

Community Engagement Committee

Skagit Watershed Council Feb 23, 2021, 9:30 am – 11:30 am via Zoom

Draft Notes

Present: Stacy Dahl (SLT), Kristi Carpenter (SCD), Lucy DeGrace (SFEG), Pete Haase (SMRC), Olivia Hubert (SFEG), Cindy Pierce (SCD), Allison Roberts (Kulshan Services), Scottie Schneider (SWC), Karen Summers (SCEA and ECONet), Holli Watne (SWC), Wayne Watne (WDFW).

Not Present: Scott Bohling (DOE), Richard Brocksmith (SWC), Stacy de la O (Salish Sea School), Danielle Gartenberg (SFEG), Codi Hamblin – on furlough (NCI), Jeff Giesen (NCI), Beck Pittman (ACFL), Michelle Quast (ECY), Kevin Tate (Skagit PUD), Sylvi Thorstenson (WSU Skagit Extension), Susan Wood (Padilla Bay)

Start: 9:30 am

1. Meeting Notes

We approved the January 2021 meeting notes. Approve January notes Wayne made a motion to approve and Pete seconded to approve.

2. Updates on Skagit Water Weeks (Karen Summers)

- SCEA is hosting Skagit Water weeks, a collection of virtual and socially-distanced events/ resources that teach about water in Skagit County during the entire month of May. There are currently 15 events/resources set, with more in the works. Participants will include Padilla Bay (4 events, including aquarium tours), MoNA (“water is life” art classes), SCD (cutest dog photo contest, in conjunction with the Poop Fairy campaign + video of watershed model lesson), SCEA (letterbox trail + macroinvertebrate video), SFEG (speaker series + maybe a virtual event having to do with the releasing of the “salmon in the classroom” salmon), SWC (daily watershed facts on their FB page all month), national drinking water week, Skagit Audubon (educational walk at Wiley Slough), Salish Sea School, and SLT.
- She reached out to Deception Pass, museums, Tri-Dee Arts, Skagit Valley Food Coop, Chambers of Commerce, various libraries, and Skagit PUD. It was suggested she reach out to Samish Tribe, Skagitonians, and other tribal entities, American Rivers, WSU Extension, and [Terramar Brewstillery](#). **Scottie will send Karen the contact for American Rivers.**
- Allison suggested that Karen get this information via Survey Monkey to keep all the information straight. **Allison volunteered to help Karen organize the information.**

3. Group discussion: using Letterbox Trails

- The Letterbox Trail Subcommittee that was formed last year will continue to plan the trails this year. Their first meeting is set for March 1. This year’s trails will use the same format as last year, but starting earlier (May 1st) so they can be part of Skagit Water Weeks. The trails are set to go through end of September.
- Trail locations are TBD but will likely include the Padilla Bay trails that participated last year, as well as one or more Skagit Land Trust trails (on Guemes Island and/or one in the upper Skagit - not Utopia like last year due to elk issues). Additional options mentioned were ACFL trails and Tommy Thompson Trail.

4. Group updates

- a. SKAGIT CONSERVATION DISTRICT

- Kristi is working with the city on Poop Fairy campaign. They are going to have a cute dog photo contest this May, which asks participants to pledge to clean up after their dogs. [Woof Pack bags](#), satchels for carrying used dog poop bags, will be among the prizes for the contest. Skagit County did a survey in 2019 on dog poop. [Skagit County's Poop Smart](#) program is run by [Karen DuBose](#).
- Courses going on: Kicking off the Backyard Short Course which will be virtual. Marine BioToxin Course – most folks are returning and will be recruiting some.
- Cindy recently got to do an in-person lesson for students in Sedro-Wooley

b. SWC and SCEA

Holli will be working on her Skagit River watershed story map again in March. She is also helping Cindy Piece make a video of her watershed model lesson and helping her fellow SCEA board members make a macroinvertebrate video for Skagit Water Weeks.

c. WDFW

Wayne has been very busy. He's excited about working with the [Darrington Collaborative](#) on a forestry program to improve forest health and economic development. They have been creating a Story Map with [Forest Road Drives](#) which is encouraging scenic drives in the area. They are also working on this with the Nooksack River System, South Fork and North Fork Stilly. **Wayne will share info with Allison about Stilly work.**

d. KULSHAN SERVICES – NOW PEAK SUSTAINABILITY GROUP

Allison announced their company has a new name: Peak Sustainability Group and is rebranding and will have a new website in March/April. She reported that she has been working with the Network for Landscape Conservation with particular emphasis on climate resilience for tribal entities throughout the country as well as landowner engagement on large landscapes. She also noted that she is working with the Communications Group with the Sustainable Lands Strategy (SLS) of Snohomish County. They too are doing more video storytelling and engaging more members of the watershed in the work of the SLS.

e. SKAGIT LAND TRUST

Stacy has been busy this February with tree plantings at Tope Ryan. They've been planting 3 to 4 days a week, putting in about 5,000 trees over 11 acres. They will finish up next week. In March, they have a lot of small work party opportunities at [Samish Flower Farm](#) (planting and trail construction), [Day Creek](#), and [Fidalgo Carstens Property](#). They still are requiring online waivers from their volunteers. They will do an event for Water Weeks at a property near [Marblemount](#) to remove invasive species and walk along the Skagit River. Last year, they did the Swan Rise events at Barney Lake. This year, they did a virtual [Swan Rise on their SLT YouTube](#). Interpretive signs are done and will be installed at Tope Ryan later. Stacy may be working with Pete to make signs at the Carstens flower property and at Marblemount.

Their Annual Meeting is March 24 from 6pm - 7:30pm. They are honoring their relationship with NCI with a presentation by Saul Weisberg who is retiring. They will be giving out their annual awards.

f. PETE'S UPDATES

Pete took photos of the planting at Tope Ryan. Lots of blue tubes! He attended the virtual Storming the Sound. He wondered how it went and if they did a post-survey. The sessions he watched had great participation. He noted that people from farther away attended.

Pete noted that the Padilla Bay Reserve has education programs going on. [Friends of Skagit Beaches](#) is doing their winter lectures and had Jacques White this month. Salish Sea School is operating in-person school with very small groups. The MRC and [Salish Sea Stewards](#) training is virtual this year and will start

today at 1:00pm for 10 weeks every Tuesday afternoon. 41 people signed up with some from Seattle and Bainbridge Island. This has enabled people from farther away to participate.

g. SFEG

They are doing tree plantings on February 27 (full) and March 6 (1/2 full) at [Swan Reserve](#) - allowing for 25 volunteers per shift, two shifts per day. They plan to do 350 trees per day with tree protectors. Every Thursday, Feb 25-March 25, they are doing potting parties for those that pre-register.

Lucy has been blogging a lot- reflecting on SFEG's 30 years of work. She is regularly sharing about past projects and how these projects are doing now. Some of her blogs feature new projects as well. Lots of the blogs have been with a focus on birds; now she's moving into economic connections and orca connections for habitat.

They connected with the Glacier Peak Institute in Darrington to help Skagit County Parks with re-digging a side channel and removing some big leaf maples. There is interest in preserving the genetic bank of these old trees, so Adam, their Riparian Manager, is heading a project to collect seeds with Oak from Glacier Peak Institute. It's a good project for Olivia and others in SFEG's AmeriCorps members.

The Salish Sea School will be planting with them at Hansen Creek on March 27 with [Skagit River System Cooperative](#). And April 17 at [Skiyou Island](#). Alternative youth groups are working with them. They are getting high school student volunteers to help.

There are scattered events planned in April, connected to Earth Day. Olivia spoke about SFEG's work at [Samish Island Campground](#) removing invasive English ivy where the Samish Longhouses were near the burial site. They have goats and sheep that will clean up after they do the work.

As for education programs, Olivia has worked with [Jr. Stream Stewards](#) doing a riparian lesson at the nursery with a series of videos. Regarding Salmon in the Classroom, they partnered with the [Children's Museum](#) and are getting ready to do the next segment in salmon life stages. They have created a craft project for each stage of life and compiled video of each stage. Lucy will invite all of the CEC members to the fish release.

h. CONCRETE YOUTH ACTIVITY DAY - "TALES AND TAILS" Thursday, July 22

This event is being planned as an in-person summer event. It may be a drive-through event or in-person with multiple sessions and registration. Scottie noted that 400 people are expected (that's like 50% of the town) and it draws a lot of people from outside the area.

5. Group discussion: Should we update our Educators Resource Guide for 2021?

We have a [2019 Education Resource Guide on the SWC webpage](#), but some of the information is out of date. In 2020, Holli worked with the CEC to create [a supplemental document for school teachers](#) with virtual and socially-distanced options for schools. Will something similar work again for 2021, or should we redo the whole guide? Allison suggested the need for a website with separate pages for each organization so that it can be updated in real-time. **Holli will discuss this with Richard.**

Regarding School outreach changes for 2021-22 school year, Lucy noted that they will be working toward accommodating more schools, which means trimming down what they do in-person. They are planning with the assumption of in-person engagement, but they will remain adaptable with a combo of virtual and in-person engagement.

6. Group discussion: What have we learned about virtual community engagement in 2020?

a. Examples of our community engagement in 2020:

- Educational videos:

- [Southern Resident Orcas](#) (Holli's first video for SWC, using Zoom)
- [Habitat Needs of Salmon](#) (part of SFEG's Salmon in the Classroom)
- Classroom programs that have been adapted into webpages:
 - [Salmon in the Classroom](#) (by SFEG)
 - [Junior Stream Stewards](#) (by SFEG)
 - [Luminary Arts Program](#) (by SWC)
- Blog entries:
 - [Expansion of conservation area](#) (by Skagit Land Trust)
 - [Update on a conservation project](#) (by SFEG)
- Other:
 - [Home-based resource page](#) (a list of resources on the SWC page)
 - [Home Rain Drain Project](#) (SWC's quick adaptation of the Drain Rangers Program)
 - [Illuminight 2021](#) (a virtual event, streamed live on FB – this is the edited video)
 - [North Sound Riparian Conference](#) (a playlist of presentations from a day-long workshop SWC put on for professionals)
 - [Distance Learning Resource list](#) (on the Skagit PUD's web page)
- b. TECHNOLOGY - Suggestions for video-making
 - All non-profits have access to a great deal on the [Adobe Premier Elements](#) program through TechSoup. (\$30 for a 4-year license – with Photoshop).
 - This program does take up a lot of space. Holli had to get an external hard drive shortly after installing it.
 - Lighting and cordless microphone. Holli got a circle light with a good quality microphone at Best Buy for about \$300.
 - A tri-pod with a flexible head. Ideally one that can be used for phone or camera. [This one](#) was suggested as a good choice for not much money.
- c. Questions that came up:
 - What's the best way to record what you're doing on a computer, so that the cursor is easy to see?
 - What resources do we have for making our educational materials bilingual? Holli has used Google translate in Spanish but had had trouble finding a reliable person to revise the translations.

7. Topics for next month:

- Explore other group event/project, such as hosting a film discussion or adopting a Council of all Things type community discussion.
- Pete suggested have a conversation at creating bilingual content.
- Holli created an online survey to learn more about how the group has engaged the community in 2020 and what "pearls of wisdom" we've learned along the way. **She will report on the results at the next meeting.**

Next meeting: March 30th, 9:30-11:30 am

Adjourn 11:36 am