

Community Engagement Committee Draft Notes

Skagit Watershed Council July 27th, 2021, 9:30 am – 11:30 am via Zoom

Present: Scott Bohling (ECY), Kristi Carpenter (SCD), Stacy Dahl (SLT), Lucy DeGrace (SFEG), Jessica Epsy (Puget Sound BayKeeper, WSU Ext) Pete Haase (Padilla Bay, Shore Stewards), Christine Longdon (for Karen Summers) (SCEA and EcoNet), Cindy Pierce (SCD), Beck Pittman (ACFL), Michelle Quast (ECY), Allison Roberts (Peak Sustainability Group), Scottie Schneider (SWC), Holli Watne (SWC), Wayne Watne (WDFW), Sylvi Thorstenson (WSU Skagit Extension)

(Underlined items mark decision points; ***Bold items mark action items**)

Start: 9:35 am

1. **Approve June notes** – We approved the June 2021 meeting notes, with edits. Michelle made a motion to accept the notes as corrected; Scottie seconded.

2. Roundtable of updates

Allison – (Peak Sustainability Group (formerly Kulshan Services) and Wild Whatcom) PAG are celebrating their 10th year with a rebrand and new website. They have grown to over 20 people with expertise in ecosystem health, community engagement, climate change and sustainability. Their website will be ready in August, finally! Wild Whatcom is running at full capacity with summer programming and wait lists. They are forming programs in Mt. Baker School District and possibly Blaine SD as well as their existing programming with Bellingham SD. They are concerned about the Delta variant so are keeping an eye on that while following all of the protocols.

Stacy (SLT) – It's fabulous to do trainings again outdoors and in person! They have an elk education trunk produced by the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation. Upcoming events: August work parties will be posted soon. They have been doing weekly work parties at Marblemount removing blackberries. Their AmeriCorps Community Engagement Associate has been chosen, but they are still looking for a [Stewardship Associate](#). ***Please share**. If anyone has leads or can share their opening, it's appreciated!

Lucy (SFEG) – They filled all three of their AmeriCorps. ***Lucy will send good un-hired intern applicants to Stacy**. Tabling on July 10th at the Farmers Market. Their AmeriCorps spoke with 130 people. On July 19th, Bowman Bay work party with NW Straits Foundation and Skagit MRC working on nearshore planting, weeding, and watering plants. Doing this again on August 17th. They are inviting Salish Sea School kids who love these activities. They will do seining with some volunteers at that. Excited about their new Orcas brochure which she is distributing – even to orca watching outfits. She is back in the office now.

Scottie (SWC, Salmon Festival) – the Salmon Festival is seeking to fill 100 bags with freebies to give away at a tabling event at the Farmers' Market in early September. She'll put bags together on September 7. Scottie can receive the freebies when she is in the office Tues, Weds, and Thursday the week before the event. 100 cool pencils coming from Sierra Pacific. Wants 100 of the Orca and Salmon Brochure SFEG just put out (see the image on the right). ***Cindy will make buttons like she did for Concrete Youth Day**.



Holli (SWC) – Concrete Day went well! They had a great theme with trivia and salmon lessons. While the wind was disruptive, they had about 100 people they interacted with mostly from the Concrete area. She's also working on a MoNA art exhibit with a proposal finished in a couple weeks. She's doing a

GearUp Salish Sea School training for a week with Pete Haase. She will be doing a modified Stormwater Stream Rangers program. Next week, she's doing a stormwater training with RE Sources in Bellingham.

Jessica Epsy (Skagit WSU)– In her new position, Jessica is still getting to know people. Next month she hopes to host some restoration events. She wants to offer workshops and a speaker series, in particular, she is planning a training on microfibers in water. ***She asked CEC members to get in touch with her regarding professionals on water quality (perhaps at WWU or otherwise) who can participate with her.** She spoke about a UW study about a car tire chemical that is decimating Coho populations and is interested in collaborating with others in our group.

Michelle Quast (Ecology) – Their film team is working on getting drone footage of existing tree planting projects on tributaries in the Skagit. In particular, they are working with a farmer on the Nookachamps who consented to footage and interviews. They are also highlighting the Mud Lake projects. Landowner interviews are starting to be scheduled as well. They are developing the grant agreement to release soon through the Skagit CD for Community Based Social Marketing efforts on tree planting.

Kristi (Conservation District) – They are hosting their year-end celebration for 64 Stream Team volunteers tonight. She is also working on a training starting in early September for the 2021-2022 monitoring season. The Marine BioToxin testing will proceed into mid-September with good news that there have been no toxin hits so far. She noted that Samish Bay was closed with a naturally occurring bacteria, but it was not a toxin. They watch these toxins because their appearance is like a canary in the coal mine.

Christine (SCEA, EcoNet) – She is working in Karen's capacity on promotion for the Letter Box Trail. It's hard to know how many people are doing it. She is working with SCEA to put together an educator trunk on insect pollinators. They have three entomologists on their board, and this ties in well with their programs. They considered doing Kids in Nature this summer but decided to postpone it again this year due to COVID risks with many of their mentors/volunteers being older and wanting to limit their exposure. She noted Skagit's Delta numbers as a concern.

Cindy (SCD) – Helping Kristi with Stream Team Awards at Bayview State Park tonight. Are Boys and Girls Clubs doing summer camps? She could do the Watershed Model with them. She helped with registration at Concrete Days. It appeared that the prizes and variety of booths made this a success. Holli added that the safari theme with a stuffed animal and a passport stamped with their guess on each animal encouraged them to participate all the way through!

3. Soul of the Skagit Project Proposal (see attachment #4)

Christian Murillo is a photographer who is planning on an project that aims to use photography to illustrate and educate about the impacts of climate change in the Skagit watershed and the Pacific Northwest. Holli has shared artist's written proposal with the group. SWC is giving \$2,000 to the project in exchange for permission to use Murillo's images. Murillo is looking for more partners that can offer financial assistance and/or land access, gear, contacts, etc. He won't be a finished with the project until next year. ***Please contact the artist directly if you're interested in partnering on this project.**

4. Discussion: How to reach the Spanish-speaking community once we've created content for them?

The Skagit Watershed StoryMap Holli did in Spanish has had 150 views already! She did a Spanish language announcement on their blog and on Facebook. The address to the StoryMap is really long which is hard to do over radio.

Ecology got approval to translate their StoryMap into Spanish using the Ecology translation team. They are planning to get more of their StoryMaps translated as well. She noted for Holli that there is an efficient way to make a copy of the StoryMap which can then be translated into a Spanish version.

Michelle thought it would be great to have a document that kept a Spanish contact list (teachers, Viva Farms) as a resource for the CEC. Allison suggested sharing this Spanish content with Spanish teachers in the local school districts and Skagit Valley College

Holli also suggested we could consider having our STEAM Guide include Spanish resources.

5. Discussion: What should we do with the STEAM Educator resource guide for next school year?

Take away: The group generally agreed that the [2019 STEAM Educator Resource Guide](#) needs to be updated and could be made a lot more user-friendly. Given the limited time and money available right now, for the upcoming school year, we will develop a simple list of teacher resource, similar to [what Holli created last year](#). ***Holli will reach out to CEC members and other program coordinators for help developing this document.**

When we are ready to update the full guide, here are some ideas to consider:

1. Should programs that are not designed for in-class K-12 use (such as Master Gardeners, Master Composters, and Watershed Masters) be included in this guide – or should we create a separate guide for programs like these?
 2. Could we display the programs on a webpage, as opposed to a PDF as has been done on the past? Pros to this approach
 - a. Easier for us to update changes in the programs
 - b. Easier for users to find programs that meet their needs (they can use filters/tags)
 3. Are there any CEC interns that could help with this?
 4. Are there any grants that could help fund the development of a new STEAM guide?
6. **Salmon Festival** – Due to COVID there will not be a Skagit River Salmon Festival at Edgewater Park this year. However, there will be 1) tabling on September 11 at the MV Farmer's Market, 2) cosponsoring SFEG's speaker series. Some other things that may or may not take place this year: 1) A presence at the Skagit River Brewery, giving away SRSF pint glass, 2) an outdoor film. The future of the festival is up in the air. Edgewater Park doesn't work well.

Next meeting: August 27th, 9:30-11:30 am