

## PUBLIC HEALTH NEWS

February 19, 2016

### **Kitsap Public Health District releases 2015 Water Quality Report**

*More than 3,500 acres of shellfish beds upgraded; 22 streams showing improvement*

KITSAP COUNTY, WA— The Kitsap Public Health District in partnership with Clean Water Kitsap has released its 2015 Water Quality Monitoring Report for Kitsap County. The report is available on-line at [www.kitsappublichealth.org](http://www.kitsappublichealth.org).

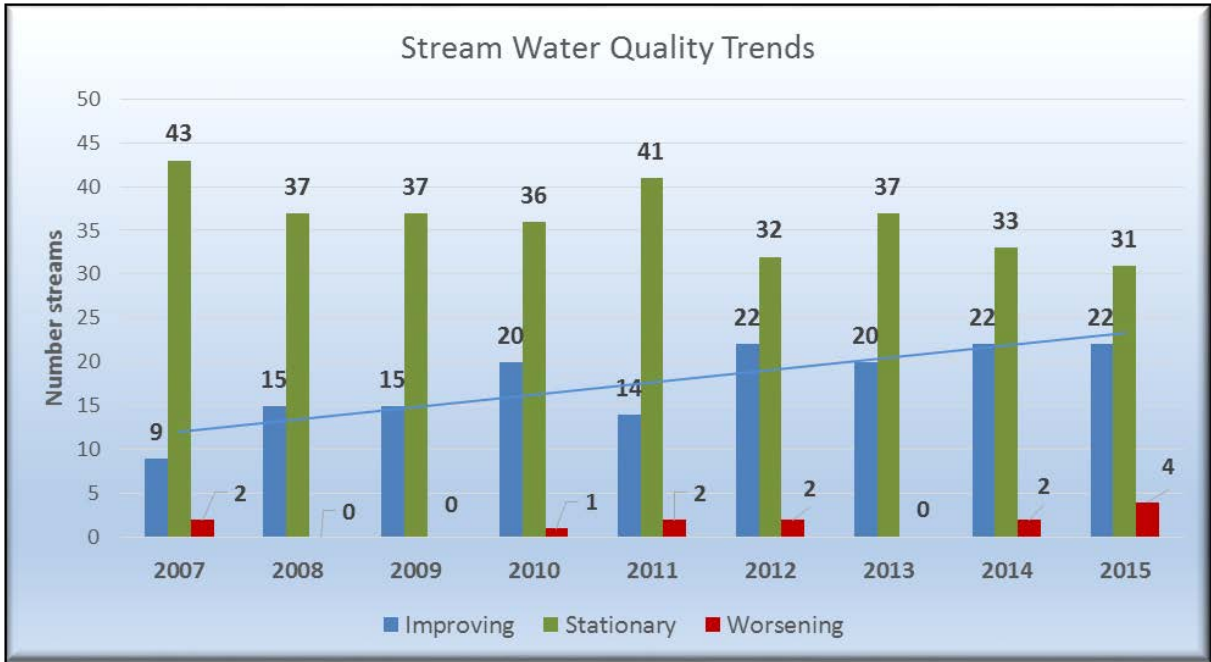
To protect public health, Kitsap Public Health tests streams and marine waters monthly, and public swimming beaches weekly during the summer months. This report summarizes bacteria levels in 57 Kitsap County streams, five marine embayments, and 17 lakes for 2015. Additionally, shoreline monitoring was completed in three areas in 2015. A summary of these efforts is included in the report.

The report also includes the annual list of streams that will require public health advisories in 2016. Public health advisories are posted when contamination levels are high enough to pose a health risk for people coming in contact with the water.

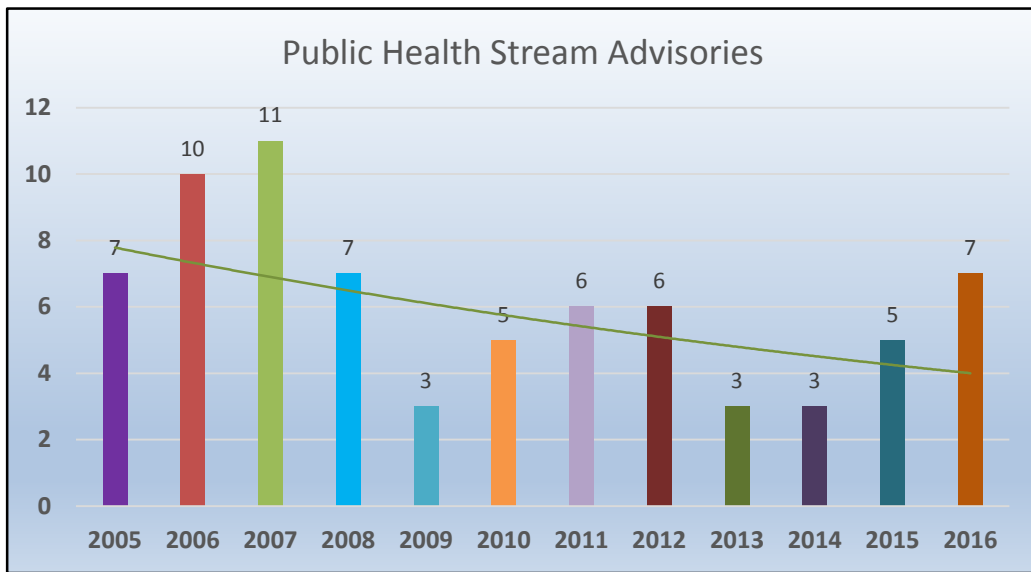
Some highlights from the 2015 water quality report include:

- **Shellfish growing area upgrades:** Since 1996 Kitsap Public Health has been conducting water quality monitoring and pollution identification & correction activities throughout Kitsap County. As a result of these efforts, and the efforts of our Clean Water Kitsap partners and the City of Bremerton, **3, 546 acres** of shellfish growing areas have been upgraded!
- **Stream improvements:** There were 22 streams with improving water quality trends and 31 streams which show stationary trends. Four streams showed worsening trends. Correction of pollution sources such as failing septic systems, adopting best management practices to prevent run-off from agricultural properties, cleaning storm water systems, and practices such as picking up and disposing pet waste are continuing to protect the water quality of Kitsap streams. Statistical analysis for long term water quality trends since 2007 show an overall improving trend as shown in the graph.

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- Public health advisories for streams:** Public health advisories will be posted on 7 streams in 2016. These include Lofall creek, that drains into northern Hood Canal; Ostrich and Phinney (Dyes Inlet), Barrantes Creek and Bjorgen Creek (Liberty Bay), Karcher Creek (Sinclair Inlet) and Bear Creek (Burley Lagoon). Kitsap Public Health is conducting investigations in each of these areas to identify sources of pollution affecting these streams. Overall there has been a downward trend in the number of streams requiring public health advisories since 2005.



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- **Public health advisories for swimming beaches:** There was one public health advisory issued in 2015 for potentially toxic algae bloom in Kitsap Lake. Three public swimming beaches were closed at Island Lake and Wildcat for elevated levels of E. coli bacteria, and the third closure in Kitsap Lake for a toxic algae bloom.

Kitsap Public Health's Water Pollution Identification and Correction (PIC) Program uses this extensive water quality monitoring data to help clean up pollution sources. Once bacterial sources are identified, PIC staff work with property owners to develop corrective action plans.

The PIC program's work has been recognized by the Washington State Department of Health and Department of Ecology, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Puget Sound Partnership, and serves as a model for other Puget Sound counties. Information on the PIC program and the report are available at [www.kitsappublichealth.org](http://www.kitsappublichealth.org).

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