

The Port takes another environmental step forward

By Bob McChesney, Executive Director, the Port of Edmonds

It has been said that our respect for the environment can be measured by what we throw away.

Perhaps more realistically, it might better say not only *what* we throw away, but where and how we choose to do it, as well.

If that standard is meaningful for individuals, it is a thousand times more important for the Port of Edmonds. With just under a thousand tenant vessels moored here, plus our workyard, temporary guest boaters, walkers and other visitors, the Port can, and does, generate a significant amount of garbage and other human detritus that can easily be recycled.

Looking back, it would be no exaggeration to say that the Port of Edmonds has increasingly placed protection of the environment at the top of our list of facility management and policy objectives.

It was in this spirit that we recently launched a professional study to determine if there might be better—and more cost effective—ways to collect and remove the materials we throw away.

Although the Port has always had effective waste, garbage and recycling programs, the rationale for this study was to examine whether there might be improved methods for handling our stream of waste by-products, and especially recycling. Although Port staff has many years of experience managing public facilities, we consulted five outside authorities to obtain additional insight and recommendations that may have recently been developed.

We began with an earlier study of our practices by an intern from Landau Associates, the Edmonds-based environmental engineering firm, with whom we have had a long relationship.

We also utilized the advice of Seattle's MAKERS Architecture & Urban Design; Sound

Disposal, our local contractor; and Steve Fisher, the recycling coordinator for the City of Edmonds.

Additionally, we met with and partnered with Puget Soundkeeper Alliance, whose stated mission is to stop pollution from entering Puget Sound, an objective we enthusiastically share.

After numerous meetings, among our conclusions were that the Port's recycling procedures, while responsible and effective, have become less efficient because of our diverse user base and changes in methods. For example, many of the marina's enclosures for garbage and recycling need to be expanded. We also found that we need added capacity for recycling collection in the north marina and—with the new Edmonds Yacht Club facility—a new enclosure is needed there.

The area where the Port is located—where the land meets the sea—is perhaps the most environmentally challenging in Edmonds. It is also the most ecologically sensitive, where even the smallest of amounts of contamination matters can made a big difference. Human activities in and around the near shore environment matters very much. Recycling is worth the effort. We know this from what we can see everyday.

Please join us in doing what you can by disposing of things properly. Let's thank Mother Nature for all she has given us by treating her with the respect she deserves.

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