

Community Engagement Committee

Skagit Watershed Council Oct 25th, 2022, 9:30 am – 11:30 am, [Zoom link](#)

Draft Minutes

Present: Hannah Katz (Friends of the Forest); Hannah Liss (Puget Sound Partnership); Christine Longdon (Skagit Conservation Education Alliance); Taylor Sudzinski + Cindy Pierce (Skagit Conservation District); Gabby Jacunski + Stacy Dahl (Skagit Land Trust); Holli Watne + Richard Brocksmitth (Skagit Watershed Council); Melissa Ciesielski (Swinomish Indian Tribal Community); Amanda Colber (The Salish Sea School).

Special Guests: Flora Lucatero (Children of the Valley); Amy Keiper (Pacific Education Institute)

1. We approved the Sept 2022 CEC minutes
2. Roundtable of updates
 - a. Friends of the Forest (aka Friends of the ACFL)
 - i. Hannah has recently been hired as the new Youth Education Coordinator.
 - ii. There are planning a bunch of [educational hikes](#) and as well as their [annual auction](#), which will take place November 12th.
 - b. SCEA
 - i. Recently hosted Watershed Art and Discovery Day (WADD) at Padilla Bay. The event went well, but there was an issue with a lot of folks registering that did not show up. More than 50% of the families that registered did not show up! There was a big waitlist of folks that missed out on this event.
 - ii. Finished up the Watershed letterbox trail. 145 clue sheets were turned in! This is a huge improvement from the paperless participation the last few years. Hoping to do this again next spring, but not sure about funding.
 - iii. There may be an EcoNet Meeting in December. Stay tuned.
 - c. SLT

- i. Many [work parties](#) coming up.
 - ii. Haven't been getting enough volunteers. Looking for new ways to spread the word.
 - iii. Continuing work with the [Kulshan Creek Neighborhood Youth Program](#). Will be doing some birding at Samish property, hopefully with Skagit Audubon.
 - iv. Doing some guided walks as fundraisers
- d. SITC is starting their [Between Two Worlds Indigenous Science Program](#) and working on an indigenous science project for the spring.
- e. SCD
- i. Cindy a stormwater runoff demonstration for WADD.
 - ii. Busy with Stream Team and Watershed Masters programs.
 - iii. Taylor is working on a Waterwise with Environmental Club at Skagit Valley College. They will also be putting in signage for pollinator habitat.
- f. SWC
- i. Richard just got off a really interesting meeting about setting up some incentive programs to get landowners to plant trees along the river. He's wondering if we are doing enough riparian education in K-12 programs.
 - ii. Holli worked with youth to make patches at WADD. These will be turned into large luminaries for window displays in January.
 - iii. Luminary programs are being scheduled for this winter in Schools and with the Museum of Northwest Art.
- g. TSSS
- i. Summer programming is wrapped up, including shore-based and boat-based programming. Went really well.
 - ii. Working on a "rewilding" program for the fall with schools.
 - iii. Working on getting calendar set for next year.

- iv. On January 7th, students will be presenting on results for a year-long study.
 - v. Working on 2-3 after-school programs in Anacortes schools for half-days with schools.
3. Presentation by Amy Keiper, our local FieldSTEM Coordinator for Pacific Education Institute (PEI). The presentation is visible [here](#).
- a. PEI has developed a bunch of resources, including environmental curriculum, for K-12 teachers.
 - b. They are happy to help organizations like ours with teacher trainings.
 - i. SCD is working with PEI on the Project Learning Tree curriculum. They are building a “Forestry Institute” to teach local teachers about what forestry is. One of the goals for this project is to show how Forest Managers are “not bad guys” and how forestry is developing to utilize more ecological principles for the betterment of the environment and economy.
 - ii. SLT is also interested in doing a teacher training on PEI’s Project Learning Tree curriculum.
 - iii. Holli is interested in doing a teacher training that will utilize the Drain Rangers curriculum. She applied for grant money to help put this together. She will not know until late November if she’ll be awarded any money for this.
 - c. PEI wants very much to get more place-based science into classrooms. Too many classrooms are teaching only about habitats and regions outside of their children’s personal experiences.
4. Presentation by Flora Lucatero, director of Children of the Valley (COV). This nonprofit organization was established in Mount Vernon in 2006 to offer support youth and their families who are struggling in Skagit County. Among other things, COV offers multiple free education centers for afterschool programs that serve students in need throughout Skagit County. They had 35 students in their first year (2006), and now serve over 200.

- a. Teachers have reported a decrease in behavior problems and an increase in confidence and compassion from students after joining COV. This is partly due to the fact that social-emotional care/education is a large part of their programming.
- b. The school district offer transportation to these facilities and may be able to transport the students to/from field trips (needs about 3 months notice to set up)
- c. About the students:
 - i. Students must be referred by the school district and demonstrate a need for assistance.
 - ii. Currently serving elementary-aged students only.
 - iii. ~90% are Latinx. Most speak English without difficult but have families that primarily speak Spanish.
 - iv. They attend every day after school and get picked up by 6pm.
- d. About the education centers:
 - i. There are 5 – S-W, Burlington and 3 in Mount Vernon.
 - ii. Locations are either at the school or a near-by church
 - iii. Centers run afterschool, five days a week.
 - iv. Wednesdays are the day that they could use the most help because this is a early release day for MV and Burlington schools.
 - v. Each class has a maximum of 15 students. K-2, 3-5 classes. Larger centers have separate classes for each
 - vi. Staff are bilingual and bicultural.
- e. Flora would love it if we brought some of our programs to her students.

5. Steam Train discussion:

- a. A little work has been done on the draft resource website: <https://sites.google.com/view/skagit-resource-guide/home>. At this time, we are still not sure if and how we want to use this.

b. Some of us are interested in trying to get a conversation with district planners from Burlington-Edison School District (BESD) and/or Sedro-Woolley School District (SWSD). We'd like to work with them to make a plan to bring our programs to their teachers to meet their specific standards.

i. Cindy, Lucy, Holli Watne, Christine, and Stacy expressed an interest in being part of a meeting with the school districts.

ii. It was suggested the Susan Wood (not present) may also be interested.

iii. We started this work before COVID and it was starting to bear fruit in BESD and SWSD.

There was little to no interest in Mount Vernon SD.

Next meeting: October 29th – **at the SWC office!**

There will be no December meeting