

# Fidalgo Bay Day 2012

A Public Education Program Sponsored by  
Skagit County Marine Resources Committee  
Anacortes Community Maritime Center



# Table of Contents

Summary of Event Activities .....	3-5
Event poster .....	6
Event entry point .....	7
Shannon Point creature tanks .....	8
Shannon Point video set-up .....	9
Welcome table .....	9
People for Puget Sound .....	10
Marine Mammal Stranding Network .....	10
Samish Indian Nation .....	11
Knot tying .....	11
Skagit Conservation Education Alliance .....	12
Beach Watchers plastics display .....	12
Washington State Dept. of Natural Resources .....	13
Pacific Biodiversity Institute .....	13
Kids' environmental permit activity .....	14-15
REsources of Bellingham .....	16
City of Anacortes/Port of Anacortes .....	17
Fish Biologist Dan Penttila .....	18
Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve ..	19
Fish printing activity .....	19
Notecard making activity .....	20
Fish printing activity .....	21
Button making activity .....	21
Taylor shellfish barbecue .....	22
Chowder tasting .....	23
Bill Bailey salmon barbecue .....	24
Hauling out the beach seine .....	24
Hauling in the beach seine .....	25
Dan Penttila shows of the fish .....	26
List of volunteers .....	27
List of participating organizations .....	28

This report was compiled by Beach Watcher and Skagit County Marine Resources Committee member Erica Pickett.

# Fidalgo Bay Day 2012

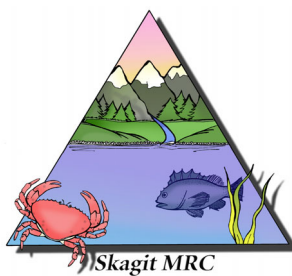
Weather is always an iffy proposition in the September of Fidalgo Island and yet we scooted through this one without a single raindrop or threat of wet. There were many nice surprises to come along this year and the good weather was just one of them.

Although this event is put on without a huge budget, it is still a four-figure sum of money and we weren't certain that there would even *be* a budget until Joan Drinkwin of the Northwest Straits Foundation came along with a grant from the Burning Foundation for us. It was this grant which allowed planning for the event to go ahead. That was nice surprise number one. Many thanks to Joan and to the Burning Foundation. We would not have been able to put on the event without this help.

Usually our largest expense is the rental of facilities. Nice surprise number two: the Samish Nation picked up the tab for our facilities rental. The big hall and kitchen at the Fidalgo Bay Resort and RV Park are well suited to our event, being right on the beach and of a perfect size, and the staff is always wonderful to work with and instantly present. We simply could not have asked for better facilities or finer staff assistance. Many thanks to Robert Smith and Jeff Wooten as well as the other staffers at the front desk.

Shannon Point Marine Center, a local outpost of Western Washington State University, has always gone way out of their way to bring us a whole zoo of undersea creatures, and this year was no exception. The sea stars were especially outstanding as they crawled up the clear glass of the tanks and showed off those amazing little tube feet, finally waving them in the air as they broke the surface of the water.

Gene McKeen brought Shannon Point's newest version of the microscope: an electronic wonder which shows the miracles of invisible life up on a pair of video screens.





Gene and his stalwart helpers Denise Crowe and Anna-Mai Christmas brought about twenty-five college freshmen along to help mind the touch tanks, explain life in the sea to the little kids, and also to go on a kind of “scavenger hunt” among the displays, adding to their store of marine science knowledge.

Making this all happen requires the efforts of a diverse bunch of more than two and a half dozen organizations and the time, talents and connections of some forty-five volunteers, many of them WSU Skagit Beach Watchers.

Taylor Shellfish Farms donates dozens and dozens of clams and oysters so that our guests may experience the delectable taste of fresh shellfish, a succulent product of good clean water and a lot of care and know-how on the part of the folks at Taylor.

The Anacortes Community Maritime Center allows us to buy a liability rider on their insurance policy, cutting our insurance costs to about a quarter of what they would otherwise be.

This year the County Health Department increased their fees for permits from \$150 to \$350, so that was not a happy event. On the plus side, though, Mary Ann Tostenson, owner of Mary-Ann’s Kitchen, let us use her kitchen to chop up all the ingredients for sauces the night before the event. I think we delayed her evening routine, and am really grateful to her for her generosity.

Paul Dinnel, one of the charter members of the Skagit County Marine Resources Committee and a marine scientist at Shannon Point Marine Center came through for the ninth year in a row by picking up shellfish at Taylor Shellfish Farms on Samish Bay. He and his wife, Vicki McNeil, mastermind the creation of sauces for the oysters and make sure there is a smooth and constant flow of roasted oysters to the hungry crowd.





Six more local businesses stepped up to help make the day a festive one with Adrift and Randy's Pier 61 serving chowders along with Mary Ann's Kitchen. Gary Dear of Mad Hatter's Ice Cream brought us a ton of good cheer with his varieties of delicious ice cream. We ask a lot of these folks to interrupt their normal routine and trek down to the Fidalgo Bay Resort with food and sundry equipment, and we send many thanks their way. Brownies from Gere-A-Deli were as popular as ever.

Bill Bailey and Rosie Cayou and family put out a traditional lucheon of barbecued salmon with all the trimmings, including that old-time favorite, frybread.

Children's activities have always been our specialty and this year saw many different things for kids to do besides the ever-popular poop toss and beach seine. Kids had a chance to look through a real microscope at live fish eggs, make notecards with a variety of rubber stamp images of sea creatures and create their own cloth fish prints. Adam Lorio of the Samish Indian Nation showed the kids how to make rope with nettle fiber and gave them a chance to try it.

It has always been hard to put a reliable figure on attendance because the event has never had a real single gateway where we might count each person. This year was no exception to that situation but we did have Shannon Point set up right at the entrance to the building, ice cream just inside the door and a welcome table staffed by energetic volunteers eager to log in the zip codes of all visitors.

We counted 302 visitors. Almost sixty percent of them came from our local 98221 zip code, so somewhere on Fidalgo or Guemes Islands. The balance of our crowd came from around the Northwest, mostly, with 13 visitors from out of state and 19 from Canada. Visitors from Oak Harbor on Whidbey Island matched our out-of-state group with 13 folks. We did not think to ask how many of our out-of-state and Canadian visitors were staying at the RV Park, but certainly some of them were. This pattern is similar to other years. It has always been a challenge to lure people who live near the shopping mecca of the Burlington-Mt.Vernon area to come west across the Swinomish Slough.

When I was talking with some of the staff of the RV Park after the event they were very clear in their own estimate of attendance based on the parking problems we had had. They said they had overseen many events at the RV Park and that we had at *least* 400 visitors and probably more like 500. Who knows. Many of our exhibitors felt we had the best event yet no matter what the exact number of attendees was.

It was a great day for all concerned, old hands, tiny hands and the hands of college freshmen!



# Fidalgo Bay Day

September 15, 2012 - 11 AM to 3 PM

Fidalgo Bay Resort RV Park

4701 Fidalgo Bay Rd., Anacortes, WA



Photos by Ivar Dolph

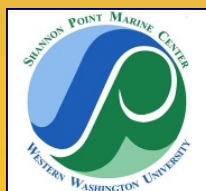
## Fun for the whole family!

A community celebration of Fidalgo Bay

Fun and educational activities for kids & adults

Meet sea creatures and marine scientists

Enjoy the popular beach seining demonstration



### Enjoy Local Seafood Lunch

No-host traditional Samish BBQ

Salmon platter by Cayou Family

Samples of local seafood & chowders



Mad Hatter Ice Cream



Thanks to our sponsors,  
volunteers & food donors







Shannon Point Marine Center set up their touch tanks right at the entrance of our event, making a nice welcome to all.



Sea stars up against the glass give a view of those amazing little tube feet they use to move. Those feet have got to be one of the earliest known applications of the principles of hydraulics.





Photo: Ivar Dolph

The undersea "zoo" is always a high point for kids and parents alike. Many folks have never seen these animals except in photos.



Photo: Ivar Dolph

Purple sea stars tolerate exposure to air here just as they do on their native rocks.





Shannon Point shows off the marvels of plankton on two big screens, one at left and a twin just out of the photo on the right.



Beach Watchers Raffi Manion and Helen Harris worked the first shift at the welcome table, handing out permit applications to the children and doing their level best to record the zip codes of all the visitors.





Though People for Puget Sound was due to dissolve on September 30, they showed up on September 15 and had lots of fun things for kids to do.



Caroline Spehar is a favorite volunteer at the Marine Mammal Stranding Network display. She tells people interesting stories to remind them that seal pups are not abandoned just because they are alone on the beach.





Adam Lorio of the Samish Tribe lets kids try their hands at traditional Samish rope making with nettle fibers.



Cary Tolman, in the blue shirt, shows young folks and older ones the secrets of tying knots that hold.





The Skagit Conservation Education Alliance brings two tanks to our event. Both are filled with bay water cloudy with algae. One holds about a dozen clams or oysters. People are amazed to watch the tank with the shellfish clear up during the day as the clams and oysters do their work.



Beach Watcher Patti Hutchins tends a display she created to teach people about the hazards of plastics in the marine environment.



Photo: Wayne Huseby

Betty Bookheim of the Washington State Department of Natural Resources sets up to tell folks about the Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve.



Photo: Wayne Huseby

Fidalgo Bay Day isn't just for the visitors! Beach Watcher pals Mike Mohundro and Sue Ehler share a friendly greeting in front of the display about the Harbor Porpoise study, one of many research projects reliant on Beach Watcher volunteers.



Go to Permit Headquarters

My Fidalgo Bay Day Pledge:

I will protect Fidalgo Bay and its surrounding environment by taking the following action(s):

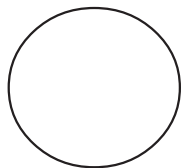
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PERMIT APPROVED!



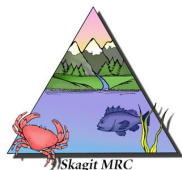
CONGRATULATIONS!

Line drawings of marine organisms from Eugene Kosloff's  
Marine Invertebrates of the Pacific Northwest

Thanks to our sponsors:

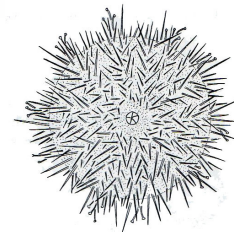
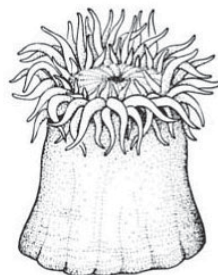
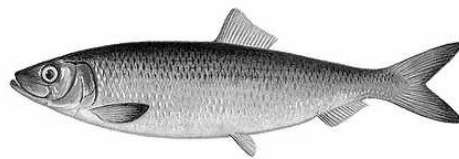
**The Burning Foundation**

*To protect our region's  
rivers, forest, native  
fish and land...*



Fidalgo Bay Day  
September 15, 2012

# Environmental Permit Application



Directions:

Throughout your Fidalgo Bay Day journey,  
check in at each Permit Station.

After visiting all four stations, return to  
permit headquarters to complete your  
pledge to Fidalgo Bay and have your permit  
approved.

Applicant's  
name \_\_\_\_\_

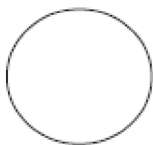
This page is the front and back covers of our permit application which the kids were encouraged to fill in.

## Go to Permit Station #1

### FORAGE FISH

Forage fish is a name for those small fish which are food for bigger animals like salmon, seals, porpoises and birds. People sometimes eat them, too! Which fish below are the three main forage fish living in Fidalgo Bay?

- A. Sand Lance
- B. Surf smelt
- C. Pacific Herring
- D. Gold Fish

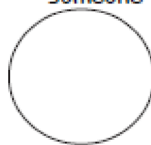


## Go to Permit Station #3

### PLASTICS

Plastic pollution in the oceans is creating one of the world's biggest environmental problems. Many sea creatures such as seabirds, seals, and whales eat the plastic trash or get caught up in it and die. Which of the following can you do to help stop this problem:

- A. Recycle or throw away used plastic in a trash can with a lid on it.
- B. Don't use plastic shopping bags - use canvas or paper bags
- C. Make sure all plastic bottle caps get in to the trash can
- D. Leave trash from a picnic on the beach for someone to pick up later



## Go to Permit Station #2

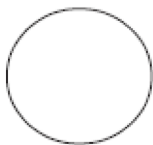
### MICROSCOPE

So much of life (plant and animal) in the ocean is very small, so small you need a microscope to see it. Researchers use microscopes a lot to study sea life. List three very special things you see here at this station.

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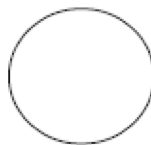


## Go to Permit Station #4

### LIVING SEA CREATURES (OUTSIDE TANKS)

When we visit the beach there are many wonderful small creatures we can see. They are very small and we are so big! Choose three ways we can enjoy seeing them on the beach and keep them safe at the same time.

- A. Only touch them if your hands are wet
- B. Bend down to look at them rather than pick them up way up into the air
- C. Step carefully while you explore the beach for creatures - you don't want to crunch them
- D. Pick up and throw big rocks



Here are the inside pages of our little permit exercise. The permit stations were various displays marked around the room. Thanks to Beach Watcher Sue Ehler for organizing this activity.



Photo: Wayne Huseby

This photo gives an idea of why we like the Fidalgo Resort so much. There is plenty of room for all the displays and the visitors.



Photo: Wayne Huseby

REsources of Bellingham brought this display to highlight the terrible and completely unintended consequences of plastics at sea. Beach Watcher Pete Haase represented the group.





Photo: Ivar Dolph

Christine Timmerman of the Port of Anacortes explains the details of cleaning up the former Scott paper mill site on Fidalgo Bay to a trio of Shannon Point college freshmen.



Photo: Ivar Dolph

Photo: Ivar Dolph

Scott Eisen of the City of Anacortes water department tells a family about the city's new water treatment plant on the Skagit River. Scott is a real trooper: this was his third day on the job at the City's water department!

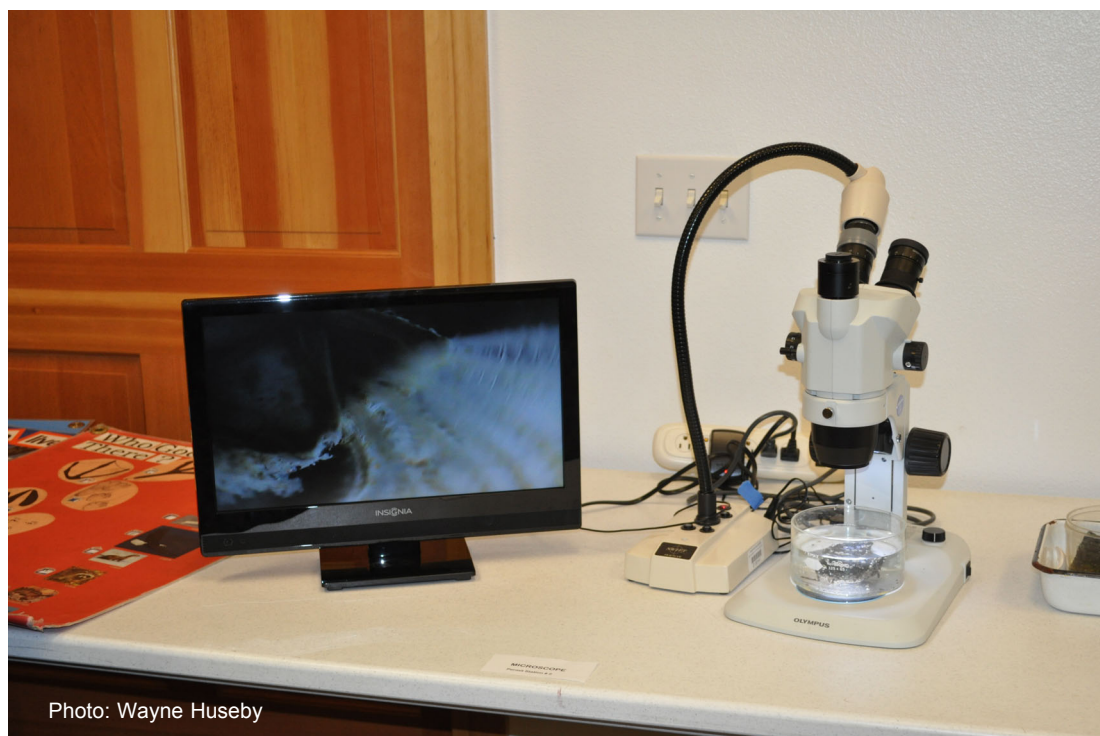


Fish biologist Dan Penttila adjusts the microscope so that the fish eggs on the stage may be seen clearly. We are very fortunate to have the state's foremost forage fish expert set up a display at Fidalgo Bay Day.



Dan Penttila shows off forage fish eggs to one of our attendees.





What looks like a tidal wave on the screen is actually the tiny feeding fan of a barnacle, blurred by its constant motion. Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve is the source of this enlargement of the small world.



Kids had a great time making fish prints. We borrow accurate rubber stand-ins for real fish; much less in the way of smell and slime.

Making notecards using rubber stamp images of sea creatures is one of many activities for kids of all ages.



Photo: Roz Krumm



Photo: Ivar Dolph





Photo: Ivar Dolph

Fish printing attracted all ages, including these college freshmen.



Photo: Ivar Dolph

Button making was another fun thing to do for the smaller marine scientists. We provided line drawings of an assortment of marine creatures for the kids to color in and make into buttons they could wear.





Beach Watcher Dixon Elder and friend Barbi Fuentes serve up delicious shellfish from Taylor Shellfish Farms.



Does tasting shellfish count as marine science?





Randy Barrett from Randy's Pier 61 gets set up early with delicious chowder. Can it be that some people just come for the food?



Janette Jones minds the table for Mary Ann's Kitchen. Mary Ann usually sends smoked salmon bisque for an extra special treat.



Samish master carver Bill Bailey is known for the totems he has carved and for the barbecued salmon he fixed us for lunch!



Dan Penttila holds the beach end of the seine while Darrell Asseln and John Cornelius swing the other end around to bring in fish, crabs and seaweed.





Photo: Roz Krumm

Beach Watchers Chris Brown, Scott Petersen and Tom Richards help haul in the seine. Everyone waits to see what will come up in the net.



Photo: Roz Krumm

Dan Penttala gives the kids a good introduction to the kinds of fish we find in the net. He puts a fish in a bag of water and passes it around so the kids get a good close look.





Photo: Wayne Huseby

The kids also get a fair amount of time to explore fish in tubs full of water. The parents tell us that many of the kids ask to come back year after year.



Photo: Wayne Huseby

These little hands will soon inherit the future with all the challenge, wonder and promise it brings. A few of them will go on to become scientists. All of them will remember the first time they touched the cool skin of a live flatfish from Fidalgo Bay.



# Participating Volunteers

Name	Affiliation
Darrell Asseln	All-around Great Skipper
Caroline Barney	Anacortes Community Maritime Center
Betty Bookheim	WA Department of Natural Resources
Chet Bradley	WSU Extension Skagit County Beach Watchers
Phyllis Bravinder	WSU Extension Skagit County Beach Watchers
Nihla Bradley	WSU Extension Skagit County Beach Watchers
Chris Brown	WSU Extension Skagit County Beach Watchers
Betty Carteret	WSU Skagit Beach Watchers, Friends of Skagit Beaches
John Cornelius	All around Great Seine Skiff Mate
Paul Dinnel	MRC, Shannon Point Marine Center
Ivar Dolph	MRC, WSU Extension Skagit County Beach Watchers
Beverly Dresen	WSU Extension Skagit County Beach Watchers
Sue Ehler	WSU Extension Skagit County Beach Watchers
Dixon Elder	WSU Extension Skagit County Beach Watchers
Tammy Ennen	WSU Extension Skagit County Beach Watchers
Jennifer Fenswick	WSU Extension Skagit County Beach Watchers
Lin Folsom	WSU Extension Skagit County Beach Watchers
Bob Freedman	WSU Extension Skagit County Beach Watchers
Barbi Fuentes	Great Canadian Education Assistant
Lyndon Greene	Anacortes Community Maritime Center
Gerri Gunn	Trail Tales Docent
Pete Haase	WSU Extension Skagit County Beach Watchers, REsources
Helen Harris	WSU Extension Skagit County Beach Watchers
Jan Hersey	WSU Extension Skagit County Beach Watchers
Wayne Huseby	WSU Extension Skagit County Beach Watchers
Pattie Hutchins	WSU Extension Skagit County Beach Watchers
Roz Krumm	WSU Extension Skagit County Beach Watchers
Raffi Manion	WSU Extension Skagit County Beach Watchers
Charlaine McGinnis-Brown	WSU Extension Skagit County Beach Watchers
Mike Mohundro	WSU Extension Skagit County Beach Watchers
Vicki McNeil	Anacortes Community Maritime Center
Dan Penttila	Salish Sea Biological
Scott Petersen	WSU Extension Skagit County Beach Watchers
Ruth Peterson	WSU Extension Skagit County Beach Watchers
Erica Pickett	WSU Skagit Beach Watchers, Friends of Skagit Beaches
Michele Pope	WSU Extension Skagit County Beach Watchers
Tom Richards	WSU Extension Skagit County Beach Watchers
Karen Richman	WSU Extension Skagit County Beach Watchers
Eric Shen	WSU Skagit Beach Watchers, Friends of Skagit Beaches
Caroline Spehar	WSU Extension Skagit County Beach Watchers
Pat Steffani	WSU Extension Skagit County Beach Watchers
Mae Tabor	WSU Extension Skagit County Beach Watchers
Cary Tolman	Anacortes Community Maritime Center
Bob Weathers	WSU Extension Skagit County Beach Watchers
Ashley Westling	REsources



# Participating Organizations

Adrift Restaurant  
Anacortes Boys' & Girls' Club  
Anacortes Community Maritime Center  
Burning Foundation  
Cayou Family Catering  
City of Anacortes  
City of Anacortes Water Department  
Friends of Skagit Beaches  
Gere-A-Deli  
Mad Hatter's Ice Cream  
Mary Ann's Kitchen  
Northwest Marine Mammal Stranding Network/ OrcaNet  
Northwest Straits Foundation  
Pacific Biodiversity Institute  
Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve  
People for Puget Sound  
Port of Anacortes  
Randy's Pier 61  
REsources  
Salish Sea Biological  
Samish Indian Nation  
Shannon Point Marine Center  
Skagit Conservation Education Alliance  
Skagit County Marine Resources Committee  
Skagit County Public Works/Water Quality  
Skagit Land Trust  
Taylor Shellfish Farms  
Village Pizza  
Washington State Department of Natural Resources  
WSU Extension Skagit County Beach Watchers