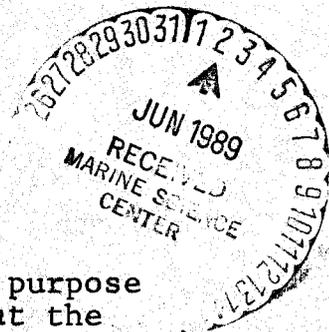


YAQUINA BAY WATER QUALITY TASK FORCE
MAY 10, 1989



This meeting had originally been called for the sole purpose of discussing the results of OSHD's 10-day sampling at the end of March. The recent Hepatitis A outbreak in Lincoln County and its possible link to oysters from Oregon Oyster Co. became a critical topic for discussion as well.

Debbie Cannon reported on the sampling results in two areas: long-term results needed to re-classify the estuary and the 10-day results needed to modify the closure criteria. Regarding the long-term results she noted some improvement in the numbers but not enough to change the "conditionally approved" status of the bay. Ron Phillips asked whether the sample results could be averaged across the entire oyster zone as that would result in a number below 14. Cannon said she'd check into it.

She then presented the 10-day sample results which showed continued FC estimates above 14 for the entire period. Based on these results the 7-day closure period will remain in effect. Phillips voiced objections to the sampling method and the interpretation of the data as not being in conformance with ISSC regulations. John Faudskar replied that FDA had refused to accept the new "pollution condition" protocol and hadn't incorporated it into the ISSC Manual.

Lou Waschmith asked for meat sample results and Cannon said no meat samples were taken because classification and closures are based entirely on water sample results.

Chairman pointed out the bad fit of the sample results at Oregon Oyster Co. - there were lower numbers above and below this station. Cannon acknowledged the strangeness and offered to do further sampling to clear up the anomaly.

Finally, Cannon reported again on the Valsetz dam removal impact on the Siletz River level. She is getting a letter from USGS for her file that indicates their belief that the dam removal had little or no impact on the river level at the Siletz gauge.

Hilda Moravick gave a report on the current Hepatitis A outbreak in Lincoln County. There were 12 cases in all of 1988 and there have been nine confirmed with four more pending confirmation in the last two weeks. The county Health Department issued a press release after six confirmed cases as a caution to the public. As that time, Health Department officials were beginning to suspect oysters because of the high recentage of infected individuals who reported eating raw oysters. County Health Department contacted the OSHD and OSHD found four more cases statewide who reported oyster consumption from the same source. OSHD then issued a statewide press release identifying oysters from Yaquina Bay as the probable cause of several cases of Hepatitis A.

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Larry Foster presented OSHD's case. Hepatitis A is very infectious - a small dose will cause illness. The only known mode of infection is fecal-oral. It takes 2-6 weeks from infection before symptoms occur and individuals are infectious before they exhibit symptoms. Most people recover with no permanent effects. The virus can't reproduce outside the liver and there's no evidence of how long it can live outside the body. There are well-documented Hepatitis A outbreaks due to contaminated oysters in the Gulf and North Atlantic coasts.

Lou Ann Kelly asked why there weren't cases in this outbreak since so many oysters are eaten raw. Foster replied that a lot of people are immune to Hepatitis A and not every oyster is contaminated. Russ Sinnhuber asked if there could be a carrier responsible. Foster replied that there are no carriers, no employees had reported illness, and that several of the customers bought oysters in the shell. Lilli Clausen asked where the source of the infection could have been since no cases were reported in Lincoln County during March. Foster said that people may have Hepatitis A and not know it. Lou Waschmith asked how enough virus could get into the water to contaminate the oysters when all the septic tank and sewage treatment plants were functioning. Doc Cassel suggested campers, Russ Sinnhuber suggested fishermen. Kelly said that the employees had asked for blood tests and been turned down by the county. Foster said OSHD would support the testing.