

# Community Engagement Committee

Skagit Watershed Council Feb 28th

## Minutes

Amanda Colbers (TSSS), Richard Brocksmith + Holli Watne (SWC), Keven Tate (PUD), Christine Longdon (SCEA), Pete Haase (MRC +), Cindy Pierce (SCD), Lucy DeGrace (SFEG), Melissa Ciesielski (SITC), Brooke Ahlegian (MVPE),

(Underline means decision point; \***Bold** means action item)

1. We approved the November CEC notes.

2. Roundtable of organizational updates

a. From the Salish Sea School (TSSS)

i. New programs:

1. Barnacle Buddies for ages 4-6 SEL, experiential, shoreside program; focused on nature immersion.

2. Science club at AMS (FIG) - meets 5/6 times a year during a homeroom period (roughly 35 min); trying to grow middle school reach and encourage more involvement in TSSS program offerings.

3. Homeschool program - launching new program Tuesdays in May - boat-based with geological and natural histories of 4 surrounding islands; continuing Guardians of the Sea for homeschoolers in September.

ii. Building/modifying summer curriculums, shore and boat based, for grades K-12

iii. Building adult programs mostly surrounding orcas, seabirds, mindfulness practices - abridged version of the boat-based program we do with MS and HS students in the summer based on adults desiring to partake in similar program they're dropping their students off to attend.

iv. Burrow's island lighthouse restoration and service projects (potting, planting, marine debris survey at Seafarer's Memorial Park)

- v. Introducing programs with field trip accompaniments. Sedro-Woolley, Anacortes, Bow, so far
  - vi. Working with 2 tribal members in La Conner to integrate programming based on the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community (SITC) curriculum, “Between Two Worlds”. 3 excursions for 10 tribal students coming up, March, April, and May
  - vii. Fundraiser boat tour - full this Sat, looking to add another for Friday in April (19th)
  - viii. [Tufted Puffin Fundraiser Boat Tours](#): “welcome” in May; “farewell” in August
  - ix. Illuminight was an amazing experience for TSSS and students. 73 luminaries to represent the 73 living, endangered southern resident orcas; installed luminaries at Pelican Bay bookstore in Anacortes with educational blurb and advertising about the event; walked at the event; lots of talk and inquiry and excitement around this project.
- b. From Skagit Marine Resource Committee (MRC):
- i. Salish Sea Stewards in progress – Feb 28 will be class # 4 of 10. 4 hrs every Tuesday afternoon. 27 students of variety of ages and backgrounds – several very new to here.
  - ii. Some school kid things coming up on the beach later in Spring.
  - iii. Fidalgo Bay Day (Sat Aug 26. 11 - 3) planning started. First invitations to participate will come in late March/early April.
- c. From Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group (SFEG)
- i. Starting salmon release field trips next week with Salmon in the Classroom, as well as planting field trips with Kids in Creeks this week. Saturday events have begun, with potting at our nursery.
  - ii. Planning on doing a fish release at Hanson Creek for Skagit Water Weeks.
  - iii. Melissa: Swinomish and SRSC have a restoration site on that creek... maybe she could do some outreach about that. Off HWY 20. Doesn't have shelter and bathrooms, so may not be a great of a site to use for a public event.

- d. From Padilla Bay Reserve
  - i. The foundation will be hiring a part-time education assistant and a summer intern.  
Email Susan if you'd like more information about this.
  - ii. Susan will be working on a market analysis of environmental education offerings for K-12 classes/teachers in NW Washington. She'd love it if all CEC members who have K-12 programming to take ~10 minutes needed to complete [this market analysis survey](#).
- e. From Skagit Conservation Education Alliance (SCEA):
  - i. Skagit Water Weeks is being planned for May.
  - ii. Christine has decided to resign as director of SCEA. She will stay at least through the end of March.
- f. From the Skagit Watershed Council (SWC):
  - i. The next instalment of the Skagit Salmon Science Series (4S) will be at the next quarterly membership meeting on 3/15. There will be a presentation/discussion about impacts of road maintenance/ mass wasting, regarding the Chinook Recovery plan. These presentations (and all others from the 4S) will be posted here:  
<https://www.skagitwatershed.org/resources/skagit-watershed-workshops/>
  - ii. Holli is busy writing grants to support the luminary arts program, plus she's getting ready to start running the Drain Ranger's program next month.
- g. [From Mount Vernon Parks and Enrichment](#) (MVPE)
  - i. working to build Environmental Education programming.
  - ii. Lots of opportunities for partnership with fellow CEC organizations:
    1. Summer programs
    2. Tabling/running activity at large outdoor Earth Day Event
    3. Training for volunteer naturalist program

- iii. Please contact Brooke to chat more about ways MVPE can help you broaden your engagement goals! Email: [brookea@mountvernonwa.gov](mailto:brookea@mountvernonwa.gov), phone: (360) 336-6215
- h. From Skagit Conservation District (SCD)
  - i. lots of [school presentations](#) going on.
  - ii. The [2023 Soil and Water Stewardship Poster Contest](#) is on. The deadline at end of March.
  - iii. [Youth Conservation Tour](#) info went out last week.
  - iv. [Arbor day tree give away](#) is “hot, hot, hot”. They had 500 trees to give away to teachers, and now Cindy is having to tell teachers “no”.
  - v. Bill is retiring to be a stay-at-home dad. Hiring new director.
  - vi. The [Backyard Conservation Series](#) for adults will start soon.
- i. Skagit Public Utility District (PUD)
  - i. Judy Reservoir [School tours](#) are back! Curriculum available for teachers.
  - ii. [Community Tour](#) on May 9<sup>th</sup> (full)
  - iii. They now have a “Thirst buster”, a large water bottle filler that can be used a local events (especially useful for summer events).

### 3. STEAM Train discussion

- a. K-12 conservation resource website for Skagit
  - i. Skagit PUD and SWC have agreed to take the lead on this.
  - ii. Kevin has technical background with web development, so he will build the site.
  - iii. Holli will take the lead on collecting information on our programs.
  - iv. Both Keven and Holli will work on populating the website with content.
  - v. Collectively, both organizations will set aside enough funds to run the website for three years.

- vi. The intended audience for this site will be K-12 teachers. Only programs/resources that are designed for school use will be promoted.
  - vii. The site will be designed to be as user-friendly as possible.
- b. Holli contacted [Gen:Thrive](#) about adding our programs to the Washington State resource map that they are building. She got an automatic confirmation that they received her message, but has not heard a response yet.
- c. There is a new [Teacher Resource Page from SWESD 189](#). This page does not have much in the way of place-based conservation/environmental education opportunities.
- d. Holli has met with the B-E School District about STEAM Train planning.
- i. She will be sending them a Draft STEAM Train proposal by end of March, matching [current unit sequence](#) with our programs with their timeline. **\*If you have a program you'd like included, get this info to Holli by 3/17**
    - 1. Name of program
    - 2. Grade level(s)
    - 3. BESD Conceptual Unit (match with link above)
    - 4. Learning objectives
    - 5. Activity description
    - 6. Time requirement
    - 7. Time of year
    - 8. Contact information
  - ii. Science professional development day for grades 6-8: April 20<sup>th</sup>, 9am-4pm. There is an opportunity for us to join the Zoom to talk about our resources.
  - iii. The district said that they have a need for more Career Connections in our programing.  
**\*We will discuss the possibility adding Career Connections at our next meeting.**
- e. Holli, Cindy, and Lucy will try to set up a STEAM Train planning meeting with S-W School District in the near future.
4. The [National Marine Educators' Association Conference is in Bellingham July 23-27](#) conflicts with our July meeting. Holli has submitted a presentation proposal to this event. We rescheduled out July meeting to July 18<sup>th</sup>, 1-2:30pm

5. [NextDoor](#) is an effective and free way to promote local events. Both Keven and Taylor said they had success using this website. Events can be promoted to an area as big as Skagit County, or as small as specific neighborhoods.

Next meeting: March 21<sup>st</sup>, 1-2:30, online only

Other upcoming events:

- Children of the Valley “Earth Month” programs, April
- BESD Science professional development day for 6-8<sup>th</sup> grade, April 20, 9am-4pm
- BESD Technology + Science Fair, April 20, 4:30-6pm
- MVSD Science Fair, April 20, 5-8pm
- Skagit Water Weeks – Month of May?
- Fidalgo Bay Day, Aug 26th