

## Community Engagement Committee

Jan 30th, 2024, 1-pm, @ the SWC office or this [Zoom link](#)

### Minutes

Present: Wayne Watne (Herrera engineering), Jessica Espy (Hampton Lumber), Jeff Osmundson (SAS), Cindy Pierce (SCD), Clare Spain + Holly Henderson + Kayla + Lucy DeGrace (SFEG), Melissa Ciesielski (SITC), Sydney Benson (SLT), Holli Watne (SWC), Bob Gillespie (WNPC).

(Action items **\*BOLDED**)

1. Approved Nov 2023 notes
2. Roundtable of updates
  - a. Jessica is the new Outreach Coordinator for [Hampton Lumber](#), based out of Sedro-Woolley. She was invited to the CEC by Cindy Pierce as she is interested to learn how our organizations engage the public and finding ways she can help. She's currently making connections with classroom teachers and interested in helping out with our school programs if there's a connection to the lumber industry.
  - b. Skagit Conservation District (SCD)
    - i. Cindy is planning the [Youth Conservation Tour](#). **\*If you'd like to run a 15-minute conservation-themed activity for hundreds of 6<sup>th</sup> graders (in modest-sized groups) on May 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>, please contact Cindy ([cindy@skagitcd.org](mailto:cindy@skagitcd.org)).**
    - ii. They will be giving away 500 arbor day trees (Douglas Fir seedlings) to students this year. They usually go fast.
    - iii. The annual [poster contest](#) is currently underway and High School teams are getting formed for the Envirothon.
  - c. [Salal Chapter of the Washington Native Place Society](#) (WNPS)
    - i. Bob is new to this group. He's a retired entomologist who is interested in getting the word out about the importance of pollinators and native plants.

- ii. He's working with Pollinators Pathway NW to get pollinator-friendly pathways put in Woodinville.
  - iii. He'll be doing a pollination workshop at the end of Feb, and he's helping to develop a workshop on plant propagation.
  - iv. There will be a native plant sale at the end of March at the WSU extension gardens.
- d. Skagit Watershed Council (SWC)
- i. Holli has had a very busy January. She helped 665 students participate in the STEAM luminary arts program this year, with help from MoNA and the Salish Sea School (TSSS). She had a record-breaking day in which she taught at 4 different schools – with help from Clare at SFEG!
  - ii. Holli got to help raise the voices of youths from TSSS and a Mount Vernon Boys and Girls Club on stage at the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Winter Walk, which was a real pleasure.
  - iii. We are “back to the drawing board” on trying to find a new ED. The board is discussing hiring a headhunter to find someone well suited for the job. Richard is staying on part-time to fulfill essential ED duties while the search continues.
- e. Swinomish Indian Tribal Community (SITC),
- i. Presented at Storming the Sound
  - ii. Will be presenting at the WA and OR Higher Ed sustainability Conference ([WOHESC](#)) in March at WWU
  - iii. Will be tabling at the MVHS Science night.
  - iv. SITC and SFEG partnered to bring Salmon in the Classroom to La Connor this year. High School students watch the development of the young salmon and will teach local 2<sup>nd</sup> graders about what they learned as part of their project.

f. Skagit Audubon Society (SAS)

- i. A lot of connections have come through the CEC. Jeff is happy to be part of this group!
- ii. Working with TSSS STARS program for High School students. Helping with bird ID at Fidalgo Bay.
- iii. Recently did a bird program for a girl scout troop.
- iv. Tabled at storming the sound and Illuminight. Logged 400+ contacts through these events.
- v. La Conner Birding festival coming up.
- vi. Interested in doing Kindergarten tour at Fir Island Farm.

g. Skagit Land Trust (SLT)

- i. Hired new stewardship coordinator: [Jonathan Worley](#)
- ii. Upcoming work parties. Plantings. Day Creek on 2/9. Marblemount on 2/23. Tool Maintenance on 3/16. Muddy creek with SFEG on 3/30
- iii. Utopia field trips that have educational station about Bevers, Elk, Macroinvertebrates, Birds, and Snags. **\*Anyone educators interested in running a station can contact Stacy (stacyd@skagitlandtrust.org).** Programs that place on May 2,10,14,15,16,17,22,23. Schools participating include Lyman, Samish, Mary Parcel, Evergreen, and Immaculate Conception.

h. Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group (SFEG)

- i. Potting planting season starts on 2/17.
- ii. Events coming up every weekend in March. MLK day event rescheduled due to snow.
- iii. Presenting at the Skagit River Bald Eagle Interpretive center on Feb 10<sup>th</sup>.
- iv. Annual meeting on Feb 8<sup>th</sup>.
- v. Education volunteer training on Feb 13<sup>th</sup>. This is to get more help with fieldtrips, because we find that the more adults we have at these, the better. Field trips

include tree planting and releasing fish. Cindy and Holli said they might be able to help on these. Every tues-Fri all through March.

vi. The Salmon in the Classroom program is well underway. All schools have tanks, almost all of them have hatched. One school had issues with mortality due to lack of refrigeration.

3. Discussion – what are our goals for 2024?

a. We'd like to produce the 2024/2025 STEAM Guide earlier than usual. It would be helpful for teachers if this was completed before the end of this school year. It would be helpful to get physical copies into school offices. **\*We will review the 2023/2024 list next month and discuss what needs to be updated. Holli will make a version with a QRC so teachers can have a physical copy but still have access to hyperlinks.**

b. There has been no update from Kevin Tate about the development of [www.TeachSkagit.org](http://www.TeachSkagit.org) for some time. **\*Holli will try to get an update about this at the next meeting.** It was suggested that maybe Amy from PEI would be a good person to consult with about developing this website.

4. Susan Wood has just retired. The 25<sup>th</sup> Storming the Sound conference on 1/25/24 was her last duty. She announce at the conference that the help with planning for this conference has dwindled over the years and is now unsustainable. She asked for organizations like those in the CEC to step up with the planning of future events. We discussed how we can help:

a. One of the biggest problems we identified with this event is that there are always lots of technological issues. For example, Wayne presented on fish passage and nearly half the time folks were fighting to get his PowerPoint to work. This sort of thing is both common and very distracting. It was purposed that Skagit Valley College might be a better venue for the conference. Their rooms are already set up for presentations and it would be a good way to encourage more young adults to come. **\*Bob will get more information about this possibility from his connections at SVC.**

- b. Cindy went to a conference a while ago at the [ESD office at 1601 R. Avenue](#), in Anacortes, and suggested that could be another good venue to consider.

Upcoming events:

- Sound Waters University, Feb 3<sup>rd</sup>
- WA and OR Higher Ed Sustainability Conference @ WWU, March 4-6
- Billy Frank Jr. Day @ La Conner School, March 8<sup>th</sup>
- Mount Vernon HS Science Night, 5-8pm, April 18<sup>th</sup>
- Skagit Youth Conservation Tour, May 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup>, at Pomona Grange Park
- Concrete Youth Activity Day, July 18<sup>th</sup>