

Best Management Practices for Geoduck Aquaculture in Washington State, 2015

Washington State Association of Conservation Committee

Whereas the state of Washington's Shoreline Management Act (SMA) ((RCW 90.58.080) provides a broad policy framework for protecting the natural resources and ecology of the state's beaches and shorelines and;

Whereas Shoreline Master Program (SMP) established the standard of "no net loss" of shoreline ecological functions in WAC 173-26-186(8) which directs counties to include in their Shoreline Master Programs "policies and regulations designed to achieve no net loss of those ecological functions."

Whereas National Audubon Society encourages the application of Best Available Science as a standard to determine evaluation and mitigation for projects that may cause environmental damage or change the habitat or feeding practices of birds and other wildlife, and:

Whereas the WSACCA adopted a resolution in 2007 regarding moratorium on geoduck aquaculture in Washington State in 2007.

Whereas the adoption of a recommended list of mitigation practices reduces risks to birds and wildlife by limiting the use of predator control area netting and also reduces the risk of birds being trapped in aquaculture equipment.

Whereas the adoption of a recommended list of mitigation practices reduces risks to birds and wildlife starving by applying mitigation that encourages the use of non-toxic plastics. Such plastics keep wildlife and fish from ingesting microplastics which when ingested by birds, fish and wildlife causes starvation.

Whereas site preparation techniques allowed in some counties allow scraping beach soils to remove creatures that compete with the geoduck's growth. The recommended list of mitigation practices would limits changes in benthic community in the substrate during the site preparation and planting of geoducks.

Whereas current methods of site preparation destroys benthic community, flora and fauna important to shorebirds and diving ducks. Current Harvesting practices turns the beach to sand where nothing grows on the site for six months or longer. Adoption of a recommended list of mitigation practices contributes to biological diversity by changing the methods used by geoduck aquaculture operators during site preparation, planting and harvesting.

Now therefore be it resolved by the Washington State Association of Conservation Committees to adopt as their geoduck aquaculture policy the mitigation sequencing practices listed in Appendix 1.

And further that this policy be used as a guideline to assist interested chapters in adopting as their county's Shoreline Master Plan, or in appealing county shoreline permits or used in reforming the shoreline management plans in their respective counties.

And further, to repeal the moratorium on Geoduck Aquaculture resolution passed by WSACC in 2007 placing a moratorium on Geoduck Aquaculture in Washington State

And further to encourage each chapter to request the use of cumulative impact analysis on the effects that Geoduck Aquaculture techniques might have on loss of bird and wildlife habitat eelgrass, kelp and forage fish, loss of feeding and foraging areas of shorebirds, diving ducks, and wildlife.

And finally, the mitigation sequencing and the geoduck aquaculture policy that is outlined in the Appendix and adopted in this resolution does not apply to the wild harvest of geoducks by divers on tribal lands or Department of Natural Resources lands which are 10 feet below the water surface at the lowest tides of the month. This resolution only pertains to Geoduck Aquaculture grown and harvested on intertidal lands on beaches in the state of Washington below the ordinary high tide line.