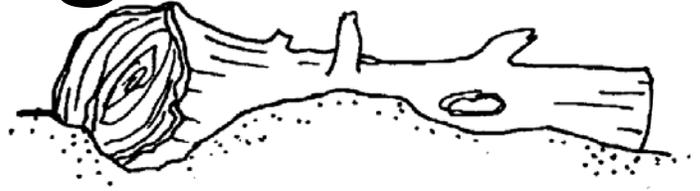




Beach Log

SEPT 2006

**Education,
Research,
Stewardship**



WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
ISLAND COUNTY EXTENSION

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Year-long spartina drift card project underway in Puget Sound and Canadian waters

Washington state is participating in a "drift card" project with Canada to determine how spartina cordgrass and other destructive, invasive marine plant seeds spread in salt waters of Washington and British Columbia. The bright orange 4-in. by 6-in. wooden plywood cards float on the same tides and currents as a potential spartina or marine plant seed, showing officials where they should look for new infestations.

Through next May, 600 cards will be launched each month from sites in Washington and Canada to determine where tides and currents take them. Launch sites in the U.S. are at South Skagit Bay in Snohomish County; Livingston Bay in Island County; and Turners Cove in Skagit County. Three additional sites are in Canada.

The Puget Sound Action Team, Washington State Department of Agriculture, and the Nature Conservancy are conducting the project in Washington. Ducks Unlimited Canada is conducting the project for Canada.

Persons finding the cards on shorelines are encouraged to telephone the Puget Sound Action Team, 1-800-547-6863, and report the finding. Persons are asked not to throw cards back in the water.

WSDA officials say the project will be particularly helpful in getting rid of spartina in north Puget Sound. Spartina, a very destructive pest weed that grows to heights of four or six feet each summer, converts salt

water mudflats to meadows, destroys shorebird and waterfowl habitat, and increases the threat of flooding.

In 1995 the Washington Legislature called spartina infestations in state mudflats an "environmental disaster." Legislation was passed that year aimed at its total eradication. Of the approximate thousand acres in Skagit, Snohomish, and Island counties infested with spartina in 1997, almost half has been eradicated by a coalition of government and private agencies and entities that include the

Washington State Department of Agriculture; Puget Sound Action Team; The Nature Conservancy; noxious weed boards in Skagit, Snohomish, Island, and Whatcom counties; Swinomish tribal community; Tulalip and Suquamish tribes; People for Puget Sound; Wildlands Management; University of Washington Olympic Natural Resource Center; Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife; and Washington State University. State officials believe spartina in north Puget Sound can be eradicated by 2010 or 2011.

For more information, contact the Puget Sound Action Team, at 1-800-

547-6863, or visit the organization's Website at www.psat.wa.gov. Information on spartina on the WSDA Web site is at www.agr.wa.gov/PlantsInsects/Weeds/default.htm.

Press release from Puget Sound Action Team

Each month there will be 600 bright orange 4-in. by 6-in. wooden plywood cards launched.

Call 1-800-547-6863 to report the finding.

Please do not throw the cards back in the water.



Monitoring Madness

Bob Lawes and Charlie Seablom noted big changes in the substrate at **West Sunset Beach** on July 13th. In contrast to previous years, this year there was virtually no sand high on the beach. Instead they found mostly cobble and gravel. In addition, terrain around the large erratic had washed away, creating a large tidepool that extended 30-40 feet on either side of the erratic and was 6-8 inches deep. The beach beyond the erratic was a wide expanse of sand. Charlie identified two sea lemons “parked” side by side head to tail next to a patch



Photo by: Charlie Seablom

Sunset beach Sea Lemon

of the breadcrumb sponge (*Halichondria*) that they feed on. The two-man team also saw four species of barnacles along the profile area: little brown (*Chthamalus dalli*), acorn (*Balanus glandula*), smooth white (*Balanus crenatus*), and thatched (*Semibalanus cariosus*), and they found a fifth species giant barnacle, (*Balanus nubalis*) about a quarter of a mile up the beach as they hiked back to their cars. Charlie Seablom monitored seven beaches this season and in addition, he recorded a species list for another beach on a non-monitoring day. Thank you Charlie!

Whidbey Island beach monitors closed out the season at **Clinton Old Town Beach** on August 9th. While rain showers peppered much of Whidbey Island

with rain that day, the skies over this beach remained dry. Winnie Wheeler and Bill Blair worked the profile poles while Evelyn Blair and Mary Kehl checked out the biota. Evelyn reports the presence of lots of tubeworms sticking up out of the sand and also large numbers of moon jellies washed up on the beach.

And here's a great big thank you to everyone who participated in the monitoring program this year! We couldn't do it without you. Congratulations on a job well done!

Mary Jo Adams, BW Class of 1999



New Zealand trip !!!

Deadline has changed!!!

Four more people are needed to sign up by **September 15** for this to be a Beach Watcher Fundraiser.

If you are thinking of joining this trip, sign up now. Call OAT (1-800-493-6824, extension #2 and give our booking number #G711420.

Dates: Jan. 4—18th 2007

Price: \$4475.11 round trip from Seattle, food, lodging, and tours.

Plan now to avoid the winter post-holiday blahs with a southern hemisphere summer excursion. Please contact Linda Ridder with questions or comments, and please let Linda know asap when you book your trip with OAT.

Linda Ridder, BW Class of 2005



Saltmarsh Dodder

A couple of years ago, after monitoring at Camano Island's English Boom beach, John Custer and I decided to take a look at a small nearby area of salt marsh. As expected, there was a lot of pickleweed (*Salicornia* sp.) there but we were surprised to see what looked like tangles of delicate orange dental floss wrapped around it. I had no idea what the string-like material was but John suggested that it might be dodder and that proved to be correct; we were seeing saltmarsh dodder (*Cuscuta salina*)

There are about 150 known species of dodder. Its closest relatives are the morning glories and dodder used to be included in the morning glory family (Convolvulaceae) but is now classified in a family of its own, Cuscutaceae. Dodders are parasitic plants and rely on their host plants for water and carbohydrate. Because they don't photosynthesize, they have no chlorophyll and their leaves are reduced to minute scales. Like the dodder we saw at English Boom, their color is often orange or yellow.

Dodder starts life as a seed that germinates into a seedling with a root anchoring it to the soil. The newly emerged filamentous stem immediately begins seeking a host plant. It has several days for this quest and if no host is found within that time, it depletes its energy store and dies. If luck holds and it finds a host, the dodder seedling wraps around it in a counterclockwise direction. Small bumps on the dodder stem called haustoria tap into the host's stem and the parasite/host bond is formed. With that connection, the dodder's root becomes superfluous and disappears. The stem will

twine upwardly around the host plant's stem following that same counterclockwise direction until it reaches the top, and then will form small flowers that later give way to seed-bearing fruit. Dodders usually do not kill their host plants, but sap their growth and vigor.

While some dodders are host-specific, our salt marsh dodder can grow on several species other than pickleweed, including *Jaumea carnosa*, another Island

County native with pretty yellow flowers and a nifty common name: salty Susan.

Speaking of common names, the dodders have some pretty imaginative handles as well: golden thread, witch's hair, devilguts, stranglegweed, and tanglegut. As you may have deduced from the names, some dodders are not very popular. They grow on agricultural crops and ornamentals, making them first class pests. As such, they are classified as noxious weeds. There is also an invasive Japanese dodder (*Cuscuta japonica*) that has recently been found in several states, including California. With a growth rate of six inches per day, seeds that can remain dormant for many years, and the ability to grow on a wide variety of broad leaved plants ranging from small vegetation like alfalfa to large trees, this invader is judged to be a real threat.

Dodder is just one of many fascinating plants on Island County beaches and

backshores. To learn about more of them, check out the recently expanded Shore Plants section of the EZ ID web pages at <http://www.beachwatchers.wsu.edu/ezidweb/shoreplants/index.htm>.

Mary Jo Adams, BW Class of 1999



Photo: Mary Jo Adams

Close look at Saltmarsh Dodder



Dates to Remember Upcoming Camano Island and Whidbey Island Events and Other Items of Interest



WHIDBEY ISLAND

Saturday, September 16, 2006, 4:30 to 8:30 p.m. *Waves and Wine!* Beach Watchers fundraiser cruise, including whale watching, dinner and wine. For more information call (360) 240-5558.

Thursday, September 21, 2006. *Whidbey Beach Watchers Monthly Meeting.* Trinity Lutheran Church, 6:15 p.m. Gary Wessen presents "The Archaeology of Whidbey Island." Public is welcome.

Saturday, September 23, 2006. *Beach Clean-up with Shell Oil.* Call Kristen at (360) 679-7391 for more information.

Thursday, September 28, 2006. *Climate Change, Water, and the Choices Ahead.* Bill Ruckelshaus speaks at the Whidbey Institute in Clinton, 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, October 3, 2006. *Whidbey Beach Watchers 2006 Class Training Begins Again!* Coupeville Recreation Hall, 9:00 a.m.

Thursday, October 19, 2006. *Whidbey Beach Watchers Monthly Meeting.* Race Road Fire Station, 6:15 p.m. Frances Wood speaks on her Pigeon Guillemot Bird Breeding Survey. All are welcome.

CAMANO ISLAND

Monday, September 11, 2006. *Camano Island Beach Watchers Monthly Meeting.* Hugh Shipman speaks at 9:00 a.m. Note: Labor Day forces this meeting to be held on the second Monday.

Saturday, September 16, 2006. *Forest Owners' Field Day,* an educational day with nearly 30 concurrent educational programs for those interested in forest management. Presented by WSU, US Department of Agriculture and Skagit County Extension programs, this will be held near Arlington. For more information go to <http://skagit.wsu.edu/forestry/> or e-mail Andy Perleberg at andy@wsu.edu.

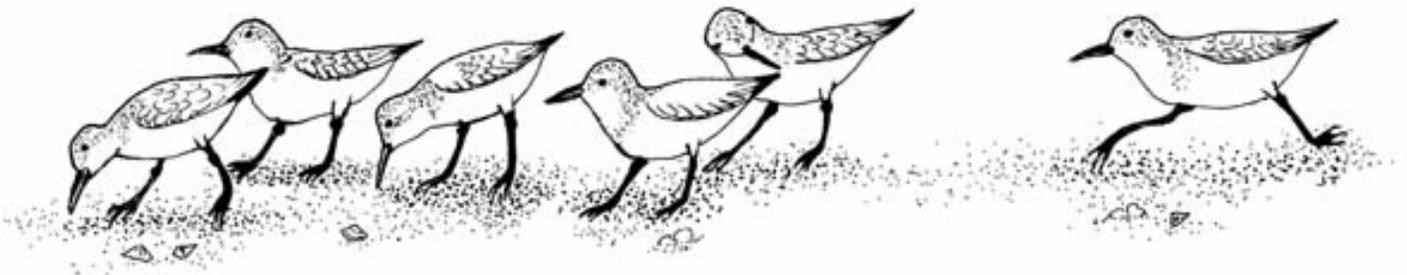
Thursday, September 28, 2006. *Public Hearing on the proposed Camano Island Non-Point Pollution Prevention Plan,* held at the Meadow Room at Four Springs. Sponsored by Island County and CIWMC. Time to be announced.

Saturday, September 30, 2006. *Free Plastic Pots Recycle and Exchange.* 9:00 AM—1:00 PM Follow directions from Kan Ku Rd (360) 387-3443 Ext. 258.

Saturday, September 30, 2006. *Sound Gardeners' Workshop.* Details will follow.

Thursday, October 12, 2006. *Camano Island Beach Watchers Monthly Meeting.*

Thursday, October 12, 2006. *Camano 101.* Mark your calendars now. Details will follow.





Whale Bones Collected

Eight dedicated Beach Watcher/Central Puget Sound Marine Mammal Stranding Network volunteers got together at Whidbey Island's Possession Beach Waterfront Park on Labor Day to salvage bones from a dead gray whale. The 29-foot animal, thought to be 2-3 years old at the time of its death, was originally spotted floating in the waters off Whidbey Island on July 21st. On July 24th, after the whale was towed to the isolated section of beach on Possession Point, scientists from Cascadia Research Collective in Olympia and also Dr. Stephen Raverty of Canada's Department of Fish and Oceans came to perform a necropsy. Volunteers later secured the skull from this animal to keep it in place and also collected the baleen as it loosened from the jaws.



Photo by: Mary Jo Adams

The Labor Day team that salvaged the gray whale skeleton are, from left, Davide Kane, Sandy Dubpernell, Matt Klope, Jill Hein, Marty Crowley, and Susan Berta.



Photo by: Mary Jo Adams

Davide Kane and Jill Hein clean up the gray whale skull before transport. .

Studies are being conducted to try to determine what killed this young whale. At the time of necropsy, it was found to have orca rake marks on the tail flukes, an abscess under the right front flipper, a heavy infestation of whale lice, and bruising and blood in the thoracic cavity. In addition, the blubber layer was thin, a sign of poor general health.

The Labor Day volunteers found that ribs and some of the vertebrae were missing, either washed away by the

tides or collected by souvenir hunters. The volunteers dug through the cetacean, salvaging the skeletal remains. After more than a month of summer heat, the carcass stunk to high heaven, and soon the volunteers did too. In addition to the skull, flipper bones and vertebrae were retrieved to be used for educational displays.

Mary Jo Adams, BW Class of 1999



Washington Lighthouse License Plates





Creosote log survey

On August 24 and 25 a group of Beach Watchers spent a few hours inspecting the stretch of beach from Admiralty Head to Perego's Lagoon for creosote logs and treated wood. Our goal was to find treated wood in all its forms and get a Global Positioning System (GPS) location for later removal. A few days earlier, Bob Buck and I had a brief look at the survey area and decided to do the southern part first. On August 24th the group met at Ebey's Landing and received a bit of training on what to look for. One team went north to check the beach up to the near end of Perego's Lagoon while another team headed south toward Fort Casey. The remaining teams went to Fort Casey and Admiralty Head, to work north.



Photo by Graham Johnson

Charlie Seablom and Graham Johnson a huge (approx. 16" x 6' x 10") piece of "creosoted" wood found on the beach near Fort Casey

At the end of the first day, over 500 pieces of creosote logs and other treated wood had been found, and that was just the stuff over two feet long. The next day everyone went to Perego's Lagoon because the beach there has a huge amount of driftwood. At the end of the second day we had recorded over 1,000 GPS entries, each entry representing between one and ten pieces of creosote or treated wood. We also found lots of trash; many shoes (none my size, and no pairs anyway), tires, and plastic bottles. This is a worthwhile project, so if you have the opportunity, do it.

Charlie Seablom, BW Class of 1993

Those Bad, BAD Invasive Tunicates

At the August Beach Watchers meeting, Judy D'Amore (a marine biologist from the Port Townsend Marine Science Center) spoke on invasive tunicates, especially nasty little critters that threaten our marine ecosystems. She also brought some for us to look at. There are three kinds of invasive tunicates in our waters at this time. They are *Didemnum* sp., *Styela clava* (club tunicate) and *Ciona savignyi*.

Possibly introduced to Puget Sound in ballast water, *Didemnum* is a non-native species, an aggressive invader and a threat to a variety of marine life including our commercial shellfish fisheries. With no natural predators in our area, it creates metabolic toxins while growing rapidly, taking over underwater real estate and smothering native species. Never try to take samples! Take only photographs. Just touching *Didemnum* can spread it to other sites via your dive gear or by simply breaking off pieces that will drift in the current and start new colonies. *Didemnum* has been successfully managed at Edmonds Underwater Park by covering it with plastic wrap and subjected it to increased salinity.

Styela clava (club tunicate), native to the waters of Korea, Japan, northern China and Siberia, is larger than *Didemnum* and also has no natural predators here. It has been found in Blaine, Neah Bay, Pleasant Harbor marinas and southern British Columbia. Club tunicates foul boat hulls, marina equipment and shellfish growing equipment, as they grow in extremely high densities to crowd out other marine species. It can reproduce every 24 hours, out-competing native organisms for space and food. Hand removal is the most reliable control method, while other methods being considered include exposure to air, extreme temperatures, and sprays or dips of high salt, hydrated lime, or acetic acid solutions.

Ciona savignyi is a translucent, gelatinous tunicate that has been found in the Des Moines Marina, Edmonds Marina, Tacoma Yacht Club, and in southern Hood Canal geoduck beds, competing with native and aquacultural species for both space and food. Like other tunicates, it gets nourishment by siphoning water through its system and trapping food particles in a mucous net in the oral cavity.

As filter feeders, tunicates impact the bottom of the food chain with the potential to affect the entire trophic system. The June 2006 *Beach Log* contains an article on the tunicate life style, and you can search on line for more information and photographs on invasive tunicates in Washington state.

Sammye Kempbell, BW Class of Spring 2003



WSU Beach Watchers
of Island County
present



WAVES & WINE

Saturday,
September 16th

A Sunset Dinner Cruise
featuring naturalist
Bart Rulon

“Waves and Wine,” a sunset cruise with the Beach Watchers

If you were lucky enough to have attended last year, you experienced a truly magical moment as a golden midsummer moon rose over the Deception Pass Bridge. The trip delivered on its promise to be a photographer's delight, from the gray whale splashing off the San Juan Island shore to the opportunity to capture that special sunset picture. As we returned to the marina at Anacortes, many of last year's sell-out crowd asked to be placed on the list again for this year. Good fellowship, food, wine, and the natural wonders of the San Juan Islands marked the inauguration of a Beach Watchers tradition.

This year's event is planned for Saturday, September 16 from 4:30 to 8:30 p.m..

Beach Watchers and friends will enjoy a catered dinner, including Penn Cove mussel appetizers, and wine as we relax and absorb the beautiful views. Cruise naturalist is Bart Rulon, a featured speaker at Sound Waters and highly respected wildlife author, artist, and photographer. You can visit his website at www.bartrulon.com. Surprises may include door prizes and auction items.

“Waves and Wine” begins at Island Adventures in Anacortes with the 4:30 p.m. check-in prior to boarding the Island Explorer II. The boat returns to the dock at 8:30 p.m.

The Island Explorer II is a 65-foot wildlife viewing boat, the pride of the fleet of Island Adventures (www.island-adventures.com) with two decks and ample indoor and outdoor seating. Should we encounter orcas, she is equipped with an underwater microphone/hydrophone.

Tickets are \$85 per person, with proceeds going to the WSU Island County Beach Watchers. Sorry, but no one under 21 years of age is permitted, and no tickets will be sold at the door. Bring your jacket, camera, binoculars and a good appetite, and be prepared to enjoy a wonderful, relaxing evening.

The cruise sold out last year, so call (360) 221-8856 and make your reservations now!

Carol “Finn” Gatewood, BW Class of 2006



Friends of Beach Watchers

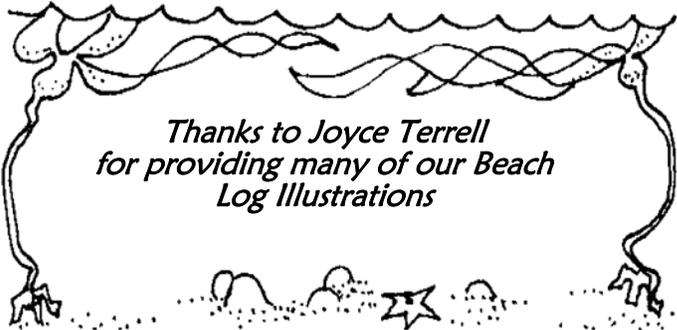
Thanks to all who give so generously to the Beach Watcher Program throughout the year. Many thanks, also, to those who give to our ongoing educational efforts but prefer to remain anonymous.



If you would like to learn more about the Beach Watcher Program, please contact Kristen Cooley, Program Coordinator at 360-679-7391 or kcooley@wsu.edu.

THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS

Town of Coupeville



Thanks to Joyce Terrell for providing many of our Beach Log Illustrations



"In the end we will conserve only what we love; We will love only what we understand;

We will understand only what we have been taught."

~ Baba Dioum, Senegalese ecologist



**DEADLINE FOR NEXT BEACH LOG
Oct 6, 2006**