

Community Engagement Committee

Skagit Watershed Council Feb 22nd, 2022, 9:30 am – 11:30 am [via Zoom](#)

Draft Minutes

Present: Susan Wood (PBNERR); Alison Roberts (PSG); Hannah Liss (PSP), Carla Glassman, Cindy Pierce, and Taylor Studzinski (SCD); Andrea Doll, Karen Summers, and Kristi Carpenter (SCEA); Sam Mackin and Megan Cahill (SFEG); Hannah Katz and Stacy Dahn(SLT); Pete Hasse (SMRC +); Holli Watne and Scottie Schnider (SWC), Jessica Espy (WSU)

(Underlined means decision point; ***Bold** means action item)

1. We approved the January 2022 notes
2. Roundtable of updates
 - a. Padilla Bay Reserve (PBNERR) is very busy with lots of programs for students and teachers.
There has been a recent flood of public-school groups asking for field trips in the last month.
 - b. Peak Sustainability Group (PSG) is working on community based social marketing campaign to encouraging riparian landowners to plant shade trees along the water. They are just finalizing the contract now. The campaign will be in effect over the next 9 months.
 - c. Puget Sound Partnership (PSP) – no upcoming community engagement projects
 - d. Skagit Conservation District (SCD)
 - i. Carla taking on the adult education work that Kristi used to do. She is currently working on a virtual [Bayard Conservation Stewardship Short Course](#), which will have in-person fieldtrips.
 - ii. They have an updated [webpage](#). It is more user-friendly and has lots of videos and other resources.
 - iii. Taylor has experience working for the Skagit River System Cooperative and has just been hired as the Conservation Specialist and will be working on lots of different projects. They are still figuring out what her responsibilities will be.

- iv. The [Soil and Water Stewardship Poster Contest's](#) theme is "healthy soil, healthy life" and will run until March.
 - v. Their [native plant sale](#) going on now, but selling out of some stuff. Preorder are being accepted through the end of the month.
 - vi. Cindy got to do some classroom presentations last week and had a great time!
- e. Skagit Conservation Education Alliance (SCEA)
- i. This is Karen's last week. [SCEA is currently hiring](#) and still accepting applications.
 - ii. There will be an in-person EcoNET meeting this Thursday at 3pm at Taylor Shellfish Farm, with a presentation about ocean acidification. Meeting in the "Dining Room. Taylor's will provide oysters/snacks and beverages are available for sale. *Bring your mud boots!* We may have an opportunity to go walk out to a demo plot due to a rare low tide.
 - iii. Skagit Water Week's is coming up this May. SCEA will be promoting our water-related events for the entire month of May. March 18th is the deadline to let SCEA know about your event if you are planning to participate.
 - iv. SCEA is looking into doing an activity that centers around exploring macroinvertebrate at Pomona Grange Park for Skagit Water Weeks. They are fortunate enough to have three entomologists on their board.
 - v. Andrea is a board member who will join our meetings, at least until there is a new hire on who's ready to join the CEC. She has done a lot of volunteer work in the Skagit and is very politically active.
- f. Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group (SFEG):
- i. They started work parties at the plant nursery with a bang! They did nearly 10% on their potting work for the season already. More potting events coming up, mostly on Saturdays, but also drop-in on Thursdays. Check out their [event page](#) for more info.

- ii. Things are constantly changing with school programs. It's unclear on which schools can do fieldtrips and which ones can't.
- iii. Megan is working with [Children of the Valley](#) to expand their school programs next year with help from. This organization is based in Skagit and gives afterschool educational opportunities, primarily to children of migrant families. They could be a great resource for other organizations looking to broaden their programs, especially to under-served students. Megan would be happy to give out contacts for those who are interested in being introduced to the organizers.

g. Skagit Land Trust (SLT):

- i. There are lots of [upcoming events](#), including work parties, walks, and a spring break family field trip. They are no longer limiting group sizes to 10 on their in-person events, but they are still working to keep social distancing.
- ii. An Earth Day event on April 23rd is being planned for Eutopia property.
- iii. Field trips with SWSD 2nd graders are being planned for the Eutopia property.
- iv. They are working to get more public awareness of the Barney Lake Restoration Area in Mount Vernon. The Swan Rises events there have been very successful and this is a great habitat for wintering birds. They are planning to increase public access by building trails and a parking area.
- v. The March Point Herron cams will be going up soon. Nearly 700 nests counted on the property this year and they should be occupied with herons in the next week or two. Three cameras will be streaming live to the SLT website.

h. Skagit Watershed Council

- i. Beck from Friends of the Forest has connected Holli with a group that's planning on putting on a procession-of-the-species type event in Anacortes this summer. This could be an interesting new outreach opportunity.

b. At the event –

- i. Lighting tables was a bit of a challenge, but everyone figure it out. The extra luminaries Holli provided helped.
- ii. There was a lot of room for improvement with having volunteers asking for zip codes. The stickers we used to mark people who had already been asked were not easily visible. Lighting should have been provided. Better background on why we were collecting the data would have been helpful. Some participants did not respond kindly to the questions. Holli says zip codes were not even needed for the grant reporting that we collected the data for. Next year we could get away with asking more general questions like “did you travel more than 50 miles to come to this event” that are required by the grant.
- iii. It was very cold for the folks standing at the booths all night.
- iv. Some suggested having hot food/beverages available at the event.

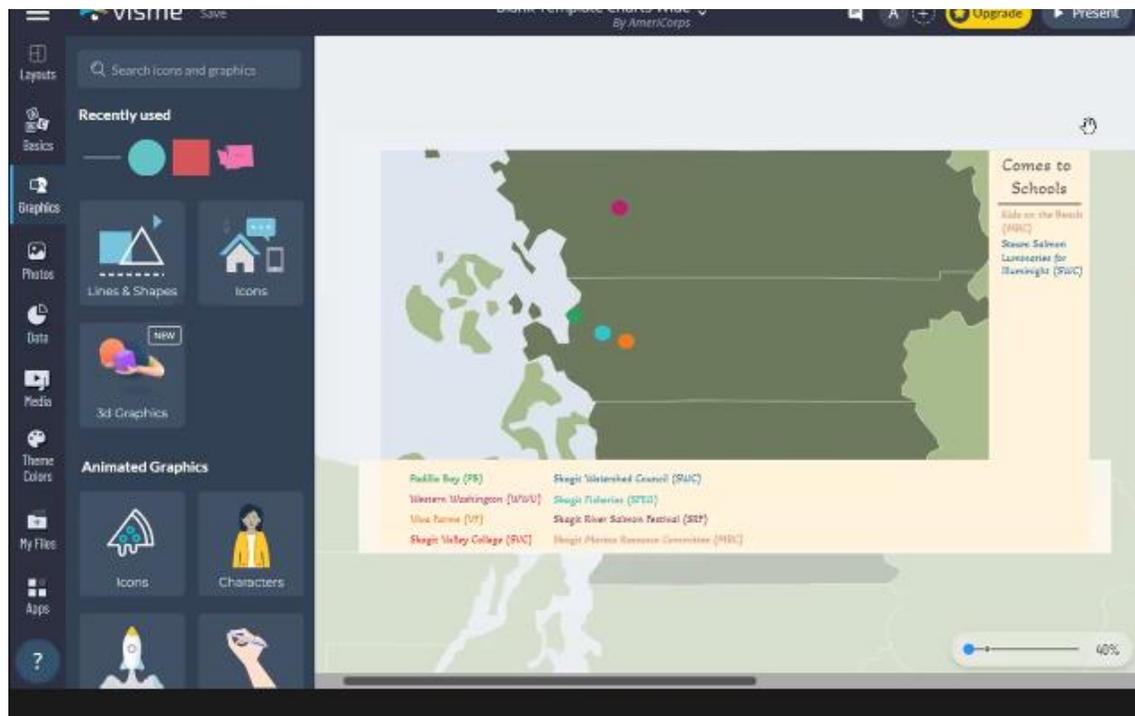
4. Debrief of Storming the Sound 2022

- a. Both Cindy and Jessica went to the event and said it was as good as a virtual event could be.
- b. Susan: This event is appreciated by the community. It is good for us to hear from the “really great people out there doing really good work”. To put the event on in person is a lot more work than doing it online, but the experience is so much greater in-person (people on-line are distracted with other work and in-person opportunities for networking just can’t be matched virtually). She is not interested in doing virtually if in-person is an option.
- c. There will need to be a strong team to put on this in-person in the future.
 - i. Susan says that over the years lots of different organizations, including WWU and RE Sources in Bellingham, have helped with planning.

- ii. Holli suggested that she could probably help with planning if the timing didn't conflict with Illuminight. Spring break was suggested for timing, but most agreed that teachers would not be likely to come during vacation days.
- iii. Pete suggested that Leadership Skagit might be able to help with the planning. ***Susan will check into that.**

5. Sam and Megan shared some tools that we could use to communicate about programs throughout our watershed:

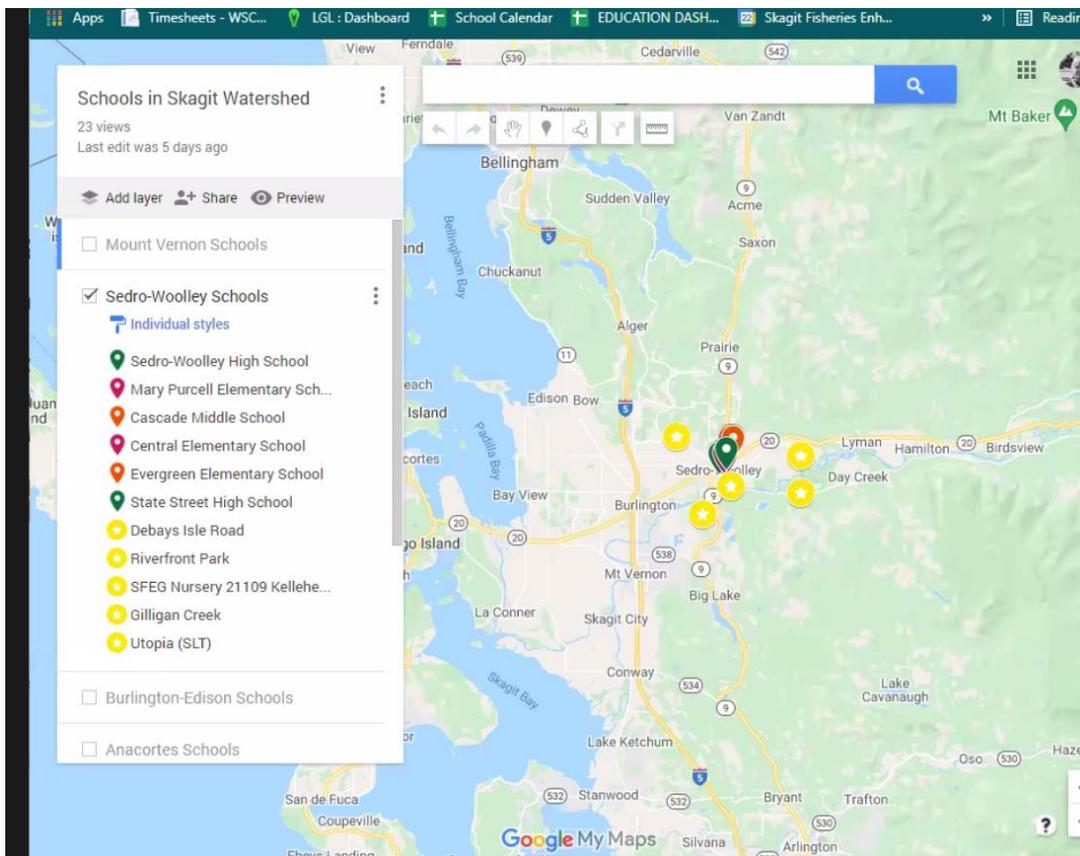
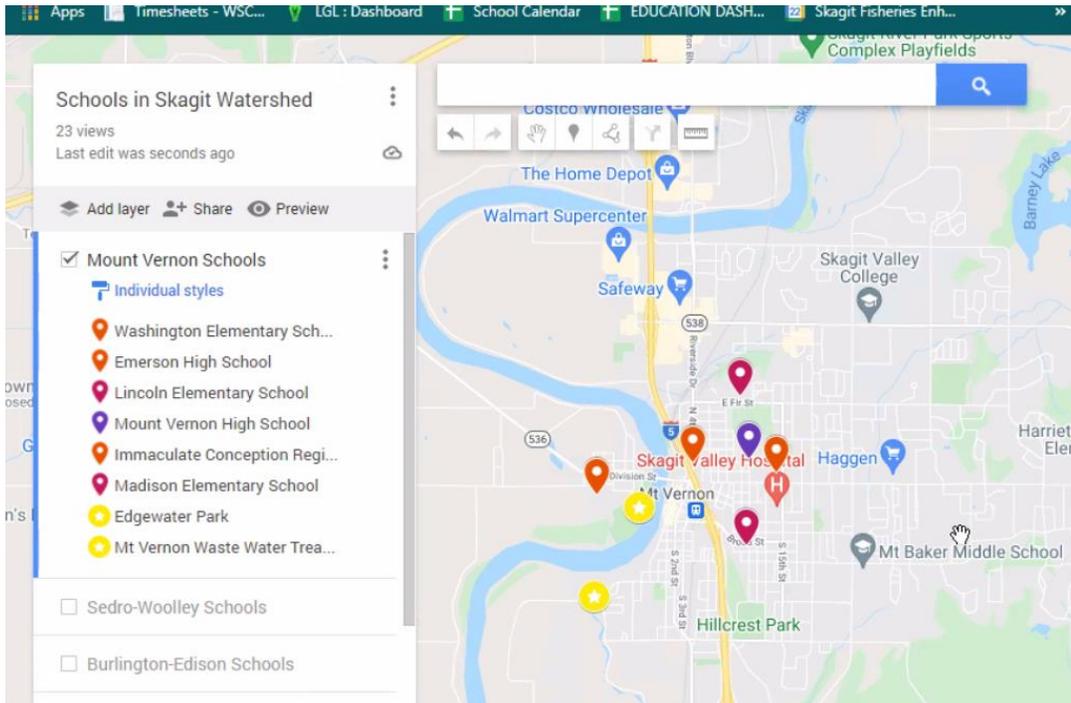
- a. Arc GIS. Most options require having a paid account. This program is probably what was used to make [this Tulip Festival map](#)
- b. Here's a quick example of a map Sam built using free content with [visme.co](#)



The map turns out clean-looking, useful for sharing general/relational locations.

- c. On the next page is a map that Megan created using layers on a Google map. She says this option is great because it makes it easy to collaborate between organizations and multiple people can work on the map at the same time. This is easy to use, and most folks are already

familiar with Google maps. There is a limit of 10 layers that can be added. Megan would be happy to give a tutorial to anyone who'd like to see how she built this.



- d. ***We will revisit this next month.** How do we want to use a map for promoting community engagement? Who would the user be: teachers, the general public? Would we want the map to be used in print, online, or both? Taylor suggests both – a generic print like Sam’s visme example that could be handed out festivals, etc, maybe with a QR code to an interactive virtual map like the one Megan shared.
6. Other updates/ for the good of the order
- a. It was suggested that we do some sort of physical activity and the start and/or mid-way point in future meetings to help keep participants present and engaged.
 - b. It was suggested that maybe virtual CEC meetings don’t need to be two hours long. ***We will discuss this out our next meeting.**

Next meeting: Tuesday, March 29th, 2022, 9:30 am – 11:30 am

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84257863307?pwd=di9LU01nd3RDQkNtM2p1SVIzVXBkdz09>