

Fidalgo Bay Day 2016

Sponsored by:

Skagit County Marine Resources Committee

With support of the
Samish Indian Nation



This project has been funded wholly or in part by the United States Environmental Protection Agency via the Puget Sound Partnership and the Northwest Straits Commission under assistance agreement Grant SEANWS-2015-SkCoPW-00001 to Skagit County. The contents of this document do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the United States Environmental Protection Agency, nor does mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation for use.

Fidalgo Bay Day Overview

Fidalgo Bay Day is the annual flagship public outreach event for the Skagit County Marine Resources Committee (Skagit MRC.) This was the 13th year and was again hosted at the Samish Indian Nation Fidalgo Bay Resort clubhouse. 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 Salish. 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. Activities are varied from year to year and may include: 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, and free shellfish and chowder samples and a no-host traditional tribal salmon lunch.

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

2016 Event Summary

Fidalgo Bay Day was held Saturday, August 27th at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort in Anacortes from 11:00AM to 3:00PM. We had over 300 visitors with beautiful weather and scenery. 45 volunteers, 20 organizations, and five businesses helped make this year's event a huge success! Parking was at the Resort clubhouse and an adjacent field.

Opening Ceremony: A warm and inspirational welcoming was led by Samish tribal members.



(Lee First)

Outdoor Interactive Displays: People walking up to the clubhouse were greeted by “Gracie”, the skull of a BIG gray whale. Provided and staffed by the Deception Pass State Park Foundation, she was the first of several “passport” stations.



(Samantha Russell)



Individuals and groups obtained their passports and instructions at a nearby information booth and set out to learn more about Fidalgo Bay and its beauty and value. By answering questions and getting the passport “stamped”, they could compete for prizes and learning. Other outdoor passport stations included Fidalgo Bay history, how estuaries work, and the wonders of eel grass.



Indoor Interactive Displays: Inside the clubhouse were more interactive educational activities from many different organizations. Many were also passport stations. These included Skagit MRC’s forage fish food web bean bag toss game and the NW Straits Foundation Proper Crab Trap methods. There were also Birds of the Bay, Orca Whales, Watershed Functions, and others. A full list of participating groups is included below.



Youth Craft Activities: There were several 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.



Outdoor Activities: Besides the passport stations, some also walked the beach searching for Forage Fish eggs or enjoyed just getting their feet wet. The great attraction was the traditional "Beach Seining" led by Jason Morgan and Dan Penttila with help from many volunteers and most of the audience. Some looked for birds on the bay and others just enjoyed the celebration!





Food – Chowder, Shellfish, Salmon, and more: 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.





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.



Samish Tribal Support and the Fidalgo Bay Resort: The Samish Indian Nation again graciously hosted our event at their wonderful Fidalgo Bay Resort Clubhouse at no charge. The Clubhouse 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.

Zero Waste: This was a Zero Waste event. Skagit MRC grant funds were used to purchase compostable utensils, plates, coffee cups, and chowder cups.

Evaluation: Several visitors were asked to participate in a short survey conducted by two of our volunteers. The purpose of the survey was to gather some metrics for the event, as well as qualitative information such as favorite activities and suggestions. The learning, the food, and the setting were frequently mentioned.

Volunteers: Putting on a successful Fidalgo Bay Day requires the talents and efforts of many people. This year, more than 45 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 Peter Haase, who could not have done it without the extensive help provided by other key helpers including:

Administration and Event Promotion: Tracy Alker

Food: Lin Folsom

Shellfish: Dick Kent and team

Set up and more: Wayne Huseby

Kids' Activities: Sue Ehler

Parking: Morty Cohen

Beach Seine: Jason Morgan and Dan Penttila

Passport Stations: Chris Wood and Betty Carteret

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

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 Skagit Valley Recreation and Activity guide. A Public Service Announcement was posted on the County's Listserve. Local reporters were contacted.

Acknowledgements

Resources or funding contributing to Fidalgo Bay Day include the following:

Samish Indian Nation provided free use of their facility, kitchen, grill, food handler permits

Friends of Skagit Beaches provided insurance coverage for the facility, sandwich board signs, and passport activity and prizes

Complimentary seafood chowder provided by 3 local restaurants (Adrift Restaurant, Johnny Picassos, and Mary Anne's Kitchen)

Complimentary shellfish provided by Taylor Shellfish

The Anacortes Boys and Girls Club's popcorn machine

Gere-A-Deli donated free brownies

Dan Penttila provided free scientific expertise identifying and presenting information about fish and other marine life during beach seining and forage fish spawning walks

Over 200 volunteer hours



2015 Participating Organizations

Adrift Restaurant
Anacortes Boys' & Girls Club
Cayou / Bailey Family
Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve Citizens' Stewardship Committee
Friends of Skagit Beaches
Gere-A-Deli
Johnny Picassos
Mary Ann's Kitchen
Northwest Straits Foundation
Northwest Straits Commission
Orca Network
Pacific Biodiversity Institute Harbor Porpoise Project
Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve
Salish Sea Biological
Salish Sea Stewards
Samish Indian Nation
Wa. Department of Natural Resources Aquatic Reserves Division
Wa. Department of Ecology
Wolf Hollow Wildlife Rehabilitation Center
Skagit County Public Works
Skagit County Marine Resources Committee
Skagit Land Trust
Skagit Conservation Education Alliance
Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group
Coastal Volunteer Partnership at Padilla Bay
ReSources for Sustainable Communities
Deception Pass Park Foundation