



# Conservation in Washington: Powered by People



## MAKING AN IMPACT:

- *Fecal pollution in Henderson Shellfish Protection District decreased at several water quality monitoring stations from HIGH in 2001 to LOW in 2009.*
- *340 acres of degraded shellfish beds upgraded to Approved or Conditionally Approved.*
- *Cost-share provided to 12 landowners, resulting in 36 conservation practices.*

## THURSTON CONSERVATION DISTRICT - LANDOWNERS WORK TO REOPEN SHELLFISH BEDS

Declining water quality in heavily developed areas of Thurston County led to several shellfish classification downgrades. This triggered the formation of a Shellfish Protection District (SPD) in 2001. Soon after, Thurston Conservation District agreed to dedicate 28 percent of the District's county assessment funding to improving water quality in the Henderson and Nisqually SPDs.

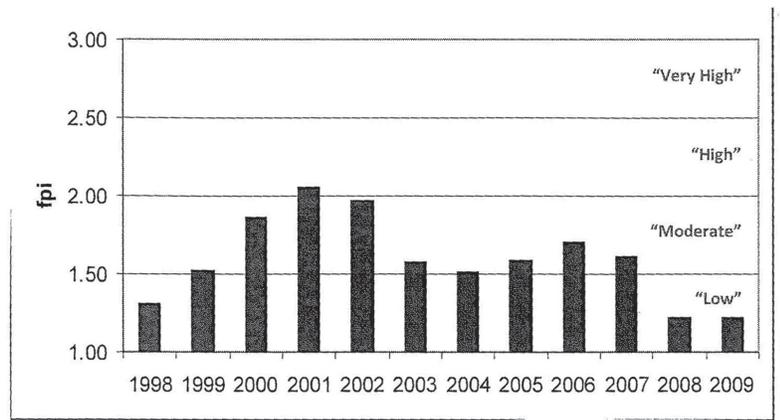
**FINDING A COMMON PATH** Thurston Conservation District developed 26 conservation plans (85 percent of which are fully implemented) in areas of high fecal counts. Cost-share was provided to 12 landowners, resulting in the implementation of 36 conservation practices. These practices included installation of five waste storage structures; 11,462 feet of gutters and downspouts; 942 acres of nutrient management; and construction of eight livestock confinement areas.

**RESULTS ON THE GROUND** In the areas where landowners implemented conservation practices, fecal pollution in Henderson SPD decreased from HIGH in 2001 to LOW in 2009 (Washington Department of Health). In all, Thurston Conservation District recorded 213 implemented agricultural practices throughout the SPD. Of the 650 acres of degraded shellfish beds in Henderson SPD, 340 acres were upgraded to Approved or Conditionally Approved. The District continues to focus on and dedicate funding to these areas.

Direct quantitative measurement of remediation is complex. It requires extensive, standardized record-keeping and regular reporting by local agencies, which is rudimentary in most jurisdictions. However, the reopening of shellfish beds in SPDs following the implementation of practices by the Thurston Conservation District is a clear sign of success.

“Without the dedicated funding provided through the Conservation District assessment and combined efforts with our partners, we would not have seen such success in the Henderson Inlet,” said Kathleen Whalen, Thurston Conservation District Administrator. “Our partners recognize our unique ability to get onto private land because of our non-regulatory nature.”

Livestock stable before (top) and after Thurston Conservation District worked with landowners to install confinement area (bottom)



Graph showing decreasing fecal pollution levels in Henderson SPD following the implementation of 36 conservation practices by the Thurston Conservation District and participating landowners.