

READERS' JOURNAL:

Letters lack transparency

Editor, the Journal:

Bill Burrows and Donald Stave have sounded off repeatedly in letters to the editor and in various public forums about their desire to prevent geoduck farming on state-owned tidelands (Geoduck dialogue continues here – 8/28/08, Keep tidelands open to the public – 10/2/08 and Some facts about shellfish 11-13-08).

Claiming to represent the citizens of Harstine Island (some, but not all of which they no doubt do), they virtuously argue that the state-owned tidelands should be preserved for everyone's public enjoyment. While their mission is laudable, their transparency is not.

Yet to be acknowledged in these letters or forums is that Mr. Burrows and Mr. Stave are neighbors with beautiful waterfront homes on Harstine Island. Unlike many waterfront homeowners in the Puget Sound, the state, not them, owns most of the tidelands in front of their homes.

They also fail to mention, as they virtuously argue to preserve public tidelands for the benefit of all, that the tidelands in front of their homes have been offered by the Washington Department of Natural Resources for leasing for geoduck farming. Perhaps

most significantly, they also fail to mention that there is no public access from the upland to these state-owned tidelands in front of their homes and that this "public" beach, has effectively until now been "theirs."

No doubt, that is why it was selected by DNR to lease for geoduck culture – because there was no convenient public access to it and, because of that, limited public use of it.

By way of further evidence of Mr. Burrow's lack of transparency, it is of note that he introduces himself as a professor and proceeds to talk like a biologist while pontificating on the environmental effects of geoduck aquaculture. In fact, Mr. Burrows has no biological credentials – he has a master's degree in information systems and he's a senior lecturer emeritus. The lack of transparency is truly appalling.

Jim Gibbons
Olympia

Agreement on geoduck plan?

Editor, the Journal:

I would like to respond to Mr. John Lentz's letter in the September 25 edition of the *Journal* headlined "We can share the tidelands."

In his letter, the president of the Pacific Coast Shellfish Growers Associa-

tion explained that the Revised Code of Washington relating to DNR practices of the Department of Natural Resources requires "balancing public benefits," in this instance by allowing both recreation and shellfish farming on state tidelands. He continues with a statement that the DNR should continue to consider concerns about recreational access when selecting sites for shellfish aquaculture and negotiating lease provisions.

I find these statements to be highly encouraging. It is the position of the concerned citizens on Harstine and Stretch islands that the state is not balancing the recreational and industrial uses adequately and we are pleased to see that Mr. Lentz agrees that the DNR needs to recognize and promote recreational uses of our tidelands.

According to DNR records, Taylor Shellfish is currently leasing 292 acres for oyster and clam aquaculture from the state and Seattle Shellfish is currently leasing 18.5 acres. The DNR wants to lease public beaches for geoduck aquaculture. These leases would include the acres on Harstine Island

and 5.5 acres on Stretch Island as well as other beaches in Case Inlet and Hood Canal.

These beaches have decades of history providing recreation to local residents, visitors and boaters. The beach on Harstine Island has a very high density of naturally occurring shellfish that are recreationally harvested by many of the public. These are smooth, sandy beaches that encourage family walks and beach combing. The lack of rocks encourages boaters to beach their boats to picnic, stroll the beaches, and enjoy these jewels of Puget Sound.

It seems to us that if just two of the more than 100 Washington members of the growers group are currently leasing over 310 acres of public tidelands, then letting the citizens keep 29.5 acres unrestricted for recreational use is not a greedy request. Given Mr. Lentz's stated support for recreation uses of state tidelands, we call for the association to support our request that the DNR withdraw the beaches in Case Inlet and Hood Canal from the geoduck aquaculture program.

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We welcome letters at
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