

# County forms citizens' marine panel

Bellingham Herald 5/26/89

**ENVIRONMENT: "It's not just a soft, feel-good thing."**

**BY AUBREY COHEN**

**THE BELLINGHAM HERALD**

Whatcom County officials hope a new Marine Resources Committee will devise solutions to Puget Sound pollution problems without the need for more big government regulation.

It's voluntary and it's from the ground up, instead of the feds telling us what to do," County Council member Connie Hoag said.

The committee, which the council approved last week, is actually a result of big govern-

ment. In 1987, Sen. Party Murray, D-Seattle, and Rep. Jack Metcalf, R-Langley, formed a citizens advisory commission charged with finding ways to protect the sound. The panel did not reach consensus on a solution, but did call in August 1988 for local marine resources committees in the mold of a San Juan County effort.

Last October, Congress approved \$350,000 to start marine committees in Whatcom, Skagit, Snohomish, Island, Jefferson and Chatham counties, and to create a Northwest Straits Commission composed mostly of representatives from the counties.

Although the effort is volun-

tary, it will be disbanded if it does not, among other things, show a net gain in habitat, a net reduction in shellfish harvest areas closed because of contamination and increases in factors showing recovery of bottom-fish populations within five years, said Tom Cowan, project coordinator for the initiative.

"It's not just a soft, feel-good thing," he said. There are no numerical targets, but just reversing the negative trends would be quite an accomplishment, Cowan said. Unfortunately, things have just been going the wrong direction for quite a long time."

Whatcom, Skagit and Island counties have each passed res-

## Learn more

For more information about the county's new Marine Resources Committee, or to volunteer for the committee, contact Whatcom County Executive Pete Kremen's office, 676-6777.

\$10,000 startup grant from the Northwest Straits Commission, which will coordinate activities across the counties, provide training and technical assistance, and fund programs the counties devise, Cowan said.

Each county is approaching the problem a little differently, Cowan said. San Juan County, for instance, has focused on rehabilitating bottom-fish populations, while Whatcom County officials are looking more at shoreline salmon habitats and shellfish protection.

San Juan County's committee has devised several successful voluntary measures, such as "no-take" zones, since forming three years ago, Cowan said.

"The beauty of this is it involves a lot of citizens and the ideas will come from the locals," Cowan said. He said such community-based environmental initiatives are generally the most successful.

Handed out at the Surface  
Water Work Session on November 12, 2019  
by Glen "Alex" Alexander (Marine  
Resources Committee member.  
One Copy for all councilmembers  
to share.

Date	5/26/89	# of pages	1
From	Tom Cowan	Co.	Stuart Chesoe
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Post-it* Fax Note	7671		

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▼ OUR VIEW

# Marine panel idea has chance for real success

**ENVIRONMENT:** County group must be sure to avoid duplicating efforts already under way by other agencies

Community members working together to find ways to help the environment are always preferable to waiting for the hammer of federal regulations to come down.

A new Whatcom County citizen panel targeted at improving marine water-quality is a step in the right direction.

Counties have little to no jurisdiction over marine waters, which are largely monitored by state and federal agencies. Although the county panel doesn't have legislative power, most communities tend to be far more open and accepting of community recommendations rather than government rules.

The program, which will be started with state grant money, is modeled after a successful panel in San Juan County. There, local residents have gathered different interests together — from port authorities to commercial and sport fishers and environmentalists — and found positive ways to help revive the bottom fish population.

The diverse group agreed upon eight no-fish areas that have essentially been turned into nurseries for rockfish and cod. The areas are patrolled by citizen volunteers who can't make anyone stop fishing, but can explain the panel's recommendation and ask for cooperation. So far, cooperation has been about 90 percent, according to coordinators.

People simply respond better to neighbors and peers than they do to a faceless government entity.

The San Juan panel also has eased tensions and provided a compromise between groups on opposite ends of the spectrum: one that wants a federal marine sanctuary instated to protect fish and one that wants no government intervention. Under the panel, both goals of protection and local control are accomplished.

Here in Whatcom County, the volunteer group likely will look at things like herring habitat. Herring are an important food source for salmon. The state and county already have groups looking at upstream salmon issues, but this group will focus on salmon once they get into the ocean.

That's where the caveat comes in. The committee must make sure it doesn't duplicate efforts already in place by county and state agencies, which are looking at herring decline, bay pollution and shellfish contamination. We've seen that too-many-cooks problem with salmon restoration efforts.

To be effective, the panel must clearly outline its mission and ensure that it's filling a specific niche and not reinventing the wheel.

These panels are designed to work on projects, rather than the planning that often is the focus of government agencies. If our local panel communicates well with other agencies, it has a chance for real success.

June 10, 1999

## THE BELLINGHAM HERALD

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The Bellingham Herald's opinions are expressed in the column below. Opinions expressed in letters and elsewhere on this page are independent points of view.

▼ OUR VIEW



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**Northwest Straits Commission**

**MEDIA ADVISORY**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
NOVEMBER 18, 1999**

**CONTACT: TOM COWAN  
360-428-1558**

**THE NORTHWEST STRAITS COMMISSION CONVENES FRIDAY**

Mount Vernon, WA – The Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) will hold its inaugural meeting on Friday, November 19, at the Port of Everett Commissioners Meeting Room from 1:00 to 4:00 PM.

The Commission meeting brings together for the first time representatives from each of the seven Marine Resource Committees (MRCs), the gubernatorial appointees and the tribal representative. The Northwest Straits Commission is charged with providing a regional, ecosystem focus for protecting and restoring the marine waters of the Northwest Straits. It is also responsible for coordinating technical assistance and funding for the seven county MRCs (Whatcom, Skagit, Snohomish, Island, San Juan, Clallam and Jefferson.)

The Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative was sponsored by U.S. Senator Patty Murray (D-Seattle) and U.S. Congressman Jack Metcalf (R-Langley) and enacted by Congress in 1998. Under its provisions, each of the seven Northwest Straits counties established MRCs made up of citizens and affected tribes.

These committees make recommendations to local governments and initiate actions to restore and protect critical marine species and habitat within their waters. The initiative also established the 13 member NWSC.

The NWSC will review a set of "Benchmarks for Performance" as established in the initiative, discuss ongoing activities and training, develop a work plan for prioritizing research projects, and address organizational issues.



07/30/70

P. 03

7/30/70 Bellingham Herald

# Volunteers scour shoreline for data

**COMMUNITY:** Group covered 4 miles to record information for maps.

**BY KARI THORENE THE BELLINGHAM HERALD**  
BLAINE — Armed with pens and clipboards, about 40 Bellingham-area volunteers hit the beaches of Drayton Harbor on Saturday morning to find what grows, what lives and what stinks along the Blaine shoreline. "We found a few outfalls that have a real odor to them," said Lisa Younger, volunteer coordinator for People for Puget Sound.

The volunteers, separated into two groups to cover a 4-mile stretch of shoreline, recorded data that will eventually be used to make detailed maps. The information fills gaps in the county's data on its fragile tidelands, information used to preserve it and interpret impacts of neighboring development.

Younger's organization, along with the county Marine Resources Committee and the local volunteer group ReSources, worked on the Drayton Harbor tidelands courtesy of a federal grant to shape up Northwest tidal areas, said Amy Kraham, a representative of the county Marine Resources Committee.



RACHEL E. BAYNE HERALD PHOTO

**TAKING STOCK:** ReSources environmental educator Crina Hoyer checks measurements Saturday at Drayton Harbor in a volunteer effort to document the state of the shoreline at Semiahmoo. About 40 people gathered information, which will fill gaps in the county's data on fragile tidelands.

Gibb Fletcher, who works two intensive, three-hour courses required before the non-profit National Association for the Mentally III in Bellingham, volunteered for the weekend out near Fletcher said. "I used to walk the beaches a lot so I know about the critters. But I didn't know as much about shorelines before the

See SHORELINE, Page B2, Col. 3

# Council to consider Civic Field, water rate

approval of a maximum \$5 monthly

# Man shot in car ID'd

**CRIME:** 23-year-old Whidbey serviceman killed while driving car.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

**MOUNT VERNON** — A Whidbey Island Naval Air Station serviceman, fatally shot as he drove along Washington 20 near La Conner, has been identified. Scott W. Kinkelle, 23, died in Thursday's shooting, authorities said Friday.

It was unclear what kind of weapon was used, Orland Freeman, the deputy Skagit County coroner, said late Friday.

"The evidence indicates the shot was most likely fired from another car," said Skagit County Sheriff's Chief Deputy Harry Hemphill.

Deputies say Kinkelle apparently had been driving westbound when the shot was fired. He died instantly.

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the range of \$4 to \$10 per  
 t — an \$2 to \$20 boost in  
 monthly residential water  
 city's Public Works Depart-  
 is expected to present the  
 il with a precise amount for  
 e on August 21.  
 ch John Stark at  
 @bellingh.gannett.com or call  
 274.

**ferry strike**  
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 ollars for first-class, senior  
 engineers.  
 ; proposed settlement will be  
 ned to union members begin-  
 next week. Voting is expected  
 e a number of weeks, said a  
 release from the B.C. Ferry  
 t Sunday, union members  
 93 percent in favor of a  
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 lified to the burn unit at Har-  
 borview Medical Center in Seat-  
 tle, Sprankie said. Hart was in

## Shoreline

Continued from Page B1

flags for habitat specialists inter-  
 ested in rehabilitating the shore-  
 line.  
 For example, the vast expanse  
 of eel grass visible during low  
 tide in Drayton Harbor is not na-  
 tive to the area.

Though possibly of little conse-  
 quence, the grass might be chok-  
 ing out native species more ap-  
 propriate for the harbor's salmon  
 and herring populations.

"Healthy eel grass is essential,"  
 Kraham said.  
 "Young salmon hide from pred-

ators there herring spawn there.  
 "We just don't know if this non-  
 native species is healthy for the  
 area," she said.  
 The volunteers keep an eye out  
 for other things, like smelly out-  
 falls or crumbly culverts, that  
 could send polluting materials  
 into the harbor and shellfish  
 beds.

"We look for if there's algae  
 growing near the outfalls or if  
 there's an oily sheen," Younger  
 explained.  
 She expects those observa-  
 tions will be followed up by a  
 visit from biologists.

Younger said she didn't know  
 when the maps and data would  
 be complete from the four-hour

then the worksheets the volun-  
 teers fill out must be picked  
 through and analyzed.  
 "It'll make a good report,"

Younger said.  
 "And it's kind of detective-like,  
 so it's fun."  
 Reach Karl Thorens at  
 kthorens@bellingh.gannett.com or  
 call 715-2290.

**POWERHOUSE OUT:** A fire at Grand Coulee Dam, shown in this July 7  
 photo, knocked out one powerhouse Friday and injured one worker.  
 Crews on Saturday were working to restore power to the dam.

**"Healthy eel grass is essential. Young  
 salmon hide from predators there, herring  
 spawn there. We just don't know if this  
 non-native species is healthy for the area."**  
 Amy Kraham,  
 representative of county Marine Resources Committee

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 so it's fun."  
 Reach Karl Thorens at  
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## Beach health...

The Whatcom County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) has joined with RE Sources and People for Puget Sound to conduct Rapid Shoreline Inventories on key county beaches, including Drayton Harbor. Volunteers will conduct the surveys documenting the current health of our shorelines on Saturday, July 29.

The data will be used to prioritize beaches for restoration, clean-ups and protection. It will also be included in a regional shoreline inventory database which can be found at [www.pugetsound.org/csi/default.html](http://www.pugetsound.org/csi/default.html).

This project has been made possible by funding from the Whatcom County Marine Resources Committee.

from *The Northern Light*, April 27, 2000



NEWS from U. S. Senator

# PATTY MURRAY

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<http://murray.senate.gov>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
THURSDAY, July 19, 2001

CONTACT: Todd Webster  
(202) 224-2834

## **Senator Murray Announces 66 Percent Increase in Northwest Straits Funding in Senate Appropriations Bill**

*\$1.25 million earmarked for North Puget Sound will restore, protect marine environments*

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) – U.S. Senator Patty Murray (D-Wash) today announced that the Senate has committed \$1.25 million for the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative. Senator Murray, a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, secured \$1.0 million in the fiscal year 2002 Senate Commerce, Justice, State and Judiciary bill (CJSJ) and \$250,000 in the 2002 Senate VA-HUD and Independent Agencies bill. Last year, the Northwest Straits Initiative received a total of \$750,000 in federal funding.

"I am pleased that the Senate has demonstrated its support for our fragile marine environment by increasing funding for the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative," said Murray. "We must now work to ensure these increases are maintained when the Senate enters negotiations with the House on next year's budget."

In 1998, Senator Murray and former Congressman Jack Metcalf (R-Wash.) convened a citizen's panel to look at ways to protect environmental resources in the Northwest Straits. Based on the panel's findings, Congress authorized the organization of the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative.

"Continued funding for the Initiative is one of my highest environmental priorities," said Murray. "The Commission is doing outstanding work, such as creating protected marine areas, assessing fish habitat, sponsoring research and increasing awareness. This funding increase will allow an even more aggressive effort to protect marine ecosystems in North Puget Sound."

The Northwest Straits Commission consists of 13 appointees: one from each of seven counties involved, along with appointees of the Governor and the Department of the Interior. Each county has created a Marine Resources Committee (MRC) to draw input from local governments, tribes, conservationists, scientists and business. Over 100 people are participating in the seven MRCs to protect and restore marine resources in North Puget Sound.

"This is exactly the type of locally-driven, collaborative effort needed to restore salmon and other declining fisheries," Senator Murray added. "The Northwest Straits Initiative demonstrates just what can be accomplished when communities come together to protect our environment."

"This is an amazing show of support for a very worthy effort, spearheaded by Senator Murray," said U.S. Representative Rick Larsen (D-Wash.). "Northwest Straits is an impressive initiative, driven by local community members who have willingly shouldered the awesome responsibility of marine stewardship. Today's announcement is a clear demonstration of the benefits that stem from local and federal partnerships."

###



# OPINION

**THE FIRST AMENDMENT**  
 "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

## ...sible, vote today

### ▼ More election information

In the interest of fairness, The Bellingham Herald does not run election-related letters on Election Day.

The Bellingham Public Library front desk has envelopes containing campaign information as well as back issues of newspapers.

The Bellingham Herald's election coverage, including letters to the editor, candidate statements, endorsements and news stories can be viewed online

at <http://www.bellinghamherald.com>.

It's important to note that some polling places have moved this year and some residents in southern Whatcom County who voted previously in the 42<sup>nd</sup> Legislative District have been redistricted into the 40<sup>th</sup> Legislative District.

For information on polling places or other election questions, call the county Auditor's Office at 676-6740.

### ▼ ANOTHER VIEW

## Make Sound safe; report derelict gear

**MARINE:** Pilot project has removed 3,550 linear feet of gill nets off Whatcom, Skagit counties' shores.

**BY TOM COWAN AND BOB OKE**  
 GUEST COLUMNISTS

Picture your house littered with dangerous and rusting traps that could suffocate or kill you. That is the unfortunate home for millions of salmon, rockfish, crabs and other marine life that live in Puget Sound.

The numbers are astonishing. Puget Sound has become the final resting place for hundreds of tons of lost or abandoned fishing nets and lines, crab and shrimp traps and other fishing equipment, known as "derelict fishing gear."

Often, the fishing gear simply continues to do what it was designed for — capturing and killing fish and shellfish. In its derelict state, however, the killing is needless and frequently includes marine birds and mammals.

The gear, deep in the Sound, reefs and tidelands, is also a significant public safety problem. The gear can entangle and even kill divers. It can damage propellers and rudders of recreational, commercial and military vessels, and in some instances nets and lines have entangled and overturned small boats.

### Be on lookout

Now you can help the Northwest Straits Commission locate and identify derelict fishing gear underwater, in coves, on beaches and elsewhere in Puget Sound.

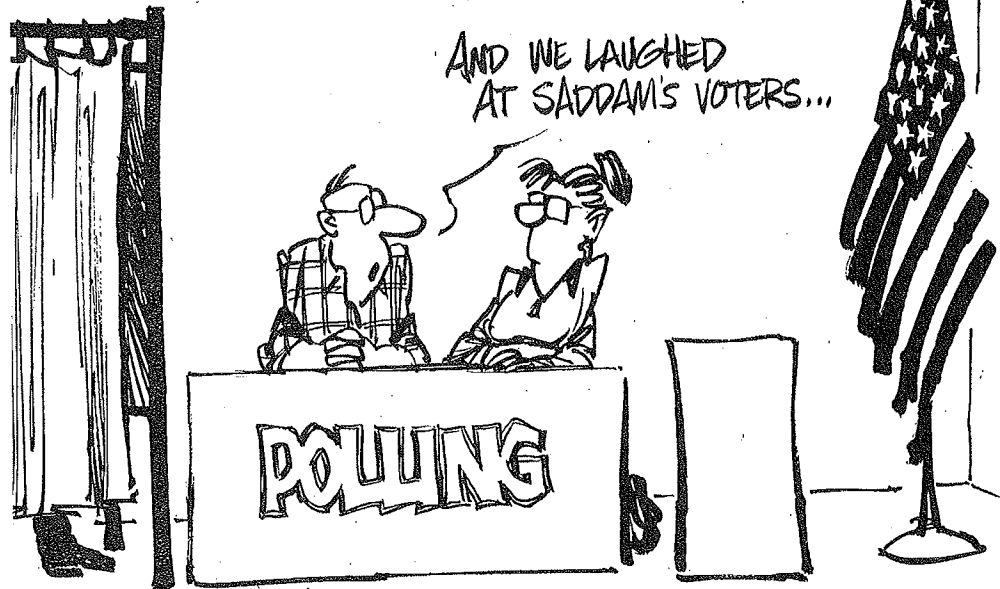
The commission is conducting a Pilot Derelict Fishing Gear Removal Project with assistance from federal, tribal, state and local governments to locate, identify and remove the dangerous and sometimes deadly gear.

The commission wants your help — help from divers, boaters or people who enjoy or work on or near Puget Sound. You can be a voice and a researcher in the Derelict Gear Removal Project.

Most importantly, we do not want you to touch any fishing gear that you believe may be lost or abandoned. Fishing lines have entangled and

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to create an ordinance that offers adequate public protection when new mushroom composting operations open. Now I hope the county will listen to Brenner and enforce against the stink emanating from the bad neighbors at Recomp.

I am left to wonder if the conscience of our society has long since been extinguished. Has it been so deflated and subdued that we have not the spine to confront this outrage? Have our attentions been so numbed and manipulated that our

Neighbors should have tried to

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I hope the county will listen to Brenner and enforce against the stink emanating from the bad neighbors at Recomp.

Charlene French  
Ferndale

### Slow down and watch for school children on highway

I'm writing to urge all drivers to slow down on Mount Baker Highway and pay attention to school buses. For the second time in just more than a month, a car that didn't stop for the bus' flashing red stop sign has nearly killed my 6-year-old.

The first time my son had gotten off the bus and was waiting for the bus driver's OK to cross the road. Luckily, the bus driver saw the SUV not slowing down, was able to get my son's attention and tell him not to cross just as the driver drove about 55 mph through the bus' stop sign.

The second incident occurred Thursday morning. The bus driver stopped the bus, put out its stop sign and waited for a car to come to a stop before she told my son to walk toward the bus. The car didn't stop and drove right through the red flashing stoplights.

I cannot comprehend how these two drivers could not see the bus and its flashing red stoplights. Both of the incidents happened on clear days with no fog, rain, etc. I live on a straight stretch of the highway with no curves or hills that might make it hard for drivers to see the bus. I wonder what they were paying attention to.

I'm begging drivers to slow down and, when they are behind the wheel, only pay attention to driving. Please watch for school buses and slow down even if the lights aren't flashing. My son's life depends on it.

Jennifer Martinson  
Deming

### Food critic caught restaurant at wrong time

It is unfortunate that "Take five" dining critic Stacey Sledge was at Mykonos at a time they were overwhelmed by an unexpected large crowd.

We eat there quite often and find the food and service to be very good.

Bob Moles Sr.  
Sandy Point

### Speak out against unsuitable sex-offender housing

I write this letter with a deep feeling of perturbation and disgust that has accompanied me since reading the Oct. 24 article on the two Level 3 sex offenders now housed next to a playground and a university.

ded that we have not the spine to confront this outrage? Have our attentions been so numbed and manipulated that our sense of justice is only aroused through media over sensationalizing? We debate whether to fight a war in Iraq against a possible threat to our future safety and at the same time we put two known, dangerous sexual predators near thousands of students and a children's playground.

These men should not be allowed to walk the streets in their current condition. However, that is another argument, and another glaring flaw of the criminal justice system. Now pressure must be put on the Department of Corrections, Thad Allen and the Indian Street landlords. We must demand that they do their part to keep these animals from our parks and schools, for when these men re-offend they do not act alone. The above mentioned necessarily partake in a portion of that crime, as does everyone who by their passivity allow monsters to live in the part of our city that should be the safest. Please speak out. Thank you.

Jordan Selvidge  
Bellingham

### Herald only interested in sports, wealthy people

As an artist, physicist and musician, I'm disappointed with The Bellingham Herald. There is little or no hard news. You seldom interview artists, scientists and musicians.

While the staff of the newspaper is strutting their stuff and parading around town like stuffed peacocks marching to a drumbeat, the poor and unemployed are ignored. While you're enjoying fat paychecks and eating steak and eggs, the poor and unemployed are eating Spam on toast.

You could interview poor people and expose real issues locally. But you don't. You're only interested in sports and the wealthy.

Brian Simpson  
Bellingham

### Herald reflected readership's views on war with Iraq

Thanks are due for your editorial on the war resolutions and for the scope and quality of editorials in its wake on other key issues.

But especially for this first: not only for the judgment and articulation, but for what I do think is a more accurate representation of your readership's views than most sources in the press and other media are providing.

Milton Krieger  
Bellingham

Derelict Gear Removal Project

Most importantly, we do not want you to touch any fishing gear that you believe may be lost or abandoned. Fishing lines have entrapped and killed divers. Not only could you be seriously injured trying to remove the gear, you may also violate state or federal laws that prevent citizens from removing such gear.

Recreational beach-goers can participate in beach cleanups to pick up derelict fishing gear on beaches. However, only trained and experienced professional divers who have permission should remove submerged nets and other derelict fishing gear.

If you see lost gear, report the location and information about the type of gear to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife at (800) 477-6224 or on the Internet at <http://www.wa.gov/wdfw/fish/derelict>.

Working in coordination with the commission and the Department of Natural Resources, the Department of Fish and Wildlife will develop a database that outlines the locations of gear. Priorities will be established to determine which gear to remove first.

### Pilot project

The commission's pilot project to remove derelict fishing gear includes establishing and testing a protocol for safely and efficiently removing abandoned or lost fishing gear, as well as exploring options to reuse, recycle or dispose of the gear.

Last week, the commission successfully completed a pilot project to test the protocol that also resulted in removing about 12 tons of crab pots, fishing nets and other fishing gear in waters off the shores of Whatcom and Skagit counties. About 3,550 linear feet (two-thirds of a mile) of gill nets were removed, which is equivalent to two full-length fishing nets.

A \$75,000 grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, with matching funds from tribal, state and local governments, as well as private organizations, is paying for the pilot project. Removing the gear has a hefty price tag as last week's test removal cost nearly \$40,000. The commission intends to obtain additional funding to continue this important work.

Removing the gear is a top priority for the commission, but it is not investigating who or how the gear was abandoned in Puget Sound. Rather, the state Legislature, in 2003, will consider ways to reduce the loss of fishing gear.

For more information about the Derelict Fishing Gear Removal Project and how you can help, visit [http://www.nwstraits.org/derelict\\_gear](http://www.nwstraits.org/derelict_gear).

Tom Cowan is director of the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative, which was authorized by Congress as a local approach to protecting and restoring marine resources and habitat. State Sen. Bob Oke, R-Port Orchard, is a member of the Senate Natural Resources Committee and is prime sponsor of a new law (SB 6313) that helps rid state waters of derelict fishing gear.

torial columns, and articles submitted to The Bellingham Herald may be published or distributed in print, electronic or other forms.

Only Our View editorials reflect the opinion of the editorial board.

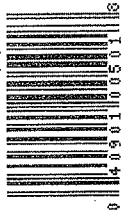
Address letters to Letters to the Editor, The Bellingham Herald, P.O. Box 1277, Bellingham, WA 98227.

Letters also can be faxed to 756-2826 or e-mailed to [letters@bellinghamherald.com](mailto:letters@bellinghamherald.com).

# INDEX

- Ann Landers C4
- Business B5-B6
- Classifieds C6-C10
- Comics C2
- Crossword C7
- Homework A4
- Horseshoe C9
- Lifestyle C1-C5
- Local & State A3
- Lottery A3
- Obituaries A5
- Opinion A7
- Sports B1-B4
- TV listings C2

A Gannett Newspaper



# State divers search for deadly 'ghost nets'

### MARITIME: Abandoned fishing nets continue to kill human and marine victims.

#### THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

OLYMPIA — An abandoned fishing net, hundreds of feet long lurks beneath the water near San Juan Island, snaring fish and creating danger for recreational divers.

Today, the state Department of Natural Resources and the Northwest Straits Commission will try to unplug the net and pull it from the water. Along with the big net, they're hoping to raise

awareness about the problems posed by hundreds of tons of fishing nets lost in Washington waters.

These "ghost nets," as divers call them, fish for decades. Fish get trapped in them, in turn attracting other fish and marine life who enter the nets to feed. Diving birds, whales and even people can get entangled and die.

Four years ago, an experienced recreational diver died after getting caught in discarded fishing lines in Puget Sound near Tacoma. Megan Reehling, 42, was working with other divers on Earth Day to clean up derelict fishing line and nets. She had a

knife with her but ran out of air before she could get free. "It's extremely dangerous," said Doug Williams, senior master diver and resource manager at the state Department of Natural Resources.

Today, Williams will supervise about eight divers that will unplug the net, cut it free and float it to the surface. A fisher who volunteered his 75-foot purse seiner will pull the net out of the water. Williams said the net is several hundred feet long and will probably weigh two to three tons.

State divers discovered the net accidentally when they were blown off course during a training exercise.

### Pilot project kicks off

Today's net-raising kicks off a pilot program for the Northwest Straits Commission, which is trying to map all the abandoned nets in Washington waters and write a standard rule for how to remove them.

The group got a \$75,000 grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and raised another \$135,000 from state agencies, tribes and private groups. The commission's goal is to remove at least 12 tons of ghost nets from Puget Sound this year. **ON THE NET:** <http://www.nwstraits.org> and <http://www.wa.gov/dnr>.

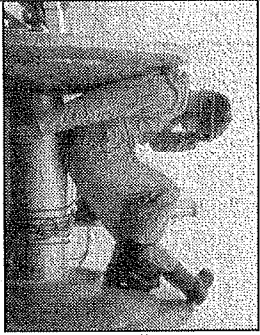
The Northwest Straits Commission, a federally funded group, will pay some of the cost. Skagit County Public Works has offered to dispose of the derelict net for free.

**Haggen Angus Beef...**  
*Tasting is believing!*

FOOD & PHARMACY

# What's A Fish Worth?

By Buck Maloy



Most of the press I see salmon getting is about their life cycle, their imperiled status, their hardness, their toothsome-ness, or how much fun they are to catch. Little note is made of direct interest value, probably because that topic is of direct interest primarily only to those who catch them for a living, and to their families and immediate communities.

As one such person, I am keenly aware of what has happened to the value of my catch in the face of the flood of pen-treated "feeder" salmon on markets worldwide. At one time, my primary concern was the environmental and human health ramifications of substituting a low-quality, polluting, capital-intensive form of production for a perpetually self-renewing

and healthful resource. Those impacts have only gotten worse. Yet the economic devastation that has been wreaked on an entire industry by the explosive growth of the salmon net-pen industry is also a human disaster.

That growth is almost beyond comprehension. Despite difficulties with some salmon stocks, primarily in the dammed rivers of the West Coast, the overall production of wild salmon worldwide has actually increased over the last several decades. Additionally, since 1980, when farmed salmonids\* represented a mere 1 percent of the world's total annual production of 567,000 metric tons, the total (capture plus farmed) has escalated steadily to 2,390,000 metric tons in 2001, 68 percent of it farmed. To put that another way, the amount of salmon on the market last year had quadrupled. And the aquaculturists have been selling theirs for less each year at prices that are often below their cost of production. The price of wild salmon has plunged right alongside.

With few exceptions, salmon fishermen are receiving less for their salmon than they have in modern history. Last year, the total Alaska salmon pack was worth \$216 million. In 1977 it was worth \$514 mil-

lion, on an inflation-adjusted basis, climbing to \$1,164 million in 1988 when plentiful salmon and high prices in Japan combined fortuitously. Then the long descent began. This year's value will almost certainly be the lowest yet.

This has been catastrophic for fishermen. Boats and permits that even 10 years ago had great value are, in many cases, available for pennies on the dollar today. Retirement is not an option for older fishermen who assumed that their businesses would provide a nest egg when they sold out. Now no one spends money on his investment unless it is absolutely necessary. Boat builders and repair shops are closing their doors if they cannot find alternative opportunities. In the fishing village of Cordova, where I live and work seasonally, one of two foodstores has closed, restaurants have closed, many boats that would have been warehoused for the winter are being left outside to avoid that expense, and repair shops and the fuel dock have cut their hours. The raw fish taxes that once supported many coastal villages' infrastructures like police, social services, and fire protection have fallen steadily with the fall in value of salmon.

You will rightly wonder why the price of wild salmon is still often high in the retail cooler since, with a few notable exceptions like Copper and Yukon River kings, the wholesale prices have plummeted. Some of that is inefficiencies unique to Alaska, like the necessity of air shipment for most fresh fish. And wages are high, often more per hour than foreign fishfarm workers earn in a day.

The tribulations faced by fishermen and coastal communities are great, and the consumer alone cannot solve them. There is, however, the choice that each of us can make for healthful diets and sustainable economies: choosing omega-3 rich wild salmon over its feeder cousin is like choosing free-range chickens over cooped and chemicalized ones, or choosing organically raised beef or pork or, if sustainably available, choosing uncorrupted wild meat. Or, perhaps, choosing not to eat meat at all.

*\*salmonids = salmon plus "salmon-trout", which are mostly steelhead, and other salmon-like species that compete with salmon on world markets.*

Buck Maloy has pursued his livelihood fishing plentiful wild salmon wherever he finds them since 1972. Visit his website at <http://nas.com/fish>, or complain to him about his views by email at [fish@nas.com](mailto:fish@nas.com)

## Salmon Summit 2002

# Community Gatherings

Come share the spirit and energy that makes Whatcom County unique.

Thursday, October 17, 2002 \* 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Best Western Lakeway Inn \* 714 Lakeway Drive in Bellingham

2/15/03

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ASTORIA, Ore. - Commercial fishers said Friday they were relieved by the passage of a massive federal spending bill that includes a multimillion-dollar program designed to relieve pressure on West Coast fisheries and fleets.

Introduced by Sens. Gordon Smith, R-Ore., and Ron Wyden, D-Ore., the "buyback" program will alleviate competition in the groundfish, Dungeness crab and pink shrimp fisheries by buying fishers permits and boats.

"I think it's a positive step," said Joe Easley, Oregon Trawl Commission administrator. "We've certainly got a lot more capacity than we need to catch what they're allowing us to catch."

The spending is included in a nearly \$400 billion omnibus bill passed by the U.S. House and Senate on Friday. President Bush is expected to sign the bill.

The program is intended to cut the number of boats fishing for groundfish, pink shrimp and Dungeness crab by as much as 50 percent. There are now 263 licensed boats off the coast of California, Oregon and Washington.

The majority of funding for the plan comes from the fishing industry, which won a \$50 million government-backed loan last year. The new bill would add a \$10 million federal grant to supplement the loans.

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Reach Ericka Pizzillo at [ericka.pizzillo@bellinghamherald.com](mailto:ericka.pizzillo@bellinghamherald.com) or call 715-2266.

# The Bellingham Herald

(9/4/2000-Current)

Paper: Bellingham Herald, The (WA)

Title: Net recovery cleans up local waters; FISHING: 6,000 pounds of net have been pulled from waters around Lummi Island.

Date: October 23, 2002

CORRECTION: The Northwest Straits Commission brought in more than 1,000 pounds of fishing nets off Stuart Island in June. This corrects the story.

BY ERICKA PIZZILLO

THE BELLINGHAM HERALD

Diver Duane Black slipped into the glassy waters on Lummi Island's west side and spent a half hour in the water, cutting and bunching old fishing nets about 60 feet below the surface.

An air pillow Black tied to the nets popped out from the water to signal workers on a Zodiac to begin pulling the gillnet, likely a decade old, to the surface.

The Northwest Straits Commission hired Ballard Salvage and Diving to spend the past six days pulling the dangerous nets from the water, allowing marine life - including the declining groundfish species like cod and rockfish - to reclaim the habitat.

At least 6,000 pounds of purse seine and gillnet fishing nets have been removed from four rocky underwater areas on the east side of Lummi Island and Alden Bank, directly west of Sandy Point - enough, if laid out flat, to cover about 12 acres.

In June the commission started the operation by bringing up more than 1,000 feet of fishing nets on a rocky area off Stuart Island.

The derelict fishing gear project is paid for with \$75,000 of the commission's funding from the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration and another \$135,000 in in-kind and money contributions from the state Department of Fish and Wildlife and Department of Natural Resources, the Tulalip Tribe and others.

Commission member Buck Meloy, a Whatcom County fisher, said the Puget Sound Gillnetters Association wanted to start a similar program years ago, but funding was scarce.

"Anything that has a negative effect on the resource, has a negative effect on us," Meloy said.

Some areas have been picked clean by the divers, including a rocky area close to the Lummi Island shore where seals cluster. The seals are vulnerable to the nets - seeing an easy meal of groundfish tangled in the lines.

The rocky pinnacle off of Lummi Island is tougher.

Just 30 feet below the surrounding 300-foot water, the pinnacle has been trouble for decades for sockeye fishers. Strong currents typical in the area push boats and nets onto the rocky slope, sometimes forcing fishers to cut loose their valuable nets and leave them behind.

Tuesday, the 1,000 feet of net that Black brought up was covered in algae and barnacles and contained skeletal remains of a rockfish.

The pinnacle was formerly a hot spot for dive companies to bring new divers to see rockfish, starfish, crabs, urchins and other rocky shore marine life. But over the years, the layering of nets has caused dive companies to abandon the spot because of the danger of divers getting entangled.

Commission members have investigated recycling the nets or even cleaning them for reuse, but the nets are too dirty, tangled and cut, said Tom Cowan, commission director. The nets are disposed in a landfill.

The citizen-based Northwest Straits Commission was created by federal legislation in 1998 to include seven counties, including

Whatcom, in a decision making process to improve marine health.

To report derelict fishing gear, call the state Department of Fish and Wildlife, (800) 477-6224.

PETE KENDALL

HERALD PHOTO

RECOVERY MISSION: Erik Benson (left) and Shane McCall of Ballard Diving and Salvage in Seattle haul in an old gillnet that was cut loose at a depth of 60 feet by diver Duane Black west of Lummi Island.

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*Author: Ericka Pizzillo*

*Section: Local*

*Page: 1A*

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Bellingham Herald 2/15/03

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Groundfish researchers need input

FISHING: Community meetings will help form recommendations for fish protection.

Erica Pizzillo, The Bellingham Herald

A government advisory and marine research group will hold community workshops during the next two weeks to help them develop recommendations for future protection of bottomfish.

The Whatcom County Marine Resources Committee is also asking local divers, fishers and community members to help identify some of the most important habitat locally for fish such as sole, flounder and rockfish.

"It's one of the groups of fish that really hasn't gotten as much focus in the past several years," said Erika Stroebel, resources planner with Whatcom County. "It's another indicator of the health of marine waters."

Bottomfish are a collection of fish that live on the floor of Puget Sound. Depending on the species, they live in sand, mud or steep rocky reefs.

The status of Puget Sound bottomfish in the waters off Whatcom County is mixed.

According to the state Department of Fish and Wildlife, bottomfish species' populations are "below average" include spotted ratfish, Pacific Cod, lingcod, sablefish and surf perch. "Depressed" stocks are rockfish and Dover sole.

But bottomfish such as some sole species, Pacific halibut and flounder are considered above average in population.

"There are some populations that seem to have drastically reduced since 1980," said Chris Fairbanks, a committee member and fisheries biologist.

Determining whether the health of Puget Sound waters or the level of commercial fishing has contributed to the declines is important for the future health of the fish, Fairbanks said.

Species such as rockfish, which give birth to live young, reproduce more young the older they get. Of course, older, larger rockfish are more prized in commercial fishing.

"By removing rockfish, you're removing a lot of (breeding) potential," Fairbanks said.

Stroebel said the committee might decide to collect more information about the bottomfish population or make recommendations to state officials on new regulations.



Commercial and sport fishing for bottomfish in Puget Sound have declined in recent years because of new regulations. For example, sport fishing for rockfish was reduced from five fish per day to just one.

In 1999, a retired Department of Fish and Wildlife employee petitioned to have 18 species of Puget Sound bottomfish considered for protection under the federal Endangered Species Act.

The National Marine Fisheries Service considered seven of the species, but determined all were ineligible for protection because they are considered part of larger Pacific populations. But the agency agreed to continue studying the Pacific whiting, also known as hake, because of its declining numbers.

Last year, nearly one million pounds of bottomfish were commercially harvested off Whatcom County and the San Juan Islands, including the Strait of Georgia. More than two-thirds of the catch was English sole.

Bellingham's Bornstein Seafoods, one of the few bottomfish processors in the state, processes bottomfish from coastal waters, not those caught in Puget Sound.

West Coast groundfish fishing has been dramatically reduced by new regulations by the National Marine Fisheries Service.

Whatcom County started the Marine Resources Committee in 1999. The committee makes recommendations to the Northwest Straits Initiative, created by Congress to consider marine issues in northern Puget Sound.

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#### Workshop dates, times

Three public workshops are planned on bottomfish in the waters off Whatcom County, all at 7 p.m.:

\* Tuesday at Civic Center Building, second-floor conference room, 322 N. Commercial St.

\* Wednesday at Blaine Marina's conference room, 235 Marine Drive.

\* Thursday, Feb. 27, at the Port of Bellingham's Squalicum Boathouse.

Details: [whatcom-mrc.wsu.edu/MRC/index.htm](http://whatcom-mrc.wsu.edu/MRC/index.htm)

# The Bellingham Herald

(9/4/2000-Current)

Paper: Bellingham Herald, The (WA)  
Title: Second abandoned fishing net kills seals  
Date: September 22, 2003

BY ERICKA PIZZILLO

THE BELLINGHAM HERALD

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife officers on Saturday retrieved a derelict gill net that may have been floating unreported in Chuckanut Bay for at least a month.

Inside the fishing gear were three dead seals, crabs and a cormorant, a kind of shorebird bird that seeks prey by diving underwater, said Fish and Wildlife officer Myron Hawkins.

Hawkins and other Fish and Wildlife officers retrieved the net Saturday afternoon near Chuckanut Rock. The net was floating on the surface, but caught below the water, possibly on a rock, said Fish and Wildlife Officer Troy McCormick.

Reported Friday

Kayaker Jim Green reported the derelict fishing gear to the Coast Guard on Friday after finding it floating freely between Dot Island and a rocky outcropping in Chuckanut Bay. The Coast Guard alerted Fish and Wildlife officers.

Hawkins said nearby neighbors told him on late Saturday afternoon that the net had been in the water for nearly a month before it was reported to Fish and Wildlife.

"But this was the first time that anyone had seen fit to do anything about it," Hawkins said.

Green said he and fellow kayaker Robert Bell, also of Bellingham, attempted to pull the gear toward shore, but it proved too heavy. They noticed the dead juvenile seal tangled in the nets.

"I thought it was such a shame," Green said.

First unattended net

He decided to report the net, in part, because of a news story two weeks ago that reported Lummi tribal officials arrested a tribal member on suspicion of leaving an unattended fishing net at Little Squalicum Beach.

On Sept. 8, volunteers hauled that net partially ashore and freed an estimated 200 crabs that were tangled in the net. The net also contained hundreds of dead fish, mostly pink salmon, and a few dead birds.

Gill nets are made of monofilament nylon mesh that is set in water to drift with the current, catching fish by the gills.

Fish and Wildlife officers did not find any identification on the net retrieved on Saturday to help determine the owner, McCormick said. The fishing net will be destroyed, he said.

Unattended fishing gear can be reported to the Washington State Patrol at 676-2076.

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[Editor Letters](#)

[Police Reports](#)

[Sports](#)

## Meeting targets forgotten fish

*By Meg Olson*

Members of the county's marine resources committee are coming to Blaine to teach the community about the county's bottomfish and glean a little local knowledge at the same time.

"We haven't had a lot of focus on bottomfish, it's mostly been on salmon and forage fish like herring," said resource planner Erika Stroebel. "There is concern the population of bottomfish in Puget Sound is declining."


At the Blaine Marina harbor office from 7-9 p.m. on February 19 the committee will hold one of three county meetings on the health of the county's bottomfish, which includes various rockfish species, flat fish like sole and flounder, and ling cod.

Marine resources committee chair Michelle Evans said they hoped to give the public an appreciation of these fish that most members of the public rarely think about, with salmon stealing the limelight. "They're an important resource to the county," she said. "There is commercial interest in them and they're part of the ecosystem. If you take out one part it affects the other parts."

Stroebel said they were also looking for local knowledge of how Whatcom County bottomfish populations have fared. "We don't have specific information for the county right now," she said. Recreational and commercial fishers, boaters and divers could all have knowledge that would help the committee get a clearer picture of how local bottomfish populations are doing. "We'd like to know if in the past 10 or 20 years people have stopped catching one species and have started catching another," Evans said.

Ultimately the committee will use the information they gather to recommend strategies for preserving bottomish stocks and habitat to the state and tribal agencies that manage them. Some options to

consider might include seasonal closures for certain species, different fishing techniques or establishing marine reserve areas. The last option could be especially effective, Stroebel said, given that bottomfish often stay in one spot and may live longer than humans. Setting aside an area where breeding adults would be undisturbed could protect stocks in the whole county. It could also be a tourist attraction, like the Edmonds Underwater Park, where divers flock to see massive rockfish. "Edmonds is an example of how popular these areas can be," she said.

 [BACK TO TOP](#)

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## Bottomfish numbers declining in local waters

*By Meg Olson*

At a February 19 meeting focusing on bottomfish in local waters members of the county's Marine Resources Committee (MRC) came up against local fishermen, who argued declining numbers of fish being caught was more a function of less fishers than less fish.

"I work less and catch more. My pounds are up on everything," said Shawn Waters, owner of the Tulip and one of Blaine's last fishers to make his living catching fish that live on the ocean floor. "Back in the 80s it may have been a little overfished, but now there are so few of us here."

MRC member Chris Fairbanks presented data that showed stocks of bottomfish took a nose-dive in the mid-1980s. Bottomfish being tracked include rockfish, flat fish like flounder and sole, ling cod and pacific cod. The group is holding a series of public meetings as part of an effort to develop recommendations to preserve local bottomfish, including limits to harvest, gear and even establishing no-fish preserves where the largely sedentary species could build their populations. Waters said higher water temperatures off Cherry Point due to the discharge of cooling water from the refineries was more to blame than fishing pressure. "We've had to go deeper and farther from the refineries to catch fish," he said.

Most audience members supported the idea of using more input from fishermen in managing fish populations. "No offense to the game department but these guys have done this all their lives. We could listen to them and use their information."

Later this year, the MRC will make recommendations to the state department of fish and wildlife and tribal fisheries authorities which co-manage fishing in state waters.

[BACK TO TOP](#)

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# OUTDOORS

## Calendar

1 from Page C4

minutes; July 25, in the Sea, 55 minutes; Incredible Suckers, 1 p.m. Details: (360) 428-1558.

**U Outdoor Adventure** or students in grades 6-Adventure: sea kayak and the San Juans; grades 6-8, 3; grades 9-12, July 25-3; Details: 650-6820 or u.edu/~adventur.

**U Boat safari:** 10 a.m. at Breazeale Interpretive 0441 Bayview-Edison currt Vernon. Explore the mudflats at low tide. I shoes that tie or snug I ages welcome. Free. \$5 ee at Bayview State Park. g sessions: July 30, Aug. 1. Registration: (360) 428- www.padillabay.gov.

**Map and Compass 101:** 7 sday, REI, 400 36th St. inar; details: 647-8955.

**ants are Pals:** Junior ts, ages 6-9, investigate the estuary and learn how pend on them for food and ir we breathe, 1-2:30 p.m. at Breazeale Interpretive t Padilla Bay, 10441 -Edison Road, Mount Pre-registration required. ) 428-1558 or visit dillabay.gov.

**Classes offered through iam Mountaineers:** ountry Navigation, July 24; ountry Travel, July 24; re Ave Hse, July 25; and



HERALD FILE PHOTO

## Star trek

**SHELLFISH SURVEY:** Today and Saturday on Semiahmoo Spit in Blaine. Join the Marine Resources Committee and Drayton Harbor Community Oyster Farm and spend the day digging holes, identifying and counting clams, and returning them to their holes. Training, beverages, snacks and tools provided. Registration: 676-6876 or Dstark@whatcom.wa.us.

**Climbing:** 7 p.m. July 27, REI, 400 36th St. Free seminar; details: 647-8955.

**Beach seine:** 1 p.m. July 28 at Breazeale Interpretive Center, 10441 Bayview-Edison Road, Mount Vernon. Join Interpretive Center staff on the beach at Bay View State Park and see what comes up when you pull a fish net through the

ends. Details: 676-6981 or whatcomuseum.org.

**Diablo Lake Adventure:** 9:45 a.m. and 12:45 p.m. Thursdays through Mondays in July and August and on Saturdays and Sundays only in September. Explore Diablo Lake by motorcoach in this Seattle City Light tour. Tours depart from the Strait Information Center

free for ages 5 and younger. Reservations recommended: (206) 684-3030 or www.SkagitTours.com.

**North Cascades Institute:** Offers experiential classes, seminars and retreats. "Round the Mountain: Nature Photography at Mount Rainier," July 26-28, \$195; "Mountain Cultures of the World," July 28-30, \$195; "Nature's Colors: An Artist's Workshop for All Media," July 30-Aug. 1, \$295; "Beats on the Peaks: Lookout Poets of the North Cascades," July 30-Aug. 1, \$195; Details: (360) 856-5700, ext. 209 or www.ncascades.org.

## Paddling and rowing

**"Paddle for Speed":** 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday at Lake Padden. Learn to paddle your kayak faster and prepare for next year's Ski to Sea race. \$100; participants must provide own equipment. Details, registration: Greg Dutton, 714-0617.

**Row the bay:** 7 p.m. Tuesdays, meet at Fairhaven Boatworks dock, off Harris Avenue in Fairhaven. Bring a rowboat, kayak, canoe, rowing shell or dinghy and a life jacket and paddle about with like-minded boat people. Free and fun. Details: 738-8059.

**"Whitewater Kayaking Introduction":** 5 to 7 p.m. July 23 and 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. July 24 at Lake Padden. No prior experience required; designed to provide an introduction to the fundamentals of whitewater kayaking. \$150; kayak and paddling gear provided. Details, registration: Greg Dutton, 714-0617.

**Whatcom County Parks and Recreation Outdoors Program** offers a variety of kayak classes and

Information and registration: 733-2900. Introduction to kayaking, 1-4 p.m. and 4:30-7:30 p.m. July 24, upcoming sessions Aug. 8 and Sept. 18, \$40; one-day saltwater kayak class: 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. July 25 with upcoming classes Aug. 14, Aug. 28 or Sept. 19, \$55; lake canoeing fundamentals, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. July 25, \$35; three-day natural history kayak tour of Cypress Island area, July 30-Aug. 1, pre-trip July 26, \$195; kayak skill building courses, Aug. 7 or Sept. 14 and Aug. 7 or Sept. 15, \$35.

**Kayak outing:** July 25 at Lake Whatcom. Sponsored by Mount Baker Club. Details: 671-4502.

## Running

**Frontrunners Bellingham:** A walking and running club for gays, lesbians and their friends, meets Saturday mornings. Check the Web at www.frontrunners.org or call 738-7999.

**Drop-in runs and walks:** The following events take place at Fairhaven Runners, 1209 11th St., unless otherwise noted. Run 8-16 miles at a talking pace at 7:30 a.m. Sundays; run/jog 3-5 miles at an 8-11 minutes per-mile pace on South Side paths and trails at 6 p.m. Tuesdays; race walk with Janelle Kaufman at the track at WWU at 6 p.m. Tuesdays; strenuous runs of 1 1/2 to 2 hours on hilly terrain with experienced runners at 6 p.m. Wednesdays; fun fitness walk around Fairhaven at 5:30 p.m. Thursdays; run at a medium pace

**Practice shots:** Bellingham Senior Activity Center organizes weekly walks beginning at 12 p.m. Tuesdays. Call 384-5113.

**Weekly walkabouts:** Bellingham Senior Activities (takes off every Tuesday and Thursday for walks. Call 676-8040.

for 1 hour on hilly trails at 6 p.m. Thursdays. Details: 676-4955 www.fairhavenrunners.com.

**Tess' Adventure Running Series:** Fairhaven Runners sta member and ultra runner Tess be hosting a running series this summer. Bring water, snacks extra clothes; details, registration: 676-4955. Schedule: 8 a.m. A 10- to 20-mile Hannegan Pass/Copper Ridge Trail Run; a.m. Aug. 29, 8- to 18-mile Excelsior Ridge Trail Run; 8 a Sept. 5, 7-mile loop Chain Lake Trail Run.

## Seniors outdoors

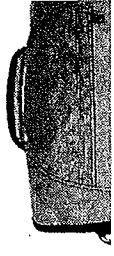
**Afoot in Ferndale:** Fern Senior Activity Center organizes weekly walks beginning at 12 p.m. Tuesdays. Call 384-5113.

**Borderite strolls:** The Bellingham Senior Activity Center organizes hour-long walks at 9 a.m. Fridays. Call 332-8040.

## Shooting sports

See CALENDAR, Page C

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**Fabric Expressions FABRIC SALE!**



# MEDIA ADVISORY



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For Immediate Release – Nov. 30, 2004

04 - 17

**Contact:** Mary Getchell, Puget Sound Action Team, (360) 725-5445, cell phone: (360) 701-3568  
Steve Sundin, City of Bellingham, (360) 676-6982

## Learn how to protect Chuckanut Bay's quality of water and wildlife

**BELLINGHAM** – Homeowners who live along the shorelines of Chuckanut Bay/Edgemoor, as well as other interested residents can learn more about how to protect the beautiful marine resources they share.

The Puget Sound Action Team, City of Bellingham and Whatcom Marine Resources Committee are offering a free, three-hour workshop this **Saturday, Dec. 4, in Bellingham.**

**WHO TO ATTEND: Property owners surrounding Chuckanut Bay/Edgemoor and interested residents, including those in Bellingham**

**WHAT: Chuckanut Bay/Edgemoor Marine Shoreline Landowner Workshop**

**WHEN: Saturday, Dec. 4, 8:30 – 11:30 a.m.**

**WHERE: Fairhaven Library, 1117 12<sup>th</sup> St., in Bellingham**

At this workshop, participants will learn about the shoreline processes that affect their land and will discuss specific actions they can take to help protect and improve the health of their shorelines. They can talk with scientists and technical staff to find out how they can best prevent erosion from their property, while ensuring the bay is clean and healthy for shellfish, herring, rockfish and a variety of extraordinary wildlife that share Chuckanut Bay with shoreline homeowners.

Homeowners will also hear from the City of Bellingham and Whatcom County about updates to their local Shoreline Master Programs and how residents can get involved.

Following the workshop from 12 – 2 p.m., participants may go on a field trip for more up close information.

###

**For more information about shoreline protection visit [www.psat.wa.gov](http://www.psat.wa.gov).**



## Clam survey finds plenty of clams in the sand

by Jack Kintner

The first organized survey of clams found in the sand of Birch Bay was carried out June 12, by 22 volunteers organized by the county's Marine Resources Committee (under the leadership of Erika Stroebel. The purpose was to provide baseline information about the types, numbers and sizes of clams found in Birch Bay as a first step toward community education about the resource and future attempts to establish sites for restoration and enhancement of desirable clam species.

"We won't have the results tabulated for release for some time," Stroebel said, "but there were some pockets where we found high populations of what are called varnish clams especially around Cottonwood Beach," the part of Birch Bay immediately east of Birch Village.

Varnish clams are a far eastern species introduced into British Columbia in the late 19th century that spread south rapidly into Washington waters. The small clams, usually about two inches long and dark in color, were introduced into British Columbia by a ship carrying contaminated ballast and that purged its tanks in the Vancouver harbor. Densities of small, dark clams have been observed that reach over 1,500 per square meter of beach they now occur as far south as Oregon.

Each team of diggers was assigned a line perpendicular to the beach and dug holes one foot in size 100 feet apart, spreading the clams they found on a plastic sheet to count and identify before replacing them in the sand.

"We always fill the holes, as everyone should," said Stroebel, "and that's one of the things we did the survey. We also want to help the community learn more about the shellfish in Birch Bay and how to conserve them. Two of the bigger issues are getting clam diggers to fill in holes they dig and not keep clams that are too small."

The survey was delayed a week by concerns over working on private property, as at Birch Bay State Park, many Birch Bay waterfront property owners own title to the tide

"Sometimes that means to sea level, sometimes to mean lower low water, and sometimes to extreme low tide," said Stroebel, who was able to get permission from all the owners of the land she needed to survey.

Eight other species were found by the survey teams. Besides varnish clams, they also found littlenecks, butterclams, manilas, two types of macoma clams, horse clams and eastern shell clams.



Varnish clam beds are often infested by small native pea crabs that can be very difficult to eradicate once established, according to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW). The concern they list on their website is that someone allergic to crab meat could unknowingly eat a pea crab along with a host clam and get sick, which makes them less desirable as a market species.

For more information, go to [www.whatcom-mrc.wsu.edu/MRC/index.htm](http://www.whatcom-mrc.wsu.edu/MRC/index.htm), or to the DFW website at [wdfw.wa.gov/fish/ans/varnishclams.htm](http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/ans/varnishclams.htm).

**ENVIRONMENT**

# Healthy clam population is measure of health of beach



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Saturday, July 2, 2005

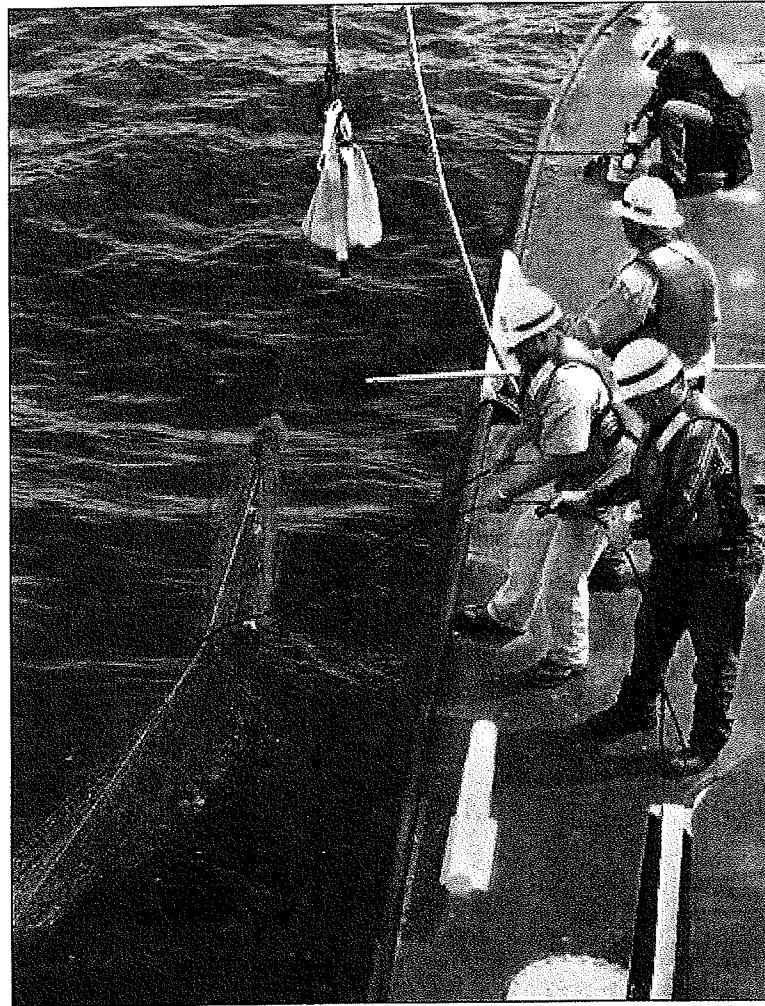


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**ENVIRONMENT**

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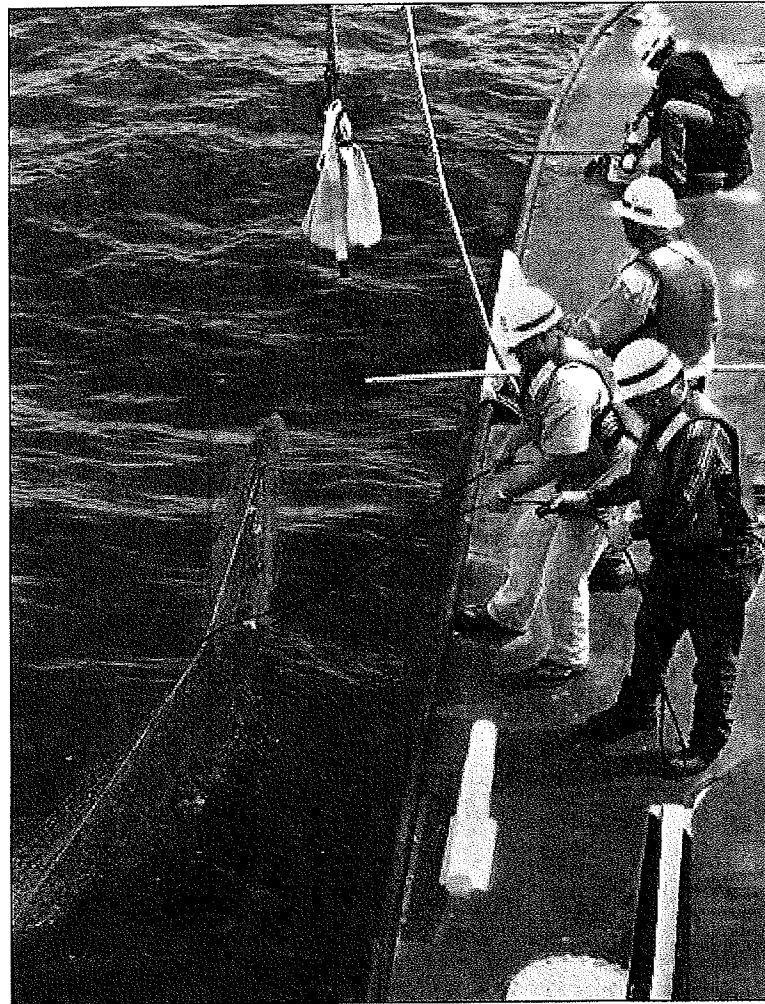


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**ENVIRONMENT**

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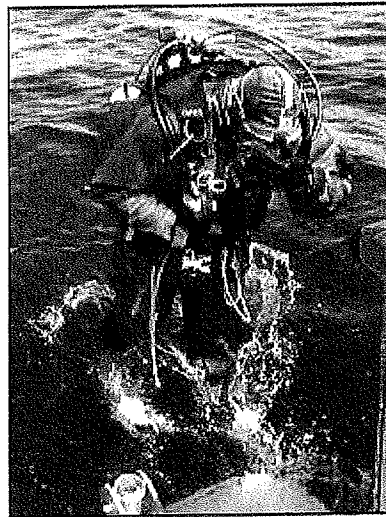
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**ENVIRONMENT**

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## Group offers scientific expertise in managing shoreline

*Federally-funded Marine Resources of Whatcom County an amalgam of private citizens, local officials*



Andrea Olah and Mary Ellen Hartnell at Mud Bay in northern Chuckanut Bay, digging holes and sorting, measuring, and counting clams. At both Mud Bay and Birch Bay, at least nine different types of clams were identified. Olah is an MRCWC member. *Courtesy photo*

by CHRISTINA CLAASSEN  
*christina@whatcomindependent.com*

About four years ago Chris Fairbanks attended the 2001 Salmon Summit. As a marine and fisheries biologist he is interested in salmon recovery and restoration of marine habitat, so he was quickly drawn to the Marine Resources Committee of Whatcom County (MRCWC). "I saw (their) display board and thought this would be a good group to be involved with," said Fairbanks, who has been vice-chair

of the committee for about a year. "I found that a position was open for members with scientific expertise, so I applied and was accepted." The MRCWC is one of seven committees in Western Washington that was created to guide local communities in preserving marine resources by using up-to-date information and scientific expertise. The goal is to achieve resource conservation and habitat protection within the Northwest Straits. The Marine Resources Committee was created in 1998 and is federally funded by the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative.

In addition to federal funding, the MRCWC has also partnered with local governments and other groups that bring additional resources to the projects. For example, the group partnered with the City of Bellingham to conduct the creosote log inventory and removal project, and with the Port of Bellingham on a water quality improvement project in Drayton Harbor. Seven counties along the waters of Puget Sound and the Straits of Juan de Fuca work to maintain the health of the ecosystems along these waterways. Habitats such as

eelgrass beds, shellfish beds and kelp forests are monitored, as well as populations of marine animals and their food sources. Erika Stroebel, Senior Planner of Whatcom County Public Works, is the planner for the Committee and has been working with them for about five years. Stroebel works for the Water Resources Division of Public Works, which provides administrative and technical support to the MRCWC. She has been the lead staff person for this committee, and also works with the County's two shellfish protection districts:

Portage Bay and Drayton Harbor. The Water Resources Division also has an intern who assists with MRCWC community outreach projects and the clam surveys. Stroebel has seen the programs evolve through time. "In the first couple of years people were still learning a lot, and we took a lot of time to become more familiar with issues in Whatcom County," she said. "We have had a lot more participation in the last few years (from people) who are not committee members."

See SHORELINE, page 22 ▶

# outdoorevents

## BELLINGHAM

**8th Annual Runnin' o' the Green Fund-Raiser**, Saturday, March 12, Bloedel Donovan Park, 2214 Electric Ave., Event Schedule: Registration/race bag pick up for 2-mile course, 8:30 to 9:30 a.m.; 5-mile, 9 to 10 a.m.; race start for 2-mile, 10 a.m.; 5-mile, 10:30 a.m. Awards and raffle drawing follow the race. Festivities begin at 10 a.m. with Celtic music by Maggie's Fury, dancing, sponsor booths, drinks and snacks, St. Patty Day arts and crafts and more. Proceeds benefit Bellingham Parks and Recreation Department programs. \$16/registration fee. 676-6985.

**Whatcom Creek Community Work Party**, Saturday, March 12, 322 North Commercial, (parking available), 9 a.m. - noon. Please join the Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association to improve streamside habitat along Whatcom Creek! We will be planting native plants and spreading mulch at this future native plant demonstration garden. Look for signs and check-in at the NSEA tent. Tools, gloves, drinks & snacks are provided. Please wear sturdy shoes and weather-appropriate clothing and bring enthusiasm, your friends and family. Free. 715-0283.

**Help Maintain the Laurelwood Trail**, Saturday, March 12, Call for location, 1 p.m. Neighborhood work party, sponsored by the Bellingham Parks Volunteer Program, to maintain the Laurelwood Trail. No experience necessary, tools and gloves provided. Walk, bike or carpool, if possible as parking along McLeod and Cottonwood is limited. Free. 676-6801.

**Weed the Bernal!** Saturday, March 12, Bloedel Donovan Park, 2214 Electric Ave., 10 a.m. No experience necessary, tools and gloves provided. Bellingham Parks Volunteer Program. Free. 676-6801.

**Carl Cozier Family Fun Run and Trail Walk**, Saturday, March 12, Carl Cozier Elementary School, 1330 Lincoln St., Registration: 9 a.m. This 7th annual event offers 1-mile and 2-mile fun runs and a 2-mile trail walk. All events begin and end in the school parking lot. Refreshments, prizes, children's games and a Bellingham Fire Department ladder truck tour. Everyone welcome. \$10/entry fee per family. 676-7144.

**GPS 101: Introduction to GPS Use**, Saturday, March 12, REI, 400 36th St., 10 a.m. Learn basic use of GPS units, what a GPS can do and how it works. Class size limited, reserve at customer service desk. \$20, \$15/members. 647-8955.

## DECEPTION PASS

**Goose Rock**, Saturday, March 12, Join the Mount Baker Club for an easy to moderate 6-mile hike near Deception Pass. Call for location and costs. 332-3195.

## FERDALE

**Wild Walkabouts: Jumpers!** Saturday, March 12, Tennant Lake Interpretive Center, 5236 Nielsen Road, 12:30 p.m. Learn how far different animals can leap and compare yourself to a cougar. For ages 3-5. Admission by donation. 384-3064.

## MERIDIAN

**Trees for Streams Tree Give-Away**, Saturdays thru March 19, BelleWood Acres, 231 Ten Mile Rd, Two-year old nursery trees available from local farmers to help improve water quality in Whatcom County. Made possible by partnership with Farmers Growing Trees for Salmon, National Fish & Wildlife Foundation and Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association, with labor provided by Meridian High School FFA. Call for large orders. Free. 398-9187.

## MOUNT BAKER

**Lichen Field Trip**, Saturday, March 12, Mt Baker area, call for location, 9 a.m. Join Fred Rhoades and members of the Washington Native Plant Society Koma Kulshian Chapter for a walk in the Mount Baker area to look at lichens. Free. 671-8403.

**Canyon Lake Creek Snowshoe/Hike & Tours**, Saturday, March 12, Call for meeting location, 9 a.m. Join Whatcom Land Trust conservation specialist Ann Russell and outdoorsman and nature photographer Roger Weiss for a vigorous excursion. Bring snowshoes, water, lunch and weather gear. Registration required. \$5, free for WLT members. 650-9470.

## SINCLAIR ISLAND

**Kayak Trip to Viqueen Lodge**, Saturday - Sunday, March 12-13, San Juan Islands, 7 a.m. Saturday - 5 p.m. Sunday. The Outdoor Center invites students, faculty and staff of Western to explore the San Juan Islands while learning basic kayaking techniques. Participants will spend the night on Sinclair Island in Western's rustic Viqueen Lodge. No experience necessary. \$85 students, \$100 non-students. 650-3112.

## SHORELINE

(from page 21)

Stroebel says the Committee has 19 members, most of them volunteers. Five members are staff from local governmental agencies.

The mission of MRCWC is to revitalize and preserve Whatcom County marine resources for future generations. Five citizen-based interest groups focus on conservation and environmental issues, economic issues, recreation, relevant scientific expertise and citizens-at-large. Many community members participate in activities, as well as monthly meetings.

The committee has been involved in several projects including clam surveys and restoration at Birch Bay, mapping of marine vegetation at Cherry Point, assessing rockfish population in Whatcom County, removing creosote logs from county beaches and assessing surf smelt spawning along beaches.

Projects such as these help the MRCWC understand certain marine wildlife groups more clearly. Stroebel said that the clam surveys at Birch Bay, Chuckanut Bay and Seniahmoo Spit filled a data gap that helped determine what kind of clams lived in this area. Also, it helped determine which areas needed clam enhancement.

"We'd been hoping to reseed some native clams, but now we're looking at reseeded Manila clams," Stroebel said.

The projects also teach community members various ways to reduce their impact on marine habitat and wildlife. In the case of clams, participants were taught how to refill clam holes, measure their clams and the importance of staying within the state regulated limits of clams harvested.

See SHORELINE, page 23

For more information or to see a calendar of events, visit [www.whatcom-mrc.wsu.edu](http://www.whatcom-mrc.wsu.edu) or call 360-676-6876. MRCWC's monthly meetings are held the first Thursday of each month from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Whatcom County Civic Center Building, second floor conference room, 322 N. Commercial Street, Bellingham (unless otherwise noted). The public is always welcome.



Chris Fairbanks and Heidi Biggs conduct a clam survey at Birch Bay. Fairbanks is a MRCWC member. Courtesy photo

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

### Conservation/Environmental Interest

Wendy Steffensen, North Sound Baykeeper  
Andrea Olah, marine ecologist  
Jon-Paul Shannahan, Community Outreach Subcommittee Chair

### Economic Interest

Scott McCreery, BP staff, oil and hazardous material spill prevention  
Buck Meloy, NWSC representative, commercial fisherman  
Rob Lemmon, marine recreation

### Relevant Scientific Expertise

Michelle Evans, Chair  
Chris Fairbanks, Vice-Chair, marine biologist

### Recreational Interest

Gerald Larsen, Shellfish Subcommittee Chair  
Ron Akeson, Bottomfish Subcommittee Chair, dive shop owner

### Citizen-at-Large

Amy Kraham, NWSC Commission Alternate  
Bob Cecile, Data Subcommittee Chair

### Elected Officials

Sharon Roy, Whatcom County Council  
Barbara Ryan, Bellingham City Council

### Local Government Staff (Ex-Officio)

Clare Fogelsong, City of Bellingham Public Works  
Mike Stoner, Port of Bellingham  
Erika Stroebel, Whatcom County Public Works

### Project Subcommittees

Community Outreach Subcommittee Chair, Jon-Paul Shannahan  
Members, Scott McCreery, Wendy Steffensen, Amy Kraham, Chris Fairbanks, Doug Stark (Whatcom County)

### Shellfish Subcommittee

Chair, Gerald Larson  
Members, Bob Cecile, Andrea Olah, Geoff Menzies (Drayton Harbor Community Oyster Farm), Doug Stark (Whatcom County), Erika Stroebel (Whatcom County)

### Bottomfish Subcommittee

Chair, Ron Akeson  
Members, Chris Fairbanks, Michelle Evans, Gerald Larson, Andrea Olah, Duncan Burns, Analiese Burns

### Data Subcommittee

Chair, Bob Cecile  
Members, Andrea Olah, Erika Stroebel (Whatcom County)

### Planning Subcommittee

Members, Michelle Evans, Chris Fairbanks, Rob Lemmon, Clare Fogelsong (City of Bellingham), Mike Stoner (Port of Bellingham), Erika Stroebel (Whatcom County)

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# Portrait of Mountain Man - Part 2

## According to Wes

But old mountain man's main love was fishing. I swear this man could catch a fish in a mud puddle. I first met him on a local lake and would observe him for hours as he hooked and released trout after trout when nobody else out there seemed to get a bite. He was like watching poetry in motion. He was one with his surroundings. It was like he had a sixth sense. One day I met him at the boat ramp and started talking to him and asking questions about his remarkable success rate. Well, one thing led to another, and he invited me to go with him the next day. I'll tell you, I was excited. The next day I was an hour early because there was no way I was going to miss this adventure and the possibility of learning from a true master. I can remember it just like it was yesterday, and this took place four years ago.

On this day he was bigger than life to me. This man was a fishing legend in the area and his feats as a fisherman were always discussed

where anglers gathered. Everyone knew his reputation as one of the truly greats, not only in the area, but around the state. I can honestly say this was the day that I truly learned about fishing a lake effectively and the reason you should do your homework before you attempt to go out. We loaded all of our gear in the boat and started out. He explained to me what we were going to use and just why we were going to work the area he was

never really gave a second thought to and showed me how much I really had to learn.

He also told me that to say that you were going to go trout fishing was a very ambiguous statement to make. Each species of trout needs different habitats to survive. This was really an eye-opener for me, part of the education I was hoping to receive. As we got to the section of the lake he intended to work for the day we let our lines out, then he

*I finally got him close enough to the boat to put a net on him - a beautiful eight-pound rainbow. As I looked at the mountain man, he had this great big grin on his face and said, "There's your dinner."*

headed to. As we motored out into the lake he pointed out different areas and explained to me why one area was better than others during certain times of the year. He also told me things I should be looking for in early spring, summer, fall, and winter. These were things I

started to teach me how to bracket a lake down to locate the trout. This was turning out to be quite an experience and I was soaking it all in. I watched him as he checked out the water looking for a hatch so he could find a fly with matching colors or the exact matching fly.

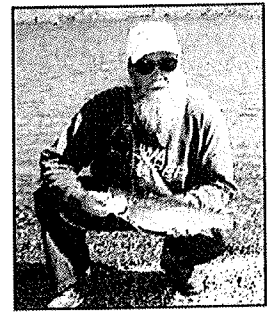
In less than twenty minutes, we had hooked and released two rainbow trout, each from twelve to sixteen inches. He was telling me not to worry, those weren't the ones we were looking for. We were looking for big game in the five-pound

range, which was fine by me. Something that big would be an all time best for me. And to tell you the truth, I was getting excited at the prospect of hooking into something that big.

As the day wore on, he taught me lesson after lesson. We hooked and released over thirty fish apiece, several in the two- to three-pound range. I finally had a hook-up that completely took me by surprise. I saw it come out of the water and couldn't believe my eyes. It was huge, the biggest I'd ever hooked into. I played him for about a half-hour as he leapt out of the water and made several more runs on me. I finally got him close enough to the boat to put a net on him - a beautiful eight-pound rainbow. As I looked at the mountain man, he had this great big grin on his face and said, "There's your dinner." I got the fish home that evening and filleted him out. I had a few friends over for dinner mainly because I knew no one would believe me if I told them.

Now the reason I'm writing this story is that I had noticed the old mountain man hadn't been on the lake lately. The fall was his favorite time to fish the lakes, so I made a trip up to his cabin to make sure everything was all right.

I knocked on his door and got no answer. I went in to find that it was empty, everything was gone.



UNCLE WES

Evidently he just packed up and moved on without any fanfare or good-byes. I don't know if this community realized the loss that they suffered. I think eventually they will, but it's too late now. I only hope he finds what he's looking for. If you should happen to see him, tell him I said hello and thanks for everything. This man is one of a kind and it's worth your time to get to know him.

*So until next time, may the fish at the end of your line be the one of your dreams. •WI*

@ Uncle Wes, of Maple Falls, can be reached at <http://scentcom.proboards25.com/index.cgi> where his fishing knowledge and reports are posted 24-7.



### DIRT TRACKS

For the sake of honesty, we've officially changed the name of this column until Mt. Baker gets more snow. Hopefully, this happens before next year.

This past week on the mountain was marked by warmer temperatures and some rainfall, chipping away at an already extremely shallow snow base. With discounted lift tickets and creative grooming, the ski area is making a desperate stand against the fickle weather.

Facing no significant snowfall in the foreseeable future, Mt. Baker did what any respectable ski area would do: hold a rail contest. Mt. Baker will be hosting a "Rail Box Jam Contest" this weekend with cash prizes, music, and merchandise. If you got skills putting p-tex on metal, you might want to make the trip up the mountain.

In other contest news, holding the beloved Legendary Banked Slalom could prove exceedingly difficult this year. If the current weather pattern holds, it will be interesting to see what creative alternatives Gwyn and Amy Howat think up: Legendary Pond Skim, anyone?

Despite ample sacrifices to the snow gods, the weekend forecast calls for more sunshine. Things should cool off a bit moving into next week, but don't expect any significant snowfall.

Let's all pretend we live in Ohio and this is an epic winter...

—John Kinmonth

Mt. Baker ski report: 671-0211  
Website: [www.mtbaker.us](http://www.mtbaker.us)

## SHORELINE

(from page 22)

Many volunteers participate in monitoring habitat for fish, shellfish and other wildlife. They participate in data collection which is then used to determine where the critical or threatened habitat may be and how the habitat is affected. Some of the subcommittees will work with specific species to get a better understanding. Stroebel said the rockfish subcommittee conducted three workshops to find out where community members have seen rockfish.

The MRCWC will be conducting three clam surveys again this spring and summer. The exact dates and locations are still being determined, Stroebel said. Anyone wishing to participate or learn more about the surveys can contact Doug

Stark at 676-6876.

MRCWC also works in conjunction with various organizations within the county. Projects have been coordinated with the Nooksack Recovery Team, the City of Bellingham, the Port of Bellingham, as well as the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Mostly, MRCWC is a way to educate and involve the community in the diverse marine ecosystem around them.

"This is a tool for getting out and talking to the community," Stroebel said. •WI



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# Local News

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Published: Tuesday, January 3, 2006

## Wildlife officials study eelgrass

### The plant is an indicator of the health of Possession Sound and Port Susan, and vital to longtime survival of salmon.

By Lukas Velush  
Herald Writer

Spending millions of dollars to save salmon in Snohomish County rivers and streams is wasted if the fish die in Possession Sound and Port Susan before they make it out to sea.

Wildlife officials say it's hard to know what happens to young salmon once they reach waters off Snohomish County's shore, but a plant called eelgrass may give them some clues.

Little is known, however, about eelgrass locations and densities in Snohomish County waters.

The county, in partnership with the Tulalip Tribes and the Northwest Straits Initiative, is trying to change that, said Stef Frenzl, marine resources steward for the county.

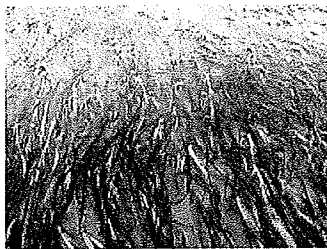
Aerial surveys of the shoreline that show shallow eelgrass plant locations are being completed by the county and tribes.

But because eelgrass can live 20 feet below sea level, more mapping is needed, so the county plans to do underwater eelgrass mapping in the spring or summer, Frenzl said.

The county has a \$14,000 grant from the Northwest Straits Initiative and hopes to get more grant money before the mapping starts.

"Eelgrass is an important part of the marine ecosystem," said Ginny Broadhurst, marine program coordinator for the commission that operates the Northwest Straits Initiative. "It's vital to know where that eelgrass is so we can protect it. We have rules and regulations to protect eelgrass, but you can only enforce those regulations when you know where eelgrass is."

The Northwest Straits Initiative is set up to help counties in the



Eelgrass, which washes back and forth with the tide, provides habitat for tiny fish that salmon eat. Sediment in the water, often from farming or development, is the biggest threat to the plant.

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north Puget Sound area work to protect the water body that links them together.

Eelgrass, which washes back and forth with the tide, provides habitat for tiny fish that salmon eat.

"Forage fish use it for shelter," Frenzl said. "Salmon feed on the forage fish. It's really important habitat for the species that use the intertidal area."

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Eelgrass also provides cover for young, dime-size Dungeness crab, Frenzl said.

Frenzl said the eventual goal is to determine whether eelgrass is in decline, stable or growing.

Perhaps the biggest threat eelgrass faces is too much sediment in the water, something that also threatens salmon and other marine life, Frenzl said.

Erosion brought on by farming or development near streams and rivers puts extra sediment into river systems - sediment that flows into Possession Sound and Port Susan when rivers run high. The sediment blocks sunlight, which causes eelgrass to die, Frenzl said. He hopes the mapping will help gauge whether the sediment is causing eelgrass to shrink.

Eelgrass strands are about 2 1/2 feet long and about a half-inch wide, Frenzl said. Although the plant floats on water, it stays attached to the sea bottom. Eelgrass is easiest seen on the beach when the tide is out.

Reporter Lukas Velush: 425-339-3449 or lvelush@heraldnet.com.

Eelgrass facts

- \* Eelgrass is a perennial plant, which means it's not seaweed.
- \* The plant reproduces by root and seed. Most reproduction is through roots, which allow the plant to create large colonies or beds.
- \* Eelgrass booms from June to August. The flowers are small and hard to see.
- \* The plant grows on muddy, sandy bottoms in shallow subtidal zones down to about 22 feet below the surface. It likes estuaries and other areas with weak wave action.
- \* Washington state has lost an estimated 33 percent of its eelgrass beds.
- \* Eelgrass in the past has been used for food (seeds and roots), animal bedding, insulation, diarrhea medicine and compost.

Source: Snohomish County

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Friday, October 20, 2006

**ENVIRONMENT**

# Sound cleanup plan draws concerns

## Environmentalists question panel's effectiveness

**KATIE N. JOHANNES  
THE BELLINGHAM HERALD**

Creating a redundant layer of bureaucracy, and the inability to enforce existing environmental laws, are among Bellingham environmentalists' concerns about recommendations for protecting and restoring Puget Sound.

Draft recommendations released Oct. 13 by the Puget Sound Partnership, appointed by the governor in 2005, are receiving mixed reviews.

Robyn du Pré, executive director of the environmental group RE Sources, said the proposed creation of a new governing body to direct cleanup efforts is reminiscent of the now defunct Puget Sound Water Quality Authority.

"It started to be effective, and then it got its budget yanked. It had no authority and no power," du Pré said.

The autonomous authority was created by the Legislature in 1985 to develop a comprehensive water quality management plan for Puget Sound. It was absorbed into the governor's office in 1996 as the Puget Sound Action Team, which continues to operate.

"If they want to create another entity, that's fine, but how is this entity going to be able to hold other state agencies accountable?" she said.

### GET INVOLVED

To comment on recommendations for cleaning up Puget Sound:

- E-mail: [info@puget-soundpartnership.org](mailto:info@puget-soundpartnership.org)
- Mail: Puget Sound Partnership, c/o Puget Sound Action Team, P. O. Box 40900, Olympia, WA 98504-0900

Instead of creating new regulations, de Pré said she would like to see cleanup standards set at a higher level.

"We want better quality sediment cleanups, for example," she said. "My fear is that we're rushing to an outcome. ... Is that really going to benefit the Sound in the long term? I'm not talking about 10 years; I'm talking about 100 years from now."

She and others would like to see more money go toward enforcing existing laws and teaching the public ways to minimize negative effects on the environment.

"If we were really putting all these resources that we're putting into a new entity into enforcing the laws on the books, we probably wouldn't have some of these problems," she said.

For example, government agencies have a difficult time ensuring industries have and comply with permits to discharge waste into the water.

Ginny Broadhurst, marine program coordinator for the Northwest Straits Commission, said she was excited to find such specific recommendations in the draft report.

"The actions are supporting work we've been doing with fishing gear removal and creosote log removal," she said.

She was pleased to see that the Puget Sound Partnership recognized the work of the local Marine Resource Committee and stewardship programs.

But she said those local programs can't be effective without funding.

She thought the recommendations would be applicable to Bellingham as a piece of the larger ecosystem.

"Bellingham is similar to so many other shoreline communities around Puget Sound (in terms) of habitat loss and water quality problems," she said.

The Puget Sound Partnership developed the recommendations as part of the governor's goal to achieve a "healthy" Puget Sound by 2020.

Many in the environmental community think the goal is ambitious, but they said significant improvement was possible.

Most in attendance at a Monday public meeting about the draft recommendations were from an environmental organization. Sehome High School senior Courtney Scherting wondered what it all means for her.

"As a person who is about to exercise her right to vote ... we need to have programs in our schools, so when it comes to the point where our choices affect the generations after us, we understand what we're doing."

Reach Katie N. Johannes at [katie.johannes@bellinghamherald.com](mailto:katie.johannes@bellinghamherald.com) or call 756-2805.

**THE BELLINGHAM HERALD**  
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ISSUE 178

August 24-30, 2006

FREE EVERY THURSDAY

## New development slated for watershed

■ *Neighbors concerned over impact on Lake Whatcom, surrounding area*

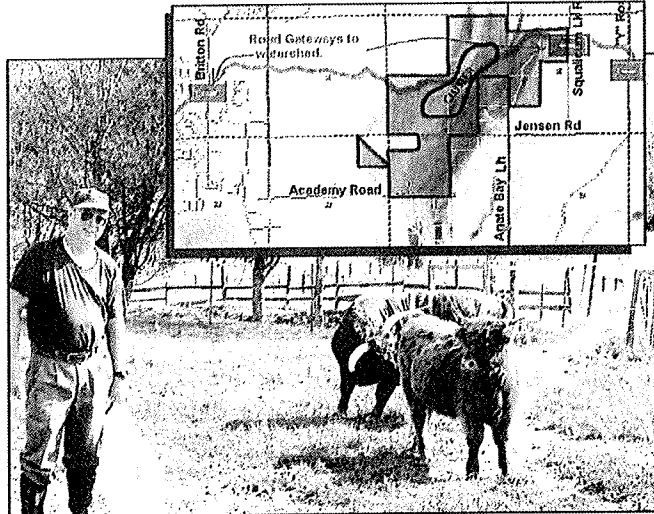
by SHERI WARD  
sheri@whatcomindy.com

**BELLINGHAM** - If property owner Gordon Iverson is able to fulfill his plans to develop a portion of Squalicum Mountain, the area will become home to 45 to 55 view homes clustered on the southeast ridge of the mountain.

Iverson owns approximately 700 acres on Squalicum Mountain, with most of his holdings zoned forestry, allowing one house per 20 acres; some parts are currently zoned rural, and allow one house per five acres. He purchased the property around 12 years ago, after it had been logged by Trillium Corporation.

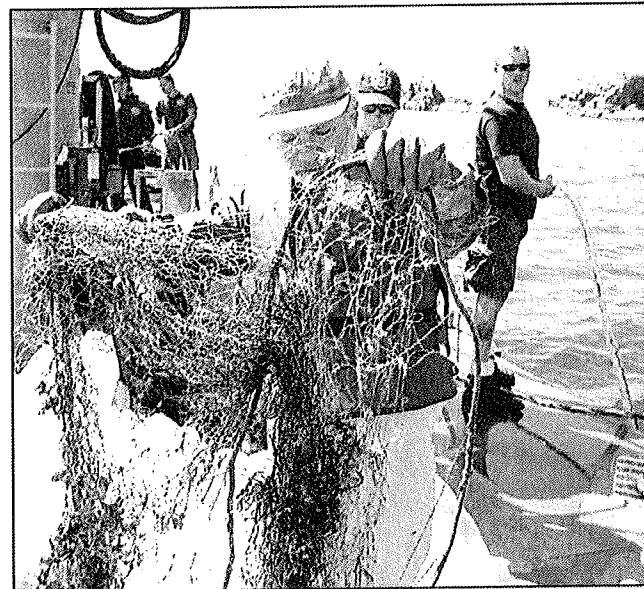
Bill Sygitowicz, a development consultant who is working with Iverson on the feasibility study, said the area outside the cluster,

see DEVELOPMENT page 16



Area resident and small-scale cattle farmer Larry Helm is concerned about the proposed cluster housing on Squalicum Mountain and the impact it might have on the surrounding area. The area of cluster housing shown on the map would include approximately 45 to 55 home sites of one to two acres each. The gray line running east to west between the two "Road Gateways to watershed" indicates the northern boundary of the Lake Whatcom watershed.

Photo courtesy of Larry Helm; map augmented by WJ graphics staff



Coast Guard Reserve members and members of a Navy dive team retrieve nets left behind by fishermen. The nets present a hazard to aquatic life, and tons of such nets litter the sea floor.

photo by Taylor Phifer

## Net Recovery

■ *Acres of discarded fishing nets cover seabed*

by TAYLOR PHIFER  
taylor@whatcomindy.com

**BELLINGHAM** - Last week two detachments of Navy divers from San Diego and Honolulu performed training exercises off the south end of Lummi Island where more than 100,000 pounds of derelict net have been removed from the seabed.

The project is a joint effort between the Commission, the Coast Guard and the Navy to clean up the tons of net that litter the sea floor in the area.

Over the years, hundreds of gill-netters have dragged thousands of acres of net through the waters of Puget Sound and the San Juan Islands. But during the process, the huge nets have become snagged or were simply cut and left behind. These nets may sink to the bottom, but their days of catching things are far from over.

Last week the Northwest Straights Commission, with help from the Coast Guard Reserve and a Navy dive team brought up several of

see RECOVERY page 16

## NEWS AT A GLANCE



Photo courtesy of Steve Wolff

**POINT ROBERTS** - On August 12, a bright and sunny day, the Point Roberts Taxpayer's Association sponsored a walk around Lily Point to promote interest in preserving the area, now privately owned and undeveloped. ■WJ

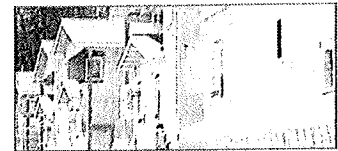


Photo by Jonathan W. Sott

## 50 low-income apartments nearing completion

**BELLINGHAM** - The Bellingham/Whatcom County Housing Authority is nearing completion on 50 low-income apartments to be located near downtown on Laurel St. a half block west of State Street. For more on this development, turn to p. 2.

## District tells Vanderstine, "Go work in the garage!"

**PEACEFUL VALLEY** - In addition to the many areas of disagreement among commissioners and citizens in Water District 13, at this week's meeting a decision was made to tell Plant Operator Don Vanderstine that from now on he was to work in the garage instead of the district's office. Want to know what else commissioners decided? Turn to p. 3.

## What's really the problem?

**COUNTY** - Some say there's too much immigration, some say there's not enough. Some say the border's pretty secure; others beg to differ. Some say there are enough border agents, others say we're 400 short. The one thing that's for sure is that there is a lot of opinion on the subject. For some of it, see p. 3.

## Lanny's Progress - 8/22/06

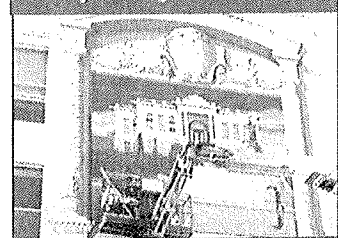


photo by Sara L. Geballe

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PARADISE WATER DISTRICT p. 3

STEVESTON p. 8

MUSIC REVIEWS p. 10

**DEVELOPMENT**

from page 1

approximately 550 acres, would be retained by Iverson and the areas currently in forestry would be run as a managed forest. According to current plans, approximately 65 to 70 percent of the home sites would lie within the Lake Whatcom watershed, which provides drinking water for Bellingham.

The Squalicum Valley Community Association (SVCA), representing area residents, is concerned about the proposal, and presented its concerns to the County Council in a letter last week. In the letter, the SVCA challenged the council's decision to send the proposal directly to the planning staff, rather than

is the southern boundary of the property.

Area resident Larry Helm is concerned that the area proposed for managed forestry may not remain in that use. Iverson has proposed putting a deed restriction on the property to preserve its use as forestry, but Helm and other members of SVCA question if the deed restriction could later be changed to allow for housing development. Helm said SVCA had asked Iverson to put a conservation easement on the property instead, but he declined.

Helm owns a small cattle ranch in Squalicum Valley, and is concerned that builders on this site would be disturbing the soil and causing erosion into the watershed. Helm said,

Approximately 65 to 70 percent of the home sites would lie within the Lake Whatcom watershed, which provides drinking water for Bellingham.

have a public hearing on it. In the letter, SVCA also stated its opinion that the proposed clustering is inconsistent with the law, since the Growth Management Act "requires that a county preclude clusters of such magnitude that will demand ... urban services." The SVCA letter also pointed out that the development is dependent on the extension of water and sewer services by the Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District outside its boundaries. The northernmost boundary of the water district is at Academy Road, which

"I can't even build a culvert on my property without asking the county's permission. I need to put down gravel on the cow-paths so they don't create a muddy path." Helm believes the county requires more stringent environmental protection steps from farmers in the area than they do from builders. He is also concerned about the impact the development will have on the existing rural lifestyle currently enjoyed by Squalicum Valley residents.

Iverson's project would not include actually building the homes

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in the cluster, only selling the lots at a price from \$350,000 to \$450,000 for a one- to two-acre parcel. Sygitowicz said building activity can't occur between September 1 and May 1, and builders would be using preventative measures to reduce erosion. He also pointed out that the distance from the cluster site to either downhill boundary is approximately a mile, so the environmental impact outside the area would be minimal.

According to Sygitowicz, ever since the County Council imposed a building moratorium in Lake Whatcom's watershed, they have been discussing criteria for acceptable projects. The four criteria they have developed at this point are:

- homes should be clustered;
- water and sewer service should be available;
- development should not be at the maximum allowable density; and
- a development agreement should detail such items as the

number of homes in the cluster and treatment of storm water.

Sygitowicz maintains they meet all four criteria, and that this development would be better than simply platting out the property in 20-acre parcels.

According to the current plan, the Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District would extend service to the property. Since the property is outside the water district's boundaries, this requires an amendment to the county's Comprehensive Plan, which the proponents are currently working on. Originally, Iverson had asked for water service only, and had proposed a community water treatment plant for the cluster. Jim Neher, speaking on behalf of the water district, said they rejected that proposal, and would only agree if both water and sewer were provided. "Not on top of our mountain," he said, speaking of the proposed water treatment plant.

Sygitowicz stressed that water and sewer would serve this project

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only; no latecomers are envisioned. The line would run north from Agate Bay where the water district already provides service, and there is no developable property between the existing homes and the Iverson property. #W1

**RECOVERY**

from page 1

these nets - one of which had two harbor seals, several cormorants and over 100 salmon snagged in it.

"Abandoned, lost and discarded fishing nets can be found throughout the world's ocean and are a particular concern in the waters of Puget Sound," Navy Public Affairs Officer Sheila Murray said. "Unless removed from the water these nets continue to attract, capture and kill marine organisms until the gear is buried by sediment and dissolves, which could take hundreds of years."

"It's difficult," Navy Dive Chief Tim Canup said. "Just how people can leave these nets here. The nets go missing and they don't care. There is so much net it would take months to clean up." Months at Friday's location alone.

"It's not just this location," he said. "It's all over."

The danger is that these nets don't decompose or go away, they continue to do what they were designed for.

"These nets are made out of synthetic material," Northwest Straights Commission Representative Jeff June said. "Sunlight degrades the

net but once you get about three feet under water there is little light and the stuff lasts 10, 20, 30 years. It continues to do what it was designed to do; it continues the killing process."

To reach the discarded nets, divers must go down 70 to 80 feet. One diver said the visibility is okay until you start moving around and kick up all the sediment. Then you're essentially working blind and must rely on what you can feel with your hands.

The seabed in this area is rocky and the nets get snagged on sharp rock mounds and left behind. The divers have to cut the net into sections, fold it up and then attach it to a floatation device that brings it to the surface. Currently, there is no recycle process for the net; after a days work the hundreds of pounds of net are taken to a landfill, June said.

So far there are no penalties for leaving nets behind, but June said with a bit of legislation and money, the cleanup process could be much easier.

"If they had a tagging system it would help us find the nets," he said. "We could determine where the net is going to go. They should have an excise tax for fishing to pay for the cleanup so they're not killing all this

sea life."

At present the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) funds projects like these through their marine debris program. In addition to NOAA, local support for the training comes from the Northwest Straits Commission, a group of citizens representing local, state, tribal and community interests to protect marine resources. Coastal America, coordinator of 12 federal departments and the executive offices of the president, facilitates joint projects which benefit America's oceans and coasts.

In the military, joint service projects like this are called "Purple Projects," according to Naval Public Affairs.

"This is about as purple a project as you get," project coordinator and acting military liaison for Coastal America said. "We have local Navy divers teaching a dive team flown in from Hawaii by an Air Force Reserve cargo plane. Those divers are teaming up with Army divers from Ft. Eustis, Virginia and the on-the-water mission is conducted aboard a U.S. Coast Guard tender from Bellingham with support from the Coast Guard Auxiliary. The cooperation on this project is outstanding." #W1

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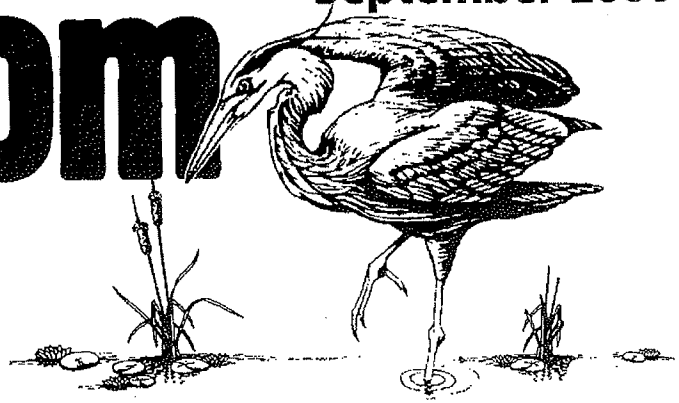
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# Whatcom Watch



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## Shore Stewards Preserve Our Whatcom County Shorelines

by Cheryl Lovato Niles

I'm standing on a stretch of gorgeous shoreline on the western side of Lummi Island watching Chris Fairbanks, marine biologist and co-chair for the Whatcom County Marine Resources Committee, wade out into chest-deep water. He's trying to locate the edges of the eelgrass beds. "This eelgrass is wonderful," he says with a grin. That's not the only thing that's wonderful I think as I watch half a dozen bald eagles play in the air.

Before Chris and I arrived onto the beach, accompanied by Dave Kerschner from the Lummi Island Heritage Trust, Gerald Larson from the Marine Resources Committee and David Evanson, volunteer for the Watershed Master/Beach Watchers, those eagles had been feasting on a large carcass along with an equal number of turkey vultures. Now the eagles are aloft and the vultures have relocated to a log perch in the shade. We can see them clearly, their red heads bright against their black feathers. The carcass is too big to be a seal. We speculate that it could have been a sea lion, but it was too well decomposed to know for sure.

As I look around I realize that stretches of shoreline like this one could serve as powerful reference points and inspiration for would-be Shore Stewards, shoreline property owners who voluntarily follow 10 wildlife-friendly guidelines in caring for their beaches, bluffs, gardens and homes. The Shore Stewards program is new to Whatcom County, and I hope that it will be as enthusiastically received as it has been in Island County, where it began three years ago. Sponsored and supported by the Washington State University (WSU) Whatcom Watershed Master/Beach Watchers, the program offers a free reference guidebook to caring for your shoreline, free informational newsletters, and will host several educational workshops in its first year in Whatcom County. The WSU Whatcom Watershed Master/Beach Watchers program is part of the highly acclaimed and nationally recognized "Beach Watcher" program begun by Washington State University Extension in Island County 15 years ago.

### Natural Processes Support Life on Beach

As Chris Fairbanks walks along this Lummi Island beach, making measurements and recording his observations, he points out sugar kelp, sea lettuce and *Sargassum* to me. The tide is well out and the eelgrass blades floating along the surface of the water form a sort of woven blanket. Tiny fish launch themselves out of the water ahead of us as we walk, land on this unexpected eelgrass barrier, and then wriggle furiously between the blades to get back into their underwater meadow. Later, as we're standing on the cobble beach talking, I realized that the ground beneath our feet is alive with movement. Tiny crabs scurried under, over and around the rocks we're standing on. I can hear them moving. It's a soft sound like soap bubbles popping. Gerald Larson picks up and examines the oyster shells he finds, while a curious coyote pup trots out onto the beach to get a better look at us.

The natural processes that support life on this beach continue as they

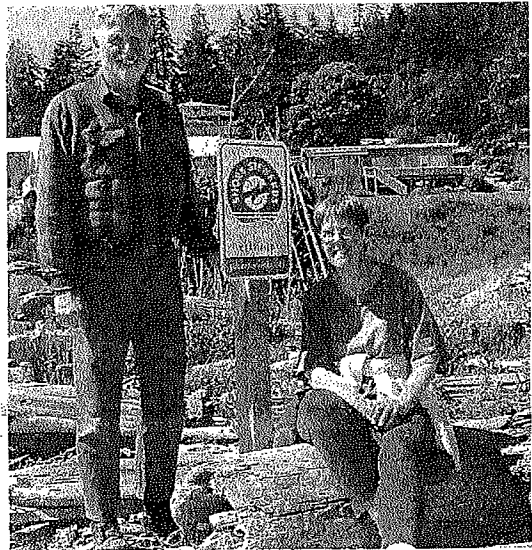


photo: Shore Stewards, Island County

Ken and Peggy Urstad are Shore Stewards at their beachfront home on Whidbey Island. They hope to leave their grandchildren a legacy of healthy beaches, salmon fishing and abundant marine life. The Shore Stewards program began three years ago in Island County and is new to Whatcom County.

have for thousands of years. The forest meets the sea here. Tall trees shade the high beach and that's good news for tiny forage fish called sand lance and surf smelt who like to lay their even tinier eggs right on the beach during a high-tide. We carefully sift through the sand in likely spots looking for perfectly round, translucent eggs only ever-so-slightly bigger than grains of sand. We don't find any today, but hope that the fish do come here to spawn. A shady beach is a good place for forage fish eggs. They are less likely to dry out before they can hatch out. And more forage fish ultimately means more food for those bigger fish, like salmon, which are such a symbol for the Northwest.

Shade is not the only way the forest benefits the marine environment. The thick, natural vegetation filters and slows the rainwater as it soaks in and moves over the land. Since there are no bulkheads or armoring structures here, the shoreline is free to erode slowly, nourishing the beach with fresh sediments. Along the edge I can see roots exposed where the waves have washed the soil away over time. Eventually, here and there another tree will fall over onto the beach where it will absorb

Continued on page 15

September song

PAGE 8

Burning problem: toxic flame retardants

PAGE 4

Lawn scofflaw

PAGE 6

We are Ohana

PAGE 7

Memories of Islamic Middle East and Africa

PAGE 8

Peak oil discovery

PAGE 10

The truth about money

PAGE 11

Whatcom County Council

PAGE 12

Cheryl Lovato Niles is Coordinator for the WSU Whatcom Watershed Master/Beach Watchers program as well as the Shore Stewards program. She has a Master's Degree in wildland resource science from UC Berkeley.

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# Shore Stewards Preserve Our Whatcom County Shorelines

Continued from page 1

## The 10 Guidelines for Shoreline Living

- Use Water Wisely
- Manage Water Runoff
- Encourage Native Plants and Trees
- Control Pests and Fertilize Safely
- Understand Bluff Dynamics Before Developing
- Respect Intertidal Life
- Preserve Eelgrass Beds and Forage Fish Spawning Habitat
- Know and Practice All the Elements of Septic Maintenance
- Use Soft Armoring Techniques When Appropriate

and deflect some of that wave energy, helping to retain beach sediments, and to keep the overall erosion rate slow.

This shoreline is a place where marine and terrestrial environments meet and mingle, and it is full of life. As I look at it I think of all of the miles of shoreline that have lost the almost magical life-giving quality that comes from these functions and processes. And I think of all of the miles of shoreline that could be lost to development, growth pressures, and an expanding population that loves the shore but doesn't understand it and doesn't know how to preserve it. And I think, "If only everyone could see the beauty of this place, people would be clamoring to find out how they can recreate this on their private property and community beaches." So many who live here in Whatcom County look out at the beautiful view of our bays and the straits and believe that this is a pristine environment. But I had never seen anything like this and I suspect that few have. Only those of us with memories stretching back to the early part of the last century have a good sense of how much has

**Shore Stewards are shoreline property owners who voluntarily follow 10 wildlife-friendly guidelines in caring for their beaches, bluffs, gardens and homes.**

changed over time.

The Lummi Heritage Trust was evaluating the parcel's shoreline in the hopes of winning grant money to help purchase the property for conservation. From a biological perspective this stretch of shoreline is very valuable. And from a non-technical perspective, it is simply stunning. I truly hope the Heritage Trust is able to acquire this jewel, but I know that the future of our marine environment will not be guaranteed through land acquisition alone.

## Vast Majority of Whatcom Shoreline Is Privately Owned

Because the vast majority of our shoreline in Whatcom County is privately owned, the future of our marine resources is in our hands. And the time is now. Many marine biologists believe that our marine ecosystem is at a tipping point and poised for a crash. If we are to pass on these precious resources to the next generation we all must learn how to protect and preserve what we have today. Those of us who live along the shoreline must come to understand how our beaches provide food and shelter to fish and other wildlife. We need to know how to keep the water running off from our yards free of pesticides, fertilizers and excess nutrients. We need to understand natural erosion processes, how to live with them and how to avoid accelerating them. Most importantly, we need to put our understanding into action.

The good news is that caring for our shorelines is both doable and rewarding. And in the process of learning how to take good care of your beach or bluff you learn more about what happens on a beach and the wildlife that lives there. Even better news is that we now have excellent guidance in Whatcom County in the form of the *Shore Stewards Guidebook*. Many of the steps to good stewardship are simple, such as keeping grass clippings and yard waste off of the beach, keeping your septic system in good working condition and preserving as much natural vegetation as possible. Other topics are more involved, such as understanding erosion, soft-armoring techniques and beach friendly gardening practices. Washington State University Beach Warriors

erosion and appreciating and enjoying shellfish (for dinner!). Participating Shore Stewards also receive the *Shore Stewards Guidebook* as well as informational newsletters.

To learn more about the Shore Stewards program, or to become a certified Shore Steward, contact Cheryl Lovato Niles, at 676-6736 or send an email to [cniles@wsu.edu](mailto:cniles@wsu.edu).

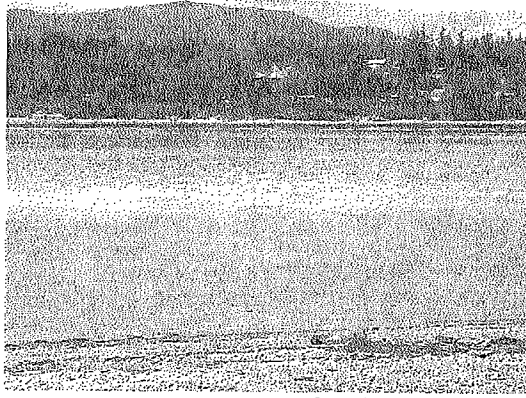


photo: Whatcom County Public Works

This is a view of a Lummi Island beach from Gooseberry Point.

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Feb. 13, 2007

## ENVIRONMENT

# Creosote-laden pilings on way out

**Squalicum project to yield 700 tons of wood**

**JARED PABEN**

---

BELLINGHAM — Crews have started removing old pilings filled with the cancer-causing chemical creosote, the first of several planned cleanup projects in Bellingham Bay.

Contractors working for the state Department of Natural Resources on Monday used a crane mounted on a barge to pull the 50- to 60-foot-long pilings of an old dock from Squalicum Waterway between Bellingham Cold Storage and Mount Baker Plywood Mill. Within the next five weeks, they expect to pull 672 of the more than 50-year-old pilings from the water.

Creosote was put in logs as a preservative, to kill fungi, plants and pests. But the chemical leaches out, poisoning sea life near the logs. Broken logs wash up on beaches, poisoning the sediments, ground water and shore waters, and the organisms that live there. People on the beach can be exposed to the chemical's vapors on hot days and when they use the wood to make beach fires.

Each piling may contain as much as a gallon of creosote per cubic foot of wood, said Lisa Kaufman, a project manager with the Department of Natural Resources.

Before being pulled out, the pilings are first loosened by a machine that shakes them, freeing them from the sediment. Then a crane hauls them out. The logs will be disposed of at a special landfill in Roosevelt, Wash., Kaufman said.

The dock was used as part of a shipbuilding facility sometime after World War II, Kaufman said, but officials can't find a record of who owns it.

The dock's removal is another step in the restoration of Squalicum Creek, which provides a habitat for salmon. The Port of Bellingham will improve the creek bed just up from the creek's mouth, fix a barrier at the stream mouth to better allow salmon up the stream, and deposit sand and gravel on the waterway floor to nurture them, said Mike Stoner, Port of Bellingham environmental director. That work could be done in the next year and a half to two years, he said.

The Department of Natural Resources has removed 825 tons of creosote-soaked wood in north Puget Sound. The Squalicum project will yield about 700 tons of wood. The other projects in Bellingham Bay will yield about 350 tons of wood.

Reach Jared Paben at 715-2289 or [jared.paben@bellinghamherald.com](mailto:jared.paben@bellinghamherald.com).

## Bellingham Herald, The (WA)

September 8, 2007

### Survey will check on planted clams

*CAT SIEH Reach Cat Sieh at [cat.sieh@bellinghamherald.com](mailto:cat.sieh@bellinghamherald.com) or call 715-2236.*

BIRCH BAY - Some clamdiggers won't be in it to reap the tasty benefits this weekend. About 10 volunteers **will** dig up the shellfish today as part of a **survey** to measure the success of human-**planted clam** populations in the area.

The study's results could pave the way for future **clam**-planting projects that would benefit native **clam** populations and recreational **clam**-diggers alike.

The Whatcom Marine Resources Committee **survey** comes after the group placed baby Manila **clams** in Birch Bay in May, said Atina Casas, marine resources planner for Whatcom County Public Works.

Manila **clams** are not native but have been in the area for a long time.

Casas said digging up the **clams** - Manila is a popular species for **clam**-diggers - **will** allow the committee to test the project's methodology and measure the success of the **planted** populations.

"It **will** give us an indication of how they survived over the summer," she said.

The committee **will** continue to monitor the **planted** populations over the next three years, with the next **survey** set for spring.

"The long-term goal is to find a source of native Little Neck **clams** (which are in decline), and to evaluate seeding with them," Casas said.

Anyone interested in participating in the spring **survey** may call Casas at 715-7450.

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Dec, 19, 2007

ENVIRONMENT

## Puget Sound funding boosted to \$20 million

Money to repair logging roads is cut to \$39M

LES BLUMENTHAL

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Even as Congress cut nearly \$23 billion from a massive spending bill to overcome a threatened presidential veto, some programs actually received additional funding — including the effort to clean up Puget Sound.

Originally, Congress was going to provide \$15 million for cleanup in the current fiscal year. But the bill now heading toward final passage as Congress prepares to recess for the year includes \$20 million.

Not all programs important to Washington state were so lucky. A new nationwide program to repair deteriorating logging roads in environmentally sensitive areas was supposed to receive \$65 million. Under the revised bill, it will get \$39 million.

In Washington state alone, it could cost \$300 million during the next 10 years to fix the old Forest Service roads, which are eroding and threatening endangered salmon spawning habitat.

President Bush has threatened to veto the appropriations bills unless Congress complied with his budget request by slicing almost \$23 billion. The result was a \$515.7 billion, 3,575-page omnibus bill that combines the 11 remaining appropriations bills into a single package.

Though the bill complies with Bush's bottom line, it reorders some of his priorities, including additional funding for veterans care and border security.

"The president has been there every step of the way with a bully pulpit and a pen ready to veto America's priorities," said Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee. "It's time that we focus on the needs of the people here at home."

The bill, which funds every government agency except the Pentagon, passed the House on Monday and was headed for Senate passage by midweek. Differences remain over Iraq War funding.

Congress earlier passed and Bush signed a separate \$495 billion Defense Department spending bill.

Rep. Norm Dicks, D-Wash., chairman of the House interior appropriations subcommittee, said appropriators had to make "difficult choices" as they cut the spending bill.

Dicks' interior appropriations bill was cut back by nearly \$1 billion. While funding for such things as the National Park Service, the National Endowment for the Arts and the national wildlife refuge system were increased, Forest Service and Interior Department construction activities were trimmed \$100 million and \$395 million was stripped from the Clean Water Revolving Fund.

In general, Washington state emerged from the budget battle pretty much unscathed. All \$672 million for construction at the state's military bases remained intact. Nearly \$400 million of that total will be spent at Fort Lewis and the Yakima Firing Range.

Washington also will receive about \$25 million in funding to help restore dwindling salmon runs and \$1.4 million for the state's methamphetamine initiative. Mount Rainier National Park will receive almost \$3 million for continued construction on the Jackson Visitor Center and to purchase land along the Carbon River.

The mammoth bill also contains language that would delay for one year — until June 2009 — implementation of a rule requiring passports to be shown at all border crossings by people returning to the United States. Implementation of the first phase of the program had swamped the State Department with passport applications, causing a months-long delay in issuing them.

Les Blumenthal covers issues about Washington state from the McClatchy Washington, D.C., bureau. He can be reached at [lblumenthal@mcclatchydc.com](mailto:lblumenthal@mcclatchydc.com).

### LOCAL PROJECTS ARE INCLUDED

\$2.8 million for the Northern Border Prosecutor Initiative to reimburse northern border communities for some of their law enforcement expenses.

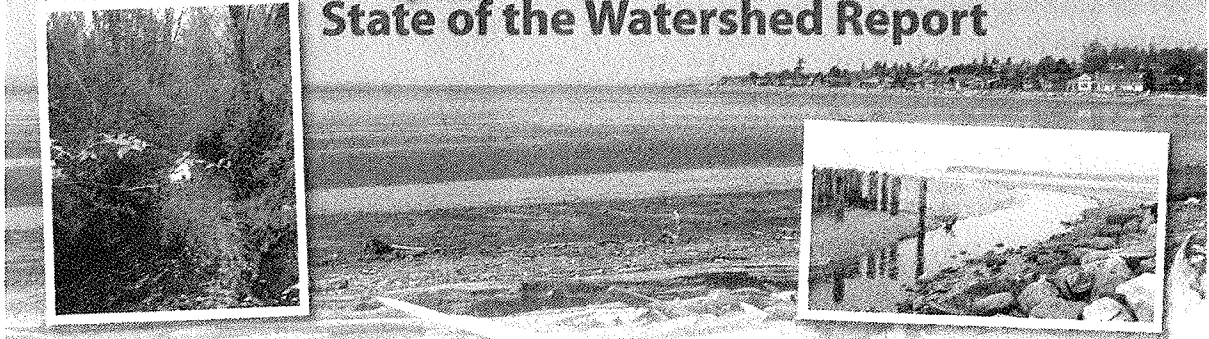
\$1.5 million for the Northwest Straits Initiative to help protect and restore marine waters in Whatcom, San Juan, Skagit, Island, Clallam, Jefferson and Snohomish counties.

\$245,000 for the Bellingham Marine Trade Center.

\$490,000 for Fidalgo Bay Road improvements.

# Birch Bay & Terrell Creek

## State of the Watershed Report



### Clean beaches, an abundance of fish and shellfish, healthy streams ...

These are things that many of us appreciate about the Birch Bay and Terrell Creek watershed. However, in this rapidly growing and developing area, the natural beauty and environmental health of this watershed is in jeopardy. The future well being of these natural resources depends on individuals like you taking an active role in the future of this community.

This report will introduce you to activities that are happening in and around the Terrell Creek and Birch Bay area. We will also explore a little about the history of the area, key issues we are facing, and some ways to be involved in building a healthier watershed. Those of us living, working, and playing in this beautiful watershed must act cooperatively and effectively in order to ensure stewardship of the creek and bay for future generations.

## What is a Watershed?

The term watershed describes an area of land where rainfall, snowmelt, groundwater, and springs flow to the lowest point. In this watershed, Terrell Creek and numerous other smaller streams and drainages (both seasonal and year-round) flow into Birch Bay.

## Connecting freshwater with marine water

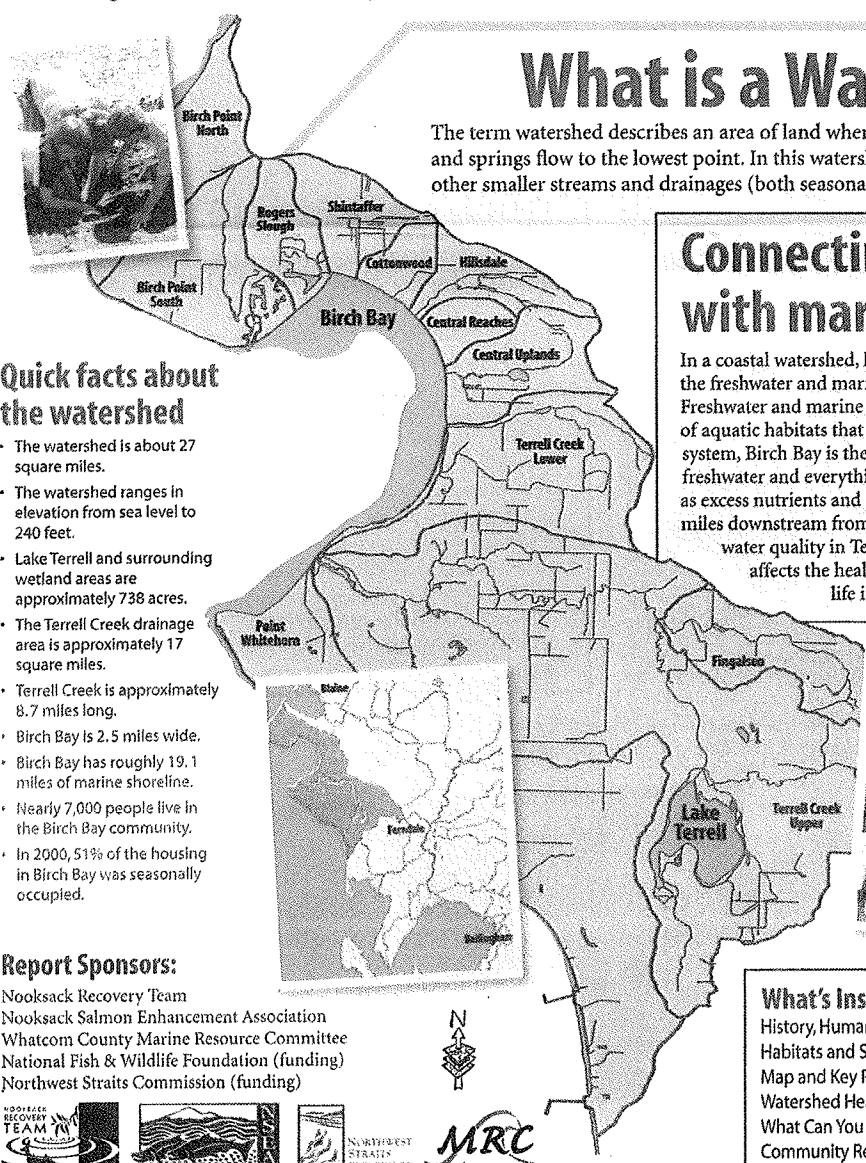
In a coastal watershed, like Birch Bay, the connection between the freshwater and marine systems is incredibly important. Freshwater and marine water are connected through a series of aquatic habitats that support a diversity of life. In this system, Birch Bay is the ultimate destination of all of the freshwater and everything it carries with it. Pollutants, such as excess nutrients and pathogens, can have adverse effects miles downstream from their point of origin. Therefore, water quality in Terrell Creek and other streams directly affects the health of shellfish beds and other marine life in Birch Bay.

### Quick facts about the watershed

- The watershed is about 27 square miles.
- The watershed ranges in elevation from sea level to 240 feet.
- Lake Terrell and surrounding wetland areas are approximately 738 acres.
- The Terrell Creek drainage area is approximately 17 square miles.
- Terrell Creek is approximately 8.7 miles long.
- Birch Bay is 2.5 miles wide.
- Birch Bay has roughly 19.1 miles of marine shoreline.
- Nearly 7,000 people live in the Birch Bay community.
- In 2000, 51% of the housing in Birch Bay was seasonally occupied.

### Report Sponsors:

- Nooksack Recovery Team
- Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association
- Whatcom County Marine Resource Committee
- National Fish & Wildlife Foundation (funding)
- Northwest Straits Commission (funding)



### What's Inside This Report

History, Humans, and the Watershed .....	2
Habitats and Species of Interest .....	3
Map and Key Points in the Watershed .....	4 & 5
Watershed Health .....	6
What Can You Do? .....	7
Community Resources .....	8

# A Chronology of Land Use in the Birch Bay & Terrell Creek Watershed

## Early inhabitants

The abundance of natural resources has always drawn people to the Birch Bay area. The Semiahmoo, a group of Coast Salish people, inhabited the area from Boundary Bay to Point Whitehorn. Archeological evidence indicates the Lummi and the Nooksack Tribes used Birch Bay seasonally as foraging and ceremonial grounds. The Lummi called the area *Strav-a-wa*, which means 'the place for clams'. In these native cultures, clams were dried and smoked in large quantities to preserve them for the winter.



California Creek School, 1880s  
Whatcom Memories Project, Whatcom Museum of History & Art

The Spanish and British explored Birch Bay in the late 1700s. The Spanish called the area *Garzon*, but the British named it *Birch Bay* because of the thick stands of birch trees that grew in abundance near the shore.

The Fraser Valley Gold Rush and the Boundary Survey of the 49<sup>th</sup> Parallel created a wave of new settlers in the late 1850s. Two settlements were established in the area at this time. Mappers, surveyors, gold seekers, and settlers lived at these sites during this short-lived boom. More settlers came to the area in the 1870s. Businesses such as sawmills, lumber mills that produced shingles and lumber, and canneries helped to build the market-based economy.



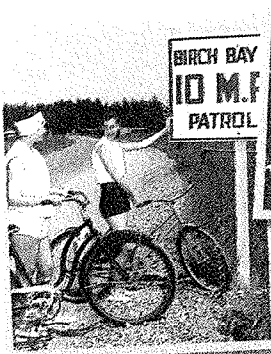
Oldtime Clam Diggers at Birch Bay  
Center for Pacific Northwest Studies, Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA



According to Robert Hawley's *Skqee Mus, or Pioneer Days on the Nooksack*, near the turn of the 20th century, Lynden residents established an annual community clam bake that still exists today. The tradition started in November 1891, when four men from Lynden traveled all day by wagon to Birch Bay. They collected butter and horse clams by night when the tides were low enough and celebrated with a community clam bake the following day when they returned to Lynden.

## The Development of the Birch Bay We Know Today

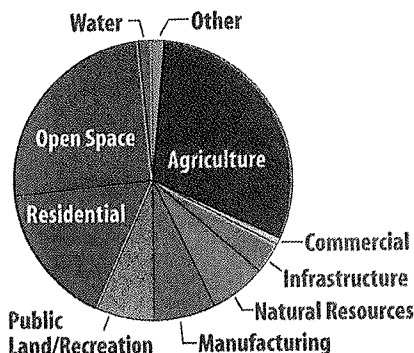
- In the 1920s, Birch Bay became established as a tourist destination. Many beachfront cabins were built to accommodate visitors and seasonal residents.
- Construction of the Peace Arch in 1921 drew people to the area.
- The state of Washington purchased Lake Terrell in the late 1940s to preserve wildlife habitat and provide recreational opportunities.
- During the 1950s Birch Bay was an important family vacation destination in the region. The amusement park in Birch Bay was a popular attraction.
- In the 1940s and 1950s, local resident Dave Beatty recalls seeing salmon (probably coho) in Terrell Creek from its mouth to above Grandview Road. Few salmon are seen in the creek today.
- Birch Bay State Park was established in 1954. The State Park now encompasses 194 acres and includes a campground.
- As time went by, new industries added to the local economy. In 1954, the BP (Mobile) Cherry point oil refinery was constructed. In 1966 the Alcoa Intalco aluminum plant was built. In 1971 the Ferndale refinery owned by ARCO was constructed. Together, these industrial companies own over 2,400 acres designated for open space and upland and waterfowl hunting opportunities.
- Another recreation boom occurred during the 1970s, which established Birch Bay as a resort community. Many houses in the area were built for use as summer homes. The warm shallow bay attracted tourists who arrived with campers and boats to enjoy swimming, hunting, clamming, crabbing, and the abundant natural beauty of Birch Bay.



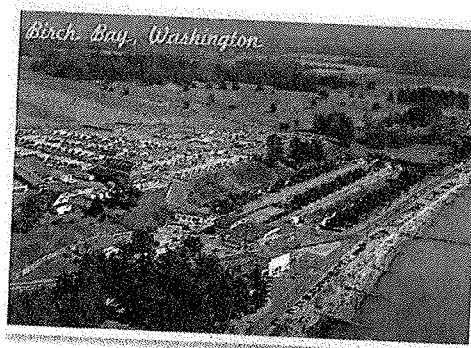
The first Old Settlers picnic was held on C Shop property on August 8, 1896.  
Photo by Henry Brown, Whatcom Museum of History and Art

Bicycling Birch Bay - July 1956  
Photo by Jack Carver, Whatcom Museum of History & Art

Birch Bay today is experiencing a high volume of recreational use and residential growth. Birch Bay is one of the fastest growing areas in Whatcom County. What will the future bring?



General Land Use in the Birch Bay and Terrell Creek Watershed 2006  
Whatcom County Planning and Development Services



The watershed has been altered quite a bit, according to this 1970s postcard.  
Postcards obtained with permission from <http://www.geocities.com/BirchBayPostcards/>

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[www.seattleinsider.com](http://www.seattleinsider.com)

## Personal contacts

- Alan Solcher, Nooksack Indian Tribe;  
Gerald Larson, Birch Bay Resident;  
David Beatty, NSEA board member

# Species of interest

## Birds

### Winged migration

*Bald eagle, great blue heron, and winter migrants*

- Bald eagle breeding territory
- One of few loon breeding sites in western Washington
- The Birch Bay rookery is one of the largest great blue heron nesting colonies in the Pacific Northwest
- Resident and migratory ducks and geese

## Forage Fish

### Eat and be eaten

*Pacific sand lance, Pacific herring, and surf smelt*

- Important link in the food chain
- Provide food for many marine fish, birds, and mammals

## Eelgrass

### The nursery of the sea

- Provides habitat for spawning, foraging, and hiding for many fish and marine invertebrates
- Abundance of marine life attracts predatory birds

## Mammals

### By land and by sea

- Coyote, fox, deer, otter, beaver, weasel, muskrat, mink, skunk, northern water shrew, bat, mice, and other rodents

## Salmon & Trout

### Kings of the sea

*Coho and chum, sea-run cutthroat, and winter steelhead trout*

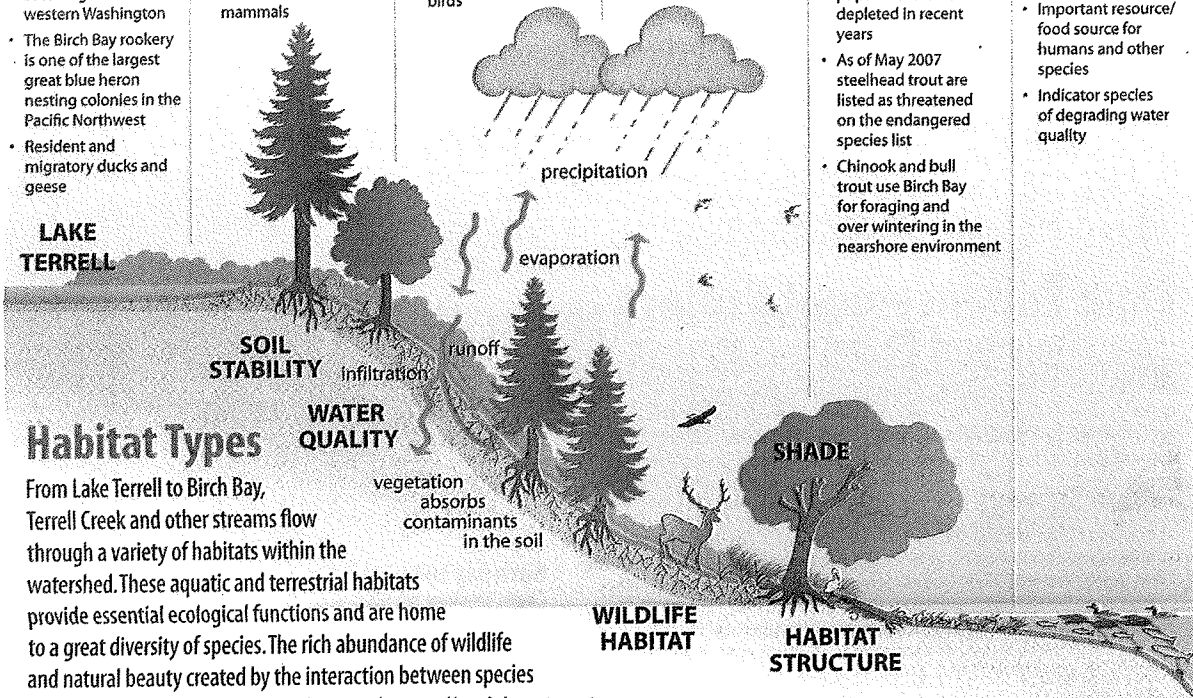
- Use Terrell Creek for all life stages, but populations have been depleted in recent years
- As of May 2007 steelhead trout are listed as threatened on the endangered species list
- Chinook and bull trout use Birch Bay for foraging and overwintering in the nearshore environment

## Shellfish

### Canary in the coalmine

*Dungeness crab, horse clam, butter clam, native littleneck, and Manila littleneck clams*

- Important resource/food source for humans and other species
- Indicator species of degrading water quality



## Habitat Types

From Lake Terrell to Birch Bay, Terrell Creek and other streams flow through a variety of habitats within the watershed. These aquatic and terrestrial habitats provide essential ecological functions and are home to a great diversity of species. The rich abundance of wildlife and natural beauty created by the interaction between species and habitats has drawn many residents to the area. Now it is up to us to minimize our footprint on the natural world and preserve what we hold dear.

Graphic: King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks GIS

## RIPARIAN

Riparian refers to the vegetated area next to a stream or other water body. It contains elements of both aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems that mutually influence each other. These areas are important natural filters which protect environments from excessive sediment, erosion, and polluted surface runoff. Riparian areas connect aquatic habitats with upland areas, serving as wildlife corridors. It has been estimated that more than 85% of wildlife species in western Washington utilize riparian zones (Eissinger 5). Healthy native vegetation in the riparian area also provides important shade for the stream and food sources for animals. The entire length of Terrell Creek and other streams are riparian habitat.



## WETLANDS

Lake Terrell and wetland areas throughout the watershed are important because they maintain the water cycle and provide key wildlife habitat. Waterfowl, fish, amphibians, and mammals utilize this critical habitat year round and seasonally. Wetlands discharge water during times of low flow, provide floodwater retention in times of heavy rainfall, and act as biofilters for pollutants. Flooding can be attributed to the loss of wetlands in the watershed.



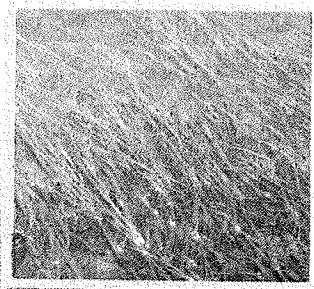
## ESTUARY

An estuary is the area where fresh and marine waters meet and mix. High rates of biological productivity are characteristic of estuaries. For sea-bound species such as salmon, estuaries provide a transitional area, where they adapt to saltwater conditions and find abundant food for an important growth stage. The Birch Bay estuary includes several salt marshes, which are wetlands with salty, brackish water and distinctive plant communities.



## NEARSHORE

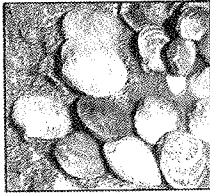
The nearshore environment refers to marine waters in close proximity to the shoreline. The nearshore is exposed to the air at low tide and submerged at high tide. Birch Bay and its extensive tidelflats are considered a nearshore habitat. The warm shallow waters in Birch Bay provide this area with an especially high level of biological productivity. Birch Bay supports one of the largest contiguous eelgrass areas in the county and one of the largest recreational shellfish areas in the state. Nearshore habitats and pocket estuaries contain critical food sources for young migratory salmon and other fish.





# Birch Bay & Terrell Creek Water

## Shellfish Growing Classifications



Washington State Department of Health (DOH) Recreational Shellfish Program provides information about where and how to safely harvest shellfish that are free of contamination. DOH evaluates water quality at shellfish growing areas throughout the state.

In Birch Bay, water quality samples are collected at 10 marine stations six times per year. Currently, all stations in Birch Bay are meeting the shellfish water quality standards. However, due to declining water quality, stations 22 and 28 have been identified as sites of concern. There is also a marina closure zone at station DOH 17, adjacent to Birch Bay Village and a closure zone around an outfall near station 20.

## Biotoxin Hotline – Always check before you harvest

DOH also monitors shellfish for biotoxins – Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning (PSP), Domoic acid, and *Vibrio*. The most familiar is PSP, or more commonly RED TIDE. While neither the water nor the shellfish may show any apparent signs, contamination with PSP or other biotoxins can cause severe illness or even death when consumed. NOTE: PSP cannot be cooked out.

To find out if there is a RED TIDE or other biotoxin closure at your favorite beach, call the DOH Biotoxin Hotline at 1-800-562-5632 or [www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/sf/biotoxin.htm](http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/sf/biotoxin.htm).

## Clam Enhancement Project

In 2004, the Clam Enhancement Subcommittee of the Whatcom County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) kicked off a major project on the tide flats of Birch Bay. The project involves filling data gaps through clam surveys and monitoring water quality, building community awareness of water quality and shellfish harvest issues, and seeding clams at appropriate enhancement plots. The MRC thanks the community volunteers who helped put these projects in motion!

### Clam Surveys

The largest recreational shellfish harvesting area in the county, Birch Bay is also the fastest-urbanizing area and runs the risk of declining shellfish resources. The goal of the county-wide clam survey project is to gather baseline information on clam species, abundance, and sizes found in Whatcom County, in order to track trends over time and identify priority areas for protection and enhancement. In 2004, 25 volunteers assisted with the clam survey in Birch Bay, sampling every quarter mile throughout the tide flats.

To date, nine surveys have been conducted throughout Whatcom County. The second round of surveys is scheduled to begin in spring of 2008 and continue through 2010.

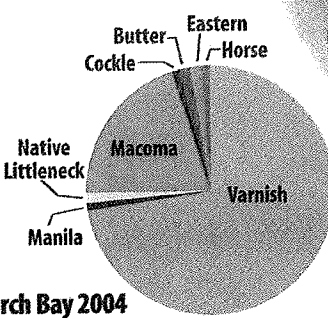
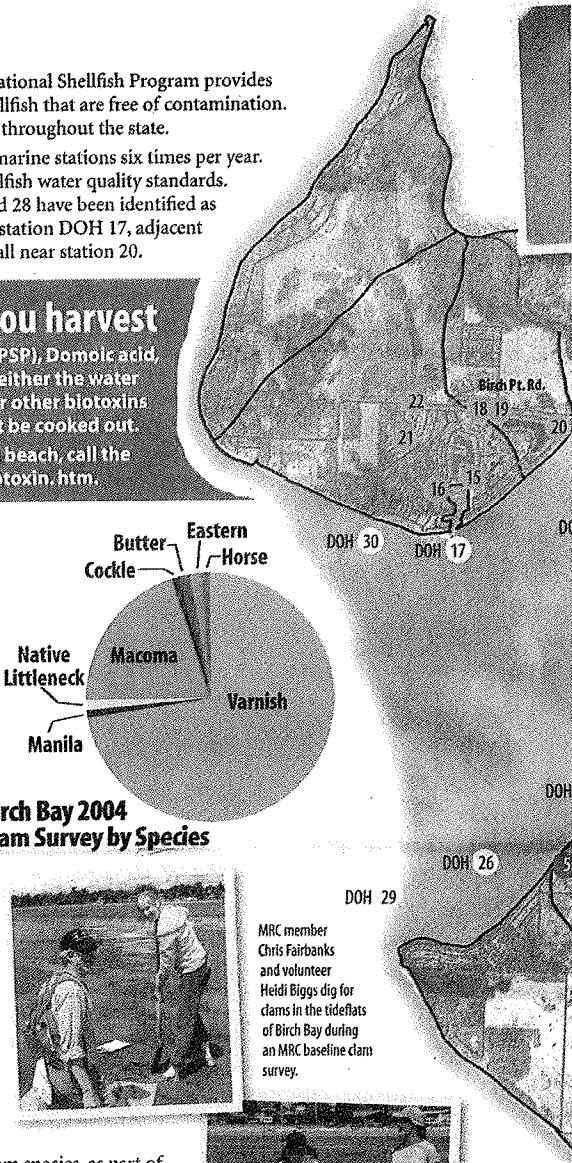
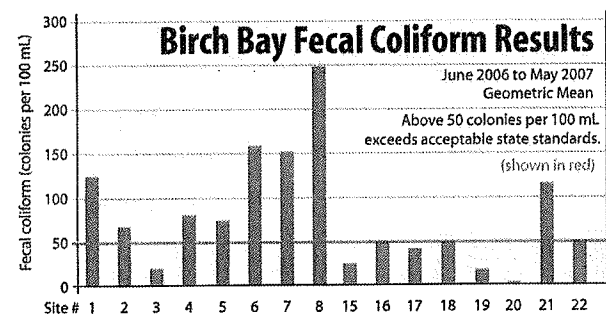
### Manila Clam Seeding Project

Supplementing diminishing shellfish beds can enhance a resource that provides recreational and commercial benefits to the community. In May 2007, test and control plots were set up in two areas in Birch Bay representing distinctly different substrate types. Volunteers surveyed the plots for existing clam species, as part of a pre-seeding clam survey. Two weeks later, volunteers helped to seed the test plots with baby Manila clams. The MRC will conduct post-seeding monitoring in the plots this fall, then annually every spring for three years. Survey data from the test plots will be compared to survey data from unseeded plots to evaluate success.

Through this clam seeding pilot project, the subcommittee will identify challenges in monitoring, site preparation, permitting, seeding, and wave energy/predator control. This information will be used to help refine the methods for future enhancement projects with native clams.

### Water Quality Monitoring

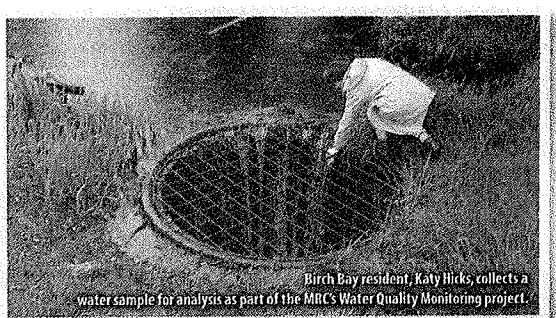
In May 2006, the MRC began a water quality monitoring project in the Birch Bay watershed. The project involves collecting monthly water samples for fecal coliform analysis and stream flow estimates. Trained volunteers assist in collecting this data, which will help prioritize drainage areas for community outreach and potential water quality improvement projects.



MRC member Chris Fairbanks and volunteer Heidi Biggs dig for clams in the tideflats of Birch Bay during an MRC baseline clam survey.



Heather Mackay disperses baby Manila clams at Birch Bay with survey manager Athena Casa



Birch Bay resident, Katy Hicks, collects a water sample for analysis as part of the MRC's Water Quality Monitoring project.

# shed



Left: Chum fry from NSEA's remote site incubator wait to be released downstream in Terrell Creek. Right: Rachel Vasak and Elle Steele-Friedlob at the remote site incubator after planting eyed chum eggs.

## Salmon Remote Site Incubator

The Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association (NSEA) operates a Remote Site Incubator (RSI) on Terrell Creek. The RSI is loaded with 50,000 chum salmon eggs every winter and is monitored by volunteers until the fry emerge in the spring.

Terrell Creek was historically abundant in chum and coho salmon, but has had very few fish returning in recent years. The goal of this project is to help ensure an abundance of salmon returning to Terrell Creek in future years. Funding for the RSI is provided by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).



Volunteers and the Chums of Terrell Creek release chum fry from NSEA's remote site incubator into Terrell Creek in the spring of 2006.

## Water Quality Monitoring

NSEA currently has a water quality monitoring program that takes place on Terrell Creek. Tests for pH, dissolved oxygen, fecal coliform bacteria, water temperature, and turbidity are performed weekly at seven sites along the length of the creek. This program is granted by the WDFW Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account.

NSEA volunteer Melissa Thompson tests the turbidity of Terrell Creek at site 7 near the outlet to Birch Bay.



## Fish Passage Barrier Removal

During a WDFW habitat inventory project, four fish passage barriers were identified on Terrell Creek. Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), NSEA, Whatcom County, and private landowners are working to remove three of them over the next two summers.

- The first, a culvert at the Blaine Road stream crossing, will be replaced with a fish passable structure in summer 2007.
- The second, a culvert at the Kickerville Road stream crossing, will be retrofitted in summer 2008.
- The third, an old concrete dam, is located immediately upstream of Kickerville Road on private property. NSEA is currently working with the landowner to remove it in summer 2007.
- The fourth is a culvert at the Grandview Road stream crossing. WSDOT is aware of the barrier and plans to replace the culvert sometime in the future.

## Salmon Habitat Restoration

A stream restoration project began at a site along Jackson Road on Terrell Creek in fall 2003. This site has been dredged, reed canary grass has been removed, large woody debris has been installed, and native vegetation has been planted. This project will continue to be planted and maintained for a minimum of five years. Volunteer work parties occur at this site twice yearly during the spring and fall seasons. This is a cooperative project between the Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association, BP Cherry Point Refinery, Chemco, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, WA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, Washington Conservation Corps, Whatcom Community Foundation, Terrell Creek Stream Stewards, and the Chums of Terrell Creek.

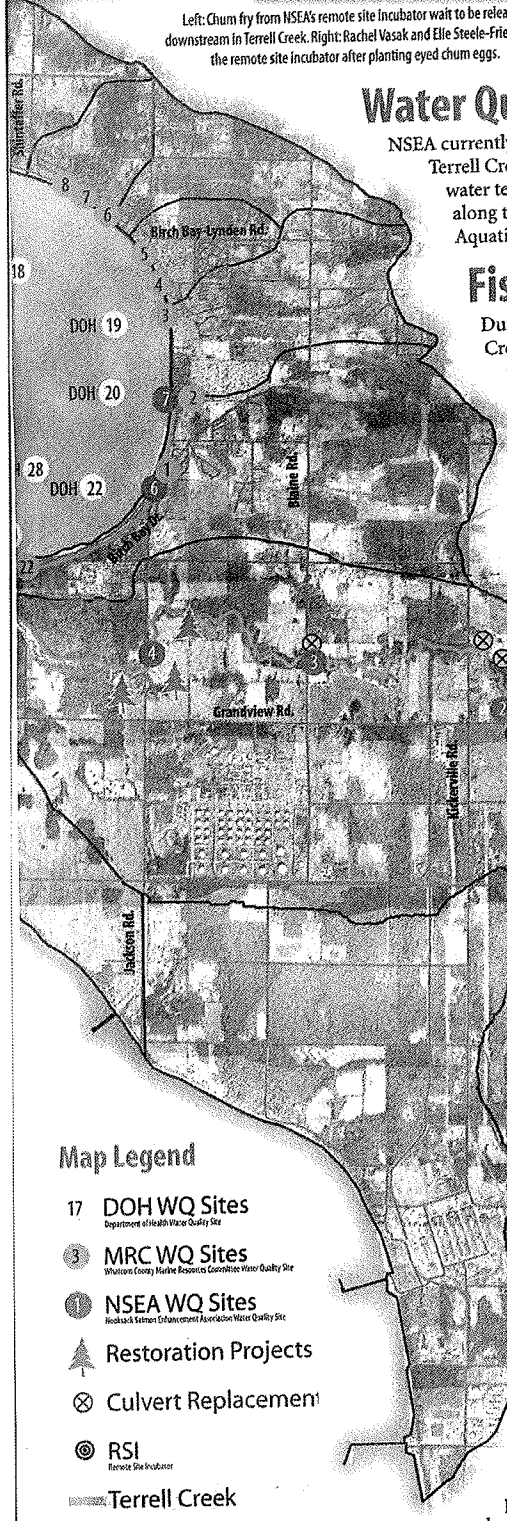


Volunteers plant trees at an NSEA community work party on Terrell Creek in November of 2003.

NSEA volunteers Kyle Ott and Vano Rehm clean and check on the 2006 Terrell Creek smolt trap.

## Smolt Trap

In the spring of 2000, 2005, and 2006, NSEA and a crew of community volunteers operated a smolt trap in Terrell Creek. The smolt trap was set up in Birch Bay State Park near the bridge. While in operation the trap catches all fish migrating upstream or downstream and is monitored and maintained twice daily. All fish are counted and released unharmed. Species caught in the trap include: steelhead, coho, prickly sculpin, coast range sculpin, staghorn sculpin, stickleback, yellow perch, shiner perch, pumpkinseed, large mouth bass, brown bullhead, starry flounder, carp, bluegill, goldfish, and chum.



### Map Legend

- 17 DOH WQ Sites  
Department of Health Water Quality Site
- 3 MRC WQ Sites  
Whatcom County Marine Resource Committee Water Quality Site
- 1 NSEA WQ Sites  
Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association Water Quality Site
- ▲ Restoration Projects
- ⊗ Culvert Replacement
- ⊙ RSI  
Remote Site Incubator
- ▬ Terrell Creek

# Watershed Health Concerns

A number of problems concerning the health of the ecosystem have been identified in the Birch Bay and Terrell Creek watershed. The Birch Bay Stormwater Management Plan states, "Birch Bay is currently experiencing declining water quality, increased flooding and erosion, and loss of aquatic habitat as a result of increased growth and development in the region." With the Birch Bay community experiencing rapid growth, this is a pivotal time to take the steps necessary for protection of our invaluable natural resources.

## Water Quality Issues

The decline of water quality in Birch Bay and Terrell Creek is one of the most notable concerns in the watershed. Some water quality issues are listed below.

### Problem: High Water Temperature

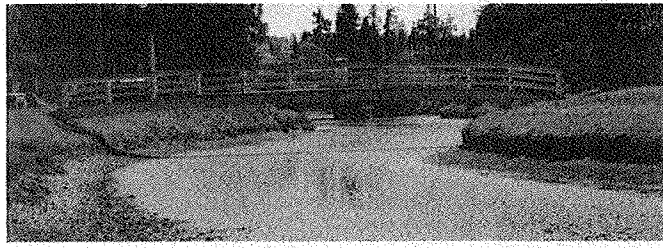
Water warmer than 16°C (60.8°F) causes stress or death for salmon, especially the more vulnerable juvenile salmon. Warmer water also holds less dissolved oxygen.

**CAUSES:** High water temperatures are caused by decreased stream flow, loss of deep pools, damming, and removal of natural riparian vegetation, which shades the stream.

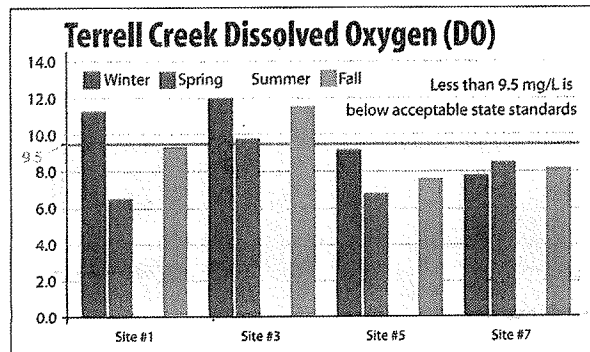
### Problem: Low Dissolved Oxygen (DO)

DO is the oxygen freely available in the water. Fish and other aquatic life take in DO through their gills and will die if there is not enough.

**CAUSES:** Low DO is caused by high water temperatures and low water flows. Algae blooms can also lead to low DO levels when bacteria feed on the algae and use up all available DO.



Excess nutrients and algae bloom in Terrell Creek.



### Problem: Excess Nutrients

Excess nutrients can trigger algae blooms, which lead to low DO levels.

**CAUSES:** Fertilizers used in landscaping and farming can easily enter water systems if not properly managed. Leaking septic systems and poor livestock management can cause excess nutrients to enter nearby streams.

### Problem: Fecal Coliform Bacteria

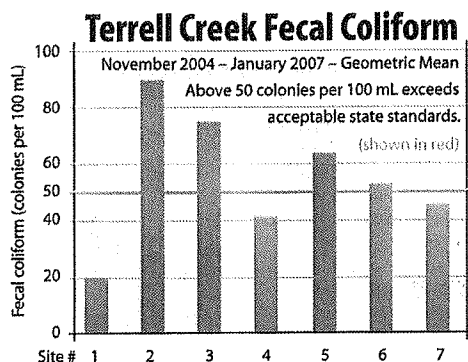
Elevated fecal coliform bacteria (FC) levels indicate the potential presence of disease causing organisms found in animal waste. FC can accumulate downstream and become concentrated in filter feeders such as shellfish.

**CAUSES:** High levels of FC can be caused by improper waste discharge from recreational vehicles and boats, leaking septic systems, domestic pet waste, livestock manure, and wildlife.

### Problem: Excess Sediment

Excess sediment smothers aquatic species, degrades spawning gravel habitat, and harms aquatic plant growth.

**CAUSES:** Increased sediment levels are caused by land clearing, road building, poorly managed livestock areas, and plowing and tilling adjacent to streams with no vegetation buffers. Stream banks that are not vegetated are easily eroded.



## Water Quantity Issues

The right amount of water at the right time.

### Problem: Too much water

Drainage problems lower in the watershed cause considerable problems for Birch Bay residents including increased flooding, erosion, and hillside instability.

**Flooding:** Much of the development in Birch Bay is in low-lying areas. Other areas in Birch Bay with flooding problems were previously large, natural wetlands. More impervious surfaces in the area have increased runoff and blocked natural flow paths of surface water.

**Erosion:** Beach erosion and slides along bluffs are natural events, but can be accelerated by human impacts. Stormwater routed over bluffs or otherwise infiltrating the ground near the bluffs increases erosion. Septic drain fields can have a similar effect. Creek banks with no vegetation are also susceptible to erosion.

**CAUSES:** Increased development has led to more impervious surfaces including rooftops, roads and driveways and parking lots. Instead of being intercepted by vegetation, soaking into the ground, or collected in wetlands, rain water races off the paved surfaces into ditches and storm drains, carrying pollutants into streams and eventually the bay.

### Problem: Too little water

Low water flow may harm or kill salmon, contribute to low dissolved oxygen levels and high water temperatures, and cause excess nutrient buildup in stagnant pools.

**CAUSES:** The dam at the outflow of Lake Terrell allows only limited water downstream and is linked to disrupted flow in the summer. More water use in the watershed may be lowering the water table in areas near streams.

## Instream Habitat Issues

### Problem: Alteration of the natural stream channel

**CAUSES:** Natural stream channels have been constricted, straightened, dredged, and routed through culverts underneath the road. Improperly placed and undersized culverts can block fish passage.

### Problem: Degradation of aquatic habitat

Salmon and other fresh water species rely on clean, cold, consistent water, places to hide, sorted gravels, and adequate food sources. In a healthy stream, the plants in the riparian area contribute leaves which aquatic insects ingest. Fish in turn eat the insects.

**CAUSES:** Loss of riparian vegetation, lack of water during critical times, and disconnection between areas of habitat due to fish passage barriers.

### Problem: Invasive species

Invasive species can act as a limiting factor to native plants and animals by out-competing the native species and taking up their natural habitat.

**CAUSES:** Numerous invasive species have been found in the watershed. A few examples of these invasive species are listed below:

- Non-native warm water or spiny ray fish prey on juvenile salmon.
- Reed canary grass out-competes native plants in riparian areas, chokes streams with slow water and sediment buildup.
- Himalayan blackberry aggressively competes with native plants
- Spartina competes with native eelgrass.
- Non-native varnish clams are moving into native clam habitat.

## From Lake Terrell to Birch Bay, the entire watershed needs our help. Clean beaches, an abundance of fish and shellfish, and healthy streams will take all of our efforts to protect the watershed.

*In order to address the health concerns in our watershed the following goals have been developed.*

### Water Quality Issues

**GOAL:** Maintain cool summer water temperatures of below 16°C (60, 8°F) to allow salmon and other aquatic organisms to survive.

**GOAL:** Consistently meet the state standard of greater than 9.5 mg/L throughout the year.

**GOAL:** Decrease amounts of excess nutrients and harmful pesticides entering the stream system through improved landscaping and farming techniques and by regular inspection and maintenance of septic systems.

**GOAL:** Meet freshwater standards for FC

established by the state (<50 FC/100mL) to ensure safe shellfish harvesting downstream.

**GOAL:** Minimize runoff through wetland preservation and replanting riparian areas through habitat restoration efforts.

### Water Quantity Issues

**GOAL:** Reduce impervious surfaces, minimize runoff through wetland preservation and enhancement to facilitate increased water storage.

**GOAL:** Work with Lake Terrell Management to allow adequate flows to be released from the

dam through summer months. Use only the amount of water we need.

### In-stream Habitat Issues

**GOAL:** Replace culverts that are fish passage barriers.

**GOAL:** Replant with native plants, place large woody debris in stream channels, remove invasive species, and repair fish passage barriers.

**GOAL:** Control or remove invasive species and replant riparian areas with native vegetation.

# What Can You Do?

## Are you involved in community planning?

The Birch Bay and Terrell Creek watershed is one of the fastest growing areas in Whatcom County with continued high levels of growth anticipated in the next twenty years. The way the community plans for and manages the impacts of growth will determine the success of habitat restoration and protection efforts. You can become involved in these community planning efforts to help guide this watershed's future and talk with your elected officials about your concerns.

### Birch Bay Steering Committee

Since 2001, the Birch Bay Steering Committee has been meeting on a regular basis so the people in the Birch Bay community can address issues, take advantage of opportunities, and give collective input to the future of Birch Bay. Contact Kathy Berg 360-371-0171 or [www.birchbayinfo.org](http://www.birchbayinfo.org).

### Birch Bay Watershed and Aquatic Resource Management District (BBWARM)

BBWARM intends to provide the funding and focus to fix current and future stormwater management, water quality and quantity problems. BBWARM monthly meetings are held every 3rd Wednesday at 7:00 PM at the Birch Bay Bible Community Church on Jackson Road. Contact Alan Freidlob at 360-371-3441 or [www.birchbayinfo.org](http://www.birchbayinfo.org).

For more resources on community planning and restoration opportunities, see page 8.



## Do you live on or own property along Terrell Creek or Birch Bay?

- Receive help to restore riparian areas by contacting the Whatcom Conservation District or the Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association.
- Reduce the amount of grass in your landscape. Try native groundcovers that require less mowing and fertilizers. Test soils before fertilizing. Eco-friendly fertilizers are readily available in stores.
- Leave vegetation buffers along streams, ditches, lakeside, and marine property. If the property has been cleared to the water's edge, replant the area with native plants.
- Use a mulching lawnmower, compost lawn clippings away from the creek, or give the clippings to a neighbor with a compost pile.
- Dispose of construction debris and household chemicals properly.
- Talk to your neighbor. Sharing what you know about the watershed and nature can promote stewardship of the area.



## Do you farm in the watershed?

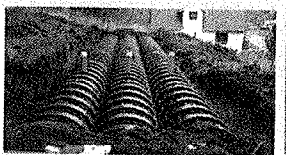
- Contact the Whatcom Conservation District or WSU Cooperative Extension for resources on small farm management.
- Fence your animals out of creeks and waterways.
- Manage mud and manure to reduce runoff.



Cows pass through a stream, potentially damaging fish habitats.

## Do you have a septic system?

- Have your system evaluated every 1-3 years.
- Contact the Whatcom County Health Department for more information.



Septic systems must be maintained to remain functional for the long-term.

## Do you commute?

- Reduce car trips by consolidating errands, carpooling, walking, using public transportation, and riding a bike.
- Take your car to a commercial car wash that treats the soapy wash water. Look for a watershed-friendly car wash business that ensures the suds go to the sewer and not into the watershed. If you must wash your car at home, wash it on a porous surface.

## Are you a pet owner?

- Scoop the Poop! Carry a bag and dispose of pet waste in the trash.
- Keep pets from disturbing spawning salmon. From fall through spring, avoid disturbing gravel where salmon eggs are incubating.



## Do you boat in Birch Bay?

- Dispose of your on-board waste in pump-out facilities rather than the harbor or ocean.
- Maintain your holding tank so it is working properly.

## Do you want to help improve salmon and shellfish habitat in Terrell Creek and Birch Bay?

- Find ways to volunteer.
- Come to NSEA habitat restoration work parties in the fall and the spring.
- Monitor water quality in Terrell Creek or in Birch Bay with NSEA and the MRC.



The Chums of Terrell Creek parade through the streets of Birch Bay during Birch Bay Discovery Days.

# Community Resources

## MARINE

### Marine Resources Committee (MRC)



The MRC is a citizen-based group committed to revitalizing and preserving marine resources for future generations.

Volunteers are needed for water quality monitoring, clam surveys and clam seeding project.

Join the MRC or attend Committee meetings the first Thursday of every month. Find out more about the Marine Resources Committee at <http://www.whatcom-mrc.wsu.edu/MRC/index.htm>. Contact Erika Stroebel at 360-715-7450 or [estroebe@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:estroebe@co.whatcom.wa.us).

### Birch Bay Watershed and Aquatic Resource Management District (BBWARM)

BBWARM intends to provide the funding and focus to fix current and future stormwater management and water quality and quantity problems. BBWARM monthly meetings are held every 3rd Wednesday at 7:00 PM in the Birch Bay Bible Church on Jackson Road. Contact Alan Freidlob at 360-371-3441 or [see www.birchbayinfo.org](http://www.birchbayinfo.org).

### Birch Bay State Park

Interpretive programs are held during weekends of summer months at Birch Bay State Park. These programs focus on a variety of topics ranging from tide pools to salmon habitat to birds of prey and typically include nature walks. Contact Ted Morris at 360-371-2800 or [nwbirc@parks.wa.gov](mailto:nwbirc@parks.wa.gov) for more information.



### ReSources



#### RE Sources Beach Naturalist Program

RE Sources Beach Naturalist Program trains volunteers as informal naturalists to share seashore wonders with others while teaching beach visitors ways to reduce impact on our treasured shoreline. Training takes place in May. Contact Doug Stark at [dougs@re-sources.org](mailto:dougs@re-sources.org), 360-733-8307, or visit [www.resources.org](http://www.resources.org).

COASST Beached Bird Survey trains volunteers to adopt a portion of shoreline, surveying once each month for dead birds washed ashore. Organized through RE Sources. Contact Wendy Steffensen at [waters@re-sources.org](mailto:waters@re-sources.org), 360-733-8307 or the Coastal Observation and Seabird Survey Team, [info@coasst.org](mailto:info@coasst.org).

RE Sources Stormwater Team monitors construction sites to ensure they do not degrade water quality. Trainings are held during winter months and on an "as needed" basis. Contact Wendy Steffensen at [waters@re-sources.org](mailto:waters@re-sources.org), 360-733-8307 or visit [www.re-sources.org/stormwater.htm](http://www.re-sources.org/stormwater.htm).



NSEA's habitat restoration site along Jackson Road utilizes blue tubes and fencing to protect young trees from voles and beavers.

## UPLAND

### Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association (NSEA)



NSEA is a community based nonprofit organization dedicated to restoring sustainable wild salmon runs in Whatcom County.

**Water Quality Monitoring Program** NSEA manages a water quality monitoring program at seven sites along Terrell Creek.

**Habitat Restoration Work Parties** take place on Terrell Creek every spring and fall. Enhance stream habitat by planting native trees, removing invasive species, and adding mulch to the restoration site. Contact NSEA at 360-715-0283 or [www.n-sea.org](http://www.n-sea.org).

### The Chums of Terrell



A community group made up of Birch Bay citizens and organizations that work to improve our watershed's natural resources. The Chums hold an annual barbeque and participate in the Birch Bay Discovery Days festival. Contact Elie Steele-Friedlob at 360-371-3441.

### Nooksack Recovery Team (NRT)



The NRT energizes locally driven watershed restoration efforts in Whatcom County through partner coordination, resource mobilization, and public education. Every fall the NRT hosts the **Salmon Summit**, which brings together organizations, agencies, tribes, and citizens to discuss problems and solutions facing salmon populations. For more information contact the NSEA office at 360-715-0283.

### Whatcom Conservation District (WCD)



**Small Farm Educational Workshops** and tours for hobby farms throughout Whatcom County are free to the public.

WCD helps property owners create healthy riparian areas and assist livestock owners with appropriate on-farm practices to protect the environment. Contact WCD at 360-354-2035 or [www.whatcomcd.org](http://www.whatcomcd.org).

Neil and Cathy Borman, Skagit MRC members, set up survey quadrats for the pre-seeding clam survey in Birch Bay.

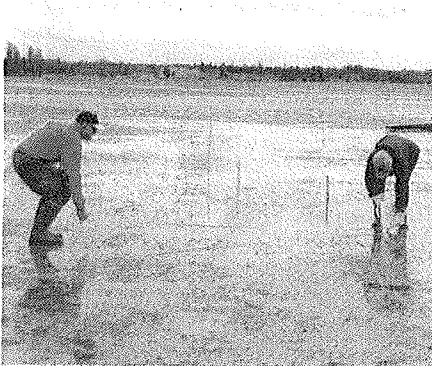


Photo credits: Whatcom County Public Works Stormwater or Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association

## OTHER

### Whatcom County

**Public Works-Stormwater** works to protect the county's water resources. Public Works-Stormwater provides support to the Marine Resources Committee. Contact 360-715-7450.



**Planning and Development Services** develops Growth Management Act (GMA) compliant long range comprehensive plans and policies. Contact 360-676-6907.

**Health Department** ensures safe septic systems, enforces regulations, and governs on-site sewage disposal and solid waste. Contact 360-676-6724.

**Other County Departments and Elected Officials** contact information and programs can be found at [www.whatcom.wa.us](http://www.whatcom.wa.us).

### Washington State University Extension



**Watershed Master/Beach Watchers Program** Receive free education on aquatic resources in Whatcom County. Volunteers receive support and make the community connections they need to accomplish projects preserving water quality, fisheries, and other aquatic resources. Training begins each spring. Space is limited. Contact Cheryl Lovato Niles at 360-676-6736, or [cniles@wsu.edu](mailto:cniles@wsu.edu)

### Whatcom Land Trust



The Whatcom Land Trust (WLT) preserves and protects wildlife habitat, scenic, agricultural and open space lands in Whatcom County for future generations by securing interests in land and promoting land stewardship.

**Conservation projects** include 54 acres recently acquired at Point Whitehorn. Whatcom Land Trust also holds three conservation easements protecting 193 acres surrounding an important heron colony. Contact 360-650-9470 or [info@whatcomlandtrust.org](mailto:info@whatcomlandtrust.org) for more information.

### Other Contacts

Lummi Natural Resources 360-384-2340

Nooksack Indian Tribe 360-592-5716

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife 360-676-2003, [www.wdfw.wa.gov](http://www.wdfw.wa.gov).

Washington State Department of Ecology 360-738-6250, [www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/rights/water-right-home.html](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/rights/water-right-home.html).



### Report Sponsors:

Nooksack Recovery Team  
Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association  
Whatcom County Marine Resource Committee  
National Fish & Wildlife Foundation (funding)  
Northwest Straits Commission (funding)



This report was funded in part through a cooperative agreement with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The views expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of NOAA or any of its staff agencies.



### Nooksack Recovery Team

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Bellingham, WA 98228

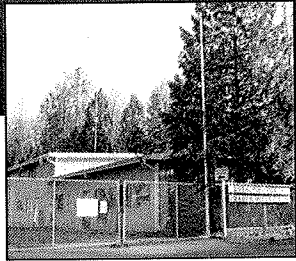
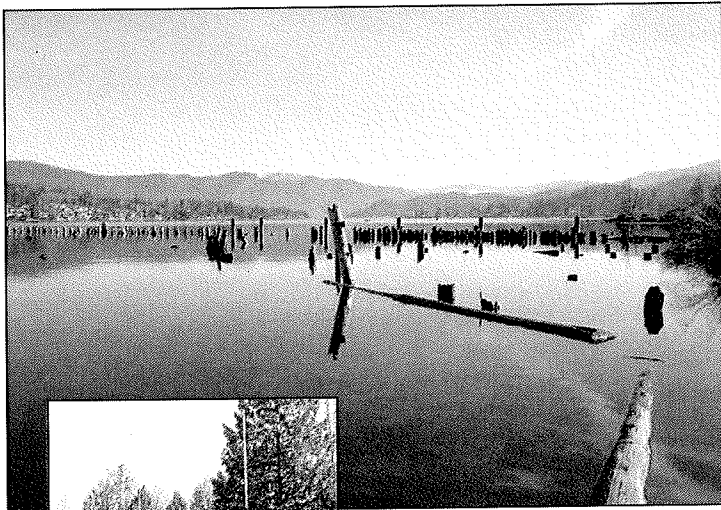
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ISSUE 167 February 1-7, 2007 FREE EVERY THURSDAY

## Whatcom water board reveals new facility plans



Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District provides service to parts of the Lake Whatcom watershed. The current facility, in the lower photo, may be replaced by one costing as much as \$5 million.

Photos by Keri Redanz

■ 3400 customers to foot bill for proposed \$5 million project

by ADRIANE BONAPARTE  
writers@whatcomindy.com

**LAKE WHATCOM** – The Lake Whatcom Board of Commissioners held a special meeting at The Firs Lounge, Jan. 17 to discuss the proposed new district facilities and to take comments on it. “There is an understanding among ratepayers,” stated Board Commissioner Tom Citron, “that this is a ‘done deal.’ It is not. It is a work in progress and we definitely want input from the

### NEWS AT A GLANCE



courtesy photo

#### Highland Games switching parks

**FERNDALE** - Glenn Winchester, speaking on behalf of the Bellingham Highland Games, said the group’s event would be taking place at Pioneer Park in Ferndale this year, rather than at Hovander Park as it has for the past 19 years. Winchester said, “The rent at Hovander is simply too expensive.” Hovander Park, which is administered by the County Parks Department, would have charged approximately \$5,000 total for the two-day event. In contrast, the charge for using Pioneer Park will be only \$200. In addition, the group would have been required to spend \$15,000 to purchase \$5 million in insurance in order to use Hovander Park. The insurance requirement for Pioneer Park is \$1 million in coverage, and costs \$5,000. The Bellingham Highland Games take place on June 2 and 3 - the first weekend in June. #WI

#### Blaine community workshop Feb. 7

**BLAINE** - A community workshop to discuss the Blaine Wharf District Master Plan will be held Feb. 7 at 7 p.m. at the Boating Center, 235 Marine Drive, at the Blaine Harbor. The Blaine Wharf District Master Plan will have a single overall design and land use concept and will provide for a mix of commercial, industrial, residential and recreational uses that are pedestrian friendly and serve the needs of both residents and visitors. It will also serve as an update to the Port’s 1998 Blaine Harbor Comprehensive Improvement Plan. More background information and directions to the center are available on the following websites: www.portofbellingham.com or www.ci.blaine.wa.us. #WI

#### Correction to Larsen article

Last week the WI stated that Congressman Rick Larsen initially voted for the war in Iraq and had subsequently “flip flopped” his position. Congressman Larsen, an adamant supporter of U.S. troops, never voted in favor of invading Iraq. Larsen appeared at the MLK Day memorial on Jan. 15 in Bellingham and made his first public statement suggesting his support for a troop withdrawal. The quotes from Larsen in last week’s issue were made by phone and email subsequent to the MLK Day meeting, and were not taken from the meeting itself. The WI apologizes for the errors and any confusion they may have caused. #WI

## “Bottom-up” approach to Sound receives recognition

■ Commission wins kudos for recovering derelict fishing nets

by TAYLOR PHIFER  
taylor@whatcomindy.com

**MT. VERNON** – Last summer the Northwest Straights Commission (NSC), an organization dedicated to cleaning up local waters, joined a Coast Guard Re-

serve and a Navy dive team to recover thousands of pounds of snagged and derelict fishing nets off the south end of Lummi Island.

This week the NSC received an “Excellence in Recovery” award from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Restoration Center.

“Over 118 acres of fishing nets and more than 1,100 crab pots have been recovered in the Commission’s



Divers retrieved thousands of pounds of abandoned nets off the south end of Lummi Island.

Photo by Taylor Phifer

NET RECOVERY 18

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**CALLING SIGN DESIGNERS!!!** The Silver Beach Neighborhood Association (SBNA) is having a road sign design competition. Entries should include a hard copy, b&w or color, no larger than 8.5 x 11 inches. Entries become the property of the SBNA. The winner will be asked and must be able to supply the design in either an EPS or PDF file format by late February. Entries should be sent via USPS first class to Joyce Prigot, 2317 Electric Ave, Bellingham, WA 98229 by February 5th. No more than two entries per person please. The winner will receive recognition on the sign and free publicity. Joyce Prigot may be contacted for more info: [prigotj@comcast.net](mailto:prigotj@comcast.net).

**13TH ANNUAL WHATCOM Artist Studio Tour** is accepting applications postmarked by March 1st for the 2007 Tour that will occur on the weekends of Oct. 6 & 7, 13 & 14. Jurying of new applicants will be by CD only. Application/Jurying fee is \$20. Show fee for accepted artists is \$180. A prospectus with more information can be downloaded from the WAST website at [www.studiotour.net](http://www.studiotour.net).

**LACROSSE PLAYING** Middle School 7th & 8th graders! Join us for field practice (outdoor Lacrosse) beginning February 2nd at Fairhaven Middle School at 3:15 - 3:30. If you want to join the team or have any questions contact Bob Smith at (360) 384-3002 or (360) 961-5205.

**BICYCLING ENTHUSIASTS!** Join us for the Bike to Work and School Planning Committee at the Bellingham Public Library meeting room on Monday, February 5th from 6:30pm to 8:30pm. If you can't make the meeting, please call 676-6974 or e-mail [Margaux@wecog.org](mailto:Margaux@wecog.org) to find out how you can still help!

**BIG BIRD RADIO W/JIM** Kobus plays the Greatest Oldies Rock Music Sat. nights 8 - 11 p.m. on Shoutcast/Winamp streaming audio. [www.angelfire.com/az/jk](http://www.angelfire.com/az/jk)

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## 1 • NET RECOVERY

ongoing effort to rid Puget Sound of marine debris that continues to kill fish, marine mammals and sea birds, as well as negatively affect habitat," the Commission said. "The Northwest Straits Commission has developed protocols to report, safely remove, and catalog derelict fishing gear that is now used throughout the country.

The Northwest Straits Initiative is a unique, congressionally mandated, citizen-based approach to preserving and restoring the 60 percent of Puget Sound shoreline and near shore waters in its coverage area. It features seven county-chartered Marine Resources Committees in Whatcom, Skagit, Snohomish, Island, San Juan, Jefferson and Clallam counties, and a Commission, which performs a coordinating role and provides an ecosystem focus.

In summer 2006, two detachments of Naval divers from San Diego and Honolulu, under the direction of NSC, performed training exercises off Lummi Island and pulled up more than 100,000 pounds of derelict net from the sea bed - one of which had two harbor seals, several cormorants and over 100 salmon snagged in it. "WI

[www.nwstraits.org](http://www.nwstraits.org) or call (360) 428-1084.

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# BRIEFS

— Whatcom In-Hi Staff

## Lions donate to Agape Home

**BELLINGHAM** — The Agape Home for Women and Children received \$25,000 from the Bellingham Lions Club on Aug. 9. The money will be used to fund the planned expansion of the facility which currently serves 32 local homeless women and children, said Ron Buchinski, executive director for the Bellingham Light-house Mission that operates the facility.

## Calling women artists

**BELLINGHAM** — In commemoration of Domestic Violence Awareness Month this October, the Center for Expressive Arts and Experimental Education is looking for women artists to express how domestic violence has affected their lives for a gallery walk to be displayed at 7 p.m. on Oct. 5. All art pieces will be donated to WomenCare, which is Whatcom County's only domestic violence shelter. The deadline is Sept. 28 and artwork can be submitted to the center located at 1317 Commercial St., Suite 201. Those interested can contact Mary Burwell at 920-2292.

## Going crabbing? Get the right cord

**COUNTY** — The 2007 crabbing season will begin soon and the Washington State University Beach Watchers will be handing out biodegradable escape cord to the crabbing enthusiasts for the first two weeks of crabbing season. Cheryl Lovato Niles of Beach Watchers said Washington State law requires crabbers to use escape cord in order to prevent crabs from getting trapped in lost pots. For more information on escape cords, contact Ken Carrasco with the Whatcom County Marine Resources Committee at 820-5014. If you would like to pick up an escape cord, you can contact the Beach Watchers at 360-676-6736, or ask for escape cord (sometimes called rot cord) at your sport fishing supply store.

## Drive hammered, get nailed

**COUNTY** — Law enforcement in Whatcom County will be conducting their "Drive Hammered, Get Nailed" extra DUI enforcement patrols from now through Labor Day, Sept. 3 in an attempt to prevent unnecessary deaths and injuries caused by impaired drivers. August is one of the deadliest months for traffic fatalities in the state and there is an average of eight deaths per year

accept more material on their lands.

In 2006, the EPA tested asbestos levels, and determined that the level of asbestos fibers was above their level of acceptable risk. The agency used three activity-based samplings: loading and hauling, raking, and recreational activities to test for asbestos fibers that can expose people to air-born carcinogens and asbestos-specific diseases such as mesothelioma. As a result, the county's permit application to the Corps to continue

dredging and removing sediment is currently tied up in bureaucratic red tape. Resident Todd Rawls queried officials on specifics of the Washington State Department of Health said there had been a total of eighteen samples; two of the eighteen samples exceeded the standards of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and the rest were above the EPA's risk range. The tests were conducted in August of 2006 to target the worst risk-based scenario of six to seven percent moisture content in the soil.

Stockpiling the sediment has in turn created potential wetland areas due to the possibility of flooding. Resident Larry Mades wanted to know the sense in

includes people's farms. Officials from the Corps suggested there are certain exemptions for agricultural purposes once an area has been deemed wetlands, to which Mades responded, "I don't see many rice paddy farms around here."

Rawls raised the concern among residents that stockpiling the material on landowners' property violates mortgage agreements and could prompt a bank to call in full payment of a loan. There is also the issue of a possible decline in property values resulting from potentially hazardous material being stockpiled, the risk of the area being deemed wetlands, and the possibility of increased insurance costs.

County Executive Pete Kremen claimed the asbestos issue had put the county in a very expensive box. He said hauling the material to a landfill that would accept it would cost over \$100 million, not including the capping costs. The cost of arresting the slide at its source on Sumas Mountain is also prohibitive.

Kremen insisted, "We are working hard but we have no latitude, no flexibility to deal with this problem, except for a cost-prohibitive solution. We want common sense, timely, affordable solutions to deal with this." He continued, "When the EPA comes to people and says there is a significant fear of asbestos and liability, stress levels go up. The resulting fear and

## "The resulting fear and stress and anxiety probably contribute more to cancer than the actual asbestos does."

— County Executive Pete Kremen

Paul Pittman of Whatcom County Public Works claimed hauling the sediment off-site

remains there.

County Public Works claimed hauling the sediment off-site



# I-5 fairly dangerous

LARSEN from B1

a major issue. About 50 percent of trips are between two or three exits — not generally what freeways are designed for, he said.

Carlson also acknowledged that I-5 in Whatcom County has been fairly dangerous. In the last three years 700 accidents occurred between Fairhaven and Slater Road, with about 50 percent of those accidents resulting in injury.

"It's pretty darn scary, and there's no silver bullet," Carlson said. "We do need some big dollars."

Reach Sam Taylor at sam.taylor@bellinghamherald.com or call 715-2263. Read his Politics Blog at TheBellinghamHerald.com/blogs.

## LEARN MORE

- ▶ Visit the U.S. House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee at [transportation.house.gov](http://transportation.house.gov).
- ▶ Visit the National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission at [transportationfortomorrow.org](http://transportationfortomorrow.org).


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## ENVIRONMENT

### Local salmon film gets attention

**LIZ BEAULIEU**  
THE BELLINGHAM HERALD  
BELLINGHAM — Locally produced documentary "Shadow of the Salmon" was created as an educational tool for Washington's public middle schools. But it also has drawn interest from the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian, where it was shown in March.

Steve Robinson of the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission made the 42-

minute docudrama. It emphasizes Salish tribal culture and tradition as well as environmental information about the salmon life cycle, and was shot on location in the Pacific Northwest with footage of Lummi Island.

It follows 15-year-old Cody Ohitika, played by actor Noah Hunt, as he travels from his home in South Dakota to visit Washington and discover the Salish side of his heritage.

The film was produced in 2007 by Three Sixty Productions of Bellingham.

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**Jul, 14, 2008**

**ENVIRONMENT**

## **Native paddlers pull devices to monitor water quality**

**Coast Salish people aid USGS efforts**

LES BLUMENTHAL

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For centuries, the traditional canoes of the Coast Salish community of tribes have plied the inland waters of Washington state and British Columbia carrying trading goods, raiding parties and families headed to summer potlatch celebrations.

But for several weeks this summer, some of the 100 canoes headed to Vancouver Island for an annual gathering will be trailing sophisticated water-monitoring equipment provided by the U.S. Geological Survey.

Every 10 seconds, the \$20,000 apiece probes will test the water for temperature, salinity, dissolved oxygen levels, pH and turbidity. Sophisticated GPS systems will track where each sample was taken and the results will be posted daily on the Web site [usgs.gov/coastsalish](http://usgs.gov/coastsalish).

It's a marriage of 21st century technology with an ancient way of life. The idea is to get a snapshot of the health of the waters known for generations as the Salish Sea. For the Salish people, it's about restoring their nearly sacred waters.

"It's about who we are," said Eric Day, a member of the Swinomish Tribe near LaConner. "These are our highways. We still have people making a living on the water. There are reports of dead zones out there. Fish runs are declining. We need to know what is going on and how to fix it."

Day is captain of a Swinomish canoe family and will be paddling a canoe through the San Juan Islands on its way north to Duncan, B.C. His will be one of the canoes equipped with a monitoring probe. The nine people aboard his "Spirit of the Salmon" canoe, ranging in age from 11 to nearly 50, will be paddling six to 12 hours a day on their weeklong journey.

"We are honoring the way our people used to travel," said Day, who has been involved in the annual canoe journeys since they were revived in 1989 in the wake of a major court decision restoring fishing rights to many of the tribes in Western Washington.

Lummi Nation hosted last year's canoe journey.

The Coast Salish includes 28 tribes in Washington state, ranging from the Squaxin, Nisqually and Puyallup in the South Sound to the Swinomish, Tulalip and Lummi in the North. The Salish also include 48 First Nations in British Columbia.

They share a common culture, a language with common roots and similar traditions. Where their waters are now called Puget Sound, the Strait of Juan de Fuca and the Strait of Georgia, in ancestral times it was known as the Salish Sea.

Nearly every tribe will have at least one canoe involved in this year's journey. The canoes will travel along six traditional Salish routes. In addition to the Swinomish, a canoe from the Squaxin Tribe near Shelton, Wash., will trail the monitoring equipment, along with canoes from two British Columbia tribes.

"This is a unique opportunity to collect some very valuable data," said Eric Grossman, a USGS research geologist based in Santa Barbara, Calif., who has long studied the estuaries of Puget Sound and is an advisor to the Salish project.

Water quality throughout Puget Sound and the Strait of Georgia has deteriorated significantly in recent years and threatens near-shore and marine habitats, Grossman said.

Slow-moving canoes are an excellent way to monitor the near-shore waters that are often too shallow for other research vessels. In addition, powered boats stir up the water and can add small amounts of toxins that can interfere with the water sampling.

The water sampling equipment is contained in an 18-inch-long cylinder. At five pounds, it weighs a third as much as the water-sampling probe pulled behind a canoe during a similar tribal event last year on the Yukon River.

Grossman said the idea for the Coastal Salish project had been kicked around for several years, but jelled when the probes became smaller and more sophisticated.

"They'll put it in in the morning and pull it out at night," said Sarah Aiken, a water resource specialist with the Swinomish. The Swinomish are the lead tribe on the canoe journey project, and Aiken is its coordinator.

Aiken said the data this year will provide a baseline that can be compared with data gathered in subsequent years of sampling from the canoes. The probes are so light, Aiken said, the paddlers won't feel any drag.

"This is different than most sampling programs," she said. "Other agencies come out once a month, once a quarter or once a year and take their samples in only a few places. This will help us fill in a lot of gaps."

Day said coupling the water sampling with the canoe journey was a natural fit.

"Every time I've gone out, I sit there and think there was something else we needed to do," he said. "We are honoring the ways of our people and trying to do something about a problem that threatens our way of life."

Les Blumenthal covers issues about Washington state from the McClatchy Washington, D.C., bureau. He can be reached at [lblumenthal@mcclatchydc.com](mailto:lblumenthal@mcclatchydc.com).

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## Recent Stories

Aug, 13, 2008

### ENVIRONMENT

## Crab pot escape cords to be given away

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**ANNA WALTERS**  
**THE BELLINGHAM HERALD**

E-mailPrint



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Free crab pot escape cords will be handed out in Birch Bay and Blaine Saturday, Aug. 16.

Washington State University Beach Watchers will distribute cords at the Blaine Marina and Birch Bay State Park boat launches.

Escape cords, sometimes called "rot cords," are made from biodegradable cotton and are designed to disintegrate after being submerged in water for nine to 16 weeks.

A lost crab pot can kill up to 70 crabs per year, and 372,000 crabs die in lost pots each year in the Northwest Straits, according to the Northwest Straits Initiative web site. But pots equipped with escape cords only kill a few crabs before the cord rots away and the trapped crabs can get out.

To pick up a cord, contact the Beach Watchers at WSU at 676-6736, or ask for an escape cord at a sport fishing supply store.

To report lost or derelict fishing gear, call the Department of Fish and Wildlife hotline at (800) 477-6224, or report it online at [wdfw.wa.gov/fish/derelict/derelict\\_gear.htm](http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/derelict/derelict_gear.htm)

For more information about crab escape cords, go online to [escapecord.org](http://escapecord.org).

## GREAT PACIFIC GARBAGE PATCH

Written by Sido De Cassis

Photography by Todd Linder

*Imagine an island of trash nearly the size of 8,500 Bellinghams floating in the middle of the ocean.*

The water's awash with toothbrushes, laundry baskets, trawling nets, plastic bags and miles of plastic cord mixed with plastic bottles, rubber ducks, gym shoes and cigarette lighters.

Welcome to the edge of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, the world's largest floating trash heap, 1000 miles west of the continental U.S. and 1,200 miles north of Hawaii.

Coined 'Great Pacific Garbage Patch' by flotsam expert Curtis Ebbesmeyer, it collects trash brought by the swirling currents of the North Pacific Subtropical Gyre.

Between 70 and 80 percent of the trash in the Garbage Patch comes from a multitude of shorelines, the rest from neighboring waters and ocean vessels, swept into the ocean by storms and wind, according to Charles Moore of Algalita Marine Research Foundation in Long Beach, Calif.

Propelled by slow, clockwise-swirling ocean currents, the Garbage Patch engulfs random objects like an immense, nebulous amoeba. It can also split and 'reproduce' much like an amoeba, its plastic spawn washing ashore on beaches of Hawaii, Washington and Japan, according to Ebbesmeyer.

The Central Pacific may seem a million miles away, but the trash horizon is moving closer. The Garbage Patch likely exemplifies the future of many marine areas: subtropical gyres, potential swirling trash purgatories, cover 40 percent of the world's oceans, according to the book "Geosystems," by Robert Christopherson.

The Northwestern Hawaiian Island Archipelago is home to 7,000 species. A quarter of them live nowhere else: corals teeming with fish, invertebrates, and threatened green sea turtles. A pod of nearly 300 spinner dolphins reside in the Midway Atoll's protected lagoon waters. Seventy percent of the Laysan albatross population nests here, said Barry Christenson, Wildlife Refuge manager of Midway Atoll.

This is the refuge of the last 1,100 Hawaiian monk seals on earth.

Greenpeace estimates that 1 million birds and 100,000 marine mammals die in the Garbage Patch each year.

Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge staff pulled up 27,200 pounds of ocean trash in 2000, according to the refuges' Web site. Since 1996, nearly 500 tons of line, net and rope have been removed from the waters surrounding the Northern Hawaiian Islands.

"The hope was that we could find out where the nets are coming from, where they're concentrated at specific times of the year and remove them at sea," said Kris McElwee, Pacific Islands coordinator for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Marine Debris Program.

McElwee recently returned from a research cruise to detect and remove derelict fishing gear in the North Pacific Subtropical Convergence Zone, which encompasses a section of the marine reserve. McElwee's project grew out of the High Seas Ghostnet Project, which began in 2001. Researchers developed satellite maps to locate ocean conditions that favored debris accumulation. Once these areas were established, the project team flew over them to record information that would pinpoint debris.

Researchers attached solar-powered tracking buoys to some nets adrift in the sea, called 'ghostnets.' Tracking the nets while still allowing them to float freely in the open ocean helps verify how accurately mapping and remote sensing data predict debris migration.

In the Pacific Northwest, smaller boats are taking on derelict fishing gear removal, mostly nets and crab pots. The Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary (NMS) has run its survey and removal work for three years with a grant from the NOAA Marine Debris Program, said Nir Barnea, Marine Debris coordinator for the West Coast.

Plastic entanglement is not as pervasive a problem in the Pacific Northwest. Nets and crab pots are larger offenders, said Liam Antrim, resource protection specialist for the Olympic Coast NMS.

"The amount of resources removed by derelict gear is frighteningly high," Antrim said.

Removing nets which contain entangled animals is a testimony to the firsthand effects of seaborne trash. One particular net in Neah Bay snared multiple harbor porpoises, a seal and a sea lion, in addition to birds and fish, Antrim said.

In some areas animal bones lie below on the sea floor, scoured by nets, said Ginny Broadhurst, director of the Northwest Straits Commission.

"This is my favorite program to work on because the solutions are so evident. For every piece of gear we remove it's a success story. We find the gear and remove the gear and Puget Sound is healthier," Broadhurst said. "We set a goal of removing 90 percent of derelict gear by 2012, which will cost \$5 million."

The San Juan Islands are the epicenter of Northwest Straits Commission's removal work. A historic fishing site, its rocky underwater terrain has acted as a trap for nets.

"In all our work we've pulled more than 700 nets," Broadhurst said.

Not only can plastic entrap, entangle or entwine animals, but it also acts as a floating habitat for toxic substances. Plastics are porous, like ultrafine sponges for toxicants. Small plastic particles with high surface-to-volume ratios can absorb and transport a million times the concentration of toxic substances, such as DDT and PCBs, as surrounding water, according to Moore's reasearch.

Common chemicals in this group are proven endocrine disrupters, or 'gender benders,' which interfere with the function of natural hormones. In the most dangerous cases, they manifest as reproductive disorders and cancer, according to Moore.

In 2003, the United States generated 26,650 tons of plastic waste, according to a report by Franklin Associates for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Pop bottles, containers and packaging accounted for nearly half of the total. That totals the weight of 59 Boeing 747s, fuel included, and just over two 747s in discarded pop bottles. The last half-century's gross production of plastic easily surpasses 1 billion tons, according to "The World Without us," by Alan Weisman.

Moore, the scientist who has seen the most of the Garbage Patch, predicts two trends. First, smaller plastic particles will proliferate through photodegradation. Second, larger plastic parts will accumulate on the seafloor as they wear and sink.

Although the potential environmental impact of smaller debris and 'plastic plankton' is relatively unknown, Moore's Algalita Marine Research Foundation in Long Beach, Calif., recently won a research grant which will allow the team to begin researching effects of plastic particles on zooplankton.

Marine debris, particularly plastics and derelict fishing gear, is a global problem. Reliance on manufactured items like plastics have lead to their prolific ocean presence because qualities, like durability, enable them to persist in the marine environment.

"Marine debris is everyone's problem. It has an impact that is significant," Barnea said. "We all exert some control over marine debris either by what we do, or don't do."

*Sido De Cassis is studying human relationships with the physical environment. This is her first published piece.*

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## News in Brief

Published on Wed, Jun 3, 2009

by Tara Nelson

Read More **Local News**

### Expert to lead Semiahmoo bird walks

Whatcom County Parks and Recreation has scheduled a series of interpretive nature walks this month beginning with a birdwatching tour from 9 a.m. to noon on Saturday, June 6. The tour will be led by experienced birder Paul Woodcock as he and others explore the mudflats and marine life of Semiahmoo Bay and Drayton Harbor as well as the multitude of resident and migrant birds. The event is free. Those interested should meet at Semiahmoo Park Museum. A second birdwatching event is scheduled from 9 a.m. to noon on Saturday, August 1. For more information, call 733-2900.

### Birch Bay Sandcastle contest June 20

The Birch Bay Chamber of Commerce has scheduled its annual Sandcastle contest for 9 a.m., Saturday, June 20. Registration at the visitor information center starts at 9 a.m. and judging will take place from noon to 1 p.m. Every participant will receive a free snow cone from C-Shop. The 30th Annual Discovery Days Family Fun and Arts & Crafts is scheduled for Saturday, July 18 and Sunday, July 19. Parade is at 11 a.m. Saturday on Birch Bay Drive starting at Harborview Road and heading to Harborview Road. More information is available at [www.BirchBayChamber.com](http://www.BirchBayChamber.com). Parade and contest applications available online or at the chamber office at 7900 Birch Bay Drive.

### NWPRD2 forms new kickball league

Northwest Park and Recreation District 2 has created a new recreational kickball league and needs community input and volunteers to make it grow. The district has scheduled a meeting at 7 p.m. June 16 at the Blaine Community and Senior Center. Volunteers are needed to organize leagues, sponsor programs as well as form teams. For more information, contact NW Park & Recreation at 656-6416 or email [info@nwprd2.com](mailto:info@nwprd2.com).

### Birch Bay blood drive Monday, June 15

The Birch Bay Lions Club has scheduled a blood drive from noon to 2:30 and from 3:30 to 6 p.m. on Monday, June 15 at the Birch Bay fire station parking lot at 4581 Birch Bay-Lynden Road. For more information or to schedule an appointment call 371-0171.

The blood drive is held in partnership with Puget Sound Blood Center, the regional supplier of blood and blood components to over 70 hospitals and clinics throughout Western Washington; which include St. Joseph Hospital in Bellingham.

### Volunteers needed for clam survey June 6

The Whatcom County Marine Resources Committee has scheduled a survey of clams along the shoreline of Point



to Cherry Point from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, June 6. The committee is looking for volunteers ready to dig for sand, identify and count clams, and tuck them back in their beds. In many Whatcom County shoreline areas, native clams serve as indicator species, improving understanding of the health of shellfish, water quality impacts, and harvesting.

For the past four summers, hundreds of volunteers have participated in the Marine Resources Committee clam surveys. Volunteers have documented 10 different species of clams, identified areas in the mudflats where there are sparse or abundant populations of clams, and discovered the areas of the mudflats where particular types of clams like to live. For more information or to register as a volunteer for any of the clam surveys, contact Sylvia Graham at 360/676-6876 or [sgraham@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:sgraham@co.whatcom.wa.us).

### State programs offer help for uninsured

Washington residents recently laid off from employment and without health insurance may qualify for assistance to cover the costs of necessary prescription medications. The Washington Prescription Drug Program is a free program available to Washington residents, regardless of age or income, who don't have insurance to cover their prescription drug needs. Participants can save an average of 60 percent on generic drugs and 20 percent on brand-name medicines. Information is online at [www.rx.wa.gov](http://www.rx.wa.gov). The Office of the Insurance Commissioner also publishes a list of assistance programs along with a brochure titled Paying for Prescription Drugs. The office also has a toll-free number, 800/562-6900, to answer questions about health insurance.

### School math materials review June 11

The Blaine school district has scheduled a middle school math community materials review from 2 to 4 p.m. on Thursday, June 11 at the Blaine school district office at 770 Mitchell Avenue. For more information, contact Deb Cummings, Blaine middle school instruction and assessment coordinator at 332-0720.



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**Jul, 21, 2010**

## **Birch Bay Beach Days are July 24 and Aug. 8**

JESSICA BADER / THE BELLINGHAM HERALD

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BIRCH BAY - Explore the beach during Beach Days from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, July 24, and 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Aug. 8, at Birch Bay State Park.

Beach naturalists from RE Sources for Sustainable Communities will share their knowledge of the beach with activities including clam digging; learning about seals, sea lions and porpoises; studying plankton and investigating the Terrell Creek estuary.

People also can enter a raffle to win prizes donated by Escape Day Spa, Paddle and Pedal Adventures, West Marine, The C Shop and the RE Store.

The event, which is free, is sponsored by the Marine Resources Committee and will have activity leaders from the Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association, Chums of Terrell Creek and RE Sources.

For more information, e-mail [dougs@re-sources.org](mailto:dougs@re-sources.org) or call (360) 733-8017.

*Reach news intern JESSICA BADER at [jessica.bader@bellinghamherald.com](mailto:jessica.bader@bellinghamherald.com) or call 756-2883.*

COMMUNITY ALMANAC

ONGOING

The Everson Library, 104 Kirsch Dr., starts its toddler times with stories and songs for children ages 1 to 3 at 10:30 a.m. on Thursdays through March 17.

The migrant seasonal farmworker outreach staff of WorkSource Northwest will conduct two job search workshops in Spanish with help and tips on filling out online and paper applications, creating resumes and searching for jobs, doing job interviews and creating a successful first impression.

WEDNESDAY

The Bellingham Public Market, 1530 Cornwall Ave., hosts a health fair from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 26.

THURSDAY

The Wilderness Awareness School and Conservation Northwest hosts a wolverine tracking training at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 27, at the Bellingham REI store, 400 36th St.

FRIDAY

The Lynden Schools Bond Advocacy Committee will host a tour of the three schools included in the February capital projects bond. Tours of Lynden High School, Lynden Middle School and Fisher Elementary will be available on Friday, Jan. 28.

SATURDAY

The Lynden Community Center's monthly fundraising breakfast is from 8 to 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, Jan. 29. It includes

all you can eat pancakes or French toast, scrambled eggs, sausage, juice and coffee. \$5 adults, \$3 children. All proceeds benefit the center, 401 Grover St.

Daniel Miller will discuss the history of ornamental penmanship at Everson McBeath Community Library, 104 Kirsch Dr., at 3 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 29. He will provide examples, show the necessary writing tools, and demonstrate the technique for learning this graceful art form.

The public is welcome. Free. The Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center hosts a Scrabble tournament in its "Compete for a Cause" series on Saturday, Jan. 29, at Nick's Bella Marina, 2615 South Harbor Loop, Bellingham. The tournament will run from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., with registration/check-in at 10:30 a.m. Entry fee \$20, only \$10 for students. The tournament official, a nationally ranked player, offers an optional "Secret Tips for Success" seminar immediately prior to the tournament for an additional \$5. Advance registration for the seminar is encouraged. All players will play at least three games, with a final game determining overall winners and prizes. Register online at www.whatcomdrc.org; forms available in person at 13 Prospect St., Suite 201, Bellingham. People of all ages and experience are welcome; a basic understanding of the game is assumed. Details: Kris Duever, 676-0122 or wdrc@whatcomdrc.org.

Local restaurants and caterers provide chill and chowder for all to sample in the third Chili Chowder Cookoff of Big Brothers Big Sisters, starting at noon on Saturday, Jan. 29, in Chuckanut Brewery, 601 W. State St., Bellingham. Enjoy live music with Chuck Dungee and the Marion West Band. Cost is \$10 per person. And learn more about Big Brothers Big Sisters mentoring programs and becoming a "Big." Details: 671-6400.

WEDNESDAY

The Birchwood Garden Club hosts Terry Maczuga from Everson's Cloud Mountain Farm at its 7 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 2, meeting in the Whatcom Museum rotunda room, 121 Prospect St., Bellingham. Maczuga will speak on "Fruiting Trees and Bush Varieties."

THURSDAY

Local author Abbe Rolnick will read from her new book "River of Angels" (Rio De Las Angeles) and discuss the creative process in writing a novel on Friday, Feb. 18, at 7 p.m. in the Deming Library, 5044 Mt.

FRIDAY

Local author Abbe Rolnick will read from her new book "River of Angels" (Rio De Las Angeles) and discuss the creative process in writing a novel on Friday, Feb. 18, at 7 p.m. in the Deming Library, 5044 Mt.

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Local author Abbe Rolnick will read from her new book "River of Angels" (Rio De Las Angeles) and discuss the creative process in writing a novel on Friday, Feb. 18, at 7 p.m. in the Deming Library, 5044 Mt.

COMING SOON

The Whatcom County Marine Resources Committee hosts a presentation and question-and-answer session on rockfish populations along the Whatcom County coastline at 6 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 3, in the second-floor conference room of the Whatcom County Civic Center, 322 N. Commercial St., Bellingham. Free. Details: 676-6876.

With a Kickoff for Kids for football theme this year, the annual benefit auction for the Lynden Boys & Girls Club will be on Saturday, Feb. 5, in the Northwest Washington Fairgrounds Expo Building. There will be a dinner and both silent and live auctions. The club serves 275 members. Details: 354-9959.

Free income tax preparation is offered, starting Feb. 5 at the Ferndale Library and Feb. 8 at the Lynden Library, by AARP volunteers. Times in Ferndale are Saturdays 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.; in Lynden, Tuesdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and Saturdays 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., throughout the tax season. In-person sign-up at the library for appointments is required, as you need to pick up certain forms. All tax returns can be processed by the AARP volunteers; some limitations apply. Details: 354-4883, ext. 3, in Lynden; 384-3647 in Ferndale.

The Rome-Grange's monthly community breakfast at 2821 Mt. Baker Hwy. is Sunday, Feb. 6, from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. featuring scratch-made pancakes, French toast, biscuits and gravy, sausage, scrambled eggs, juice and coffee. Adults, \$5; kids 6-10, \$2; kids 5 and under free.

The Book Worms Borrow at the Bellingham Public Market, 1530 Cornwall Ave., hosts family games, stories, puppets, music, face painting and more from noon to 5 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 6. Free.

Third Christian Reformed Church, 514 Liberty St., is hosting a Ray VanderLaan conference Feb. 11-12. Tickets are \$35 for adults and \$25 for students to hear this dynamic speaker who has led many trips to Israel. Register online at www.thirdchurch.org or at the church office. Details: 354-1148 or conferenceregistration@third-church.org.

Local author Abbe Rolnick will read from her new book "River of Angels" (Rio De Las Angeles) and discuss the creative process in writing a novel on Friday, Feb. 18, at 7 p.m. in the Deming Library, 5044 Mt.

Baker Highway. Set on a tropical island in the Caribbean, this is the story of people caught between what society accepts and each individual's true self.

The second annual Step Into the Power women's prayer conference will be held Feb. 18-19 in the Ferndale Events Center. Becky Tirabassi is the featured speaker. Register online and learn more at www.womenofwhatcom.com. Details: 383-7432.

Come hear the Bellingham Ubelele Group at the Ferndale Public Library, 2222 Main St., on Sunday, Feb. 20, from 2 to 4 p.m. Friends of the Ferndale Library sponsor the event and refreshments will be served. Details: 384-3647.

Local author Mike Impero will discuss his new book "Dreams of Gold," a history of 12 early gold mines in the Mt. Baker region, on Saturday, Feb. 26, at 3 p.m. in the Everson McBeath Community Library. The history includes many photos, old and new (many taken by helicopter), newspaper articles, legal papers, court records, maps (old and new) and personal interviews. Impero is a lifelong resident of Whatcom County raised near Maple Falls and he has memory of some of the characters and events of the later mining days.

'Border Songs' author Jim Lynch coming locally

Lynden Library visit is Feb. 24

WHATCOM — Jim Lynch, author of "Border Songs," a novel set along Whatcom County's border with Canada, will be making several appearances locally, including at the Lynden Library, Feb. 22-24.

The events are organized as part of Whatcom Reads!, a focus on reading one book together in a community. "Border Songs" won the 2010 Washington State Book Award.

The Lynden visit on Thursday, Feb. 24, from 10 to 11:30 a.m. is open to all and will be a "community book discussion" of "Border Songs" with the author, according to the Whatcom County Library System.

Lynch, who lives in the Olympia area, will be at Whatcom Community College's Stryker Center later that day, leading a discussion of his book at 1:30 and being interviewed at 7:30 p.m. All students and the general public are invited to attend.

Lynch gives two talks on Tuesday, Feb. 22, first at the Bellingham Public Library at 2:30 and then in the Blaine Performing Arts Center at 7:30 p.m.

On Wednesday, he joins in a panel discussion about border issues in the Wilson Library presentation room of Western Washington University at 4:30 p.m.

don Vanderloop, raised on a dairy farm north of Lynden, in the role of a new border patrolman who interdicts smugglers and drug traffickers while also having a fascination with the wild birds of the Northwest. The book, released in paperback last July, is full of references to the north Whatcom locale.

At the Lynden Library at 1:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 22, Richard Sinks, a U.S. Border Patrol agent, will discuss border issues and help you see if Jim Lynch is accurate in his portrayal of a border agent's life.

At the Sumas Library, 451 Second St., at 2 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 5, Gerry Baultues, a longtime border guard at Sumas and Lynden borders, will discuss "Border Songs" and tell his often funny border stories.

At the Blaine Library, 610 Third St., at 2 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 5, the documentary film "Letters from the Other Side" will be shown, giving voice to the women and children left behind, sometimes forever, when Mexican men cross the U.S. border looking for work.

At the Blaine Library at 2 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 12, county bird expert Joe Meche, who helped Lynch gather information for his book, talks about the birds of "Border Songs."

NWC Team Schedules

Boys basketball

All games start at 7:30 p.m.

Thursday, Jan. 27: Schome @ Lynden Christian

Burlington @ Meridian

Mount Baker @ Squalicum

Friday, Jan. 28: Ferndale @ Mount Vernon

Anacortes @ Lynden

Nooksack Valley @ Sedro-Woolley

Monday, Jan. 31: Sedro-Woolley @ Ferndale

Boys wrestling

All matches start at 7 p.m.

Wednesday, Jan. 26: Lynden @ Burlington

Blaine @ Mount Baker

Ferndale @ Bellingham

Saturday, Jan. 29: Nooksack Valley @ Friday Harbor, noon

Girls basketball

All games start at 7:30 p.m.

Thursday, Jan. 27: Lynden @ Anacortes

Sedro-Woolley @ Nooksack Valley

Friday, Jan. 28: Lynden Christian @ Sehome

Meridian @ Burlington-Edison

Squalicum @ Mount Baker

Monday, Jan. 31: Ferndale @ Sedro-Woolley

Girls Wrestling

Wednesday, Jan. 26: NWC Championships @ Sedro-Woolley HS, 6 p.m.

Boys Swimming

Thursday, Jan. 27: Archbishop Murphy @ Lynden, 3:30 p.m. (YMCA)

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Mt. Baker Rotary student of the month
Briley Bonner
It's hard to pin down just one thing that sets Briley Bonner apart. Perhaps it could be his perfect 4.0 grade point average at Lynden High School, or his excellent athletic record. Then again, it could be his long volunteer résumé.
Briley has played varsity tennis for four years and was on the All Northwest Conference and All Whatcom County first teams. He has also played four years of varsity soccer, starting every game since his sophomore year. In that time, Briley helped his team qualify for state for the first time in school history while making it to the quarterfinals. Briley has played for WFC Rangers Gold soccer team for seven years.
While currently serving as executive vice president of the school ASB, Briley also heads the school's recycling program. He has logged over 140 hours of community service, volunteers as a math tutor for elementary students and assisted coaching the Lynden High School varsity girls soccer team. He is also a member of the L Club and LHS learning improvement team.
"Servicing the north Whatcom County Community since 1981!"

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The Lynden Tribune Invites you to the Sol Lewis Community Service Awards
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Lynden Pioneer Museum • 7:00 p.m.
Come & honor the 2010 award winners!
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# OBTUARIES

## Edith Van Dyk

Edith D. Van Dyk, born on Feb. 7, 1939, in Lynden, lost her courageous battle with cancer and went home to be with her Heavenly Father on Feb. 5, 2011, in her home located in Everson, while surrounded by her family and friends.

Edith was preceded in death by her mother, Jacoba Zylstra; her father, Perry Zylstra; and her sister, Allega Krueger.

She is survived by her husband, Michael Van Dyk; her siblings, Angie (Larry) Zolde, Sara Jensen, Patricia Zylstra, and Perry (Shirley); her son, Michael Zwegman; daughter, Lisa (Rick) McCauley; and her two grandchildren, Cassidy Jay

and Haley Ray. Edith lived a full life to the fullest and expressed that to everyone in her actions on a daily basis. We will miss her constant smile that would light up any room on the darkest day.

A memorial service will be held at Christ the King Church, 4173 Meridian St., Bellingham, on Thursday, Feb. 10, at 1 p.m.



EDITH VANDYK

## Betty Candito

Betty H. Candito, age 85, went to be with her Lord on Feb. 3, 2011.

Betty lived in Lynden for 20 years, with the last two years at the Christian Health Care Center, was born in Tuxenham (London), England, and lived through World War II in London where she worked in a factory supporting the war effort. Betty was required to work on an ambulance one night a week, responding to bombing sites, and the war had a lasting effect on her life. Prior to relocating to Lynden, Betty lived most of her life in Pennsylvania and was a retired dietitian from Beaver County Home for the Aged in Beaver, Pa.

Betty enjoyed her church, family, friends, her pets and volunteering her time at the Lynden Pioneer Museum. She will be greatly missed by her family and friends who lived a life of service spanning from England to the U.S. and Canada.

She was preceded in death by her parents; her husband,

Connie, from Pennsylvania; brothers Dennis Baldwin, Kenneth Baldwin and Tom Humpheys; and sister Ginny Reeve.

She is survived by her brother, Geoffrey Baldwin of Duncan, B.C.; and family members in England and Australia.

There will be a small service at the Christian Health Care Center on March 10, 2011. Memorials can be made to First Reformed Church, 610 Grover St., or to Christian Health Care Center, 855 Aaron Dr., both of Lynden, WA 98264. You are invited to share your memories and condolences in the online guest book at [www.gilliesfuneralhome.com](http://www.gilliesfuneralhome.com).

Arrangements are entrusted to Gillies Funeral Home and Cremation Services of Lynden.



BETTY CANDITO

## Cecil VanderMolen

Cecil VanderMolen, age 80, died peacefully on Saturday, Feb. 5, 2011, at Whatcom Hospice House in Bellingham.

Born on Aug. 20, 1930, in Lynden to John and Louise (Van Dahlen) VanderMolen, he attended Lynden schools and later joined the U.S. Air Force. On June 17, 1950, Cecil married Hilma M. Grafmire in Lynden. His military career spanned over 27 years and he was stationed at numerous U.S. Air Force bases, and flew overseas combat missions in Asia. Cecil was a member of a crew member of various aircraft, but the B-52 was his favorite, as he logged over 5,000 hours in the B-52 and also was a gunner instructor for the aircraft. He was very proud of his military service achievements, attaining numerous medals, flying numerous missions as a wing gunner and was a member of USAF Senior NCO Class 74 D and SAC (Strategic Air Command). A very patriotic man, Cecil worked for the U.S. Post Office as a clerk for 20 years following his military retirement. His love for flying was evident as he obtained his private pilot's license and flew private aircraft. His first solo flight was in 1971. Cecil also collected stamps while living in Lynden. Cecil attended First Christian Reformed Church and later attended Bible study at his mobile

home park residence in Bellingham. Cecil is survived by sons John VanderMolen and Jay VanderMolen of Bellingham; and sister Ann DeJong of Lynden.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Hilma, in 1995; sons Robert James in 1991, Jeffrey C. in 1993, and infant twins, Craig and Charles, in 1961; and siblings Donald, John Jr., Percy (Pete), Susanne Van Winkle and Sade VanderMolen.

Cremation services will be held on Thursday, Feb. 10, at 3 p.m. in Hopewell Cemetery at the corner of Hopewell and Oat Coles roads near Everson.

Memorial donations are suggested to: American Cancer Society, P.O. Box 19140, Seattle, WA 98109; or American Diabetes Assoc., Everett Office, 2803 Colby Ave., Everett, WA 98201. You are invited to share your memories and condolences in the online guest book at [www.gilliesfuneralhome.com](http://www.gilliesfuneralhome.com).

Arrangements are entrusted to Gillies Funeral Home and Cremation Services of Lynden.



CECIL VANDERMOLLEN

## Gregory Phillips

Gregory Scott Phillips, age 54, of Everson, passed away on Jan. 31, 2011.

Private family services will

be held. Arrangements are by Moles-Greenacres Funeral Home & Memorial Park.

## COUNTY NEWS

### Two physicians receive honors

BELLINGHAM — The medical staff of PeaceHealth St. Joseph Medical Center are honoring radiation oncologist Jan Thompson and obstetric-gynecologist Hull "Coback" Cook, as Physicians of Excellence for 2011.

The two physicians were named from among 10 nominees in all at the annual January medical staff dinner hosted by PeaceHealth.

Dr. Thompson, of Northwest Washington Radiation Oncology Associates in Bellingham, recently stepped down after serving 28 years as chair of the PeaceHealth St. Joseph Medical Center multidisciplinary Tumor Board or "cancer conference" which helps determine appropriate treatment and/or follow-up options to improve cancer care and survival rates. He continues to serve as chair of the region's Cancer Committee which, under his leadership, has led to improvement and coordination of cancer care in Whatcom County where survival rates are now better than the national average for lung, breast, prostate and colorectal cancers.

Dr. Cook, who will retire on Nov. 11 after 30 years in obstetrics and gynecology, was recognized for delivering perhaps the most babies in PeaceHealth St. Joseph history — an average of 230 per year since 1981. He was honored for his compassion and dedication to patients, his exceptional skills, and — according to colleague physician Harry Herdman — his role as a "teacher, mentor and thoughtful role model" for fellow physicians.

Previous recipients of the Physician of Excellence honor, first presented in 2007, are: 2010, Marvin Wayne and Emily Gibson; 2009, Claire Beiser and Kenneth Bachenberg; 2008, William Lombard and Marcy Hipskind; and 2007, Margaret Jacobson and Kenneth Gass.

### NSEA offices robbed of truck, computer

BELLINGHAM — On the night of Monday, Jan. 31, the offices of the Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association on Hannegan Road were broken into, and a pickup truck, laptop computer and number of other small electronic items were stolen.

Anyone with information on the perpetrators should contact the Bellingham Police Department directly at 778-8800.

Meanwhile, NSEA asks for the lending or donation of any business or organization of surplus electronic equipment or a vehicle that could be used as a replacement. NSEA is tax-deductible. If you have information on any of the missing items, contact Rachel Vastak, executive director, at [rvastak@nsea.org](mailto:rvastak@nsea.org) or (360) 715-0283, ext. 108.

### Gregory Phillips

Arrangements are by Moles-Greenacres Funeral Home & Memorial Park.

## Boundary Bay

### derelict crab pots to be pulled

SPOKANE — March 4 is the application cut-off date for several conservation and easement programs including five new Conservation Activity Plans (CAPs) for comprehensive nutrient management (confined animal), nutrient management, irrigation water management, conversion to organic farming and forestry, the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service announces.

CAPs are being offered this year for the first time to producers who want technical assistance on a specific resource concern. Through a CAP, NRCS funds are used to pay a portion of the cost for a private technical service provider to develop plans outlining conservation treatment alternatives.

"Producers are assured of quality assistance because all TSPs are certified and must follow NRCS standards," said Dave Brown, NRCS assistant state conservationist. "Producers can choose to participate on their own or seek financial assistance through NRCS or other

### Boundary Bay

#### derelict crab pots to be pulled

MOUNT VERNON — The Northwest Straits Initiative intends to remove derelict crab pots from Boundary Bay in British Columbia near Blaine, with funding from British Columbia's Ministry of the Environment.

The project, says the Northwest Straits Foundation, will demonstrate effective removal methods and document impacts of derelict crab pots in British Columbia. Also, purse seine net will be removed off Pender Island.

"We know the impacts of derelict crab pots in Puget Sound to the crab fishery and they're very significant," said Ginny Broadhurst, director of the Northwest Straits Initiative. "It's great to see that our Puget Sound project will help to jump start the Canadian project. It's a perfect opportunity to share technical expertise."

Surveys conducted in

### Boundary Bay

#### derelict crab pots to be pulled

mendable and we were pleased to honor her with this award."

This was the inaugural year for the awards, with FSA looking for ways to reward employees who have gone above and beyond their day-to-day duties and showcase their achievements statewide.

The awards program included two kinds of awards: special achievement and employee of the year. In the special achievement category, there were five areas of excellence: special achievement, community service, customer service, teamwork and other. The awards were chosen by the FSA State Committee, a five-member committee made up of producers from throughout the state. The state is divided into four districts, with one winner chosen from each district and then another from the state office located in Spokane.

Dostal was also a recipient of a Presidential Volunteer Service Award for her work with these organizations.

### Tanya Dostal of local FSA office wins state award

SPOKANE — Providing loans for the current generation of Washington farmers and ranchers is just one part of Tanya Dostal's day.

The Farm Service Agency farm loan specialist in Lynden also volunteers more than 120 hours a year with local 4-H, Future Farmers of America and Jr. Livestock Shows to teach and help the future faces of farming.

Because of her dedication, the Washington State FSA recently awarded Dostal with a special achievement award for community service.

"Tanya's tireless work with these groups exemplifies the work ethic we strive for at FSA," said Judy Olson, Washington State Farm Service Agency executive director. "Her commitment to youth and the future leaders of Washington agriculture is com-

### Boundary Bay

#### derelict crab pots to be pulled

communities thriving by relieving development pressures.

Wetlands Reserve Program: WRP assists eligible applicants in the restoration, protection and enhancement of wetlands on their property through a voluntary, environmentally safe and cost-effective manner.

The local Farm Service Agency center is at 6915 Hannegan Rd., Lynden, phone number 354-2035.

## March 4 is last day to apply for several federal conservation programs

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Washington State gets \$30.5 million, third highest among all states, in the latest distribution of USDA Forest Service revenues to rural communities.

The Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack on Jan. 3 announced that more than \$389 million is being distributed to 41 states and Puerto Rico for public schools and various state and specific county programs.

Since 1908, 25 percent of Forest Service revenues from timber sales, mineral leases, recreation, grazing and other sources have been shared with states and counties in which national forest lands are located.

In 2008 Congress extended the program four more years, through 2011. Under the extension, states and counties will receive another \$1.7 billion to help transition to reduced payment levels.

The program offers a way to keep prime farmland in agriculture use and, at the same time, keep farming and ranching

### agency programs?

According to Brown, completed CAPs may also receive funding priority in future NRCS application rankings.

The March 4 application cut-off date also applies to other special initiatives in Washington through NRCS's Environmental Quality Incentives Program. These include:

Conservation Reserve Program Take-Out Initiative: NRCS is providing special funding to help producers with expiring CRP contracts protect their land. Funding will be available for producers interested in converting this land to grazing use by implementing practices such as water developments, fencing and prescribed grazing.

Organic Initiative: Organic producers can receive up to \$20,000 per year or \$80,000 over six years through this initiative. Funding is for implementing practices that solve resource concerns. This initiative is not intended to provide funding or incentives for producers to convert to organic farming.

Eligible producers and entities interested in conservation and restoration programs also have until March 4 to submit their applications for consideration this fiscal year. Those programs include:

Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program: NRCS is seeking proposals from local, state and federally recognized tribal governments and non-governmental organizations interested in working together to acquire conservation easements on farms and ranches. FRPP helps communities preserve farm or ranch land and cultural resources. The program offers a way to keep prime farmland in agriculture use and, at the same time, keep farming and ranching

## Washington gets \$30 million in Forest Service revenue sharing

Your right to know and be informed of the functions of your government are embodied in public notices. In that self-government, charges all citizens to be informed, this newspaper urges every citizen to read and study these notices. We strongly advise those citizens seeking further information to exercise their right of access to public records and public meetings.

**Lynden**

ANNUAL SUPPLY OF ASPHALT, QUARRY ROCK, GRAVEL, SAND & TOP SOIL.

Notice is hereby given that sealed bids will be received by the City of Lynden Public Works Department at 300 4th Street, Lynden, Washington, 98264, (360) 354-3466, until 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday, the 16th day of February, 2011. The bids will then be opened and tabulated.

Materials to be supplied on demand within 24 hours (or within 2 days in case of emergency) and delivered to within 5 miles of the Lynden service area. If necessary, a weight slip must be submitted at time of delivery.

The bid is to establish a list of suppliers and firm prices for the 2011 supply of asphalt, quarry rock, gravel, sand and top soil for the City. Award will be made to the lowest and/or best bidder. In the absence of special circumstances, the City will select the supplier submitting the lowest bid, but in consideration of the special circumstances meet the City's requirements for the specified material needed. Special circumstances that may be considered include: differences in ability to deliver, delivery time, availability of material, special loading or unloading conditions, total cost including transport, performance of the delivered material, location of the source and proximity to the delivery point.

The City of Lynden reserves the right to accept a proposal of the bidder submitting the lowest responsible bid, to reject any or all bids, or to re-solicit the call for bids if the best interest of the City of Lynden is served thereby.

Mark Sandal

**Sumas**

INVITATION TO BID

CITY OF SUMAS PUBLIC WORKS, SUMAS, WASHINGTON

RAIL ROAD STREET - HEAVY HAUL FILL, AEO NO. - 15PR-1265(002)

BID DATE: March 3, 2011 2 p.m.

ESTIMATED PROJECT COST: \$112,000

NOTICE TO BIDDERS: Sealed bid proposals will be received by the City of Sumas Clerk at Sumas City Hall 453 Cherry Street, P.O. Box 9 Sumas, WA 98265 no later than 2:00 p.m. on March 3, 2011, for the replacement construction of Railroad Street, and other related work. The said bids will be opened and read aloud at the bid opening. Bidders and other interested parties are invited to be present at the bid opening. Bids received after the time fixed for opening cannot be considered.

The Contract Documents may be obtained from Wilson Engineering, 805 Dupont Street, Bellingham, WA 98225. Contact Michael Mathies, (360)733-6100, for project information. There is a \$70 non-refundable charge for the Contract Documents. A bid bond in the amount of 5% of the greatest amount bid must be submitted with the bid proposal. Contract documents may also be examined but not purchased at the following positions: Sumas City Hall, 453 Cherry Street, Weekly Construction Reporter, 2215 Midway Lane, #208, Bellingham, WA 98216. Contract documents and the plans bid lists may also be examined at [www.wilsonengineering.com/bidding](http://www.wilsonengineering.com/bidding). The plan holder list will include those formally purchasing plans from Wilson Engineering LLC.

The City may reject any bid not accompanied by bid security or data required by the bid documents. Factors considered in award of the contract will include the Contractor's experience and performance on similar projects.

Special Requirements:

All bidders must be licensed contractors registered in the State of Washington. Work performed on this project will be subject to the State and Federal prevailing wages. Sumas is an Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Employer. Small Minority Owned, and Women Owned business enterprises are encouraged to submit bids. Following is applicable to federal aid projects:

The City of Sumas in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 78 Stat. 252, 42 U.S.C. 2000d to 2000d-4 and Title 49, Code of Federal Regulations, Department of Transportation, subtitle A, Office of the Secretary, Part 21, nondiscrimination in federally assisted programs of the Department of Transportation issued pursuant to such Act, hereby notifies all bidders that it is its policy to ensure that any contract entered into pursuant to this advertisement, disadvantaged business enterprises will be afforded full opportunity to submit bids in response to this invitation and will not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, color or national origin in consideration for an award.

Get/Levs City Clerk City of Sumas Published February 9, 2011

**Nooksack**

LEGAL

Notice of Public Hearing

The City of Nooksack hereby gives notice that a public hearing will be held by the Nooksack City Council on February 22, 2011 to consider proposed Ordinance No. 652 to adopt regulations set forth in Chapter 6.08 of the Nooksack Municipal Code addressing animal control and dangerous dogs.

The public hearing will be held at 7:00 p.m. at Nooksack City Hall. Copies of the proposed ordinance are available for review at Nooksack City Hall at the address below during normal business hours. Written comments may be submitted prior to the hearing. Any person may submit written or oral comments at the hearing.

Nooksack City Hall 103 W. Madison Street P.O. Box 4265 Nooksack, WA 98276

Published February 9, 2011

LEGAL

CITY OF NOOKSACK ORDINANCE 650

THE FOLLOWING IS A SUMMARY OF ORDINANCE 650, ADOPTED BY THE NOOKSACK CITY COUNCIL ON JANUARY 7, 2011 AND PUBLISHED UNDER AUTHORITY OF RCW 35A.12.160.

ORDINANCE 650

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NOOKSACK, WASHINGTON, AMENDING ORDINANCE NO.611 AND ADOPTING A CONNECTION TO SECTION 15.10.010 OF THE NOOKSACK MUNICIPAL CODE TO IMPLEMENT CHANGES TO THE

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The City of Lynden reserves the right to accept a proposal of the bidder submitting the lowest responsible bid, to reject any or all bids, or to re-solicit the call for bids if the best interest of the City of Lynden is served thereby.

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**Nooksack**

LEGAL

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# Shore Stewards News

Summer 2011

The newsletter was prepared by Cheryl Lovato Niles, WSU Whatcom County Shore Stewards Coordinator.

## Ta'aWshi xa'iits'os

Clams are an essential part of the Northwest story – they have been both sustenance and symbol in this region for thousands of years. Native tribes relied heavily on clams, drying and smoking large quantities to preserve them for the winter. The native Quinault language includes a phrase,

ta'aWshi xa'iits'os, meaning “clam hungry” which gives you a sense of how clams figured in the Quinault diet.



Image from the Virtual Museum of Canada

Clams are also featured prominently in a Haida creation story. In this story, Raven discovers humans in a clam, and because he is bored, he coaxes them out into the world for entertainment, which their ceaseless activity amply provides.

In Whatcom County, archeological evidence indicates the Lummi and the Nooksack Tribes used Birch Bay seasonally as foraging and ceremonial grounds. The Lummis called the area Strav-a-wa, which means ‘the place for clams.’

## Settlers and Songsters

The history of Lynden includes an annual community clam-bake which began in 1891. According to Robert Hawley's *Skqee Mus, or Pioneer Days on the Nooksack*, the tradition began when four men from Lynden made the day-long trip by wagon to Birch Bay. They harvested butter and horse clams that night during a very low tide and then returned home the following day. When they arrived, they shared their harvest with the whole community. The Clam Diggers Club carries on the tradition of an annual clam bake in Lynden today.

Clams became a national icon of the Northwest when Ivar Haglund opened his Acres of Clams restaurant in Seattle, in the 1940s. Haglund, a folk singer as well as restaurateur, got the name

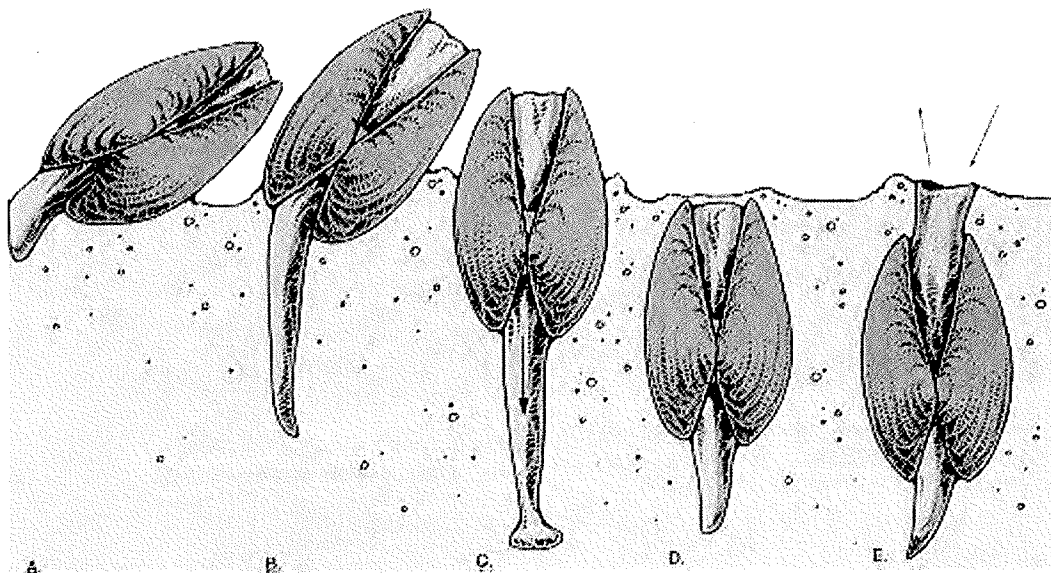
for his restaurant from a 19<sup>th</sup> century folk song. The song describes a settler who tried prospecting for gold, endured hardship, gave up on prospecting and settled along Puget Sound.

“No longer the slave of ambition  
I laugh at the world and its shams  
As I think of my pleasant condition  
Surrounded by acres of clams.”

If you would like to hear the whole song, you’ll find a rendition here:  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=thgs3ZyvBuU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=thgs3ZyvBuU)

## Life as a Clam

From the outside, you can see three main parts to a clam: Their hard shell, a siphon for pulling sea water into their bodies, and a foot for burrowing into the beach. In the case of cockles, this foot can also be used for executing evasive maneuvers.



Oregon State University

## Clams in Action

You may be dubious about the “evasive maneuvers” bit, but I assure you that I have personally witnessed a cockle use its foot to elude a sea star many times. You don’t have to take my word for it. There’s a short YouTube video that shows what appears to be a cockle rolling itself around the beach. [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=48\\_MU9NH2rc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=48_MU9NH2rc)

Of course, cockles are exceptional in their mobility. Most clams are only truly mobile for the first two weeks of their life when they drift among salish sea plankton as little veligers. The term *Veliger* (a handy item for your next Scrabble game) refers to the *velum* - ciliated lobes that serve as gills and also little wings to help the larva “flutter” about the water column as its foot and

shell begin to develop. After a very brief adolescence of exploring the substrate, “dig in” is exactly what most surviving clams will do, remaining hereto embedded for the rest of their life.

If you would like to see some juvenile clams using their feet to sedately burrow into the sand, as is the norm for most clams, here’s another short video on YouTube.

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=q7DmvehQovU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q7DmvehQovU)

## Happy as a Clam at High Tide

Clams pull sea water into their bodies and filter the tiny plankton out of the water to eat, which is why they are described as “filter feeders.” Most plankton is microscopic and can’t be seen with the naked eye (If you are headed to the beach, a hand lens might help you see some plankton in a dish of seawater; a microscope, if you just happen to have one handy, surely would).

But there is an easy and fun to see with your own eyes just how much plankton is in the water. If you go clamming, bring 2 buckets with you. Put seawater into both buckets and add the clams to just one of them. After about 45 minutes, take a look at the water in both. You’ll be amazed by how clear the water looks in the bucket with clams!

Most clams must endure a lack of food and exposure to the air during low tides. To manage this, these bivalves “clam up” - they pull their siphon and foot in, and close their shell tightly for the duration. In this way the clam keeps itself moist until the tide returns.

### Fun Clam Facts

The oldest geoduck in captivity lived to be 146 years old.

Some species of clam can filter up to 65 gallons of water a day.

Manila clams hitchhiked on oyster seed shipments from Japan.

Clams are present in the fossil record beginning 510 million years ago.

The oldest animal ever discovered was a 405 year-old Quahog found in Iceland.

## Meet Bob the Bivalve

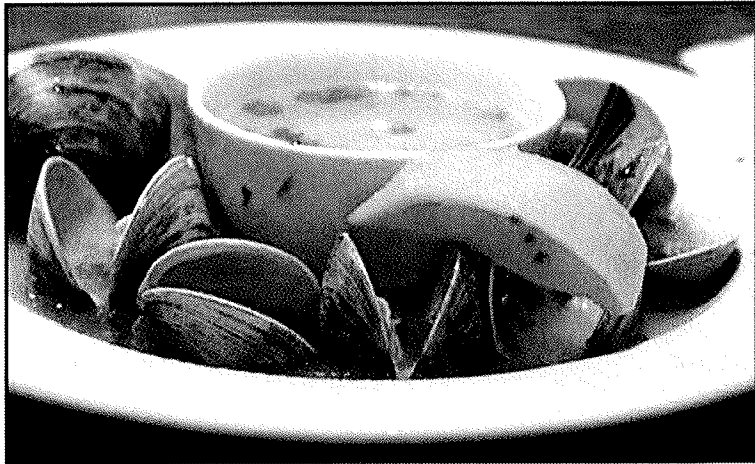
Our beaches are home to a long list of clams with colorful names such as cockles, butter clams, littlenecks, and bent-nosed macomas. If you are curious about who’s who on our beaches or you just want to know what’s out there so you can find a good recipe, here are two great websites to explore:

City of Edmonds Discover Program Clams and Mussels Page  
[www.ci.edmonds.wa.us/Discovery\\_programs\\_website/Clams\\_&\\_Mussels.html](http://www.ci.edmonds.wa.us/Discovery_programs_website/Clams_&_Mussels.html)

King County Clam Identification Key  
<http://www.kingcounty.gov/environment/animalsAndPlants/clams.aspx>

## Garlic and Butter

For many of us the compelling question about clams is whether they'll taste better fried or steamed with white wine. Given that they are a good source of protein, lower fat than chicken, and rich in iron and vitamin B12, there's a lot to love here. And they don't get much fresher than when you dig them yourself.



In Whatcom County we are blessed with several great clamming beaches. Birch Bay continues to be “the place for clams” but there are several other good spots around the County.

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife maintains a very helpful shellfish beach search engine. You can search by county, zip code, or using a clickable map. The site reports whether the beach is open for clams and/or oysters as well as details such as “boat only access,” or whether the beach is “enhanced,” meaning stocked, with additional clams or oysters. You’ll find the search engine here:

<http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/shellfish/beaches/search.php?searchby=County&search=Whatcom>

## Pollution Closures

As you look for good clamming beaches you’ll notice that many areas have been closed due to pollution. Some areas, such as those near a marina or a sewage treatment facility outfall will necessarily always be closed. But others are closed due to pollution that could be prevented.

In Whatcom County Chuckanut Bay, Drayton Harbor, Semiahmoo and Birch Bay’s Terrell Creek delta, are all examples of prime shellfish areas in Whatcom County, that have been compromised or closed because of pollution.

In all of these pollution closures fecal contamination is the culprit. The Department of Health tests for fecal coliform, a bacteria found in the waste of all warm-blooded animals. The fecal coliform bacteria do not themselves cause illness, but when fecal matter is present in the water, a whole suite of bacterial and viral nasties that can cause illnesses such as cholera, typhoid fever, and hepatitis A may also be present.

Keeping excess fecal material (above the natural background levels from wild animals) out of our waters as much as possible is the key to preserving and restoring our shellfish areas.



## What You Can Do - The Short List

- 1) Pick up dog waste promptly and throw it in the garbage – even from your own back yard.
- 2) Keep your septic system in good working order, repair or replace the system promptly when necessary.
- 3) Keep livestock fenced away from streams.

For a more complete picture of how citizens can protect shellfishing on our favorite local clamming beach, take a look at page 7 of the Birch Bay Terrell Creek State of the Watershed Report:

[http://www.co.whatcom.wa.us/pds/naturalresources/criticalareas/updates/downloads/pdf/bb\\_terrellcrk\\_watershed\\_report.pdf](http://www.co.whatcom.wa.us/pds/naturalresources/criticalareas/updates/downloads/pdf/bb_terrellcrk_watershed_report.pdf)

Please also note that while the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife website will inform you about pollution closures, **it does not provide information about biotoxin or vibrio closures.** To find out whether the clams are safe to eat you also must check with the Washington State Department of Health, or the Whatcom County Department of Health.

## Biotoxins and Vibrio

Biotoxins are poisons produced by microscopic planktonic algae naturally present in marine waters. Normally the amounts present are too small to be harmful, but when the algae grow rapidly aka bloom, toxin levels in shellfish (who, as you'll remember are slurping down plankton, including these algae, by the gallon) can rise quickly. The toxins do not harm the clams but they are very poisonous for humans.

*“Several members of Captain Vancouver’s crew died in 1793 after eating toxic shellfish – the first recorded PSP deaths in the Pacific Northwest. Native Americans were undoubtedly aware of the problem long before that.”*  
- Gathering Safe Shellfish in Washington,  
Washington Sea Grant.

### Fast Facts on Biotoxins

There is no antidote for biotoxin poisoning.

Cooking and freezing do not destroy biotoxins.

Varnish clams accumulate toxin at higher levels than other clams.

Varnish and butter clams store toxins longer than other clams.

Red water does not indicate the presence of Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning

Shellfish are routinely tested by the Department of Health for biotoxins such as Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning (PSP, or “red tide”) and Amnesic Shellfish Poison (ASP, or domoic acid). Areas are closed for shellfish harvest when the toxins are present at dangerous levels.

Vibrio are small bacteria that can also make you sick with gastrointestinal and flulike symptoms. The illness is usually mild or moderate but in severe cases, hospitalization may be required. The Department of Health tests for Vibrio as well.

## “Call Before you Dig”

To find out if it's safe to harvest shellfish contact the Washington State Department of Health or our own Whatcom County Department of Health:

Marine Biotoxin Hotline 1-800-562-5632;  
DOH Office 360-236-3330; or  
DOH websites [www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/sf/biotoxin.htm](http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/sf/biotoxin.htm).  
[www.doh.wa.gov/shellfishsafety.htm](http://www.doh.wa.gov/shellfishsafety.htm) (clickable maps)  
Whatcom County Department of Health: 360-676-6724

While biotoxins are deadly serious, your clam bake plans don't have to be completely derailed by them. All commercially harvested shellfish must meet the rigorous health standards established by the State. You can purchase safe shellfish throughout the year at seafood markets and grocery stores.

## The Harvest

You've checked the WDFW website and found a good beach, you've called the Marine Biotoxin Hotline and gotten the green light. Now you need to pick up a license so you can get digging.

There are many places to buy licenses in Whatcom County including fishing and sporting goods stores, hardware stores, grocery stores, and resorts. To find a location nearby you can search online at:

[http://wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/vendors/vendor\\_search.php?County=WHATCOM](http://wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/vendors/vendor_search.php?County=WHATCOM)

If you can wait a few days, you can also purchase a license online at:  
<https://fishhunt.dfw.wa.gov/>

The legal minimum size for Manila clams, native littlenecks, butter clams, and cockles is 1.5 inches. There is no minimum size for geoducks, horse clams and eastern softshell clams,– meaning you must keep all that you take. The no minimum rule helps to protect populations of these species that are unlikely to survive even if they are replaced after digging.

To learn more about the rules for shellfish harvest you can look online at  
[http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/shellfish/statewide\\_rules.html](http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/shellfish/statewide_rules.html)  
and call the WDFW Emergency Shellfish Rule Change Hotline 1-866-880-5431.

WDFW recommends using a rake rather than a shovel for manila and native littlenecks, cockles, and macomas. Rakes are more effective and are generally less damaging to both the clams and the beach.

## Fill in Your Holes

Filling in your holes is important for three reasons. 1) A pile of sand or gravel can prevent the critters beneath it, including any clams, from getting fresh sea water, effectively smothering them. 2) the filled-in hole area provides an excellent place to “replant” any clams below the minimum size so they can grow bigger (!) and 3) It’s courteous to fill in your holes. Clam holes can be tripping hazards for people wading in shallow water.

One way to make hole filling faster and easier is to bring a piece of cardboard or a small plastic sheet with you to the beach. Perhaps you have an old shower liner or a tarp that could be cut down and repurposed. Place the sand onto the sheet or cardboard as you are digging and when you are done simply slide the pile back into the hole. Voila!

Then simply replace any clams you cannot keep on top of the filled harvest hole and cover them shallowly.

## Keep Clamming

The Whatcom County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) is one organization helping to keep Whatcom County safe for clamming. This volunteer organization sponsors and supports water-quality testing, clam surveys, clam enhancement, and clam restoration on Whatcom County beaches.

You are cordially invited to get involved. Marine Resources Committee projects are a great way to learn more about clams and clamming, take in the local scenery, and help preserve a special piece of the Northwest experience.

To learn more about these opportunities you can take a look at the MRC website.  
<http://www.whatcom-mrc.whatcomcounty.org/MRC/projects/shellfish.htm>

To sign up or ask questions you can send an email to Sara Brooke Benjamin at  
[SBenjami@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:SBenjami@co.whatcom.wa.us)

## References

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Gathering Safe Shellfish in Washington. Avoiding Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning  
[www.wsg.washington.edu/mas/pdfs/SafeShellfishBooklet.pdf](http://www.wsg.washington.edu/mas/pdfs/SafeShellfishBooklet.pdf)

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NEXT STORY > Happy Valley residents hope to turn intersection into gathering spot

# Surveys underway to track plants, animals at Whatcom County shorelines

Published: June 29, 2013

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By KIE RELYEA—THE BELLINGHAM HERALD

BELLINGHAM - On a stretch of beach at Boulevard Park exposed by low tide, Bob Lemon uses forceps to gingerly pick at a piece of bright greenery draped over a rock while Bellingham Bay waves lap against the shore.

The intertidal zone expert studies the sea lettuce for a bit before turning his attention to barnacles that April Markiewicz and Gaythia Weis are trying to identify.

The three Bellingham residents were among the trained volunteers who surveyed intertidal life on two stretches of beach at one of the city's most popular parks June 22 and 23.

The goal of last weekend's survey - conducted on both sides of The Woods Coffee under the curious eyes of onlookers - was to see what intertidal species were there, and how many, before the city of Bellingham removes concrete riprap in a section of beach and restores it to a natural shoreline of sand and gravel.

"We wanted to know what is the change of the community in that place," said Wendy Steffensen, lead scientist with the North Sound Baykeeper Team. "We wanted like a before-and-after snapshot. And we wanted to see what the impact of making a soft shore is."

Steffensen also is chair of the Whatcom County Marine Resources Committee, which led the Boulevard Park survey.

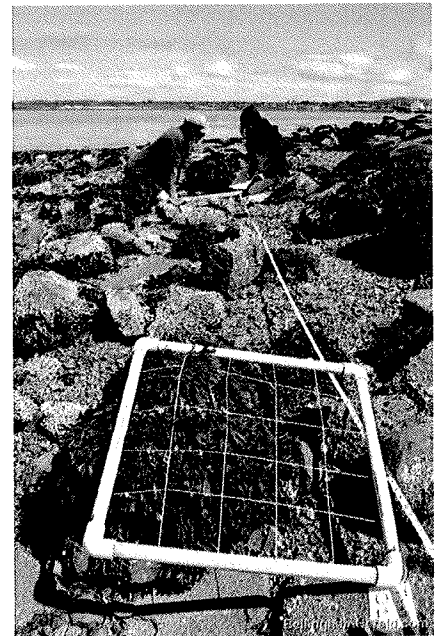
The city is restoring the beach north of The Woods Coffee, called West Beach. Volunteers surveyed that section Sunday.

Where the volunteers were Saturday was south of Woods, just on the other side and called Pete's Beach. That shoreline could have the concrete rubble removed in the future but, until then, it is expected to serve as a reference point for ongoing summer surveys, provided funding can be found, to track beach health.

Restoring West Beach - the work that is closing off a section of Boulevard Park and is expected to be done by October - should be good for the plants and creatures living there.



"We're assuming it's going to be positive and we'll see a lot more critters next year," Steffensen said, noting the survey will provide



Volunteers conduct an intertidal survey along the shoreline at Boulevard Park in Bellingham on Saturday, June 22, 2013. The survey will assess what kind of creatures and plants, and how many of them, call the tidal flats home. The survey was led by the Whatcom County Marine Resources Committee to create a baseline of species there for future comparison.

DANIEL PICKARD — THE BELLINGHAM HERALD Buy Photo

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scientific data, instead of just anecdotal information, be the news good or bad.

Boulevard Park survey results will be shared with the city, which, over time, will look for signs of improvement, such as shell fragments.

That's a good indicator that sea life that likes that intertidal zone is showing up, according to

Gina Gobo Austin, project engineer with the city Parks and Recreation Department.

"It can be an assessment tool," Steffensen said.

The intertidal zone survey at Boulevard Park isn't the only one occurring this summer to monitor changes in species diversity and beach health.

Several groups, including Whatcom County Marine Resources Committee, RE Sources and two citizen stewardship committees, are involved in an effort for Cherry Point and Fidalgo Bay aquatic reserves. Upcoming surveys are planned for those reserves.

The survey at Cherry Point will be part of an ongoing effort and will add to the historic baseline of data. Access to those sites has been approved by Intalco and Phillips 66, which own or lease land in the survey areas.

"Good science serves us all. We're all working from the same playbook. We're all getting the same information. And we can all talk about it," Steffensen said. "Some of this information is already being gathered by the industries."

Information gathered by the volunteer citizen scientists who have received training - about 40 in Whatcom County - also will be shared with the state Department of Natural Resources.

As for those volunteers: "It's a tremendous amount of fun for people to just get out there and see what's living on the beach," Steffensen said.

Back at Boulevard Park, beach naturalist Lemon confers with Markiewicz and Weis. They decide that the barnacle species they're attempting to identify is the thatched variety - ones that don't yet have the formation that makes them look like a little pile of straw, which gives the barnacles their name, but are starting to show the "break line" on their top.

As Lemon moves off to confer with other volunteers - "Yeah, I think that's Turkish washcloth," he said of a dark seaweed - Weis and Markiewicz resume their survey of the rock and that patch of beach.

"There's one mussel here that's alive and well," said Markiewicz, who also is a member of Whatcom County Marine Resources Committee.

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The pair also finds a tiny purple shore crab hiding under the rock they're examining.

"I did see something squirting," Markiewicz said as they and the other volunteers continued their survey.

### SURVEYS INFO

Upcoming surveys of intertidal zones are:

-- Friday, July 19, at Cherry Point Aquatic Reserve near Alcoa Intalco Works.

-- Saturday, July 20, at Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve in Anacortes.

-- Sunday, July 21, at Cherry Point Aquatic Reserve, Neptune Beach.

To find out more about the surveys or to register, call RE Sources at 360-733-8307.

Reach KIE RELYEA at [kie.relyea@bellinghamherald.com](mailto:kie.relyea@bellinghamherald.com) or call 715-2234.

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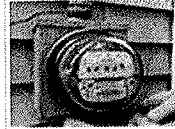
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QQQQ2

..I think it's a good idea to start developing a base line. There's been a lot of opinion and conjecture in numerous areas regarding impacts of either making changes or not making changes to ecologically sensitive areas and this is a start. The conundrum is that the placement of the materials under study represent the 'disturbed' status of what was apparently as natural beach (pre salmon canneries etc in that area). So, once the data is collected and the beach restored, we get into discussions as to is that really what would represent the undisturbed natural state. Thus, we're back to opinions. But no data is worse than none.

The big issue is how that data will to be interpreted and used. Obviously, RE Sources have their agenda and its clear that the companies who have voluntarily allowed activists come on to their property are potentially at risk of distortion or misuse . Furthermore, the issue is whether or not the information developed by amateurs will stand the test of court if there is ever a challenge. Hopefully the entities who have voluntarily allowed lay individuals onto their property to collect intertidal

data are also doing their own surveys...

06/30/2013 08:31 PM Report Abuse

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**woad**

"But no data is worse than none."

Just gotta love it folks.

06/30/2013 08:47 PM In reply to QQQQ2 Report Abuse

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**QQQQ2**

..haha, OK, good catch...'Limited data is better than none'..let the abuse begin...

06/30/2013 09:44 PM In reply to woad Report Abuse

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**Alaskabobc**

It will be interesting to see what kind of beach it evolves into once the heavy material is removed. Mother Nature may well remove the rest of the park. The Northeaster can really pound that area.

06/30/2013 10:40 AM Report Abuse

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**Civil**

Good project. They're using volunteers which is a great way to get the most out of funding resources, and also to build community support. We're privileged to live at the margin of the ocean, and we have a responsibility to learn about it and avoid despoiling it.

06/30/2013 09:29 AM 5 Likes Report Abuse

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**Taxpayer1**

Anyone else worried about these whack jobs?

06/29/2013 10:50 PM 2 Likes Report Abuse

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**mountainlove**

Not at all, but I do worry that you've reproduced your dysfunctional gene.

06/30/2013 10:25 AM In reply to Taxpayer1 8 Likes Report Abuse

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**outdoorlovetwo**

These are the Kind of "WhackJobs" we need. People that love the Shoreline and all the bounty it offers. Boulevard is such a respite for humans and critters alike. To sit and watch all the families getting out of the house and away from the Electronics for just a few hours is wonderful. One Mom brought a Van full of Middle school students out to the park and told them to go play as she handed them a list of out door games they could play. I watched the faces of these kids and then as they adjusted and gave the list a chance they began to have some real fun. Gleeful laughter could be heard as these kids played in the sun.....Many parents start to show their very young kids all the little shoreline inhabitants as little toes feel the cool water. Yes even the Train is loved by Old and Young alike. Dogs run,, lungs fill with fresher air and people can unwind for just a little while. So Please all the Outdoor Geeky Science please keep gracing Our Shores. You tooo Taxie1 may benefit,,get one of Moms list and come have a little fun in the Sun.....

06/30/2013 08:27 AM In reply to Taxpayer1 7 Likes Report Abuse

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**reasonable\_man**

Actually, you worry me more. Humans have historically been fascinated with shoreline flora and fauna. The cultivation and harvest of intertidal species (clams, mussels and oysters for example) is a multi-million dollar industry in Washington. The intertidal zone also serves as critical habitat for salmon and dungeness crab. You should put down the bag of Cheetos, log off the pom sites for a few hours, and go to the beach every once in a while.

06/30/2013 07:05 AM In reply to Taxpayer1 6 Likes Report Abuse

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outdoorlovetwo

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06/30/2013 08:21 AM in reply to reasonable\_man 3 Likes Report Abuse Like Reply

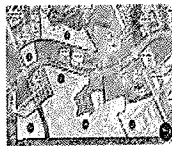
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## Whatcom County part of state study using mussels to measure water pollution

Published: June 3, 2013

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BY STACEE SLEDGE — FOR THE BELLINGHAM HERALD

Call it the mollusk version of a canary in a coal mine. The state Department of Fish and Wildlife launched a pilot program last fall strategically placing cages of blue mussels along Washington's marine shoreline, including 10 spots in Whatcom County. Those mussels are now being tested to pinpoint marine toxins.

Why mussels? Ubiquitous throughout Puget Sound, mussels are hardy filter feeders, taking in and filtering the surrounding water — including any contaminants — through their bodies. Toxins are stored in their tissues, making them ideal for measuring pollution.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration began its own mussel studies in 1986, monitoring the U.S. coast and the Great Lakes.

The Department of Fish and Wildlife, plus other state groups and volunteers, have helped collect mussels for the national program for many years.

But the every-other-year national studies include a smaller sample of Washington waters, with only two sites in Whatcom County. The new state program, made possible by a grant from the Environmental Protection Agency, expands the state study to 108 sites in Western Washington.



The study uses caged mussels — all the same age and size, and all from the same



Melissa Roberts, lead staff person for the Whatcom Marine Resources Committee, collects mussels at Marine Park in Bellingham on March 1. Roberts is involved in a state study to monitor water pollution collected in mussels.

PHILIP A. DWYER — THE BELLINGHAM HERALD

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Whidbey Island hatchery — rather than naturally occurring ones. With the same background chemical signature, any changes in their tissues can be more clearly attributed to their cage location.

"Once we got the EPA funding, we could sample at 60 monitoring sites," says Jennifer Lanksbury, a fish and wildlife biologist with the state. "But we have a small staff and knew we'd need volunteers to help."

By spreading the word through a series of summer workshops, the program landed enough volunteers to nearly double the number of monitoring sites.

"There's no way we could have done all the sampling without the 'citizen science' component," Lanksbury says.

During low tide on a cold rainy night in November, volunteers placed cages with bags of about 65 mussels at the designated spots, then returned during the next two months to ensure the cages were undisturbed. In January, the mussels were sent to a Seattle lab for detailed testing for more than 100 toxins.

Melissa Roberts of the Whatcom Marine Resources Committee helps as a local organizer for the national program and worked closely with the city of Bellingham and with Fish and Wildlife to select the county's cage sites and organize the fieldwork.

"We were able to tweak the locations so they made sense from a local perspective," she says. "A lot of this sort of work goes on in more urbanized areas and I was really happy that Whatcom County got a lot of sites and was able to get some attention."

More than a dozen volunteers helped to place, monitor and retrieve cages at Point Whitehorn, Birch Point, Cherry Point Aquatic Reserve, the west side of Bellingham Bay, Little Squalicum Creek, Squalicum Harbor and Post Point.

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Lab tests are now under way. Mussels are measured to compare growth rates, then the shells are removed and the mussels' reproductive health is examined. Finally, the mussels' tissues are ground up and used as a medium for a spate of tests for chemicals, toxins, heavy metals and other pollutants. Test results, expected this fall, will be posted at [wdf.wa.gov](http://wdf.wa.gov).

Stacee Sledge is a freelance writer in Bellingham.



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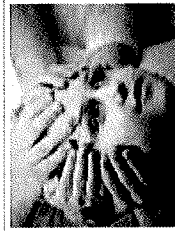


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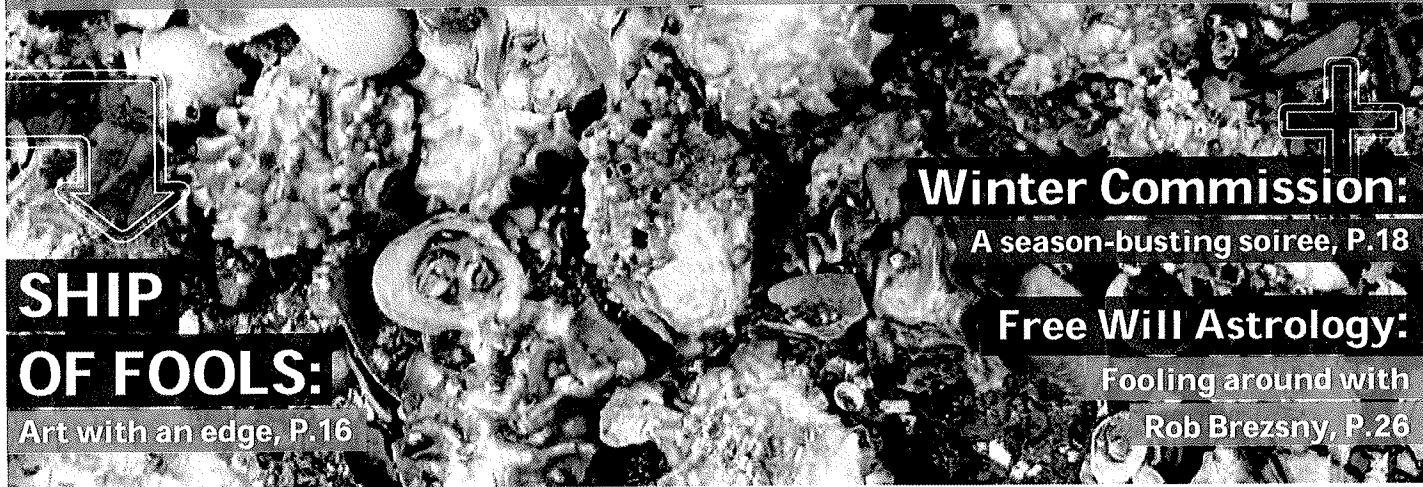
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## THIS IS YOUR OCEAN ON ACID

THE WORLD'S OCEANS ARE BECOMING CORROSIVE, THREATENING SHELLFISH, CORALS AND THE OCEAN FOOD WEB

BY BRIVA BELLI

On most days, Bill Dewey can be found wearing waist-high waders and inspecting Manila clams—the West Coast version of the littleneck—at his clam farm, Chuckanut Shellfish. Under an arrangement that's unique to the state, Dewey owns 32 acres of tidelands. Unlike land-based farms, he can only harvest when the tide recedes, leaving over a mile of mudflats, and shellfish, exposed. He gathers the clams with the help of a former tulip-bulb harvesting machine that's carried out aboard his boat, the *Clamdango*.

Working on the mudflats, often with his son and dog in tow, is the fulfillment of a dream for Dewey, a shellfish farmer for more than 30 years who is also the public policy and communications director for Taylor Shellfish Company. Taylor's operations—which include growing oysters, clams, mussels and geoduck (giant clams whose necks can reach more than three feet long)—span some 1,900 acres of the same tidelands. All told, there are about 47,000 acres of oceanic land that have that special designation in the state, and, he says, "It's fundamental as to why Washington leads the country in farmed shellfish production. In other parts of country, you typically have to lease the land from the state. Banks are less apt to loan money to businesses that have to lease."

Commercial shellfishing makes up the lion's share—two-thirds—of the nation's aquaculture industry. So reports the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administra-

tion's (NOAA's) Fisheries Service which makes a case for boosting domestic seafood production, noting that Americans eat a lot of seafood, and import 86 percent of it, creating a U.S. seafood trade deficit that now exceeds \$10.4 billion annually, second only to oil when it comes to natural resources. In the Pacific Northwest, the shellfish industry contributes \$270 million per year to the regional economy and employs more than 3,200 people. And when oyster cultivation fails at the top Northwest hatcheries and farms, the effects on the industry are devastating.

### A SHELLFISH STORY

For centuries, shellfish farmers have cultivated oysters in Washington's Willapa Bay, a massive, shallow estuary separated from the Pacific Ocean by the Long Beach Peninsula. The bay's warm waters are particularly suited for growing Pacific oysters, identified by their rough, fluted shells marked with purple streaks, and a white interior bearing "a single muscle scar that is sometimes dark, but never

purple or black," according to a Biological Report from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The oyster was imported from Japan to the western U.S. coast in 1903. "Puget Sound and Washington waters are a little bit cold compared to what the oyster had in Japan," says Dewey. "So it doesn't reproduce particularly well here. Except for a few areas—Willapa Bay is one of them. There's dependable natural reproduction from one year to the next. The water basically has to get up to 72 degrees and stay there for three weeks for the oysters to spawn."

Beginning in 2005, these oysters in the bay, known as natural sets, stopped reproducing. They have never successfully reproduced since. In 2006, the hatchery-produced Pacific oysters followed suit. In the hatcheries, spawning happens year-round in conditioning tanks where water temperature and algae levels (for food) are closely controlled.

Both Taylor Shellfish and Whiskey Creek Shellfish Hatchery in Tillamook, Oregon, witnessed oyster larvae die-offs that they couldn't explain and that continued for years. Initially, they suspected a bacteria known as *Vibrio tubiashii* was to blame. But even after Whiskey Creek installed an expensive filtration system, the oyster larvae continued to die. By 2008, Whiskey Creek, which alone accounts for 75 percent of all oyster seedlings used by West Coast oyster farmers, had lost 80 percent of its oyster larvae. Taylor Shellfish had lost 60 percent. Despite the controlled environment, the ocean water they were pumping into their hatcheries was corrosive. Upwelling—or deep ocean water rising to the surface following north winds off the Washington coast—was carrying acidic water to the surface. The shellfish farmers were experiencing the devastating impacts of ocean acidification sooner than researchers had anticipated. With support from Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA), ocean acidification sensors were set up in 2010 near Washington's hatcheries. Combined with Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS) buoys from NOAA measuring wind velocity, they track ocean acidity—and predict the upwelling events that cause increased acidity—in real time.

Mark Wiegardt, co-owner of Whiskey Creek said: "Putting an IOOS buoy in the water is like putting headlights on a car." Adds Dewey: "All of a sudden we could see all aspects of this water that was coming in our intake pipes. And it was quite eye-opening. We were seeing pH levels down as low as 7.5. Normally it's 8.2." To oyster larvae, it's the difference between life and death.

When that acidic water entered the hatcheries, it caused oyster shells in their critical formative period to dissolve. Oysters and other shellfish, including clams and lobsters, and a host of sea

creatures that include plankton and corals, need calcium carbonate minerals to form their shells and skeletons. Normally ocean water is full of these minerals, but as carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions have climbed across the globe, the ocean has absorbed increasing levels of CO<sub>2</sub>, causing ocean acidification to rise and the availability of these minerals to fall.

"A lot of things we like to eat have these calcium carbonate shells and they're very sensitive to acidification," says Richard Feely, Ph.D., a senior scientist with NOAA and its Pacific Marine Environmental Laboratory (PMEL). "Just a small drop in pH can cause the shells to begin to dissolve. It turns out that for many of these species, the larval and juvenile stages are much more sensitive than the adults. And we're finding that they can die off quite rapidly even with the kinds of changes that we're seeing right now."

### SWALLOWING EMISSIONS

Over the past 100 years, levels of carbon in the atmosphere have risen 30 percent—to 393 parts per million. And the oceans absorb a third of that carbon dioxide, or approximately 22 million tons per day, in a process that Feely likens to adding carbon to water to make soda. Once it sinks into the water, the carbon dioxide reacts with water molecules to form carbonic acid; the carbonic acid then releases hydrogen ions which in turn combine with carbonate ions (the ones that shellfish and other creatures need) removing them from the water. Normally the process of oceans soaking up our excess CO<sub>2</sub> is a beneficial one—keeping global warming in check. "Eventually, over a very long time, thousands of years, the ocean will take up 85-90 percent of all the carbon that's released," says Feely. "We thought that was a good thing." But acidification is now happening at an accelerated pace, and it's already changing the ocean in profound ways.

A study published in *Science* in March 2012 found that ocean acidity may be increasing faster today than it has during four major extinctions in the last 300 million years. The only time period that remotely resembles the ocean changes happening today, based on geologic records, was 56 million years ago when carbon mysteriously doubled in the atmosphere, global temperatures rose by approximately six degrees and ocean pH dropped sharply, driving up ocean acidity and causing a mass extinction among single-celled ocean organisms. It's likely, researchers surmise, that higher organisms also disappeared as a result. During that extinction period, ocean pH levels fell by up to 4.5 units. In the last 100 years, ocean pH today has already fallen by .1 unit—10 times faster than during

that extinction period—and could drop another .3 units by the end of the century if predictions from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change are correct. Such a drop in pH, says Feely, "would increase the acidity of the ocean by about 100 percent to 150 percent. That's a dramatic change."

The oyster die-offs are likely just the first sign of significant impacts to come if carbon emissions aren't reined in. Take, for example, the pteropod or sea butterfly. These tiny marine snails that appear winged and beautifully translucent in close-ups are essential to the ocean food web. Ocean acidification threatens the ability of pteropods to form their fragile shells, putting a range of commercially important fish at risk that depend on the small snails for food, including salmon, herring and yellowfin tuna as well as mammals like baleen whales, ringed seals and marine birds. Scientist Gretchen Hofmann of the University of California Santa Barbara said of pteropods to United Press International: "These animals are not charismatic, but they are talking to us just as much as penguins or polar bears. They are harbingers of change. It's possible by 2050 they may not be able to make a shell anymore. If we lose these organisms, the impact on the food chain will be catastrophic."

### CORAL COLLAPSE

Corals, too, face direct threat from ocean acidification, which, as it robs ocean water of carbonate ions, impedes their ability to form skeletons. Davey Kline, Ph.D., a coral reef ecology expert at the University of Queensland in Australia, first began diving in the Caribbean in 1997 and says at that time, "there were still really beautiful, elaborate reefs with really high coral coverage. Corals bigger than me that looked like giant trees forming a forest. But in the 10 years I've been working in the Caribbean, I saw those once really incredible reefs completely crash and disappear. And what were once these really diverse, three-dimensional reef structures became seaweed beds. Where the corals were gone, most of the fish were gone and all that was left was a lot of stinging, nasty algae."

It's not just ocean acidification threatening these reefs, it's a number of factors including overfishing, disease, development and warming waters. But the falling pH has a very specific impact on the corals' ability to grow, making it that much more difficult for them to withstand other stressors. Kline describes the growth and erosion of coral reefs as "a really delicate balance." Corals are built by polyps—tiny anemone-like creatures that produce calcium carbonate crystals, stacking them in intricate,

OCEAN, CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

Drove to Sea-Tac

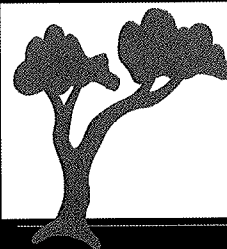
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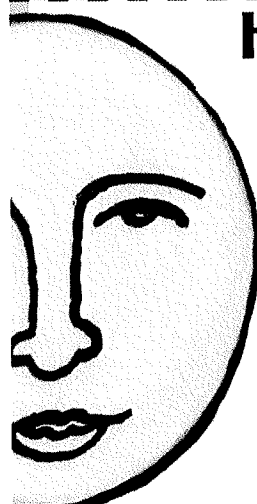


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**OCEANS,** FROM PAGE 9

interconnected branches faster than the sea can erode their skeletons. "There have been a lot of studies showing that under ocean acidification scenarios that corals and other organisms on the reef calcify at a slower rate," Kline says. "Even with just a little less growth, the corals can be tipped into these situations where they're getting eroded faster than they can grow and the reefs start to dissolve."

It is nearly impossible to quantify the importance of coral reefs to people and the planet. In monetary figures, corals have been valued at \$29.8 billion per year in net global economic value because they support fisheries, tourism and all the associated businesses, from hotels to restaurants. Reefs also protect shorelines from damaging storm waters and prevent erosion; they are the rainforests of the sea that provide a home for one million species; and they are "the medicine cabinets of the 21st century" according to NOAA's Coral Reef Conservation Program, providing new sources of medicine to treat cancer, HIV, heart disease, arthritis and other diseases. Reefs are thriving underwater metropolises where fish spawn and hide from predators and bigger fish cruise looking for food.

"If we lose coral reefs we lose a substantial source of seafood for coastal countries in the tropics in particular," says Mark Spalding, president of the Ocean Foundation. "You're threatening the basic productivity of the ocean."

And the potential for a world without coral reefs is not far-fetched or far off. The most recent report on reef health—Status of Coral Reefs of the World: 2008—found that 19 percent of coral reefs were already lost, 15 percent were seriously threatened within a decade or two, and 20 percent could be lost in 20 to 40 years. "If we continue on the trajectory that we're currently at," says Kline, referring to unchecked global emissions, "we will lose reefs as we know them. We'll probably see a transition from really diverse reefs to reefs with fewer species that are tougher, weedier species that can deal with these dramatic conditions. Associated with the loss of diversity of corals will be the loss of millions of species that use corals as their homes. A lot of the fish and seafood that we eat, the most critical part of their life stages are on coral reefs. So there will be huge economic impacts in terms of loss of fisheries, loss of sustenance for all the cultural communities and loss of tourism...

These changes could all happen within the next 30 or 40 years—by 2050, at the current rate of change."

Increased carbon dioxide in the atmosphere not only alters the ocean's chemistry, it's increasing the temperature of the atmosphere and warming waters, too. As ocean temperatures rise, a very important algae called *zooxanthellae* (zoo-zan-thel-y) that provides food for corals—and contributes to their remarkable colors—can no longer make food. That's when corals bleach.

"The reason the corals become bright white is because most of their color is coming from these algae," says Kline. "And when they lose the algae because the water is too warm and they can't keep up this relationship anymore, you see the bare skeleton."



**ATTEND**

**WHAT:** Ocean Acidification seminar  
**WHEN:** 6-8pm, Thurs., March 28  
**WHERE:** Bellingham Cruise Terminal's Dome Room, 355 Harris Avenue  
**COST:** Free  
**INFO:** [www.ecy.wa.gov/water/marine/ocean/acidification.html](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/water/marine/ocean/acidification.html)

Sometimes bleaching happens en masse as when 95 percent of corals in the Philippines bleached in 2010 after an El Niño event that raised ocean temperatures. Increased ocean temperatures also make the waters more stratified—preventing nutrient-rich water from below from rising to the surface and oxygen-rich water from reaching the middle layers. This can lead to more widespread losses. The Center for Ocean Solutions writes: "Between 1951 and 1993 zooplankton biomass off Southern California decreased by 80 percent as a result of warming surface waters." Less oxygen reaching the interior, meanwhile, a product of both this increased stratification and significant nutrient runoff from farms, creates dead zones, a massive threat to marine life. And unlike nutrient runoff, which can be brought under control rather quickly, oxygen depletion that happens as a result of global warming can't be easily reversed.

"Ocean warming, acidification and deoxygenation are essentially irreversible on centennial time scales," found the Royal Society, a London-based group specializing in scientific research, in a 2011 paper, "[O]nce these changes have occurred, it will take centuries for the ocean to recover. With the emission of CO<sub>2</sub> being the primary driver behind all three stressors, the primary mitigation strategy is to reduce these emissions."

**PIECEMEAL SOLUTIONS**

It would be hard to find an ocean expert who does not agree that global carbon dioxide emissions must be brought under control—and quickly—if we are to prevent the wholesale deterioration of our oceans. Most also recognize that such global agreements are the most difficult to come by, and that local protection strategies and efforts to reduce stressors on corals and marine life are important steps in at least staving off the impacts of ocean acidification and global warming.

Shellfish farmers with controlled hatchery environments can take some precautions to prevent corrosive, acidic water from entering their breeding tanks. Thanks to ocean buoys and sensors monitoring acidity and wind velocity, farmers at Whiskey Creek now know that they have 24 hours following a north wind before corrosive water wells up and enters their intake pipes. "When they see [a north wind] happening," says Dewey, "they fill all their tanks and they don't change their water as frequently as they should to avoid bringing corrosive water in that would harm the larvae. They've adapted management protocols to get around those corrosive events that are somewhat effective."

But in order to track and manage ocean acidification more monitoring is needed, and the federal 2013 budget cuts \$2.5 million in funding for obtaining and delivering data from the buoys in Washington state. That led Sen. Cantwell—who sits on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee—to confront NOAA Administrator Jane Lubchenco at a March 7, 2012 hearing, saying: "Cutting back on science that is important for jobs and the economy can't be substituted." Lubchenco admitted during the hearing that cutting the funding for ocean acidification monitoring "is one of those choices that I'm not happy about because it's a program that is very, very important. We will continue to do monitoring; it's not that we're not doing anything. We won't be able to do it at the scale we would like to do it."

Other fixes shellfish hatcheries can employ include filling the tanks later in the day, when the water has warmed and the pH has increased, and running the water over clam or oyster shells before filling tanks, which also increases pH. It's an imperfect process, but workable, for now. ☺

*BRITA BELLI is author of The Autism Puzzle: Connecting the Dots Between Environmental Toxins and Rising Autism Rates (Seven Stories Press). This article originally appeared in E Magazine, which she edits.*

**doit**

**WORDS**

**WED., MARCH 27**

**BOYNTON POETRY CONTEST:** All residents of Whatcom County—regardless of age—are invited to submit poems to the annual Sue C. Boynton Poetry Contest until March 31. Winning poems are displayed for a year in front of the library and on WTA buses, and will be read at a public awards ceremony May 16.

WWW.BOYNTONPOETRYCONTEST.WORDPRESS.COM

**THURS., MARCH 28**

**SKAGIT WRITERS WORKSHOP:** Award-winning author Susan Wingate will focus on self-publishing at a Skagit Valley Writers League workshop from 6:30-8:30pm at the Burlington Public Library, 820 E. Washington. Sign up in advance for the free event.

WWW.SKAGITWRITERS.ORG

**RAGGEDY MAN:** Bellingham-based musician and writer Clyde Cutley reads from his debut novel, *Raggedy Man: A Detective Toussaint Mystery*, at 7pm at Village Books, 1200 11th St.

WWW.VILLAGEBOOKS.COM

**MARCH 29-30**

**POET AS ART:** Seattle poets Raul Sanchez and Marjorie Manwaring will share their words at "An Evening with the Poet As Art" from 7-8:30pm Friday at the Lucia Douglas Gallery, 1415 13th St. From 10:30am-3pm Saturday, they'll lead a poetry writing workshop focused on the "Persona Poem" at Egress Studio, 5581 Noon Rd. Entry is free to the first event, \$55 for the second.

398-7870

**SAT., MARCH 30**

**STORYTELLING FUNDRAISER:** Members of the Bellingham Storytellers Guild will be joined by music-minded friends for a "Symphony in BE Natural: Stories from the World of Nature" Procession of the Species fundraiser at 3pm at the Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship, 1207 Ellsworth St. Tickets are \$10 per person or \$15 per family.

714-9631 OR WWW.BPOIS.ORG

**MON., APRIL 1**

**POETRYNIGHT:** The weekly word-related gathering known as Poetrynight is back in action! Those looking to share their verse can sign up at 7:30pm at the Black Drop Coffee House, 300 W. Champion St. Readings start at 8pm. Entry, per usual, is free.

WWW.POETRYNIGHT.ORG

**TUES., APRIL 2**

**A GESTALT LIFE:** Cynthia Sheldon shares ideas from her new book, *Gestalt As A Way of Life*, at 7pm at Village Books, 1200 11th St. She includes descriptions from founder Fritz Perls, her own experiences, and shows similarities to Buddhism, Eckhart Tolle's teachings, and the Navajo way of life.

673-2626

**WED., APRIL 3**

**HOMELESS HOMELAND:** Pamela Olson reads from her autobiographical book *Fast Times in Palestine: A Love Affair with a Homeless Homeland* at 7pm at Village Books, 1200 11th St.

WWW.VILLAGEBOOKS.COM

**THURS., APRIL 4**

**CHUCKANUT RADIO HOUR:** Jennie Shortridge, author of *Love Water Memory*, will be the featured author at the monthly

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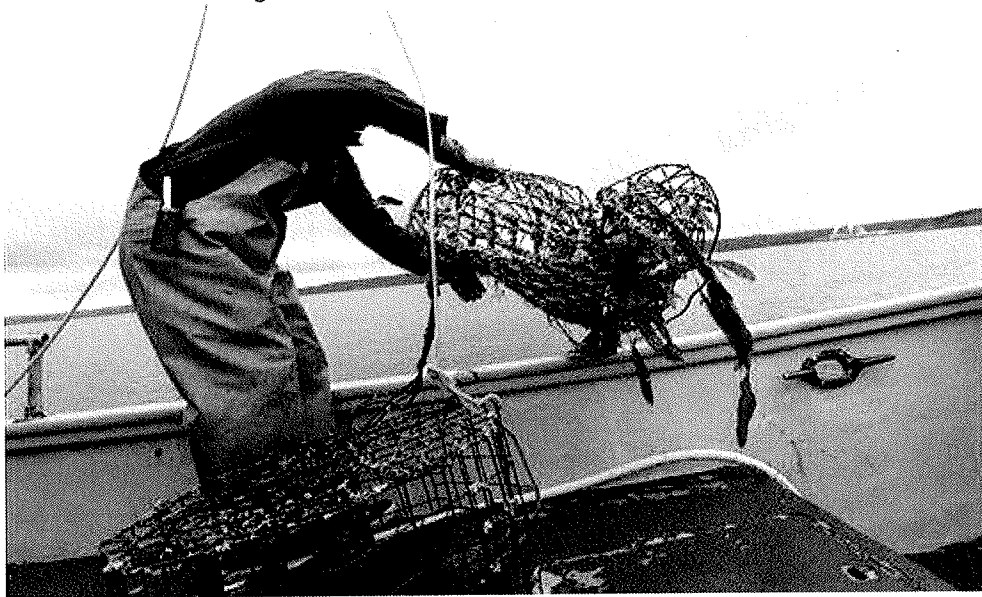
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## Divers seek lost crab pots in Washington waters

By MANUEL VALDES

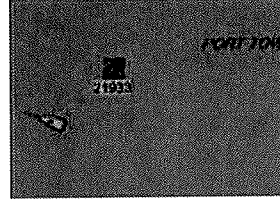
Associated Press September 4, 2014

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In this photo taken June 12, 2014, biologist Paul Rudell pulls a derelict crab pot aboard in Port Townsend, Wash. Over 12,000 crab pots are lost in Washington state's Puget Sound every year, costing an estimated \$700,000 in lost in harvest revenue, and further, damaging the sea floor environment.  
ELAINE THOMPSON — AP Photo







PORT TOWNSEND, Wash. — Over 12,000 crab pots are lost in Washington state's Puget Sound every year, costing an estimated \$700,000 in lost harvest revenue, and more poignantly, damaging the sea floor environment. Using sonar to find the pots, divers and scientists venture into the waters to clean up and learn why pots are lost.

—THE PROBLEM:

Recreational and commercial crabbing in Washington's inland waters is a popular pastime and an important seafood industry. But thousands of crab pots are lost every year, abandoned on the sea floor. The lost pots continue to attract Dungeness and red-rock crabs for up to two years, trapping them until they die. The dead crabs then attract more crabs. "It just keeps on self-baiting itself," said Joan Drinkwin, programs director at the Northwest Straits Foundation, which spearheaded the crab pot cleanup project a decade ago.

—THE DAMAGE:

Crabs are not an endangered or threatened species, so what's the issue? Scientists have estimated that a derelict crab pot can impact up to 30-square-feet of the sea floor around it, depending on where the pot landed. For example, a pot digging out cavities in the sea floor can damage eel grass beds. "If you think about 12,000 pots sitting out there every year, and you add that up, the numbers are pretty alarming in terms of the kind of impact they are having on marine habitat," Drinkwin said.

—THE CAUSES:

Research by the Northwest Straits Foundation has found a variety of reasons why pots are left behind. Lines attached to the pots can be cut by boats, a problem exacerbated when people place pots in heavily used waterways. Badly tied knots can come undone. Pots are left in water that's too deep for the line. And sometimes, even sabotage among competing fishermen is a cause. "We see people putting their pots in the middle of ferry lanes. And obviously that's a terrible place to put your pot," Drinkwin said.

—THE CLEANUP:

After using sonar to pinpoint crab pots on the sea floor, a diver plunges into the cold, dark Puget Sound waters using a rope with a weight thrown near the pot as a guide. Once the pot is found, it's tied to the rope and reeled in. The team uses divers in an attempt to minimize the impact on the sea floor. In a 2010 trip to Boundary Bay near the U.S.-Canada border, the team found over 1,000 pots in a 6-square-mile area. "When the divers went down to remove them, they tripped over the pots," Drinkwin said.

—CRAB POTS AREN'T ALONE:

More than 336,000 animals from more than 240 species have been found in derelict fishing nets and crab pots, according to the foundation. The nets have killed porpoise, sea lions, Chinook salmon and many more species. Since 2002, the Northwest Strait Foundation teams have removed 4,700 nets and 3,400 crab pots from the Puget Sound. The law now requires fishing vessels to report a lost net, and there's no penalty.

—FIXING THE PROBLEM:

Crabbing is relatively easy and accessible, but that also leads to people setting up pots without knowing how to do it well. Drinkwin and her teams can't pick up every crab pot left behind. So they've been focusing on areas with high concentrations of pots. "We recognized that what really needs to happen is a

combined approach that includes some targeted removals in areas where the concentrations of derelict crab pots may be having an ecological impact in the area, combined that with really aggressive prevention campaigns that will educate crabbers how not to lose their pots and also we want to work more to making sure that crab pots used in Puget Sound have appropriate escape mechanisms," Drinkwin said.

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## Join The Conversation

Bellingham Herald is pleased to provide this opportunity to share information, experiences and observations about what's in the news. Some of the comments may be reprinted elsewhere in the site or in the newspaper. We encourage lively, open debate on the issues of the day, and ask that you refrain from profanity, hate speech, personal comments and remarks that are off point. Thank you for taking the time to offer your thoughts.

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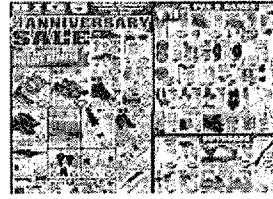
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## Bellingham, Birch Bay beach cleanups set for July 5

BY MATTHEW THOMPSON  
THE BELLINGHAM HERALD July 3, 2014



Two separate beach cleanups are planned for Saturday, July 5, to clear the beaches of the Independence Day litter.

Northwest Straits Chapter of the Surfrider Foundation is holding an interpretive walk from 1 to 2 p.m. followed by a beach cleanup from 2 to 4 p.m. at Locust Beach, also known as Whirlwind Beach.

Locust Beach is located on Locust Avenue off Marine Drive in north Bellingham. Parking is limited; participants should bike or walk to the beach. Surfrider Foundation will supply volunteers with cleanup gear.

Birch Bay Chamber of Commerce is hosting a cleanup from 8 a.m. to noon. Those interested in lending a hand are asked to meet at 7900 Birch Bay Drive. Latex gloves and garbage bags will be provided for volunteers, but bringing tools from home is encouraged.

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**Families** AUGUST 20, 2015

# Planting, beach cleanups, volunteer options for families



Cora Burns, 8, and her mother, Analiese Burns, plant a bush during a volunteer work party to plant trees and other native plants Whatcom Falls Park in Bellingham. The 2015 event was coordinated by Americorps members, the Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association and the City of Bellingham. **PHILIP A. DWYER**  
- THE BELLINGHAM HERALD

BY SAMANTHA WOHLFEIL  
The Bellingham Herald

Between jumping in puddles and leaf-piles this



fall, consider taking the family out for a few hours to volunteer at one of the many weekend work parties in the area.

## Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association

Nearly every weekend from mid-October through early December, the Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association, known as NSEA, hosts family-friendly work parties in a variety of locations throughout Whatcom County. The work usually involves removing invasive species, planting native species, and other tasks to help restore salmon habitat.

Older kids can volunteer on their own, as long as they have signed adult permission. Parents or guardians should accompany younger volunteers. NSEA provides the work gloves and tools; volunteers are asked to come dressed for the weather and to wear long pants and sturdy shoes.

For information on specific parties, go to [n-sea.org/work-parties](http://n-sea.org/work-parties).

## Bellingham Parks and Recreation

Every Saturday morning from mid-September through the first week of December, Bellingham Parks and Recreation Department hosts outdoor work parties that allow even the tiniest volunteers to get their hands dirty.

"We almost always have families, so we're very masterful at finding things for everyone to do," said Rae Edwards, parks volunteer coordinator. "It's part of engaging the community: not

turning anybody away if we can.”

Similar to NSEA, the parks’ volunteer days tend to focus on removing invasive plants and putting in native ones to keep the parks looking sharp.

Volunteers should wear long pants and closed-toe shoes, and dress for the weather. The city provides gloves and tools and has staff available to help direct everyone for the day’s project. Older kids who volunteer without their parents need a signed liability release form.

To find a list of this fall’s volunteer opportunities, go to [cob.org](http://cob.org), search “parks volunteer program” and click on the first link.

## Locust Beach Cleanup

As part of International Coastal Cleanup Day put on each year by Ocean Conservancy, local environmental groups will gather at Locust Beach to pick up trash and log how much they find. The one-day event will take place 10 a.m. to noon Saturday, Sept. 19.

Whatcom County Marine Resources Committee, Northwest Straits Chapter of the Surfrider Foundation, North Sound Kiteboarding Association, and RE Sources for Sustainable Communities will host this year’s cleanup. Volunteers are asked to meet on the beach, located at the end of Locust Avenue, off of Marine Drive. Parking is extremely limited along the side of the road.

To get to the beach, walk to the end of the road, cross under the train tracks, then follow the trail on the right. The beach is rocky, and volunteers

are advised to wear weather-appropriate clothes.

After everyone gathers trash from the beach, volunteers will tally up how many pieces of plastic, bottles, cans, and other debris are picked up, said Eleanor Hines of Northwest Straits. The information is sent back to Ocean Conservancy to be put into a worldwide database.

Garbage pickup supplies will be provided, and light snacks and refreshments will be available. The event is part of this year's Whatcom Water Weeks.



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## Locals train to become North Sound Stewards

Front Page News, News May 23, 2018



es.

More than 20 volunteers attended a training exercise about protecting marine resources in the Salish Sea at the BP Heron Center at Birch Bay State Park on May 5, said RE Sources for Sustainable Communities representative Eleanor Hines.

Called North Sounds Stewards, the program is led by RE Sources for Sustainable Communities and the Whatcom County Marine Resources Committee. Through the program, volunteers learn how to conduct intertidal surveys, forage fish surveys, plastics monitoring and sea star wasting syndrome surveys and more.

The Northwest Straits Initiative, the Northwest Straits Chapter of the Surfrider Foundation and the Cherry Point and Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserves Citizen Stewardship Committees also support the program.

To learn more about North Sound Stewards, visit [re-sources.org/north-sound-stewards](http://re-sources.org/north-sound-stewards).



POSTED BY STEFANIE DONAHUE



Home » News » Story

NEWS

## Rep. Larsen visits WWU researchers and LGBT group

3 WEEKS AGO IN LOCAL

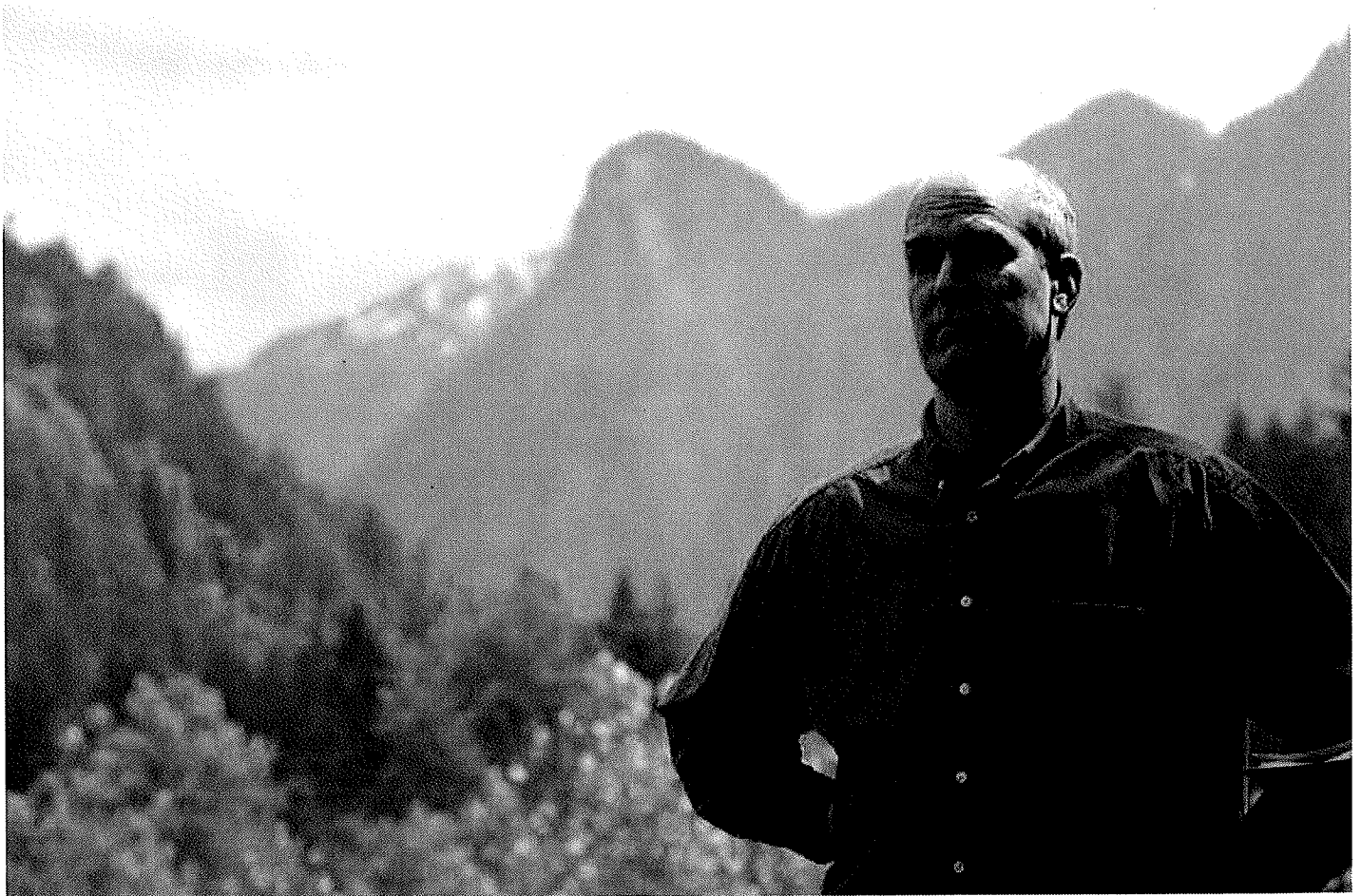


PHOTO: KGMI

**8-9-2018**

ANACORTES, Wash. — Congressman Rick Larsen is visiting Skagit County Thursday.

Larsen's office announced he will tour the Fidalgo Bay Olympic Oyster Restoration project with the Skagit County Marine Resources Committee.

He will also visit WWU students at the Shannon Point Marine Center in Anacortes to hear about some of their current research.

Larsen will end his visit after a meeting with leaders of the Skagit chapter of PFLAG (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) to discuss the impact of legislation on their lives.

Congressman Larsen (D) is currently running for a tenth term, and is the front runner of a group that has no challenger from the Republican party.

TAGS: 790 KGMI, 790 KGMI LOCAL NEWS, ANACORTES, CONGRESSMAN RICK LARSEN IS VISITING SKAGIT COUNTY THURSDAY, FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, FIDALGO BAY, KGMI, KGMI 790, KGMI 790 LOCAL NEWS, KGMI 790 LOCAL NEWS COVERAGE, KGMI LOCAL NEWS, LGBT, LOCAL NEWS COVERAGE 790 KGMI, MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE, OYSTER HARVESTING, OYSTERS, PFLAG, REP. LARSEN VISITS WWU RESEARCHERS AND LGBT GROUP, REP. RICK LARSEN, SHANNON POINT MARINE CENTER, SKAGIT COUNTY, WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY, WWU

STORY © 2018 KGMI - IMAGES © 2018 KGMI

April 19, 2018

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# The Northern Light

Blaine and Birch Bay's Community Newspaper

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## Upcoming trainings to focus on marine species, habitats in the Salish Sea

Front Page News, News April 18, 2018



courtesy of RE Sources for Sustainable Communities

By Stefanie Donahue

As part of the North Sound Stewards program, residents in Whatcom and Skagit counties can learn how to protect marine resources in the Salish Sea during two training opportunities in May.

Led by RE Sources for Sustainable Communities and the Whatcom County Marine Resources Committee, the program calls on citizen scientist volunteers to conduct intertidal surveys, forage fish surveys, plastics monitoring and sea star wasting syndrome surveys and more.

"The information we collect provides a baseline of data that informs policy, restoration efforts, cleanups and more," said North Sound

baykeeper and lead scientist at RE Sources, Eleanor Hines in a press release. "Citizen scientists are integral to support important work that underfunded agencies cannot do themselves."

Participation in at least one free training is required to join the North Sound Stewards.

Next month, the public can take part in two trainings, offered from noon to 4:30 p.m. on Saturday, May 5 at the BP Heron Center at Birch Bay State Park, 7290 Birch Bay Drive, and from noon to 4:30 p.m. on Sunday, May 6 at Fidalgo Bay Resort, 4701 Fidalgo Bay Road, in Anacortes.

Volunteers must be willing to commit 50 hours of trainings and surveys over one year. All ages and abilities are welcome; individuals age 18 and younger must be accompanied by an adult.

"People across generations and experiences find it especially rewarding to get outside and quantify the plants and animals that they would see on a casual beach walk," said Whatcom County Marine Resources Committee member and program participant, Chris Brown.

He added, "You don't have to come to a beach survey knowing a bunch about mussels, tides or data collection, but you'll leave having learned something of great value."

The Northwest Straits Initiative, the Northwest Straits Chapter of the Surfrider Foundation and the Cherry Point and Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserves Citizen Stewardship Committees also support the program.

To learn more about North Sound Stewards, visit [re-sources.org/north-sound-stewards](http://re-sources.org/north-sound-stewards).



POSTED BY STEFANIE DONAHUE





February 12, 2018

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# The Northern Light

Blaine and Birch Bay's Community Newspaper



## Whatcom County accepting applications for board and commission vacancies

Print Page | News | Whatcom County | 2018

By Stefanie Donahue

There are a number of vacancies on various county boards and commissions ready to be filled by eager applicants. The deadline to apply for one of them is 10 a.m. on Tuesday, January 9.

All positions are appointed by either Whatcom County Council or county executive Jack Louws.

Eligible applicants must live and be registered to vote in Whatcom County and must also meet residency, employment and, if applicable, other, more specific, requirements. Applications can be found online at [bit.ly/2ogYPSI](http://bit.ly/2ogYPSI) or picked up at the Whatcom County Executive's office, 311 Grand Avenue, suite 108 in Bellingham.

Here's a full list of positions that are open to residents in north Whatcom County:

**Agricultural Advisory Committee:** one vacancy for an agricultural programs expert serving a four-year term. The committee meets monthly from October through April and implements policies and tasks that help sustain Whatcom County's agricultural industry.

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance Committee:** three vacancies for positions serving a three-year term. The committee meets as needed to help the county ensure its facilities and programs are ADA-accessible.

**Behavioral Health Advisory Board:** one vacancy for a mental health recovery advocate serving a three-year term. The board meets bi-monthly and advises the county health department on matters related to behavioral health programs.

**Bellingham-Whatcom County Commission Against Domestic Violence:** one vacancy for a human service provider and one vacancy for a health care provider for positions serving a four-year term. The commission meets monthly to help victims of domestic violence.

**Bicycle-Pedestrian Advisory Committee:** four vacancies for positions serving a four-year term. The committee meets monthly to develop programs that improve safety for bikers.

**Climate Impact Advisory Committee:** 11 vacancies for positions that require work or educational experience on matters related to climate change, renewable energy development, energy conservation, the energy sector, waste reduction, food security and more.

**County Appeals Board:** one vacancy for an at-large position and two vacancies open to members of the construction trade serving a three-year term. The board meets as needed and reviews rules on appeals of orders made by building officials or fire marshals.

**Development Standards Technical Advisory Committee:** two vacancies for positions that require knowledge of development standards and serve a maximum of two, two-year terms. The committee meets as needed and reviews Whatcom County Development Standards.

**Developmental Disabilities Board:** three vacancies for positions serving a three-year term. The board advises the county about services for individuals with developmental disabilities.

**Drayton Harbor Shellfish Protection District:** four vacancies for positions serving various term lengths. Members meet each month and issue recommendations to the Whatcom County Council about ways to restore water quality in the Drayton Harbor Shellfish Protection District.

**Ethics Commission:** one vacancy for a position serving a four-year term. The commission meets as needed and receives complaints of ethics violations and administers the Code of Ethics.

**Flood Control Zone District Advisory Committee:** eight vacancies serving various term lengths. The committee advises the county's board of supervisors on flood-related issues.

**Forestry Advisory Committee:** one vacancy for a commercial forest landowner or qualified candidate and two vacancies for forest product manufacturers serving various term lengths. The committee advises the county council about issues that impact the forestry industry.

**Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force:** six vacancies for positions serving various term lengths. The task force reviews Whatcom County's criminal justice and behavioral health programs and recommends ways to reduce the rate of incarceration.

**Lummi Island Ferry Advisory Committee:** one vacancy for an individual that does not reside or own property on Lummi Island. The committee meets monthly and issues recommendations to the county council and executive about issues that impact ferry service on the island.

**Marine Resources Committee:** three vacancies for positions serving four-year terms. The committee recommends actions to local authorities to address marine-related issues.

**Northwest Senior Services Board:** two vacancies for positions serving a three-year term. The board advises the Area Agency on Aging to meet the needs of the local aging population.

**Open Space Advisory Committee:** four vacancies. The committee advises the county assessor about open space, agricultural and timber lands.

**Planning Commission:** one vacancy for a position serving a four-year term. The commission assists with the preparation and execution of the comprehensive plan and issues recommendations to the planning and development services department, among other things.

**Public Health Advisory Board:** two vacancies for positions serving a four-year term. The board meets once every other month and advises the health department about county programs.

**Purchase of Development Rights Oversight Committee:** four vacancies for positions that serve a four-year term. The committee meets on a quarterly basis and oversees the Agricultural Purchase of Development Rights program for the county.

**Rural Library Board:** one vacancy for a position serving a five-year term. The board meets monthly and adopts policies that govern the Whatcom County Library System.

**Solid Waste Advisory Committee:** six vacancies serving a three-year term. The committee advises the county about solid waste issues.

**Surface Mining Advisory Committee:** one vacancy is open to an ecologist serving a four-year term. The committee meets as needed and oversees the surface mining regulatory program.

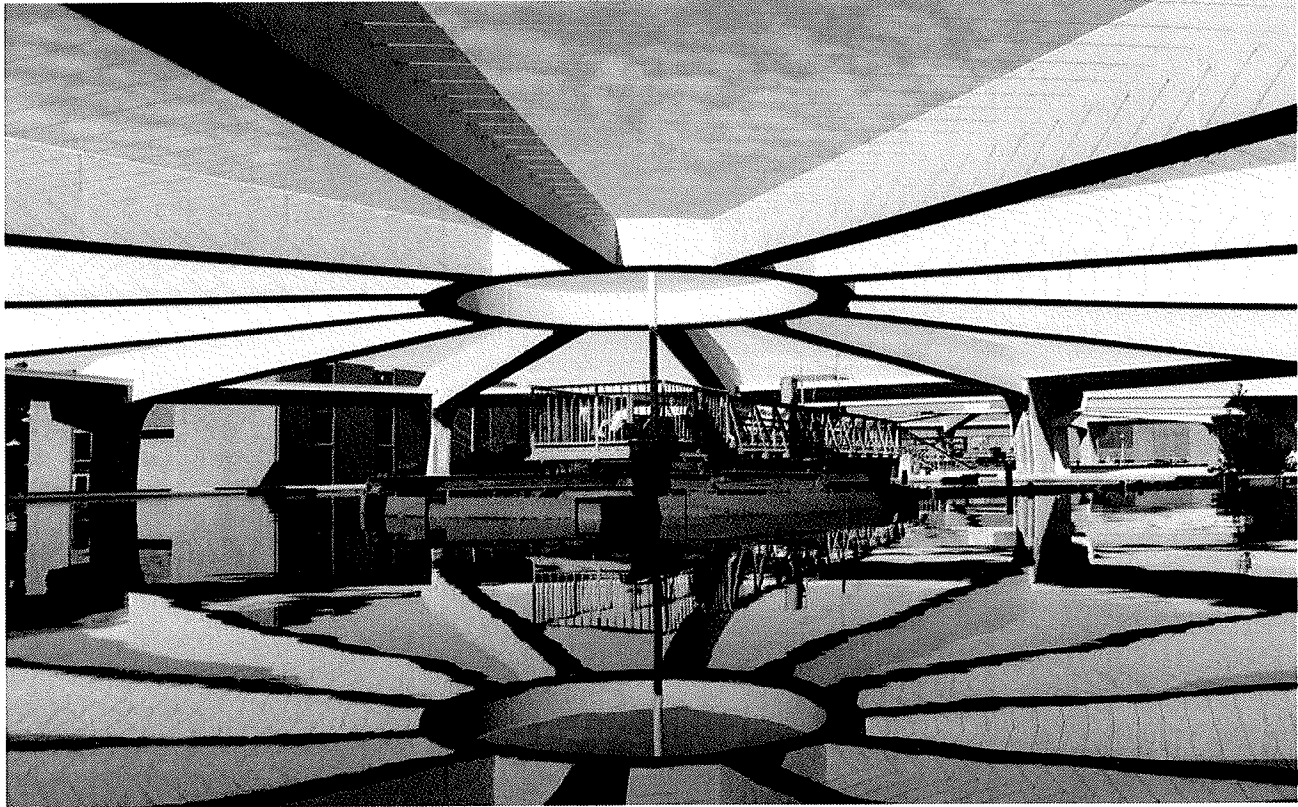
**Veteran's Advisory Board:** four vacancies for positions open to veterans serving a four-year term. The board meets monthly and advises the county on needs of local indigent veterans.

**Wildlife Advisory Board:** 11 vacancies for positions serving a four-year term.

For more details about the board and commission positions listed above, visit [bit.ly/2zfPXjn](http://bit.ly/2zfPXjn).



POSTED BY STEFANIE DONAHUE



LOCAL

## Guided hikes, tours, activities celebrate importance of water

BY ROBERT MITTENDORF  
*[rmittendorf@bhamherald.com](mailto:rmittendorf@bhamherald.com)*

September 14, 2017 03:56 PM

Updated September 15, 2017 04:43 PM

Whatcom Water Week, which starts this weekend and ends with the SeaFeast festival on Sept. 22-23, features a variety of activities that focus on the importance of clean water to the environment.

Events include films, demonstrations, outings and a work party for Coastal Cleanup Day on Saturday. Most events and activities are free, including documentaries at the Pickford Film Center. Check the online schedule for details at [whatcomwaterweeks.org/events](http://whatcomwaterweeks.org/events).

It starts with the annual Run with the Chums 5K Fun Run/Walk from 10 a.m. to noon Saturday at BP Highlands, 4900 Brown Road, Blaine.

Also Saturday is a “Salmon Sighting” to see spawning pink salmon with the Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association from 10 a.m. to noon at the Thompson Creek Bridge on Glacier Creek Road off the Mount Baker Highway east of Glacier.

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From 10 a.m. to noon Saturday is a cleanup at Locust Beach as part of the Ocean Conservancy’s International Coastal Cleanup Day. Trash bags and gloves will be provided.

A guided Nooksack River walk is 3-4 p.m. Saturday at the Horseshoe Bend Trail across from the Douglas Fir Campground on the Mount Baker Highway east of Glacier. This guided walk repeats 3-4 p.m. Sept. 23.

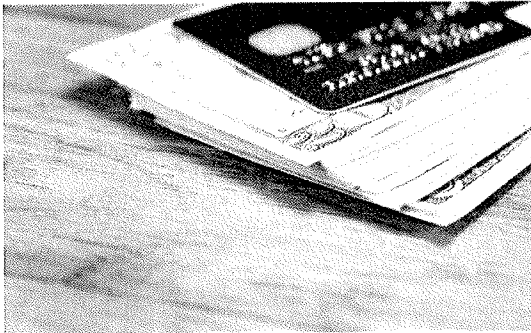
From 9 a.m. to noon Sunday is a “Meet Your Underwater Neighbors” guided tideflat walk at Marine Park with naturalists from the Marine Life Center and Marine Resources Committee.

Other events include tours of the Bellingham Wastewater Treatment Plant from noon to 1:30 p.m. Tuesday at 200 McKenzie Avenue; and the Lynden Water Treatment Facility from 9-11 a.m. Wednesday at 524 Riverview Road.

A guided Whatcom Creek habitat tour is at 6 p.m. Thursday, meeting at the lower Civic Athletic Complex parking lot, at the corner of Fraser and Puget streets.

*Robert Mittendorf: 360-756-2805, @BhamMitty*

COMMENTS ▼



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By NextAdvisor



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## OUTDOORS



# What's the Point?

## LOW-TIDE LESSONS AT POINT WHITEHORN

BY KIM CLARKIN WEDNESDAY, JUNE 12, 2019

On a calm, gray day in March, I hiked the forested trail at Whatcom County Parks' Point Whitehorn Marine Reserve, keen to see what the beach looked like after a recent herring spawn I had heard about.

Hopping across driftwood onto the cobble beach at the base of the stairs, I was delighted to see and hear crowds of scoters moving to and fro, clucking among themselves, occasionally diving. They were accompanied by gulls, a few grebes, cormorants and



### ATTEND

**What:**

What's the Point?

**When:** 9 am

Sat., Jun. 15

**Where:** Point

Whitehorn Marine Reserve

**Cost:** Free

## EVENTS

### TODAY

#### FAIRHAVEN SUMMER REPERTORY THEATRE

🕒 8:00PM | FIREHOUSE

ARTS & EVENTS CENTER

#### BOATING CENTER OPEN

🕒 10:00AM | COMMUNITY

BOATING CENTER

#### SKAGIT TOURS

🕒 12:00PM | HIGHWAY 20.

#### SKAGIT TOURS

🕒 12:00PM | HIGHWAY 20.

#### PLOVER FERRY RIDES

🕒 12:00PM | BLAINE

HARBOR

#### SKAGIT TOURS

🕒 12:00PM | HIGHWAY 20.

#### BLAINE HARBOR MUSIC FESTIVAL

🕒 12:00PM | BLAINE

#### PLOVER FERRY RIDES

🕒 12:00PM | BLAINE

HARBOR

#### SKAGIT GUIDED ADVENTURES

## Cascadia Weekly

from the beach.

Picking my way down the beach, I saw little white balls sticking to the seaweed left by the last tide.

Herring eggs! *That's* what the birds were after!

These eggs probably weren't from the famous Cherry Point herring—they spawn in April and May, later than any other Salish Sea herring population. Still, it was wonderful to see herring eggs back on the Cherry Point beach, where they used to be so thick you could be up to your knees in eggs on seaweed.

Those special herring are why the Department of Natural Resources established the Cherry Point Aquatic Reserve almost 10 years ago. Their numbers had plummeted, and remained low even after a decade of fishing prohibition. One of the main goals of the Reserve was to protect the aquatic habitat and, if possible, create conditions that would result in population recovery.

Herring do still spawn in April and May—around Birch Point—but their numbers are not increasing. Nonetheless, Cherry Point water quality consistently rates as cleaner than more southerly areas of the Salish Sea where the shoreline is more urbanized. You might already know that three companies maintain shipping piers here: BP, Phillips66, and Petrogas. Under the terms of their leases with DNR, they are required to maintain strict standards of water-quality protection. Also, because the companies need large protective buffer spaces around them, most of the Cherry Point bluffs are in a quasi-natural, vegetated state. Except for the herring, Cherry Point seems to be sustaining its extremely diverse community of intertidal plants and animals.

Would you like to see those animals and seaweed? Do you want to hear the extraordinary life stories of crabs, barnacles, sea anemones, sea cucumbers and sea stars? Do you know how an anemone catches a small crab? Can you imagine how a sea star eats a mussel? What are those lines of white dots on our purple sea stars? How do you suppose crabs mate? The intertidal

hatcomlandtr  
ust.org

Menu

MARINA

### SKAGIT TOURS

🕒 12:00PM | HIGHWAY 20.

### MISSOULA CHILDREN'S THEATRE

🕒 10:00AM | MOUNT BAKER

THEATRE

### SKAGIT TOURS

🕒 12:00PM | HIGHWAY 20.

### SHAKESPEARE THEATRE CAMP

🕒 2:30PM | FERNDALE

LIBRARY

### PLANT DIAGNOSTIC CLINICS

🕒 4:30PM | BELLINGHAM

PUBLIC LIBRARY

### PLANT DIAGNOSTIC CLINICS

🕒 4:30PM | BELLINGHAM

PUBLIC LIBRARY

### BOOKS ON TAP

🕒 6:30PM | EL AGAVE 2

### POETRY NIGHT

🕒 7:00PM | ALTERNATIVE

LIBRARY

### ARMCHAIR HISTORIANS

🕒 7:00PM | VILLAGE BOOKS

### JOVINO SANTOS NETO



## Cascadia Weekly

grow, and the annual “What’s the Point?” is a day to find out all about that world.

At low tide on Sat., June 15, a group of naturalists will be on the beach at Point Whitehorn Marine Reserve, eager to share these life-cycle stories with you. At the low tide, all ages are welcome and all ages will find things to be amazed and to wonder at.

In the parking lot off Koehn Road (just south of Birch Bay), the Whatcom Conservation District will have a watershed model where you can test how pollution travels in rivers and groundwater. The Marine Mammal Stranding Network will be there with pelts to touch and fun facts about seals, sea lions, otters, orcas and other whales. The Audubon Society will help you learn to identify birds in the upland forest, and forest ecologist Nick Sky will talk about how the forest plants work as he guides you down the upland trail. Geologist Dave Tucker will lead a geology walk on the beach at noon, stimulating your imagination about how glaciers formed our boulder beach as they receded. I hear there might be a scavenger hunt for kids with a sweet prize at the end.

Low tide is -1.5’ at 10:52am. Activities and tours start at 9am and continue until 1pm. Hosts for this event are the Whatcom Land Trust, Cherry Point Aquatic Reserve Citizens Stewardship Committee, RE Sources, and the Marine Life Center. Other organizations and enthusiasts who will be there to inform and entertain you about their work with the Salish Sea include Surfrider, Whatcom Marine Resources Committee, BBWARM, Washington Department of Natural Resources and its Puget Sound Corps, North Cascades Audubon Society, and the North Sound Stewards.

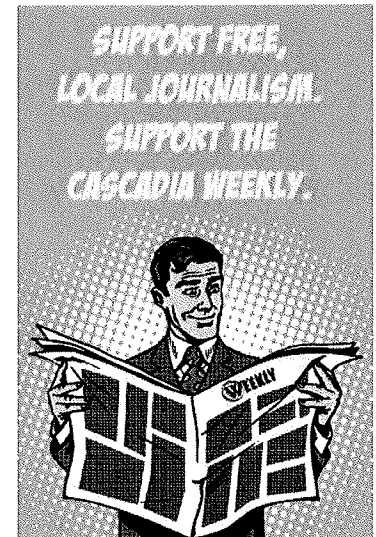
Please bring your own water bottle and lunch if you want to picnic. Pack it in, pack it out! This is a no-dog beach, so leave your canine companions at home. We look forward to seeing you there!

*Kim Clarkin is a member of Cherry Point Aquatic Reserve’s Citizens’ Stewardship Committee. Photo courtesy of Birch Bay resident Diane Hollands.*

CENTER

### GUFFAWINGHAM

🕒 9:00PM | FIREFLY LOUNGE



## TOMORROW

### FAIRHAVEN SUMMER REPERTORY THEATRE

🕒 8:00PM | FIREHOUSE

ARTS & EVENTS CENTER

### BOATING CENTER OPEN

🕒 10:00AM | COMMUNITY

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🕒 12:00PM | BLAINE