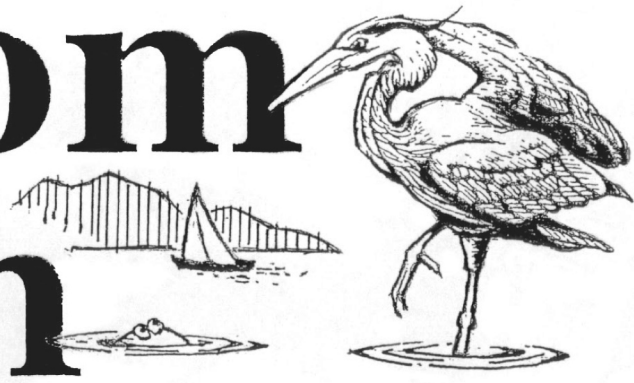


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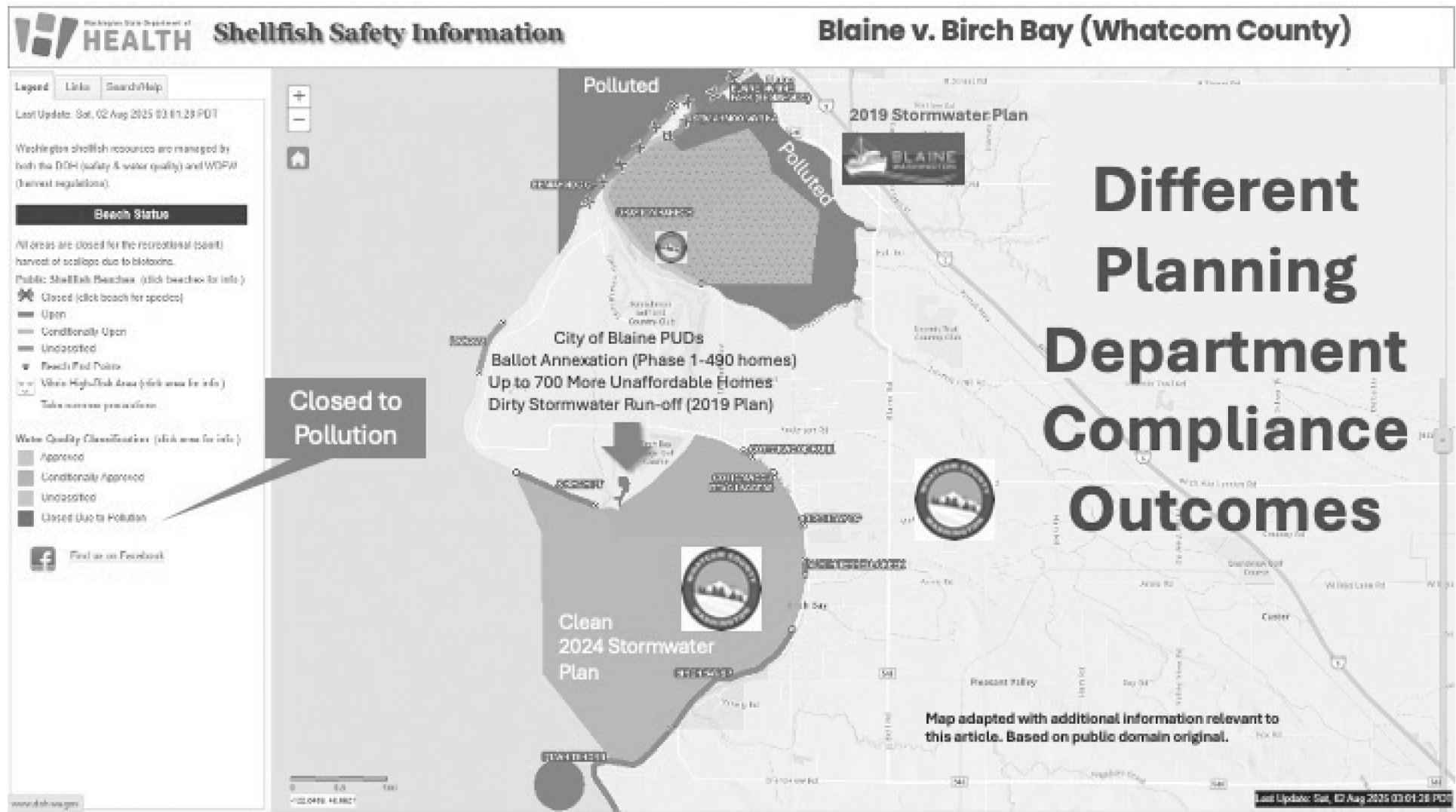
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Top 10 Rules Playbook: A Blaine Case Study



Editor's Note: This article was written without any guidance from Whatcom Watch. The newspaper is run by volunteers; it serves as a forum for people concerned about issues in Whatcom County.

by Tina Erwin and Otto Pointer (i)

Introduction

In the small coastal city of Blaine, Washington — home to about 6,371 residents in Whatcom County (1, 2) — a group of community volunteers known as the Blaine Water Coalition (BWC) discusses how Blaine's planning department [Community Development Services Department (CDS)], aided by state oversight gaps, has turned complex regulations into tools of "regulatory capture" (ii) — sidelining pub-

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Stormwater Bacteria Counts Stir Up Concerns

Editor's Note: Whatcom Watch has entered a cooperative agreement with Salish Current. When possible, we will share each other's content. Salish Current, an online-only news organization, covers the North Sound area and Whatcom Watch mainly covers Whatcom County issues. Visit <https://salish-current.org>.

Luisa Loi is a freelance reporter for Salish Current. After graduating from Western Washington University in 2022, she wrote for the Whidbey News-Times and Whatcom Watch. She mostly enjoys writing about the environment, social issues and people with unique stories, crafting, exploring the Pacific Northwest and finding her next binge-able TV show.

by Luisa Loi

Part II

High bacteria counts in stormwater are prompting concerns, as volunteer citizen scientists walk Anacortes and Bellingham shores to help track outfall water quality.

Forever Chemicals

According to RE Sources, 75 percent of toxic chemicals in the Puget Sound were introduced by stormwater.

Squalicum Creek

In 2024, RE Sources tested Squalicum Creek — rated as "threat" — for a second year to detect "forever chemicals" or PFAS, short for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, which derive from household

and industrial products and can have significant effects on the health of humans and wildlife "even in extremely low concentrations," according to the nonprofit.

While the majority of the samples contained less than the typical 50 parts per trillion of PFAS for streams in Washington, four sites in Squalicum Creek had concentrations that exceeded this standard, reaching 393.3 parts per trillion just downstream of Hannegan Road.

According to RE Sources, this could mean that one or more sources are releasing the chemicals into the creek, with two suspects being a firefighting training facility that may have discharged firefighting foam — which contains PFAS — into the creek, or a truck wash station that

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