

Fidalgo Bay Day 2017

Sponsored by:

Skagit County Marine Resources Committee

With support of the
Samish Indian Nation



08/12/2017



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-2016-SkCoPW-00003 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 14th 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 Sea. 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 seining demonstration 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.

For the fifth year in a row, the Skagit MRC collaborated with the Friends of Skagit Beaches who sponsored the "Discovery Passport" activity. This year's passport cover was selected from one of the entries in the coloring contest from last year's event. This year, 13 kids participated in the coloring contest to win a spot on the cover of the 2018 Discovery Passport. 203 people participated in the passport activity this year. The passport participants explored the discovery stations and interacted with the different organizations hosting the displays to answer the passport questions and get a stamp for prizes. Many indicated they learned something new.

2017 Event Summary

Fidalgo Bay Day was held Saturday, August 12th at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort in Anacortes from 11:00AM to 3:00PM. We had over 400 visitors with beautiful weather and scenery. 45 volunteers, 22 organizations, and six 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.



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.



The “Touch Tank” from the Shannon Point Marine Center and staffed with students was also right up front and the usual grand activity for kids – big and little, young and old!



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 from our various displays. By answering questions and getting the passport “stamped”, they could compete for prizes and learning.

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 Matt Castle 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!



Other outdoor passport stations included Fidalgo Bay history, Intertidal Monitoring, and Whales.



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 "tide pool rules" activity and two games (i.e. forage fish bean bag toss game and the stormwater golf game) as well as the Northwest Straits Initiative's "Catch More Crab" outreach campaign and proper crab trap rigging demonstration with biodegradable escape cords. There were also Birds of the Bay, Orca Whales, Watershed Functions, and many others. A full list of participating groups is included at the end of this report.



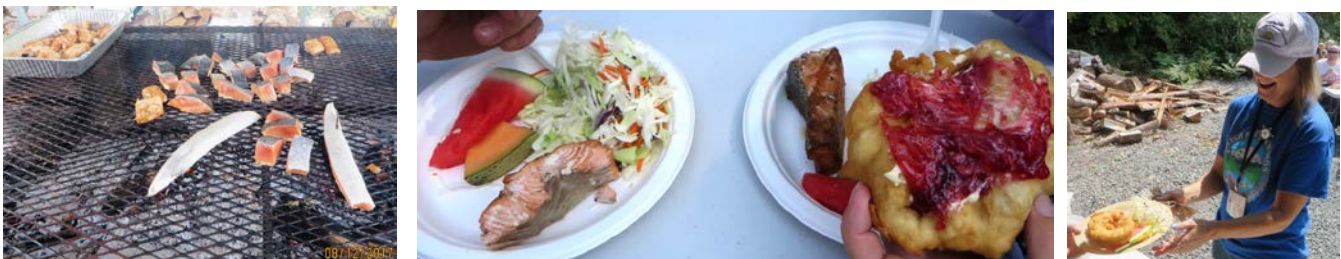
Youth Craft Activities: There were several kid-friendly craft activities including: face painting, mural coloring, luminary construction, fish prints on fabric, and notecard-making with marine critter stamps, stickers, and drawing supplies.



Food – Chowder, Shellfish, Salmon, and more: We borrowed the popcorn machine from the Anacortes Boys and Girls Club and gave away 130 bags of free popcorn. Support from our local restaurateurs was outstanding again this year. Three local establishments (Mary Ann’s Kitchen, Adrift Restaurant, and Johnny Picasso’s) each offered samples of some of the best clam chowder in the Northwest! And once again, Taylor Shellfish generously donated hundreds of dollars’ worth of delicious oysters and mussels. Volunteers prepared special sauces, steamed mussels, and grilled the oysters to perfection. Gere-A-Deli donated delicious brownies, always a crowd favorite.



Rosie Cayou-James and Bill Bailey and family offered a no host traditional Samish salmon luncheon of salmon grilled over an open fire, coleslaw salad, watermelon, 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: 43 visitors participated 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 most favorite activities were the beach seining, touch tank, food, kid’s activities, and passports. For the question “What did you learn today”, the overwhelming response was “Lots”. 26 out of the 43 people interviewed, said that this was their first Fidalgo Bay Day.

Volunteers: This year, more than 45 people volunteered over 200 hours of their valuable time to make sure the event was educational and fun for all. In addition, twenty-two 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: Gina Johnson and team

Shellfish: Paul Dinnel and team

Set up and more: Wayne Huseby

Kids' Activities: Team of many!

Parking: Morty Cohen

Beach Seine: Matt Castle and Dan Penttila

Passport Stations: Jen Herron 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 Clam Digger. Local reporters were contacted and articles were in local papers. The "Over the street" banner in Anacortes was used during the week before, as was a road-side sign.



Acknowledgements

In addition to Skagit MRC grant funding, several local business and organizations helped support Fidalgo Bay by contributing in-kind services, resources, or funding including:

- 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
- The Puget Sound Shell Refinery provided funds used for a variety of expenses, including volunteer hats
- Complimentary seafood chowder was provided by 3 local restaurants (Adrift Restaurant, Johnny Picassos, and Mary Anne's Kitchen)
- Complimentary shellfish was provided by Taylor Shellfish
- The Anacortes Boys and Girls Club loaned the 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 were expended



2017 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
New Pilgrims Church
Northwest Straits Initiative
Orca Network
Pacific Biodiversity Institute
Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve
Salish Sea Biological
Salish Sea Stewards
Samish Indian Nation
Shell Puget Sound Refinery
Taylor Shellfish
Wa. Department of Natural Resources Aquatic Reserves Division
Wa. Department of Ecology
Wa. Sea Grant Crab Team
Wolf Hollow Wildlife Rehabilitation Center
Skagit County Public Works
Skagit County Marine Resources Committee
Skagit Land Trust
Skagit Conservation District
Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group
Skagit Valley College

Coastal Volunteer Partnership at Padilla Bay

ReSources for Sustainable Communities

Deception Pass Park Foundation

Pacific Mammal Research

Shannon Point Marine Center

Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve Citizen Stewardship Committee



(Photos: Karen Richman, Lee First, Pete Haase, SVHerald)