

Community Engagement Committee Notes

Skagit Watershed Council, April 28, 2020, 9:30 am – 11:30 am (ZOOM)

Present: Richard Brocksmith (SWC), Scott Bohling (DOE), Stacy Dahl (SLT), Lucy DeGrace (SFEG), Abby Weaver (SLT), Cindy Pierce (SCD), Codi Hamblin (NCI), Wayne Watne (WDFW), Holli Watne (SWC), Susan Wood (PBERR), Karen Summers (SCEA and ECONet), Kristi Carpenter (SCD), Pete Haase (SMRC)

1. Wayne moved to approve April meeting notes. Cindy seconded.
2. The Summer Camp subcommittee (Susan, Kristi, Holli, Lucy, Karen, Pete, Codi) decided to move their first meeting to August. Too much is unknown for planning at this point.
3. Update from Letterbox Trail subcommittee (Holli, Lucy, Karen, Kristi, Abby, Wayne, and Susan):
 - a) Trail dates will be June 20 – October 4, 2020
 - b) These trails will be included: Padilla Bay Upland Trail, Ponomo Grange Trail, and a SLT Wetland Trail (likely Barr Creek, maybe the Utopia property)
 - c) Changes to usual format (due to COVID): Letterboxes will not be hidden. Instead, there will be 6-to-9 Letterbox Stations visible along each trail. Each Letterbox Station will consist of (a) a post in the ground and (b) Letterbox Poster attached to the post.
 - d) Each Letterbox Box Poster will be a different watershed theme and a QR Code. The QR code can be scanned by smart phones and will reveal educational content for each theme. The educational content will be tailored to 3rd and 4th graders but will have content for all ages
 - e) SCEA will create a clue sheet that will be posted on their website. It will inform participants how to find the Letterbox trails and where to find the posts. Once participants finish, they can submit a scan/photo of the sheet for a chance to win a prize.
4. Holli and Lucy agreed to be on a subcommittee to help Ecology with five outreach videos over the next 3-4 months. Kristi will likely also join but was not present at that time in the meeting.
5. In general, the group is concerned about uncertainty in program planning, especially for K-12 students. Some expressed concern that teachers are being overwhelmed with adjusting to a new form of teaching while having various resources poured on them “like water from a firehose”. **Holli agreed to reach out to the school districts to gain insight how to best serve teachers so that the STEAM Train can continue to run next school year.** Some of the group wondered if we should try to communicate with other watershed councils or education coalitions to see how they are handling community engagement in the time of COVID.

6. Pete suggested that we should focus our community engagement efforts away from school children and onto adults for the short-term.
7. Lucy suggested we might get something from the Regional Fishery Enhancement Group meetings. These are the second Wednesday of every month at noon.
8. AmeriCorps updates: Lucy says, "AmeriCorps is probably one of the most reliable and steady jobs in the field right now". SFEG will be offering multiple AmeriCorps positions soon. The education component of the AmeriCorps position will need to adapt in yet unclear ways. SLT will have one AmeriCorps person next season instead of two. Abby has already agreed to stay in that position.
9. We started to have a conversation about coming up with some "common, consistent and really useful messages" but decided to move that conversation to next month. In the meantime, the group agreed it is important to share the work we are doing via social media. It is important to keep community engagement positive.
10. Member updates/ what are you working on?
 - a) Pete – He is a new addition to the CEC group. He wears many hats but mostly represents the Skagit Marine Resource Committee (to a lesser extent, also the Friends of Skagit Beaches). He would like to be able to tie some of the work he has been doing with near-shore habitat work to our work. He acknowledges that this is difficult while a lot of volunteer work is not being done due to health concerns.
 - b) NCI – Codi is having trouble getting teachers to talk about Mountain School this Fall. A lot is not yet known about what Mountain School will look like next school year. Both the schools and the funding are changing in uncertain ways. Usually by this time she has fall wrapped up and is thinking about spring scheduling.
 - c) SFEG - Lucy recently put together a web lesson of macroinvertebrates that hits the key points their stream-based lesson did. She sent out communication to about 25 teachers and has received very little responses.
 - d) SCD – Cindy had been working on a stormwater project with Jefferson Elementary 4th-graders. They will be getting a raingarden installed and she was planning on having the engineers present to the students. She wrote an email to teachers asking how to proceed and got a terse response that make it clear the teacher did not have the capacity to work on this project. "It just breaks my heart", says Cindy. She has also been working with teachers to get students to participate in the poster contest. There were hardly any posters submitted.
 - e) Salish Sea Stewards program is continuing on-line. The platform seems to be working well. Susan can answer questions about the way they are doing this.
 - f) Wayne – still getting projects done but having to "think outside the box". Recently did a planting with Wildcat Steelhead Club. A Boy Scout group was supposed to help, but may be doing maintenance instead.

Next Meeting: June 30th, 9:30-11:30 at Skagit Watershed Council