

# Fidalgo Bay Day 2019

Sponsored by:

**Skagit County Marine Resources Committee**

With support of the  
**Samish Indian Nation**



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## **Fidalgo Bay Day Overview**

Fidalgo Bay Day is the Skagit County Marine Resources Committee's (Skagit MRC) signature public outreach event that has taken place annually for the last 16 years. This event has primarily been hosted at the Samish Indian Nation's Fidalgo Bay Resort clubhouse. The main focus of the event is to spread awareness of the marine environment and fostering environmental stewardship. People visiting the event learn a great many things about the ecosystem functions of the plants and animals that live in Fidalgo Bay and the greater Salish Sea. Presenters and visitors great relationships as a community while sharing their love and knowledge of the marine environment. They also get to enjoy some great seafood while doing so.

Much of the work performed by the Skagit MRC isn't very visible, but has a huge impact on the health of marine ecosystems. This event gives the public more of an inside look at the important work done by the Skagit MRC, such as 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 typically include: interactive displays from the many participating organizations, children's art and science activities, face painting, beach seining demonstration with a marine biologist, beach walks to look for forage fish eggs, microscopes, and free shellfish and chowder samples, popcorn, brownies, and a no-host traditional tribal salmon lunch.

For the seventh year in a row, the Skagit MRC collaborated with the Friends of Skagit Beaches who planned and coordinated the "Discovery Passport" activity. Each year, the passport cover is selected from one of the entries in the coloring contest from last year's event. This year, 25 kids participated in the coloring contest to win a spot on the cover of the 2020 Discovery Passport, our biggest participation yet! Over 150 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.

## **2019 Event Summary**

Fidalgo Bay Day was held Saturday, August 24<sup>th</sup> at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort in Anacortes from 11:00AM to 3:00PM. We had over 400 visitors with decent weather and beautiful scenery. Fifty volunteers and 30 organizations and 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 MRC member Jay Lind and Samish tribal member Rosie Cayou-James. Rosie shared Samish culture and a traditional song with visitors for the opening ceremony.



**Passport Stations:** 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 while learning about the different organizations and issues impacting the Salish Sea and what they can do to help.



**Outdoor Interactive Displays:** The Deception Park Foundation and State Park brought a gray whale skull. The head ranger hosted the WA Parks display this year for the first time and educated people about what park rangers do. The passport questions for this station taught kids and adults about baleen whales.





**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. This year’s haul was exceptional with lots of fish for visitors to learn about. Some looked for birds on the bay and others just enjoyed the celebration!







**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 "Kelp Forest" activity, the scuba diver photo booth, and two games (i.e. forage fish bean bag toss game and the stormwater golf game) as well as the Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve's display focusing estuaries and many others. A full list of participating groups is included at the end of this report. The interactive displays offered educational activities that focused on water quality, marine birds, orcas and other whales, watershed functions, estuaries, salmon, forage fish, marine debris and plastics, etc.





A new addition to the indoor activities was Diver Laura's "Virtual Salish Sea and Beyond." This popular virtual reality experience allowed visitors a 360° view of the depths of the Salish Sea as well as footage from South Australia, New Zealand, Indonesia and more! Diver Laura said more than 200 visitors participated in the experience. She hopes to participate in Fidalgo Bay Day again next year.



**Youth Craft Activities:** There were several kid-friendly craft activities including: face painting, cap decorating, fish prints on fabric, and gift bag-making with marine critter stamps, stickers, and drawing supplies. Nine members of Mount Vernon High School's key club generously donated their time as volunteers working with kids at the craft table and face painting. When asked about their experience participating in Fidalgo Bay Day this year we got a couple of great replies:



“I had such a great time! Everyone was so sweet, the food was amazing. Thank you so much Pete. This has been one of my favorite volunteer experience! Definitely want to do this again next year. 😊” – Chelsea Segura

“It was a fun experience getting to know great community members and being a helping hand in such a wonderful event that helped guide us on our wonderful environment.” – Brian Code

When asked if there was anything that could be improved for next year they said they couldn't find a single thing and that everything was fun and good as it was.



**Food – Chowder, Shellfish, Salmon, and more:** We borrowed the popcorn machine from the Anacortes Boys and Girls Club and gave away over 200 bags of free popcorn. Adrift Restaurant offered free 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 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 at 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 with compostable utensils, plates, coffee cups, and chowder cups.

**Evaluation:** Due to unforeseen circumstances, the volunteer who was in charge of conducting formal interviews was unable to do so. Many people gave positive feedback about the event. Some of the participants from other organizations such as Whale Scouts, Whatcom Mammal Stranding and Whale museum said that they would like to participate again next year.

**Volunteers:** This year, more than 50 volunteers contributed over 200 hours of their valuable time to make sure the event was educational and fun for all. In addition, 30 organizations and businesses contributed their time, expertise, and we had 22 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 Jay Lind, who could not have done it without the extensive help provided by other key helpers including:

Administration and Event Promotion: Tracy Alker, Pete Haase and Charlette Turman  
Food: Gina Johnson and team  
Shellfish: Paul Dinnel and team  
Kids' Activities: Rachel Best and MVHS Key Club Students  
Parking: Morty Cohen and team  
Beach Seine: Jason Morgan and Dan Pentilla  
Passport Stations: Dale Fournier, Betty Carteret, and Darla Gay Smith

**Planning and Promotion:** There are several FBD planning documents and notes available upon request. These include: Kids' Activities (including supplies needed,) Save the Date poster, half-sheet Promotional Postcards with location map, 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, newsletters, and email lists. Ads were placed in the Kids Insider, La Conner Weekly News, and the Skagit Valley Recreation and Activity Guide. Local reporters were contacted and articles were in local papers. The "Over the street" banner in Anacortes was no longer available and so ads were shown on Sebo's Hardware and Walgreens reader boards. The traditional, volunteer installed roadside sign was posted on "R" avenue coming into town.

### **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 and kitchen
- Friends of Skagit Beaches provided insurance coverage for the facility, sandwich board signs, and passport activity and prizes
- Complimentary seafood chowder was provided Adrift Restaurant.
- 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
- Mount Vernon High School Key Club provided additional volunteers.
- Over 200 volunteer hours were expended



## **2019 Participating Businesses and Organizations**

**Adrift Restaurant**

**Anacortes Boys' & Girls Club**

**City of Anacortes**

**Cayou / Bailey Family**

**Deception Pass State Park**

**Diver Laura**

**Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve Citizens' Stewardship Committee**

**Friends of Skagit Beaches**

**Gere-A-Deli**



**Guardians of the Salish Sea**  
**Mount Vernon High School Key Club**  
**New Pilgrim Ministry**  
**Northwest Straits Commission**  
**Northwest Straits Foundation (Jason Morgan - seining)**  
**Orca Network**  
**Pacific Mammal Research**  
**Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve**  
**Port of Anacortes**  
**Samish Indian Nation**  
**Skagit Conservation District**  
**Skagit County Health Department**  
**Skagit County Marine Resources Committee**  
**Skagit County Public Works**  
**Skagit Land Trust**  
**Salish Sea Biological**  
**Salish Sea Stewards**  
**Swinomish Tribe**  
**Taylor Shellfish**  
**Wa. Department of Ecology**  
**Wa. Department of Natural Resources Aquatic Reserves Division**  
**Wolf Hollow Wildlife Rehabilitation Center**