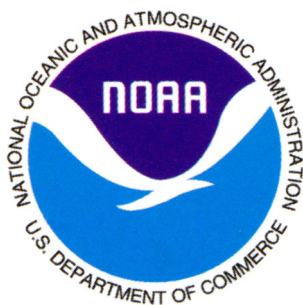


Fidalgo Bay Day 2008

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



Michele Pope photo



NORTHWEST STRAITS
marine conservation initiative

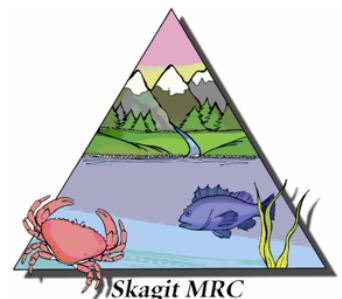


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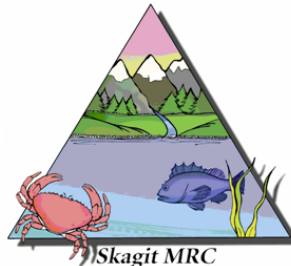
Fidalgo Bay Day 2008

Fidalgo Bay Day began as Marine Ecology Day in 2004. We have tried various activities through the years, aiming for the combination which would attract people and give them some lasting information about the life in the saltwater world around them.

Last year it seemed like no one showed up much before eleven. There were so few people at Seafarers' Park at ten o'clock, in fact, that one of the exhibitors asked me if he could move to the ESD building where there were a whole batch of kids. Then eleven came around and we had lots of visitors. So this year we decided to begin the whole event at eleven and see how that went. It went fine for the visitors and made for less wear and tear on the volunteers.

Although the celebration is not a long one, much planning goes into providing entertainment and information for the public. The event could not happen without the enthusiastic participation of a few key organizations:

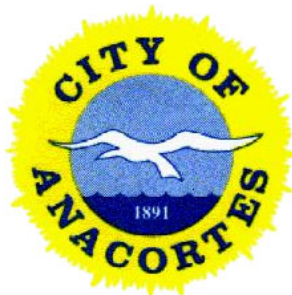
- The Skagit Marine Resources Committee supports the event with a budget of \$2000 and the help of a number of key members.
- The Anacortes Community Maritime Center supplied muscle, insurance, organization, and seafood cooks. ACCM members also provided signage and several kids' activities.
- Shannon Point Marine Center provided the living creatures and grad students to tell people about them. This maritime "zoo" was the centerpiece of the day.
- The Samish Indian Nation brought Bill Bailey and Rosie Cayou to provide delectable barbecued salmon lunches.
- WSU Skagit Beach Watchers members showed up in force throughout the year to do everything from planning and organization, minding the clams and oysters to making coffee and popcorn.



Shannon Point Marine Center

Samish Indian Nation

- Taylor Shellfish Farms once again provided us with a gigantic quantity of clams and oysters for our visitors. Many thanks to Bill Dewey for this generosity and thanks to Paul Dinnel for handling all the logistical details of fetching and preparing the shellfish. Paul and his wife, Vicki, supervised the formulation of the delicious secret sauces for the day.
- The Port of Anacortes provided the use of the facilities at Seafarers' Memorial Park at no charge to us, a huge and very welcome donation.
- Anacortes Yacht Club lent us their impressive stainless steel grill, another boost from the Anacortes community which saved us a trip to Burlington and a large stack of dollars.
- Dan Penttila of WDFW spent half his weekend setting up the microscope and surrounding display with specimens of forage fish and their eggs for all to examine. Little kids peering through the stereoscope provided lifetime memories and some of our most endearing photos of the event.
- Alex Alexander of Padilla Bay National Estuarine Reserve brought the video macroscope to amaze and delight folks young and old with an up-close look at the gorgeous eelgrass-colored Taylor's sea slug and barnacles waving their tiny fans to catch the odd bite to eat.
- Sandra Caldwell of the Department of Ecology presented both a display and a game about the extensive clean up of Fidalgo Bay.
- Skagit County MRC lead Tracy Patton showed folks the ins and outs of water quality monitoring with a little help from Pete Haase of the Skagit Conservation District. They thought the rain was perfect because it gave them another water sample!
- We had the support of five local restaurants, helping us to imprint information about the sea with tasty bits from it. Randy's Pier 61, Stork's Restaurant and Mary Ann's Kitchen brought gallons of delicious chowder. Gere-A-Deli gave us a huge pan of brownies and McDonald's set us up with a large cooler of orange drink for the kids.
- The Anacortes Boys' and Girls' Club provided us with a popcorn machine, lending the day a touch of the circus.
- Anacortes Youth Arts lent us the rubber fish and invertebrates to make fish prints. Monica Oppel taught the perfect technique for creating the most prints with the least mess.
- The City of Anacortes provided some crucial printing for us.





Beach Watcher Fran Jepperson illustrates the various habitat zones in the intertidal area. This set of children's activities was set up in the lobby of the ESD building.



Kids enjoy making buttons to wear which show drawings of various marine animals.



Fish printing was another favorite activity. It was set up outside the ESD building so as to minimize ink in the carpets.

Beach Watcher Boshie Morris tells kids about salmon habitats and life stages. The kids add a bead to the bracelet for each phase of the salmon's life cycle.





Face painting is always a big hit at Fidalgo Bay Day.

Beach Watcher Eric Shen makes sure the popcorn machine is working to perfection. We popped and served one entire case of the ready-to-pop envelopes, enough for 250 servings of popcorn.





Tracy Patton of Skagit County Public Works and Pete Haase of Skagit Conservation District set up their water quality tent near the ramp to the float.



Shannon Point grad students set up the aquaria on the float.



The Shannon Point tanks full of creatures were a popular spot for spectators.



Shannon Point grad student Carmen Guerra shows off sea creatures to one of the younger visitors.



There is nothing quite like touching a creature to help a person understand that it is alive.





The striped sun star makes quite an impression with its bright colors and many legs.



Shannon Point's maritime "zoo" is always the hit of the show.



The Zenn electric car provided a new idea about driving around town without the polluting effects of gasoline.



ACMC's paddleboat racing was a popular activity among the young and warm-blooded.



Every race must have a cheering section.



WSU Beach Watcher Jean Nelson (right) minds the chowder for Stork's Restaurant.



Randy and Tiffany Barrett of Randy's Pier 61 hand out samples of their prize-winning chowder.



A local youngster enjoys a traditional lunch of salmon, coleslaw, fruit and Indian frybread.



April James, Rosie Cayou, Glenn Tostenrude, and Bill Bailey gamely tend a very wet barbecue.

Left to right are WSU Beach Watcher Jan Hersey, Skagit MRC member Christine Woodward, WSU Beach Watcher Dennis McMillan and ACMC member Carolyn Barney helping serve the clams and oysters from Taylor Shellfish Farms.



Taylor's finest frozen oysters are a treat any time.

WSU beach Watcher Harold Spehar welcomed young and old in his “Juan de Fuca” costume.



Dad finds Similk Bay on the map.



Connie Wray is an innocent bystander who very graciously consented to run the series of video offerings in the ESD building for the day.



Sandra Caldwell of the Washington State Department of Ecology helps the younger kids make their bracelets.



Alex Alexander of Padilla Bay Estuarine Research Reserve entertains on the guitar in the background while visitors marvel at the sight of a beautiful Taylor's sea slug on Padilla Bay's video macrocope.



Dan Penttila (right) of Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife set up a microscope for visitors. They could examine a variety of forage fish eggs.

Local shrimp species reveal their secrets under the hand lens to a couple of future researchers in pink.



We like to think that this is a photo of a budding marine scientist, complete with the required rubber boots.

Evaluation

The one thing which could have gone better for us in 2008 was the weather. The day was cool and rainy. At least we did not have a 30-knot gale blowing in from the southeast. Judging from the servings of food and the number of kids' supplies we used up, attendance was down a little from last year, probably because of the weather.

On the positive side, many of the people who came were folks we had never seen before, so we were reaching a new audience. People were in a happy frame of mind and spent a while visiting with one another in the Seafarers' building over luncheon plates. Maybe the salmon and Taylor's shellfish put them in a good mood. People remained on the site for a couple of hours in order to fit everything in: the food and chowder, the videos, poster displays, electric cars, the maritime zoo and all the activities for the children.

Setting up the popcorn machine outside the ESD building helped to draw people from Seafarers' Park to the adjacent building, so that idea definitely worked well. Playing videos for the entire event rather than trying to draw a decent audience to a live speaker also worked out well. Those who wanted to watch the videos did so relatively undisturbed by those who wandered through the poster displays or picked up coffee and brownies.

We still haven't figured out a way to count the participants accurately for this event. I suspect the 250 servings of popcorn is about as accurate a count as we are likely to get.

The event remains fairly labor-intensive, with about fifty volunteers and nearly thirty organizations participating. Thanks to the Port of Anacortes, we were able to do quite a bit of basic setting up the night before at Seafarers' Park. The signs with the helium balloons attached were all set up the morning of the event. The balloons are fairly expensive and, of course, plastic, and we may try to go for some bamboo whips with cotton flags attached next time, even though they would have to be stored somewhere from year to year. Another advantage of the flags would be that they could be set out a few days before the event and would not deflate. The signs really need something to help draw attention to them and the motion of the red balloons does that very well.

Thank you cards were sent out to all volunteers and to each of the participating organizations.

Erica Pickett
Event chair

Participating Organizations

Skagit County Marine Resources Committee

Anacortes Community Maritime Center

Shannon Point Marine Center

WSU Skagit County Beach Watchers

Taylor Shellfish Farms

Port of Anacortes

City of Anacortes

Skagit County Public Works

Anacortes Yacht Club

Samish Indian Nation

Captain's Place

Randy's Pier 61

Mary Ann's Kitchen

Stork's Restaurant

Gere-A-Deli

McDonald's

Anacortes Dare Program

Skagit County Conservation District

Skagit Conservation Education Alliance

Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife

Padilla Bay National Estuarine Reserve

Jim Ramaglia Photography

Orcanet

Anacortes Youth Arts

Boys' & Girls' Club

Anacortes Chamber of Commerce

People for Puget Sound

Skagit Land Trust

MC Motors of Seattle

Photo by Michele Pope



Participating Volunteers

Dylan Bullock
Scott Bullock
Betty Carteret

Julia Cox
Paul Dinnel
Britta Escheté
Dixon Elder
Lin Folsom

Keri Hoffman
Patty Hutchins
Raffi Manion

Dennis Mazza
Vicki McNeil
Mike Mohundro
Jean Nelson
Elizabeth O'Berry

Kari Odden
Jeanne Olmsted
Erica Pickett
Tom Richards
Eric Shen

Harold Spehar
Pat Steffani
Connie Thoman

Nancy Andrich
John Bame
Carolyn Barney
Lyn Bishop
Tony Bull
Chet & Nihla Bradley

Garry Cline
Catherine Davis
Ivar Dolph
Noelle Escheté
Lyndon Greene
Jan Hersey

Fran Jepperson
Vern Lauridsen
Laura Manion
Dennis McMillan
Anne Middleton

Boshie Morris
Charlie O'Hara
Bob Pickett

Gabriel Olmsted
Ruth Peterson
Michele Pope
Linda Sanford

Caroline Spehar
Betsy Stevenson
Cary Tolman
Connie Wray

Photo by Michele Pope