

PUGET SOUND

National Estuary Program

CLALLAM COUNTY PIC PROGRAM

The Pollution Identification and Correction (PIC) Program aims to keep people and the environment healthy by keeping bacterial pollution out of Clallam County waters.

Tracer Dye Testing

Tracer dyes are one tool used to explore potential pollution sources. When we can't see exactly where water travels over and under the ground, dyes can help show those pathways.



How Does it Work?

- Charcoal packets are placed in a waterway
- Dyes are introduced at a point assumed to be "upstream" or "up-gradient"
- Charcoal packets in the water are collected and replaced over a series of weeks
- Collected packets are analyzed in a laboratory to see if they've absorbed dyes from the water
- If/when dye shows up in charcoal packets we can gain clues as to its travelled path

Meadowbrook Slough Testing

Dye testing was performed in Meadowbrook Slough in July and August of 2017. A red dye was used on Mapes St., a pink dye was used on Palmer St., and a yellow dye was used on Abernathy St. Dyes were added to sinks, toilets, showers, and other fixtures of participating homeowners to explore possible connections to Meadowbrook Slough.



After a couple of weeks, the fluorescent red dye from Mapes St. showed up in the slough with a very strong signal. This means wastewater from the fixtures tested likely does not receive adequate treatment before it enters Meadowbrook Slough. Also of note: a non-trivial amount of fluorescent yellow dye was detected in a single charcoal packet upstream from where tracer dye was used on Abernathy. This packet may have picked up antifreeze from cars as the very same fluorescent yellow tracer dye used is what manufacturers put in antifreeze to make it yellow.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

clallam.net/HHS/EnvironmentalHealth/PICProject.html
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