

Fidalgo Bay Day 2015

Sponsored by:

Skagit County Marine Resources Committee

Supported By:

Samish Indian Nation and Coastal Volunteer Partnership

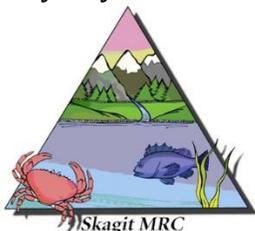
Fidalgo Bay Day Overview

Skagit County Marine Resources Committee (Skagit MRC) annual flagship public outreach event is Fidalgo Bay Day (FBD). This was the 12th year. The purpose of this free annual event is to help increase public awareness of the marine environment and foster environmental stewardship. Visitors learn about the marine ecosystem and the plants and animals that live there. They also learn steps they can take to protect the waters of Fidalgo Bay and the larger Puget Sound. Even the presenters, tabling for a participating organization, have the opportunity to learn something new, network with people from other marine-related organizations, and eat wonderful seafood. The event increases community awareness of the Skagit MRC, which devotes the majority of its resources toward less-visible projects, including marine nearshore monitoring, shoreline restoration projects, supporting the Salish Sea Stewards program, and educating shoreline land owners.

Hundreds of visitors attend this event each year and more than 30 different organizations and businesses participate. The event includes:

- interactive displays from the many participating organizations,
- children's art and science activities,
- marine life touch tank from Shannon Point Marine Center,
- beach seine with a marine biologist,
- beach walks to look for forage fish eggs,
- canoe rides in a beautiful longboat by the Samish Tribe, and
- free shellfish and chowder samples and a no-host traditional tribal salmon lunch.

For the third year, the Skagit MRC collaborated with Friends of Skagit Beaches (FSOB) to combine Fidalgo Bay Day and National Estuaries Day (NED) into a shared event.



This work has been funded in part by the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

2015 Event Summary

Fidalgo Bay Day was held Saturday, August 29th at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort in Anacortes from 11:00AM to 3:00PM. We had over 250 visitors despite the bad weather and power outage. 50 volunteers, 19 organizations, and five businesses helped make this year's event a huge success! There was an article in the Skagit Valley Herald about Fidalgo Bay Day post-event, with several excellent photos.

Opening Ceremony

The opening was led by the Samish tribal member Rosie Cayou-James and tribal staff members Adam Lorio and Christine Woodward. Rosie welcomed attendees, sang, and gave thanks for the needed rain. Christine gave a touching tribute to Ric Boge and presented a framed certificate to his family, in recognition of the work Ric did as a steward of the Salish Sea.



Weather

Several planned activities had to be canceled or modified due to the strong winds, rain, and power outage including: the free Samish Canoe Family canoe rides and showing the "Maiden of Deception Pass" and the Northwest Straits Foundation's Derelict Gear Removal videos. The Trail Tales passport stations, usually located along the Tommy Thompson Trail, had to be moved indoors.

The attendees and presenters adjusted admirably to the power outage. Smart phone flashlights were put into use everywhere and some small lanterns were brought in for the children's' activities. The conclusion of many volunteers and presenters was that the darkness encouraged a closer interaction because all had to huddle up and make do together. As volunteer Wayne Huseby commented, "Maybe we should make doing Fidalgo Bay Day by candlelight a permanent thing!" Moving the passport stations indoors with the educational displays worked out well because it helped the presenters at the educational booths become more engaged with the public.



Indoor Interactive Displays

There were interactive educational displays from 19 different organizations. These included Skagit MRC's ocean acidification science activity and forage fish food web bean bag toss game. It also included a stormwater putt-putt game, poop toss game, eelgrass mobile-making, forage fish display with microscopes, and sifting for marine plastics, just to name a few. A full list of presenters is included below.



Children's Art Activities

There were a half dozen kid-friendly crafts. Activities included face painting, button making, 3-D fish art, fish prints on fabric, and notecard-making with marine critter stamps, stickers, and drawing supplies. The Puget Sound Partnership provided Puget Sound Starts Here shopping bags, which were given out to families to carry their art projects. The National Estuaries Day team has a passport activity that inspired kids and adults to interact with presenters at educational displays in order to earn stamps and win a prize.



Outdoor Activities

Shannon Point Marine Center's portable aquarium, organized by Mira Lutz, was filled with lots of marine life for kids to see and touch. It's a wonderful way to get up close and personal with beautiful marine animals.



Dan Penttila of Salish Sea Biological provided several guided forage fish spawning walks where attendees discovered lots of surf smelt eggs.



Jason Morgan led the beach seining activity along with the help of several volunteers. Dan Penttila presented information about the fish and other marine life brought in with the seine net. Children and adults alike crowded around the buckets to see and learn about what lives, hidden to us, just offshore!



Food – Chowder, Shellfish, Salmon, and more!

Skagit MRC grant funding was used to purchase refreshments for volunteers during the morning setup. We borrowed the popcorn machine from the Anacortes Boys and Girls Club and gave away free popcorn. Support from our local restaurateurs was outstanding again this year with three local establishments, Mary Ann’s Kitchen, Adrift Restaurant, and Johnny Picasso’s, each offering up samples of some of the best clam chowder in the Northwest!



Taylor Shellfish again generously donated hundreds of dollars’ worth of delicious oysters and clams. Volunteers prepared special sauces, steamed clams, and grilled the oysters to perfection. Gere-A-Deli donated delicious brownies. Penguin Coffee donated coffee.



Rosie Cayou-James and Bill Bailey and family offered a no host traditional Samish salmon luncheon of salmon grilled over an open fire, coleslaw, and fresh fry bread. The Northwest Straits Foundation donated \$110 to purchase lunch for some of the scheduled presenters and Fidalgo Bay Day planning committee to help support Fidalgo Bay Day.



Samish Tribal Support and the Fidalgo Bay Resort

The Samish Indian Nation again graciously offered to host our event at their wonderful Fidalgo Bay Resort Convention Center at no charge. The Convention Center is located along the beautiful shores of Fidalgo Bay in the heart of the Samish Fidalgo Island ancestral homelands.



It is a perfect venue for FBD. Many thanks go to the Samish Nation for their generosity - sharing their well-equipped building which is in an ideal location.

Staff member Adam Lorio worked with us on Friday to set up, providing guidance and figuring out the projection and sound system. Staff members also completed the vacuuming and other clean-up that was impossible on Saturday due to the power outage.

Zero Waste

This was a Zero Waste event. Skagit MRC grant funds were used to purchase compostable utensils, plates, coffee cups, and chowder cups. The volunteer lead for this category coordinated with the County to reserve the necessary trash and recycling supplies and signage.

Evaluation

Several visitors were asked to participate in a short survey conducted by one of our volunteers. They were given tote bags and stickers from the Puget Sound Partnership as a 'thank you' for participating. The purpose of the survey was to gather some metrics for the event, as well as qualitative information such as favorite activities and suggestions. A volunteer directly approached participants and ask if they would be willing to answer a few questions.

Volunteers

Putting on a successful Fidalgo Bay Day requires the talents and efforts of many people. This year, over 50 people volunteered their valuable time to make sure the event was educational and fun for all. In addition, nineteen organizations contributed their time, expertise, and excellent displays. Thank you to each and every one of them!

On the day before the event, several volunteers helped set up display tables and signage, and prepared the sauces for the shellfish. On the day of the event, volunteers arrived at 9:00AM to help set up and several stayed until 4:00PM to clean up.

This event is truly a team effort! This year's FBD lead was Skagit MRC member Kari Odden, who could not have done it without the extensive help provided by Tracy Alker, Skagit MRC Administrator, and Catherine Buchalski, Coastal Volunteer Partnership (CVP) Coordinator. There were many others involved in the planning of this event, each person serving as lead for one aspect of Fidalgo Bay Day. There were three different planning meetings for the overall event and two planning meetings for the kids' activities. Those volunteers extraordinaire and section leads include the following:



Administration and Event Promotion: Tracy Alker
Volunteer Coordination and poster: Catherine Buchalski
Food: Lin Folsom
Shellfish: Paul Dinnel
Set up and more: Wayne Huseby
Presenters: Bob Weathers
Zero Waste Event and Survey: Pete Haase
Kids' Activities: Kari Odden
Canoe and Facilities: Adam Lorio
Shannon Point Touch Tank: Mira Lutz
Parking: Morty Cohen
Beach Seine: Jason Morgan

Additional volunteers supported each section. Chris Wood and Betty Carteret of FSOB were the leads on NED. Jay Lind developed a new crab pot activity. Lisa Miller created a half sheet flyer for distribution. Sue Ehler helped coordinate art activities during the event. Boy Scouts from troop 4100 help with set-up and break-down, and volunteered for several hours with the children's art activities. There were five volunteer photographers, including Dean Alker, Ivar Dolph, Karen Richman, Gail Marion, and Pete Haase. While there are too many volunteers to name each one individually in this report...

We are extremely grateful to all who volunteered!

(Over 414 volunteer hours contributed by the Coastal Volunteer Partnership, Trail Tales, and MRC volunteers)



Planning and Promotion

There are several FBD planning documents available upon request. These include: Kids' Activities (including supplies needed for 2016), 2015 Save the Date poster, half-sheet Promotional Postcards with location map, Survey, Event Timeline, and Food Timeline.

Fidalgo Bay Day flyers were widely distributed at special events and places of business. The event was also widely posted online and on partner websites, Facebook, newsletters, and email lists. Ads were also placed in the Skagit Valley Herald, the Anacortes American, and the Clipper. A Public Service Announcement was posted on the County's Listserve. Local reporters were contacted.

Acknowledgements

A special Thank You to the following partners and local businesses who generously contributed additional resources and/or funding to help support Fidalgo Bay Day:

- * Adrift Restaurant
- * Anonymous donation of materials and supplies to help construct Skagit MRC's games
- * Friends of Skagit Beaches
- * Gere-A-Deli
- * Johnny Picassos
- * Mary Anne's Kitchen
- * Northwest Straits Foundation
- * Penguin Coffee
- * Samish Indian Nation
- * Taylor Shellfish
- * The Anacortes Boys and Girls Club



2015 Participating Organizations

Adrift Restaurant

Anacortes Boys' & Girls Club

Cayou / Bailey Family

Coastal Volunteer Partnership

Environmental Science Center, Burien

Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve Citizens' Stewardship Committee

Friends of Skagit Beaches

Gere-A-Deli

Johnny Picassos

Mary Ann's Kitchen

Northwest Straits Foundation

Orca Network

Pacific Biodiversity Institute Harbor Porpoise Project

Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve

Penguin Coffee

Salish Sea Biological

Salish Sea Stewards

Samish Indian Nation Department of Natural Resources

Samish Indian Nation Education Program

Shannon Point Marine Center

Skagit Conservation District

Skagit Conservation Education Alliance

Skagit County Marine Resources Committee

Skagit County Public Works/Water Quality

Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group

Skagit Land Trust

Skagit Salmon Farm

Trail Tales

Washington Environmental Council

Washington State Department of Ecology

Washington State Department of Natural Resources, Aquatic Resources

2015 Fidalgo Bay Day Volunteers

- Alker, Dean
- Barger, Russ
- Boy Scout Troop 4100
- Bravinder, Phyllis
- Brown, Chris
- Carteret, Betty
- Cohen, Morty
- Coleman, Don
- Cunningham, Brenda
- Davidson, Donna
- Dinnel, Paul
- Dolph, Ivar
- Ehler, Sue
- Dresen, Beverly
- Eiesland, Diane
- Folsom, Lin
- Gleeson, Jim
- Gleeson, Val
- Kintner, Leah
- Kirn, Kelly
- Kuehn, Betty
- Haase, Pete
- Haley, Rick
- Hersey, Jan
- Huseby, Wayne
- Hutchins, Pattie
- Lechner, Barbara
- Manns, Timothy
- Manion, Raffi
- Marquardt, Michelle
- McDanald, Bruce
- McNeil, Emily
- McNeil, Vicki
- Middleton, Anne
- Middleton, Jack
- Mohundro, Mike
- Morgan, Jazz
- Odden, Kari
- Peterson, Scott
- Richards, Elizabeth
- Richards, Tom
- Richman, Karen
- Sjogren, Gordan
- Smith, Jennifer
- Stevenson, Betsy
- Tabor, Mae
- Tchang, Sara
- Turner, Christine
- Weathers, Bob
- Weeks, Regan

