



**Education,
Research,
Stewardship**

Beach Log

NOV/DEC 2009



WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
ISLAND COUNTY EXTENSION

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It's Good to Talk

...and the Beach Watcher Class of 2009 (the best yet, Monem,) is good at doing just that! We know we are as we're called to order (more than once) at Race Road Fire Station on 5th October 2009 to continue with training.

We are reminded of it again when we meet at Coupeville Recreation Hall on October 28th for graduation. We eat, talk and do what Sarah Woehrman, Beach Watcher co-ordinator, encouraged us to do on our first day – MINGLE. I suspect Sarah wishes she could eat her words as she glances around the room wondering how to raise her voice above the babble. She rises to the challenge. We shuffle into our seats as she takes the podium to address the gathering before introducing Don Meehan, Director of Washington State University Island County Extension.

Don (accompanied by pooch, Ollie), reminds us that he was one of the founder members of Beach Watchers in 1989. He confirms that we have a slight image problem – we are sometimes confused with 'Baywatch' (call that a problem?). My husband confides that this is what his co-workers thought when told I'd joined Beach Watchers. I can't tell you how flattered I am! Something must have worn off when I traveled in Pamela Anderson's slipstream visiting my mother in Ladysmith, Vancouver Island, where the film star once lived. Oh well, we can all dream...

After Don's address, Mark Preiss, Reserve Manager of Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve, gives a short talk. Gina Bull, representing Senator Mary Margaret Haugen, speaks of the Senator's support for Beach Watchers and future funding. The Port of Coupeville is well represented by: Benye Weber (President), Marshall Bronson (Vice President) and Jim Patton (Executive Director), who all express their appreciation and support for Beach Watchers.

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From left to right, Judy Feldman (WSU Acting Director), Jan Gross (Class of 2008) and Virginia Allen (Class of 2009) and Graham Johnson (Class of '2006).

Sarah Woehrman, BW Class of '09



It's Good to Talk *(continued)*



Everyone is appalled when Jim Patton relays the story of his experience after installing the harrowing photographs of the Orca captures in the kiosk at the end of the Wharf. The photographs had no text. None was needed.

Three families visited Jim's office after looking at the pictures. They wanted to know when the next capture would be so that they could experience it 'live'. My opinion of those individuals is not for inclusion in this Beach Log; it would be edited out. I will say only that knowing this level of ignorance exists proves to me what I already know – the need for education and why I have become a Beach Watcher.

Following this sobering tale, Graham Johnson, representing the Mayor of Langley, Paul Samuelson, relays a message from him of congratulation and thanks to Beach Watchers for their efforts.

Judy Feldman, Acting Director of WSU Island County, offers a 'thank you' to the class (and the training team) for the training we undertook; a 'welcome' to WSU Island County Beach Watchers; a 'challenge' for us to think about what we do – and good luck for the future.

After a few more words from Sarah, the moment we had all been waiting for arrived. GRADUATION! I am sure I speak for us all when I say that each and every one of us enjoyed our moment of glory as we stepped forward to shake hands with the assembled speakers. We appreciated and valued their support as we moved from the role of 'Beach Watcher in Training' to 'Beach Watcher'.

In the same way as mortar boards are thrown in the air at graduation, I had looked forward to doing that with the plastic badge I have suffered hanging round my neck on a piece of elastic. It caught in the wind when I crossed the car park and whipped my cheek; the elastic became hitched up in my collar; it never stayed straight.

Alas, my hopes of getting rid of it on Graduation Day were dashed. Sarah broke the sad news to us that our official badges would be a little late. At least the days of the plastic monstrosity are numbered – I can hardly wait!

Sandra Pollard-Snowberger, Class of '09



Thank You! Thank You! Thank You! Climate Stewards Class of 2009 Express Their Thanks for Local Food and Sustainable Living

Climate Stewards Class of 2009 has graduated! This year, 12 Island County trainees gained a comprehensive perspective on climate change science and factors that impact our climate and environment. Their course of study included classes on global and local impacts of climate change, carbon footprint, energy auditing, renewable energy, climate friendly schools and youth education programs on climate change, public transportation, agriculture and local foods, sustainable communities, communication about climate change and other topics. As in Beach Watchers training, Climate Stewards each gave a five-minute talk during the course of their studies, and these talks often served as the seed for their follow on work.

Here, you see some of our new Island and Skagit County Climate Stewards, feasting on a local grown-Thanksgiving smorgasbord. In upcoming months, you will see the following new Climate Stewards out there, educating others on all facets of climate change and sustainable living. Please don't hesitate to talk to the following graduates about what they learned: Pete D., Norm K., Sarah H. or Terry S. on Camano and Sooja N. (Master Gardener), Heather B. (Master Gardener), Kesti B., Mary H., Tillie S., Bill and Evelyn B. and Charlie S. on Whidbey! Their work has just begun.



Sarah Woehrman, Class of '09

Sarah Woehrman, Class of '09

“The roots of all goodness lie in the soil of appreciation for goodness.”

-The Dalai Lama

Camano and Whidbey Holiday Parties, 12/4 and 12/10



The Camano Beach Watcher Holiday Party will take place on Friday December 4th at the Camano Country Club. We would like to invite the Whidbey Beach Watchers to join us. Appetizers will be served from 5:30 - 6:30 PM, dinner 6:30 - 7:30 PM. We will have our usual auction and dinner will be followed by our Beach Watcher Talent Show. With Ann Finne on piano, and a great group of musicians this promises to be a great event. BUT without YOU it can't be!!

You are also invited to Whidbey Island's annual Beach Watchers Holiday Party on Thursday December 10, 2009 from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Freeland Hall in Freeland, the party festivities will include: potluck dinner, silent auction and holiday entertainment. Please reply to bwsocialevents@gmail.com if you're interested! Please contact the Newshams (suenewsham@juno.com) to donate an item to the auction!



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



FOR ALL BEACH WATCHERS

- Dec 15 BWAC Meeting.** 10am-noon. Admiralty Head Lighthouse, Coupeville.
- Dec 24 Reminder to ALL to enter their volunteer hours online or on paper AND to update their contact information in the online database to ensure you get the information you need in a timely manner in 2010!**
- Jan 9 4H Achievement Night** at Coupeville High School PAC
- Jan 12 Beach Watchers and LEP Annual Meetings.** Save the Date! More information to follow!
- Feb 6 Sound Waters, A One-Day University,** Coupeville.
- Feb 20 4H Super Saturday,** Coupeville
- Mar 20 Whidbey Gardening Workshop,** Coupeville

CAMANO EVENTS

- Dec 4 Holiday Party and Auction.** 5:30pm, Camano Country Club.
- Dec 7 Camano Island BWs Monthly Meeting.** 9:00 am to 12:00 noon Camano Center
- Dec 30 Camano Steering Committee** 10:00 am to 12:00 noon Camano Annex

WHIDBEY EVENTS

- Dec 7 Gloria Wahlin's Farewell.** 4-6pm at the Jenne Farm in Coupeville. RSVP to lincr88@comcast.net
- Dec 10 Holiday Party and Auction.** 5:30pm, Freeland Hall.
- Dec 29 Night Tidepooling,** ~7:45pm, RSVP to mjadams52@comcast.net
- Dec 30 Night Tidepooling,** ~7:45pm, RSVP to mjadams52@comcast.net

From Thanksgiving to Christmas, Admiralty Head Lighthouse is open on Saturday and Sunday from 11-4pm!

Come and shop locally!



Night Tidepooling Opportunity!

We have permission from Ranger Rick to go nighttime tidepooling again this year at Rosario Beach. Here is a list of December evenings with good low tides:

- Tues Dec. 1 -2.5 feet ~8:40pm
- Thurs Dec. 3 -3.1 feet ~10:15pm
- Tues Dec. 29 -2.2 feet ~7:45 pm
- Wed. Dec. 30 -2.9 feet ~8:30 pm



Keep in mind that Rosario can be dangerous under the best of conditions and being out on the slippery rocks at night time can make it even more treacherous. Anyone planning to come should dress for the weather, wear footwear with good traction, and each individual should bring at least two reliable lights (flashlights, lanterns, etc.). I don't have my new tidebook yet for 2010 so will send out a list of January low tides at a later date. Please let me know by email (mjadams52@comcast.net) if you want to come along on any of these evenings. Heavy rain, icy conditions, or strong winds will cause cancellation.

Thanks!

-Mary Jo Adams, Class of '99



Sound Waters 2010 Update and Request for Help!

“It seems that each year Sound Waters comes up with some amazing new classes. SW 2010 will be no exception. Planning is well under way for next year’s event – so mark your calendar now, it’s on Saturday, February 6th, at Coupeville High School. The theme for SW 2010 will be “Sound Thinking: Why Act? What Works?”

The Keynote Speaker will be Dr. Nathaniel Scholz, from NOAA Fisheries. Dr. Scholz is a resident of Whidbey Island, and his expertise is determining the impacts of human activities on the health of wild fish, especially Pacific salmon. He will tailor his keynote address around the theme.

Some of the “new for 2010” classes will cover acidity of the Sound; earthquakes, tsunamis and islands; underwater sound pollution; hummingbirds, and many more choices. The SW 2010 committee will be holding twice monthly meetings starting in October, on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of the month, 9:30 am at WSU office. If you’d like to become involved, feel free to attend the meetings.”

“Sound Waters – can you help?”

Sound Waters 2010 is fast approaching, and we’d love your help in spreading the word. Would you be willing to put up a Sound Waters flyer in your Community Center? Beach Club? Golf Club? Church? Anywhere there’s a bulletin board? There will be flyers available for pickup at the WSU office in Coupeville as of December 1st. Please help us to spread the word to all the communities on Whidbey and Camano.

For more information, go to www.beachwatchers.wsu.edu/soundwaters “

Jill Hein, Class of 2005

Check out Transition Whidbey

Maribeth Crandell invites you to get to know Transition Whidbey at a presentation on Dec. 8, 7-8pm at Oak Harbor City Hall. Here is a preview:

These are the darkest days of the year. It’s rainy, windy, cold and miserable. But we all know that soon the days will start growing longer and eventually spring will emerge as it has every year since the dawn of time. Birds will sing, the sun will shine, flowers will bloom and all will be right with the world. Right?

Not so fast. These dark days are reflected in our economy. There’s a 9.3% unemployment rate in Washington. Even those with jobs are losing benefits and raises, cutting back hours and budgets. Reports from financial wizards say that things might get worse before they get better. Food prices are escalating. The housing industry is still in a slump and experts warn of the passing of “peak oil”.

Out of these dark and dreary days comes Britt Walker, co-founder of Transition Whidbey. She’s smart, articulate, young and beautiful and her vision of a resilient relocalized community is like a blast of warm sun on a miserable winter day.

Come and meet this inspiring individual and learn about Transition Whidbey . . . And be inspired!



Maribeth Crandell Class of '93



Saltwater Seashell Soup (A Poem)

Mr. Moonsnail's favorite food
is saltwater seashell soup.
He makes it himself, when the tide is high,
with just his beak and some goop.

He glides along on his muscular foot
like all gastropods do,
and he hunts for a tasty clam in the sand,
most any bivalve will do.

Then into the clam he drills a small hole
right by the hinge of the shell
his beak-like radula, so sharp and so strong
it easily does the job well.

Then into the hole
he spits in some goop,
He slurps it all up,
mmm. seashell soup!



Poem and photo by Melody Kuschnerait, BW Class of '09

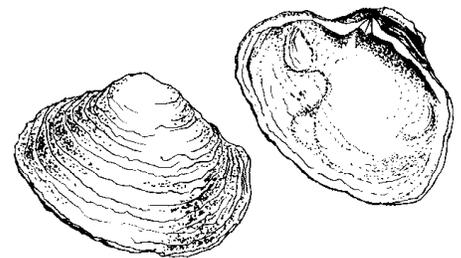
Update Your Addresses! Our Communication Depends on it!

Every day, I receive email. Not just a half dozen or a baker's dozen. I get the full meal deal—usually 30-100 each day. And while I know that my response to everyone is as important to you as your response is to me, sometimes, I run out of time. I leave those email responses that do not require an immediate response for another day. You may know how that goes. As way leads on to way . . . and there are so many hours in a day . . . I forget. This bothers me immeasurably because I really do care and want to respond. So I thought of something you might do to help reduce the “email load” that I am carrying around. If you have any email or mailing address changes, please enter our Beach Watchers database and update your contact information (contact info is found in the left column). Also, if you miss an update or Beach Log, please get in touch with me as soon as possible. Don't wait until months have passed without communication! I want to serve you well, as you serve Beach Watchers well. Thank you.

-Sarah Woehrman, Coordinator

Washington State Magazine features . . . “In Season: Clams”

In the Winter issue of *Washington State Magazine*, found online at <http://wsm.wsu.edu/s/index.php?id=758>, you will find a beautiful article by Hannelore Sudermann. It is fresh and inviting, like the meat of a newly opened clam! And in her article, accompanied by vivid photos, she writes not only of clams, but also of Eugene Thrasher and his Digging for Dinner program. If you enjoy a good video with a message that will touch each of us who have dug for our dinner at Penn Cove or Double Bluff, you can also visit: <http://wsm.wsu.edu/s/we.php?id=238>. Eugene is absolutely monumental!





More Words: To the Class of 2009 from the Coordinator!

The following is the Class of 2009 graduation speech given by Sarah Woehrman and included in the Beach Log at the request of BWAC President, Jackie Johnson.

WSU Beach Watchers wishes you, special guests, friends, family, staff, community members, Beach Watchers . . . a warm welcome to our Class of 2009 graduation and thank you for being here.

A famous opener from comedy to daily conversation is: do you come here often? Clearly, the answer among this group is: yes. And this is one, among many, threads that ties us firmly together.

This is the 20th year of WSU Beach Watchers. Since 1989, WSU Beach Watchers have been, as the name suggests, watching beaches. They have eyes and hands on that which is related to the beach and water quality across Island County and, more recently, Puget Sound. From

- monitoring life on and quality of beaches from Clinton to Camano Island . . .**
- cleaning bones for marine mammal displays at the Coupeville Wharf to Cama Beach . . .**
- verifying the safety of our shellfish for the Island County Health Department . . .**
- educating what is now over 550 citizens of Puget Sound annually at “A One-Day University for ALL” at Sound Waters in Coupeville . . . to**
- sharing the concept of stewardship of our invaluable environmental resources with audiences through hands on experiences on the beach through Beach Naturalist walks at Rosario Tidepools, Digging for Dinner clamming classes, and impromptu classes wherever people are curious about our delicate ecosystems . . .**

Beach Watchers are actively engaging communities, bolstering efforts of partner organizations and furthering best management practices of WSU Extension and other institutions.

Now, more than ever, this unique body of volunteer educators, tied to our community in efforts to improve not only our water quality, the aesthetics of beaches and the health of creatures great and small, but also to improve our future. As our world hears the silent alarms of our Sound—orcas dying, salmon populations diminishing, eelgrass thinning, Beach Watchers do not hush them. They are neither afraid of them nor daunted by them. Rather they are encouraged by them, for they are a call to action, to their crucial mission: *to improve, maintain and protect a thriving Puget Sound ecosystem through education community outreach, stewardship, and research.*

I might add that while they take their work seriously, they go about this work with enthusiasm, laughter, sociability and, most of all, tremendous, contagious passion. In fact, their passion is palpable. Here is an excerpt, available online to the public, from one of our intertidal monitorings this summer:

“Notes from the Intertidal Zone: August 19th brought a bright sunny day with temperatures well into the 70’s and a -2.3 foot tide. Team captain Evelyn Blair provided leadership as six Beach Watcher women took on Old Clinton Beach, the final Whidbey Island beach to be monitored for the 2009 season. This group had a great time searching through the eelgrass beds for the small organisms that make this habitat their home. The ladies were delighted to find a dozen or more opalescent nudibranchs (*Hermisenda crassicornis*) and one lion nudibranch (*Melibe leonina*). They also saw moonglow and white plumed anemones and the very wiggly inch and a half long polychaete *Ophiodromus pugettensis*. Evelyn noted that one surprise this year was that no moon snails or moon snail egg collars were found. As the team collected data, a great blue heron winged its way by





and greeted them with its distinctive raucous call. It was a great way to wrap up the season!"

It is this passion for education in its many forms, for people, for our Puget Sound and for our amazing world that drives these tremendous volunteers and continues to bring new, passionate people to Beach Watchers.

Our world faces some wonderful challenges right now. It is this body of WSU volunteers and many others like it that rise up to meet the challenge with all the tools necessary to make a difference. It is their partners, their supporters, their community—many, many individuals who care deeply about . . . life.

Do you come here often? Yes. And thank goodness each of us does, for it is our presence and all of our gifts that make the difference.

Jacques Cousteau said: **"If we were logical, the future would be bleak indeed. But we are more than logical. We are human beings, and we have faith, and we have hope, and we can work."**

Thank you all for your ongoing support of WSU Beach Watchers.

And now we honor our graduates. This class began in April 2009. During the course of a month, the Class "got their feet" wet. Over the summer, they put on their waders and became deeply involved. Each of them participated in a beach monitoring, and the class as a whole, was involved in activities from children's education to seining to forage fish egg studies to smolt counts and bird counts and so many activities . . . the list is already too lengthy to cover to any great extent. They have gotten to know and begun to work with many partners who generously support our program, from the Cities and Towns to Marine Resources Committee to State Parks to the Port of Coupeville

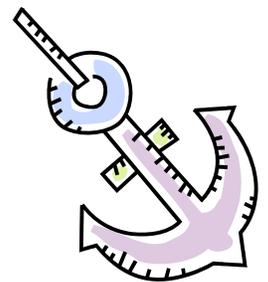
In total, these new graduates have already given over 800 hours of service as WSU Extension Beach Watchers.

As they graduate, they have committed to several small group projects that support current programs to include initiating a Clean Boating Program at the Coupeville Wharf, a renewed emphasis on children's education and a focus on beach clean-ups.

As their primary class project, they have embraced bringing the Puget Sound Starts here program to Whidbey Island, personalizing it and making it yet another great, local effort as well as a concerted effort to touch new audiences.

Clean Boating in Coupeville!

Four newly graduated Beach Watchers visited the office of Coupeville Port Executive Director Jim Patton on Friday, October 30th. They were there by invitation to discuss work the class of 2009 might do in support of the Port's efforts to develop and expand the already outstanding efforts of previous graduates on the pier. The focus was on Clean, Green Boating and how to encourage this type of activity on Penn Cove and at the Port's Marina. Participants included Richard Dent, John Johnson, Sandra Pollard-Snowberger and Victor Robart. Several potential projects were discussed and all participants agreed to meet again to discuss them after the team has further developed their ideas.



-Victor Robart, BW Class of 09

Please take a moment to enter your 2009 hours now!
<http://beachwatchers.net/isle/volinfo/index.php?q=login>



The Importance of Forage Fish . . .

November first was a cool, crisp autumn day and ushered in a week of warm, tepid temps. Beach Watchers were done with beach monitoring, seasonal seining and organized beach naturalist walks and were probably out, walking the beaches for pleasure, if that is possible once you are a Beach Watcher. Most Beach Watchers say that the pleasure diminishes once you realize you're treading on a substrate teeming with life! However, as sand lance began their seasonal spawning (November 1st to January 15th (or thereabouts)), a group of Beach Watchers committed themselves to learning more about these and other forage fish.

On November 9th, Camano and Whidbey Beach Watchers attended a presentation on forage fish by Dan Penttila of Washington



Department of Fish and Wildlife at Padilla Bay Reserve. Dan has been studying forage fish for 38 years and is the resident expert. He focused on three types of forage fish: sand lance, surf smelt and herring. He gave an overview of these similar, yet very different forage fish, discussed habitat and habitat loss and led us to a very important conclusion. There is still much to learn about forage fish, and we are just the people to study them! So we will continue our study of forage fish in January, and we'll use the excellent, comprehensive materials that Dan gave us as our foundation. In the spring we anticipate at least one field trip as well as presentations from other experts in the field of forage fish and issues pertaining to their health and prosperity!

Dan did leave us with one weighty thought that has left a lasting imprint on my mind, and I'm sure it resides in the minds of others as well: "Once habitat is lost, a particular group of forage fish [or salmon] is lost." After a fish population has lost its specific spawning area, that population is at very high risk for being lost forever. So while we look to restoration to do the best we can "to bring back" locations and populations, we may not be able to resuscitate a lost population. Period. The only real answer, then, is preservation of what we have as well as a good dose of faith in our hard work to restore what we've destroyed.

You are invited to join the study group at any point. Look for more information in upcoming weeks about the time, date and location of our next meeting at Padilla Bay. And remember that, as you walk the beach, life is not only teeming beneath your feet, but it is teeming in the nearshore, as the forage fish spawn.

-Photos and article by Sarah Woehrman, Class of '09



Puget Sound Starts Here!

If you're in the Beach Watchers Class of 2009, you know all about it, and if you watch television, you've probably seen short commercials about it. But do you know what the Puget Sound Starts Here Campaign is about? The Puget Sound Partnership brings the general public this awareness campaign to open citizens' eyes to the problems below the surface—that "Puget Sound is in Trouble. You are the Solution. Together, we can fix it." If you visit the Puget Sound Starts Here website, you will be given an orientation to the problem, resources available for further education, opportunities to get involved and a set of steps you can take to be the solution. While the initial campaign is general, awakening people to the problem, the campaign will continue and expand.

Beach Watchers are actively involved in Puget Sound Starts Here. The Class of 2009 is tailoring the general Puget Sound Starts Here campaign to the local Whidbey area. Sound Waters is including Puget Sound Starts Here in its program materials this year as well as supporting Island County ECONet organizations that also support the campaign. For more information on the campaign, please go to: <http://www.pugetsoundstartshere.org/>.

THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS

PugetSoundPartnership
our sound, our community, our chance



WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY



ISLAND COUNTY EXTENSION



*"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
Jan 15, 2010**