

FACT SHEET



Photo: R.P. Oates

Seabin Pilot Project

San Juan County's first Seabin was installed at Orcas Island's Deer Harbor Marina on June 24, 2021 by intrepid volunteers R.P. Oates and Gavin Brackett. A Seabin is a device that filters surface water, capturing and preventing marine debris and pollutants from entering our oceans where they do significant harm to marine life.

How does the Seabin work?

A Seabin is like a garbage can that's attached to a dock and moves up and down with the water level to filter and collect litter in our waterways. Its submersible water pump sucks water in from the surface, passes it through the catch bag and oil absorbing pad, then pumps filtered water (25,000 liters per hour) back into the ocean. This process leaves any floating litter, oil sheen, and marine microplastics as small as two millimeters (smaller than a grain of rice) inside of the catch bag, which we check and empty daily.

Does the Seabin affect marine life?

We've noticed that local fish avoid the Seabin, but we do catch occasional surface-dwelling critters. As we check the Seabin daily, the critters we catch are alive and well and are returned to their habitat by careful hands.



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The Seabin Pilot Project is a joint effort sponsored by San Juan County's Department of Environmental Stewardship, the Marine Resources Committee, and engaged community members. The goal of this study is to determine what types of floating microplastic pollutants are most common in the Salish Sea, understand how to operate and scale trash-trapping technologies to intercept microplastics while they are in transit to shorelines, and facilitate the removal of surface microplastics and oil to better protect marine ecosystems.



The Seabin Pilot Project is truly community-driven!

It was made possible by the vision and commitment of R.P. Oates, a volunteer environmental scientist who has driven the project from its inception. Volunteer Gavin Brackett's knowledge and electrical skills have also been crucial in the Seabin's

operational success. In addition, a dedicated group of volunteers checks the Seabin daily to sort and record the catchment.

How can you get involved?

Reducing your waste, particularly by eliminating single-use plastics, can help a lot. You can also help by picking up litter and disposing of it properly when you see it. Visit www.PlasticFreeSalishSea.org for easy ways to reduce your use of plastic.

Contact For More Information:

Frances C. Robertson
San Juan County Environmental Stewardship
360-375-5271 | francesr@sanjuanco.com



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