



Division of Water BIG LAKE WATER QUALITY PROJECT Process + Planning

What is the Project?

- Summers of 2004, 2005 and 2009, DEC conducted water quality sampling at Big Lake.
- Results showed repeated high levels of petroleum hydrocarbons (gasoline) above State's allowed threshold.
- High levels occurred on high use days near boat launches, marinas and traffic lanes in the East Basin of Big Lake.
- The source of gasoline pollution is motorized watercraft.
- Big Lake is an impaired water body under the Clean Water Act because of this pollution.

How Do We Address the Problem?

What is DEC's Role?

- DEC regulations require lake water quality meet standards and limits set by law.
- Regulations don't specify how to do this unless there is a permitted facility that's the source of the pollution.
- Currently there are no facilities on Big Lake with permits to discharge petroleum.

What is the Community's Role?

- The data tells us when and where the problem is happening – this will help the community and others focus their actions.

- The Big Lake community and their partners (e.g. business owners, Mat-Su Borough, State Parks) need to work together to develop a long-term solution and commitments to take action.
- After that, DEC's role will be to monitor the lake water quality to see if community and partner actions are addressing the problem.
- After 2 summers of "clean" water quality data, EPA will consider removing the impairment status.

What's the Next Step?

- The community will hold 2 work sessions during the month of August and a community meeting in September.
- The purpose of the work sessions is to develop an action plan that reduces gasoline in the lake to within legal limits.
- The action plan is not a regulatory document. DEC will not approve or disapprove of it.
- The plan belongs to the community and other stakeholders.

Need More Information? What to Get Involved? Contact:

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Project Website: http://dec.alaska.gov/water/wnpssc/protection_restoration/biglakewq/index.htm