



DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

Promoting and protecting health, well-being, self-sufficiency, and safety of all in Marin County.



February 14, 2022

TO: Tomales Bay Shoreline Parcel Jurisdictions

SUBJECT: MARIN COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH RECOMMENDATIONS

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The Marin County Health and Human Services (MCHHS), in consultation with the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), has determined there is a public health risk to the shellfish growing waters of Tomales Bay. Increased visitation to Tomales Bay without adequate restroom facilities has resulted in a high risk of human fecal contamination along the shoreline of the bay. The commercial shellfish growing areas in Tomales Bay, regulated for sanitary food safety by CDPH Environmental Management Branch, total 483 acres and are located primarily in waters along the east shore. These are sensitive bivalve shellfish production areas which rely on bacterial water quality standards in order to meet the sanitary requirements for consumption. Human fecal contamination in proximity to these leases threatens the water quality and increases the risk of foodborne outbreaks such as those caused by norovirus.

MCHHS recognizes and thanks the multiple agencies which are aware of this issue and have already completed actions to minimize the disposal of human waste near the shoreline. MCHHS recognizes the right to public access of the shoreline on all public parcels for all visitors to enjoy. Visitors should be reminded of best practices and have access to facilities. Camping is not allowed on the shorelines of Tomales Bay except in certain designated areas of the National Park Service. In response to this risk, MCHHS makes the following general recommendations:

- 1) Parcels with already existing no shoreline access allowed should have enforceable signage, visible from both directions of traffic, such as No Parking Anytime, No Trespassing. Such signage should not be installed in areas that currently do not have authorized parking restrictions or prohibitions, as authorized by a Coastal Development Permit (CDP).
- 2) Parcels with daytime shoreline access allowed only should have enforceable signage, visible from both directions of traffic, to prevent overnight visitation, such as No Camping, No Overnight Parking. Such signage should not be installed in areas that do not already have authorized overnight parking/camping restrictions.
- 3) Parcels with daytime shoreline access allowed should have enforceable signage to minimize human waste deposition near the

high tide line, such as Pack In, Pack Out, No Dumping, Fine for Littering, Open/Closed hours, etc.

- 4) Parcels with overnight shoreline access allowed should have enforceable signage to minimize human waste deposition near the high tide line, such as Pack In, Pack Out, No Dumping, Fine for Littering, Permit Required, etc.
- 5) Parcels with daytime or overnight shoreline access allowed should provide a restroom or port-a-potty, or when a permit is required, specific instructions for human waste disposal incorporated into the permit.
- 6) Parcels with boat launches should have a pump out station for disposing of human waste stored on vessels and a restroom or port-a-potty.

All such signage, restroom facilities, and/or pump out stations would require a Coastal Development Permit (CDP) from Marin County and/or the California Coastal Commission. Restroom facilities and/or pump out stations would also need to conform to Marin County requirements. Agencies should consider both short-term and long-term solutions when reviewing these recommendations, as notably port-a-potties are not a permanent option. CDPH has identified the following parcels on the east shore of Tomales Bay which represent a high risk to aquaculture sanitation due to their close proximity to shellfish growing leases. Special attention should be given to these sites regarding the above recommendations:

- 1) Keys Creek Fishing Area (APN 10404012)
- 2) Hamlet (APN 10411008)
- 3) Grassy Point (APNs 10423021, 10423023, 10421015)
- 4) Marconi Cove Boat Launch (APN 10630011 privately owned & APN 10626002)
- 5) Tomasini Point (APNs 10629004, 10622033)

A map of Tomales Bay shoreline parcels and shellfish leases can be found here:

<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/600cfe2d170049fab23ba92230a40731>

Thank you for your consideration in reviewing these recommendations and for your commitment to protecting the waters of Tomales Bay.

Sincerely,



Matthew D. Willis, MD, MPH  
Public Health Officer – County of Marin

cc:  
Audubon Canyon Ranch  
California Coastal Commission  
California Department of Fish & Wildlife  
California Department of Public Health  
California State Parks  
Caltrans  
East Shore Planning Group  
Environmental Action Committee of West Marin  
Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary  
Marconi Boat Launch  
Marin County Community Development Agency  
Marin County Environmental Health Services  
Marin County Health & Human Services  
Marin County Parks & Open Space  
Marin County Sheriff  
Marin Municipal Water District  
Marin Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program  
National Park Service  
Office of Dennis Rodoni  
Office of Marc Levine  
Office of Mike McGuire  
Office of Jared Huffman  
Regional Water Quality Control Board  
State Lands Commission  
Tomales Bay Watershed Association