

Community Engagement Committee – Final Notes

Skagit Watershed Council

January 31, 2017 -- 9:30 am – 11:30 am, SWC office at 815 Cleveland Ave, Suite 201

Present: Richard Brocksmith (SWC), Kristi Carpenter (CD), Alex DuPont (WSU), Karen Summers (SCEA), Lisa Miller (SLT), Lucy DeGrace (SFEG), Samantha Russell (CVP), Codi Hamblin (NCI), Allison Roberts, (Kulshan Services), and Cindy Pierce (CD).

Absent: Scottie Schneider and Leah Kintner (PSP)

1. Welcome and introductions

2. Approve November 29 meeting notes with the following corrections on names and attribution:

Page 2: Coutier should be Guitierrez. Pat Buller is not the Day Creek photographer.; he's a rancher and a photographer. Andrea is a Nookachamps historian; Isusa should be Azusa; EcoPro not ecogrow; Laure Brooks is in Mt. Vernon - not an upriver teacher. Nelida Martinez is at Viva Farms and Lizette Flores works with Alex at Extension.

3. Debrief from Storming the Sound

Every January teachers in the north Puget Sound, environmental organizations and students gather in La Conner to share their interest and expertise in environmental education. This region includes Whatcom, Skagit, Snohomish, Island, Jefferson and San Juan counties. About six of the CEC members attended the conference. They'd like more networking at this great event. For some, topics were a bit depressing because of the scope of the problem (for instance plastic pollution).

Observations: When one is tabling, it's hard to get away and network/learn. They want more ice breakers and mixers. Expand opportunities to follow up and connect by having a bulletin board for business cards and a dedicated networking room.

Speakers: John Stein was an excellent speaker. Plastics pollution as well as ocean acidification presentations were compelling. Ocean acidification can be made visible; for that reason, it represents a strong focus point for education efforts on the human causes. Second graders made an excellent presentation on their composting efforts. Others felt Richard's presentation on SWC's engagement program and Chinook conservation as a case study tied to resident orca and bald eagle food supply was an opportunity to promote the SWC. Others were inspired by the citizen science engagement by NCI students. Jude Apple did a great presentation on real time education.

4. Discuss progress on engagement program implementation

Social media progress and collaboration: Facebook has 220 likes and is attended to by our intern, Daniel Billick. Care is being taken to not overwhelm or overpost; trying to find right content to reach new audiences. Daniel has added Throwback Thursdays to the current programming of FunFact Fridays and Where in the Skagit Wednesdays. Boosting content has been inexpensive (\$35-\$40 total in ~3 months) and effective. The news article in the Herald had a tremendous positive impact on the number of photo entries and engagement. Aside from what's going well, ***Richard recommended members react to each other's posts more often**

and post more cross-marketed content, and let him know their ideas on good opportunities to act. The Winter Photo Contest started January 16 and will end March 31.

*** Richard will send both the small and large format posters so CEC members can print contest posters. He can send a link as well.**

- Social media Best practices:
 - Pinning events to the top is effective, but unlike boosting, people have to find the page to see it.
 - Boosting content is effective by increasing geographic and demographic reach. Only boost for 3 days – more than that is more expensive and turns people off.
 - Important to recognize that if a post doesn't have likes or comments, it falls away from view. Liking a page doesn't mean you'll get that content regularly; you must interact with it – share, like, and comment. The more one clicks on the SWC Facebook content, the more they'll see new content from that page.
 - ***Ask friends to like, comment, and share all of our pages.**
 - To increase engagement, newly posted photos from the contest are shared.

- **Photo contest:**

Richard provided a document showing the most popular (by vote and by SWC representatives) photo finalists in the three photo categories – places, people, and abundant resources. Richard asked that CEC members vote for one in each “finalist” category. He also suggested we award at least three honorable mentions. He plans to shortly roll out winners every day by category with three prize levels from \$50-\$150. The committee's votes were made and Richard indicated the winners: First Place – Samish River Sunset, second People – Sailboat in the light, third Place –Fish Head.

At the risk of making this too complicated, the committee provided suggestions and possible solutions to increase number of voting individuals and to make it more equitable:

- Get more individual people to vote. ***Advertise voting more during the last 2 weeks of the contest.** We boosted one of the photos to tout the program, and that skewed the votes.
 - Photo entrants can promote their photo to their friends. This is good engagement. ***However, explore if the app allows us to limit the number of times a person can vote (in a day or total).**
 - So that every photo has equal viewing time, should we collect but not make photos visible until enough have been collected, then put all of the photos up at once and ask for people to start voting?
 - Instead of voting, could we ask for people to “comment vote” which means, they have to type “vote” in the comment space.
 - What constitutes a people shot? We decided anything with a structure, human artifact, and/or a person or people in it, though recognize it is subjective.
 - While we explored the idea, members didn't agree to have people choose/self-select the category although it might help in choosing which category to judge a photo.
 - We decided it's ok that a photo be entered in two seasonal contests.
- Interviews: Richard discussed the input from the Board of Directors at their last meeting where they shared concerns about who to pick, what the questions were to be, what those interviewed

might say, who's writing the blogs, and administrative control. The Board asked that Richard expand the social media policy to include a communication policy for the SWC. He shared their caution about possible ethnocentric pitfalls of this project. Richard has spoken with Swinomish and Upper Skagit Tribal reps to gather additional perspective. The Board expressed a desire for the questions to focus more on connections between people and our natural resources and sense of place. As a result, Kulshan Services revamped the questions.

*** Richard will send these out to the CEC members for input.**

- Richard passed out a spreadsheet showing the growing list of people to possibly interview incorporating their input from the last CEC meeting. The Upper Skagit felt an interview with a tribal member should start with a governmental representative, before proceeding to other tribal members.

5. Youth educator's retreat

- Richard emailed an invitation and flyer to 25 entities. Fourteen have RSVPd so far with room for 30. Some members are still recruiting people and/or trying to arrange their own attendance.
- Members suggested we reach out to the following people to seek their attendance: Nicole Gillmore (on maternity leave – Taylor Shellfish); Shawna Blue (SVC); Teachers in Burlington – Sam? and Suzy Wittman (art teacher at Burlington HS). Richard reached out to the National Park and Forest Service; one suggestion was to ask Orlando Garcia in Visitor Services at Sedro-Woolley if he can attend. Another suggestion was to reach out to Whatcom County – NSEA, WLT or others, but it was felt we should only do that after we've provided opportunities for those in Skagit. Chase Stapleton. EcoNet. Nicole. Darrington – different county, but same watershed. Cindy could inquire with Snohomish. Glacier Peak Institute - Cody will inquire/invite. Shannon Point, Indian College, SVC? There are people involved in adult education and work in partnership, but this may not apply to them as closely. Padilla Bay may be able to suggest teachers. Samantha will find out about teachers from Padilla Bay, potential partners, Chandler and Susan and share with Richard. Victor Garcia does Green Club. Samantha will also speak with him.
- The members want more teachers invited to attend – elementary, middle, high school. The following names were suggested: Laure Brooks – Mt. Vernon (HS), Angie Stapleton (elem), Brett Skyles (5th grade),
 - * Cindy will contact the team of four teachers she met at Storming the Sound; Lucy will contact 2; Karen will contact two tribal teachers.**
 - * Lucy will craft an email to send out for consistency with the flyer and agenda, to invite these people with a personal note.**
 - *SWC can offer to pay for their substitute teacher. If they want to stay overnight, Richard will pay.**
 - *Cody will confirm day price for meals.** Wait to invite until Cody provides info about day price with lunch.
- One of the top priorities of the retreat is to develop a Resource Guide for watershed education efforts to market to all levels of educators. Cindy Pierce sends out something like this to all of the teachers at the beginning of the year. Lucy and Kristi recall a Resource Guide (inventory) that was done awhile ago, but it's dated. It wasn't geared to school-based programs. We also need to discuss the strategy for marketing the Resource Guide.
 - * Efforts will be made to try to locate this. * Get Cindy's guide.**

***Richard will revise the Products section of the agenda with this input.**

- We refined the agenda. The purposed and focus text on the agenda looked good. Members want time to discuss ways to increase partnership opportunities for example on stormwater education. They want to discuss how to complement each other's programs. They want to explore ways for teachers to know about educational options and organize materials by grade level and age. They also want to discuss an action plan for building capacity.

***Richard will incorporate these ideas into the agenda.**

-
- Survey discussion: ***A survey sent before the retreat could gather information to use at the retreat.** Regarding a survey, it was felt that regardless of if someone could attend the retreat, it should be widely distributed. If they aren't educators, but provide before and after school programs, they could answer what they can on the survey. Maybe provide the information to them but don't expect them to respond to the survey.

Regarding capacity issues and developing a survey, Kulshan Services could provide assistance. With more than 22 different groups working in shellfish, water quality, salmon, etc. in the watershed, there is more information to gather and this could build on Kulshan's previous inventory.

- Consider developing a visual tool (one map) to gather information that shows overlaps and gaps in geographic areas and topics areas.
 - Different educator groups could mark a map with their own color by labeling areas they are working and topics they are addressing.
 - What kinds of programs does each group do by age level.
 - Use Survey Monkey.
 - Interactive Google map – drop pins by categories and attribute it. Maybe Chris V. can help with this.
 - Break information down into 6-7 categories: school, program, theme, resource, grad, organization, geographic area, longevity/sustainability, funding source for
 - Explore how not to compete for grants and how to partner to strengthen the grant application. Funding and partnering discussion could be done at a future meeting.
 - What about Boys and Girls Club and Shore Stewards (WSU) - done off site. Differentiate before and after school programs that take place outside of school, but they target school-aged kids. After school programs vs those not associated with schools at all. Logistics and barriers are different for these groups.
 - Survey compilation – compile survey in the next week, send out to be filled out, provide opportunity to review, and then compile data before the conference with a few days to look at it before the conference – results (Friday before).
 - What do organizations need to do to be successful? Is there something very concrete you really need be successful? These would be great final survey questions. Preface the survey with “Here are some questions to ponder ahead of the retreat. Come prepared to discuss them at the retreat and bring resources as examples.
- There was discussion as to whether or not the retreat needed to be facilitated. Orlando and Amy Brown (she's signed up) and Richard came up as possible facilitators.
- * Codi will check with Amy as to whether she will be there overnight.**
- Meet with other outside groups as a next step to look at other programs in other areas to consider in Skagit.

- ***Lengthen the outside Break on the first day to 1 hour.** There is an NCI interpreter who could do a nature walk. – make this 1 hour rather than ½ hour. Canoe?
- School Planning – We need to add barriers.
- Thursday’s schedule will include the one session after breakfast and one before lunch.
- Logistics? Attendees will be asked to bring their resource and educational information to the retreat. Cody noted that arrival and check in can happen as early as 9 am. Bring own drinks and snacks to share. Bring your own sleeping bag. Pillow and pillow case provided and fitted sheet for the mattress. Bring own towel and toiletries.
- Entertainment: Everyone should bring games. We can designate who we bunk with or not (like a supervisor not with an intern). Codi will connect with Kayla the NCI registrar about special requests. Four people per room and a three-per room options. Expect the possibility of a top bunk.

6. Member information sharing and meeting wrap-up

- February 9th, SFEG recognition and salmon dinner annual meeting. \$20. Sedro-Woolley Community Center at 5:30 pm.
- SCEA Dash (Run, Walk, bring your dog) – March 4 at Allen Elementary School. Geoduck Chowder provided by Taylor Shellfish. Dash path: Cook Road to Bradley to Avon Allen and back to the school. No crossing of Chuckanut.
- Richard interviewed with Jodie Buller, Speak Up, Speak Out! How to get this out to the community. ***Share the audio file on Facebook.** Time it right. Pull out one quote from it.

7. Other: Lisa from SLT and Samantha from CP were recommended to be appointed to the committee. Alex agreed to be Chair of the committee – Her role will be to set the CEC agenda, define things to work on, work with Richard to share the committee’s work with the Board. Messaging. While Alex is willing to serve, this role should rotate.

Adjourn: 11:41 am

Upcoming Dates

- February 28, 2017 – Debrief the retreat.
- March 28, 2017
- April 25, 2017