

Community Engagement Committee Draft Notes

Skagit Watershed Council June 29th, 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 May notes – We approved the May 2021 meeting notes.

2. Roundtable of updates

a. SCD

- i. Finalizing winners for the “We Scoop” photo contest (part of Skagit Water Weeks). Changes they would make if they do something like this again: 1) use an online entry form rather than asking for emailed entries, 2) limit the number or photos per entry, 3) have entries include photos with useful names 4) adopt a two-month ahead planning time. Holli suggested to use Google Forms that puts everything into a spreadsheet for filtering and sorting
- ii. Managing Stormwater Facilities virtual presentation is set for July 15th from 5:30 – 7:00 PM with two great presenters.
- iii. Getting a date for Stream Team awards in a park likely in August
- iv. Family Festival Farms will happen in person in October

b. SCEA

- i. Invited to a fundraising event at the Swinomish golf course on 7/7.
- ii. Still doing Letterbox Trail with three passports returned so far.
- iii. Re-working a \$500 grant for schools/nonprofits to do an environmentally themed project. The money could be on a pre-paid credit card to buy stuff for the project.

c. ECY

- i. Working on a lower Skagit tributaries and direct implementation of social science research with a new incentive program providing more project flexibility. They want to make tree planting more profitable and financially viable to do so.
- ii. Writing scripts and collecting unscripted quotes for the video series.

d. WSU Skagit Extension - Jessica Epsy is the new Skagit Shore Stewards Coordinator. She’s Trying to grow the program and awareness of shore conservation. She wants to partner with like-minded organizations/people.

e. SLT - Stacy was not able to make it today but provided the following updates to Holli. SLT had a successful Zoom info meeting about the potential new addition to the March Point heronry. They need to raise money to purchase 3.5 acres adjacent to the current property. The Skagit Valley Herald attended the meeting and wrote a [nice article](#). SLT will also be participating in the

Concrete Youth Activity Day on 7/22. Activity tables and short guided walks are planned for their [Hurn Field property](#).

f. **Updates from Pete**

- i. Padilla Bay Reserve is still closed, but they are working on plans to accelerate their opening for small groups. The new touch pool is operational and almost complete. Padilla Bay's Kids on the Beach is funded by Skagit MRC which gets federal and state money. Kids on the Beach for schools was done almost all virtual this year with Annie England. Padilla Bay did a shoreline project with Salish Sea Stewards. They also have a Shore Friendly program through WDFW run with Lisa Kaufman with outreach to marine shoreline folks with goal of removing bulkheads.
- ii. The [Salish Sea Stewards](#) volunteer training program just completed. This program focuses on the shoreline and nearshore of our saltwater bodies. This session ended with 39 people attending and graduated and doing volunteer work. It is 40 hours with 10-11 days of education comparable to the [Skagit CD's Watershed Masters](#) program. Check out the [Skagit MRC calendar](#) for a number of volunteer opportunities
- iii. the [2021-23 ESRP appropriation](#) was passed by the Legislature and signed by Gov. Inslee, providing \$15,708,000 for nearshore restoration investments. The consortium got several \$100K to replace the old creosote trestle which includes the Tommy Thompson Trail. Public outreach and engagement will be key. Any disruption to it must be shared carefully and the big gain from replacing it communicated.
- iv. Led through the DNR (Davenport, City of Anacortes and NDR) [Anacortes MJB property](#) is being discussed beyond Seafarers Park, but the shoreline permitting hasn't been done yet. Pete expressed community desire to see that area become a beach, and the project will require public engagement.
- v. Fidalgo Bay Day has been cancelled this year – a good call. Note: The meeting facility at the Samish meeting hall is open for use with some restrictions. Opportunity for collaboration there.

g. SFEG

- i. Now [hiring](#). They have hired 2 of the 3 AmeriCorps positions, still looking for an Education Associate who works with kids from September 1-July 15.
- ii. Hosting a July 14th farewell picnic at Bayview State Park for the departing AmeriCorps who are wrapping up their projects.
- iii. mulching party on July 8th at Riverside Park with the EarthCorps crew controlling blackberries. They will do something at Bowman Bay this summer.
- iv. Tabling at Mt. Vernon Farmer's Market on July 10.
- v. Working on funding their school programs – with optimism for in-classroom field trips. They didn't get full funding this year, with an \$8,500 shortfall. If they can't make that shortfall up, they will cut a couple of field trips and won't add new schools. Looking into additional money from an OSPI grant. They are also partnering with other RFEs and asking for donors to designated funds.
- vi. They have produced about 50 videos this year!

h. SWC

- i. Published first [StoryMap](#) , working on a Spanish version now.

- ii. Received a grant from WA Arts Commissions for STEAM luminary arts program (\$5,600)
- iii. Created a flyer for the Salmon Festival and Concrete Youth Day with postcard sized information directing people to their public calendar and FB page
- iv. Starting to conceptualize the next StoryMap, which will outline the various types of salmon restoration in our watershed. Holli would love resources to help create this, since she does not have a background in salmon restoration.
- v. Putting together a luminary art exhibit for MoNA that will be up fall 2021-winter 2022.
- vi. In August, working with the GearUp program with college bound LatinX students – in partnership with the Salish Sea School

3. Discussion on current COVID protocols

- a. SFEG: The office is still locked, but everyone is vaccinated. WCC is still requiring masks.
- b. Ecology: very cautious, but some changes within the offices are happening. Small in-person meetings are happening. Mask-wearing is required with groups of 15 people or more. They may have to attend virtually if a group goes over.
- c. SCEA just had their first in-person board meeting (outdoors)
- d. SCD just discussed this too – not quite at a point to do in-person meetings.
- e. Richard was thinking about doing a hybrid annual meeting, with people attending in-person and virtually. The logistics for doing this format are difficult.

4. Skagit Survey Findings – Michelle and Scott presented ECY’s findings from the Skagit Tree Planting survey using CBSM – Community Based Social Marketing.

- a. CBSM combines the knowledge from psychology and social marketing to leverage community member’s action to change behavior and remove barriers to an activity while enhancing benefits. A framework this use is that
 - i. 16% of people will be excited to make changes and only need education to achieve the desired behavior (the “show me” group)
 - ii. 68% of people need both education and barriers to be addressed before they will do the desired behavior (the “help me” group)
 - iii. 16% of people will only do the desired behavior if they are legally required to (the “make me” group).
 - iv. This campaign focuses on the “help me” group.
- b. Ecology is calling their approach with the Skagit Video Workgroup as “CBSM-lite” – a precursor to more engagement. It included a review of existing research, survey development, outreach to many organizations which either chose or did not distribute the survey link, and seven follow-up interviews.
- c. The survey contained 24 questions. They received 261 responses.
- d. highlights: More public education needed, people feel personally responsible, wildlife and natural beauty are motivators, loss of control or perceived loss of control is a common barrier and educational products are desired. Many supported more public education - 60.4% were aware - on the issues. They also found that people feel a personal responsibility for water temperature which they found tested higher than economy, community, and water quality focused statements. Loss of control of their land was a common barrier. Trees for wildlife and

making land more beautiful or comfortable also scored high. They would like to learn more and go in-depth on this question.

- e. The Survey Monkey dashboards are located at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/stories/SM-2LNWFJYC/> A selection of the survey data charts are located here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/stories/SM-B2H8NYCC/>
 - f. Lessons Learned on the process we used:
 - i. Distribution was negatively impacted by local political issues at the time. Also Ecology had a TMDL going on at the time which was politicized.
 - ii. The NextDoor account offered to them backed out due to politics and some other reasons. The survey may be skewed by the limited response from agricultural community.
 - iii. They were competing for attention in November 2020. We delayed the release until two weeks after the election. COVID during the holidays also got attention.
 - iv. We could have vetted the questions with additional stakeholders to avoid bias. They could have helped us with the survey if we had shared it in advance. We did the best we could given our experience level. It would have been great to have had their support. No website to link back to for additional information and context.
 - g. Next steps are to complete the pre-production phase and script writing in draft form for their next meeting on July 14th. They are hoping to film this summer with video editing and post-production in fall 2021. They plan to release the video series in fall/winter 2021.
 - h. Ecology has \$300,000 to support ongoing work in the Lower Skagit Tributaries with focus on 4 elements: CBSM, Implementation scoping, GIS/Restoration tracking tool development to enhance outreach to individual landowners, and an evaluation after implementation. They plan to use an external partner to identify and engage better with the community and design/develop incentives/programs to enhance existing opportunities. Exploring focus groups will likely to be a part of this next step. They plan to work with a consultant using county-wide research to build a future implementation project pilot in a specific lower Skagit tributary. This will be shared with partners and policy makers across Puget Sound.
 - i. The WA State Conservation Commission is working on this area too. Our CBSM information will feed into their project.
 - j. Efforts will be very targeted to certain tributaries to maximize potential outcomes. The current approach needs more connectivity between projects. A pilot approach by tributary could help a snowball effect to take place. One-on-one landowner meetings could build a subset of supportive neighbors together to do the outreach.
5. **Spanish Accessibility** – Follow-up conversation about making our programs for accessible to Spanish speakers. Holli indicated they will get input/ideas from the LatinX kids may have some great ideas about this issue. If you were doing it, how would you do it?
 6. **next meeting** – ***We will discuss the STEM Resource Guide** and whether we could develop an interactive webpage where we could click and sort by categories/topic. There is no money in the budget. We'll explore how strong the interest is for this and whether it could be done with a free Google site. Allison suggested checking into this option for some staffing with an intern: <https://chss.wvu.edu/journalism/internships>
 7. **Further Discussion** – Regarding the impact of heat on salmon in unshaded creeks/tributaries, etc., are there organizations that could be including surveys to see if salmonids were impacted by this heat? The heat wave we had is just what we are planning for. The Cohos are in the streams now and it would be great if we could we capture that information. Lucy said they do seining, not it's not associated with

inability for fish to survive in side channels because they dry up and aren't connected. Their work has been more about side-channel restoration especially for Chinook. Britt Slough is one of their killer whale projects near the delta of the Skagit and doing side-channel connection. These were historic Chinook habitat. The fish die when the water dries up. Lucy could see if there is anything being done to monitor temperature in this work. Could Holli ask the membership – Swinomish – are they doing this monitoring now? What is this warming doing? Will they have data? Can the interns gather anecdotal information?

Cindy is curious about the smaller tributaries. The Skagit River is flowing high and pretty cold with the snowmelt, but our urban streams are dried up. Samish River is about half of what it should be says Pete. Friday Creek is low too. The impact may not be seen until the streams are running lower. 20-year CREP program and Stream Team data is where these CREP projects are connected. We wondered if an intern could go through the data to see if the temperatures have changed where the buffers have been implemented. ***Cindy will share where the data is.**

Chat:

Stephanie Morgareidge - stephanie.morgareidge@unitedgeneral.org

Allison shared the new animated video on the Nooksack River. <https://vimeo.com/525860963>

Allison shared tree planting connections: Kulshan Carbon Trust is looking for partners working in Skagit, Whatcom, and Snohomish Counties. It uses the land trust model of easements to pay landowners for keeping the land as a carbon sink. <https://www.kulshancarbontrust.org/>. <https://www.neilsbigleaf.com/> Bigleaf Maple: the rarest maple syrup available. There is a project in Whatcom called [Million Trees](#). They are coordinating with our County Executive. Allison shared the Wild Whatcom 2020-21 Impact Report: <https://www.wildwhatcom.org/impact> which used Canva for the design.

Adjourn: 11:35 AM

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