washington, Kitsap County; Section 22, Township 26 North, Range 01 EastWM

**Lead Agency:** Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)

WDFW has determined that this proposal will have no probable significant adverse impacts on the environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement (EIS) is not required under RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c). We made this determination of nonsignificance (DNS) after review of the environmental checklist and other information on file with us. This information is available to the public on request.

Agencies, affected tribes and members of the public are invited to comment on this proposal.

We issued this DNS under WAC 197-11-340(2). We will **not act on this proposal for 14 days** from the date of issuance of this DNS. If you have comments about this DNS or this proposal, we must receive your comments by **May 15, 2007**.

When you send us your comments, please provide the name of proposal in your comment letter and mail it to:

**Responsible Official:** Teresa A. Eturaspe

**Position/Title:** SEPA/NEPA Coordinator, Regulatory Services Section

**Address:** 600 Capitol Way North, Olympia, WA 98501

You can also send your comments via email to: [SEPAdesk@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:SEPAdesk@dfw.wa.gov)

You can also send you comments via fax to: (360) 902-2946.

If you have questions about details of the proposal, contact: Betsy Peabody, Executive Director, Puget Sound Restoration Fund, **Phone:** (206) 780-6947 **email:** [betsy@restorationfund.org](mailto:betsy@restorationfund.org)

If you have questions about this action, please contact:

Teresa A. Eturaspe **Phone:** (360) 902-2575 **Fax:** (360) 902-2946 or  
**email:** [SEPAdesk@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:SEPAdesk@dfw.wa.gov)

**DATE OF ISSUE:** May 1, 2007

**SIGNATURE:**



SEPA Log Number: 07 -037. dns