



**Education,
Research,
Stewardship**

Beach Log

SEPTEMBER 2007



WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
ISLAND COUNTY EXTENSION

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Monitoring Highlights

A team of five made the mile-long hike to **Footprint Rock** on July 2nd for a -2.5 foot tide. Charlie Seablom headed up the team and says the highlight of the day for him was seeing a Columbian blacktail deer on the beach as they walked to the site. Also along the way, Wendy Moon pointed out Indian paintbrush (*Castilleja* sp.) growing and blooming on the bluff. Paintbrush is a hemiparasitic plant; it can survive on its own but by tapping into the resources of a host plant it gains a real boost. Specialized tissues called haustoria worm their way into the roots of the host plant to siphon away nutrients.

Located on west Whidbey, Footprint Rock gets its name from a distinctive erratic with a footprint-like im-

pression on it. The erratic is fairly high in the intertidal zone and Charlie reports that it had green seaweed growing on it but little else. The substrate further down the profile line is composed of boulders and cobbles with sand filling in around them and that is where most of the species for this beach were observed. John Moon found a small and elongated silver fish, thought to be a sand lance along the profile area. Libby Hayward was fascinated by the iridescence of the polychaetes they found when they tipped up rocks to check for organisms tucked away underneath.

Monem Mahmoud Abdel was very interested in the mossy chitons (*Mopalia muscosa*). Like other chitons, the *Mopalias* use a tongue-like radula to scrape food from the



Photo by Mary Jo Adams

Indian Paintbrush



Footprint Rock Monitoring Team

rocks they live on. The radula has to be very durable to rasp away at the rocks and its covering of cusps containing magnetite, a form of iron oxide, make it so. Geologists use a scale called the Mohs scale to rate the hardness of rocks. Very soft talc is #1 on the scale and diamond tops the



scale at #10. Magnetite is ranked #6, meaning that it takes something with the hardness of a steel file to scratch it, and additionally it is magnetic, which means that the chiton's radula is not only literally harder than nails (#5.5 on the Mohs scale), it is also magnetic!

Bill and Evelyn Blair led the **Columbia Beach** team on July 12th. This site is near the Clinton ferry dock and the Blairs have monitored it annually since 1994. With a -2.8 foot tide, the profile line extended 251 feet to the water's edge. This is a sandy beach that often has a heavy growth of eelgrass but Bill reports that this year the eelgrass was patchy. In addition, the team found a build-up of sand against the bulkhead where they take a measurement of vertical height. The bulkhead extended 24 inches above the sandy substrate last year but this year that distance had decreased to 18 inches indicating the accumulation of a 6 inch layer of sand. Team members also found a small opalescent nudibranch (*Hermisenda crassicornis*), quite a number of moon snail egg cases, and lots of remnants of fireworks that had been set off on the 4th of July. During a bivalve dig, they brought up a gaper clam (*Tresus capax*) and because its shell was cracked open, they could see a pair of pea crabs living commensally inside the shell. They also claimed the distinction of being the team with this year's youngest beach monitor. Nine-month-old Amanda Kehl came along with her mom Mary, and seemed to have great fun enjoying a sunny day at the beach.

July 13th was a big day for monitoring as three teams worked on Whidbey and one on Camano. Heather Leahy-Mack had a team of six at **Cornet Bay**. She found the changes to the shape and substrate of that beach to be quite interesting. The state park finished installing a new boat ramp near the monitoring site this past year and it appears to have changed the water flow pattern and also impacted sediment deposition. Heather says that in previous years, quadrats at the -1 foot level have always been full of eelgrass. This year a sandy berm has built up and two of the quadrats were completely devoid of anything except sand. In addition, the substrate which has previously been muddy sand is now pretty much all sand. The star species of the day was a brittle star that came up with a shovel full of sand during a bivalve dig. They also found a bent nose clam (*Macoma nasuta*), a small pink *Macoma balthica*, and a heart cockle (*Clinocardium nuttallii*). The Cornet Bay team also captured Columbia Beach's short-lived title for having the year's youngest beach monitor with 8-month-old Joseph Mack, who came along with his mom and conducted a sand taste test.



Cornet Bay Monitoring Team

Finn Gatewood's **Honeymoon Bay** team was also out on July 13th. The team found a number of mesh bags containing oyster culture along this mixed substrate beach. The most exciting find of the day was that of several plainfin midshipmen (*Porichthys notatus*) and their eggs. These fish reach a maximum length of about 1 foot. They spend most of the year in water 150-450 feet deep but move into the shallows in the spring to spawn. After the eggs have been laid, the male remains with them for the 15 days it takes for them to hatch and then continues to guard the larvae until they mature enough to become free



Honeymoon Bay Monitoring Team

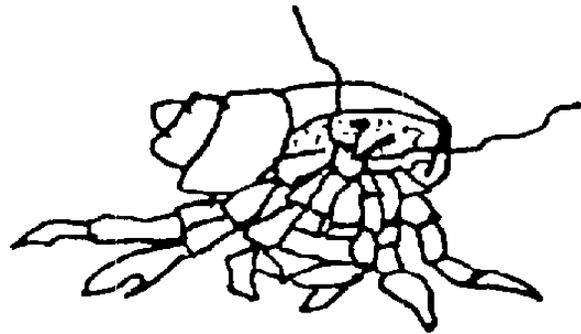


swimming and leave their rocky nest. The team also found three moon snails (*Euspira lewisii*), a gunnel eel, ribbon worms, shore crabs, and a very large polychaete that Lenore Minstrell extracted from beneath a rock.

Team captain Jim Shelver had the **Possession Point** team also working on July 13th. Jim tells us the day started out looking like a thunderstorm might roll through but luckily the wind died and skies brightened. This beach is south of Columbia Beach which had been monitored the day before, and the six-member team found many of the same species that were encountered there. Jim reported a thick stand of eelgrass (*Zostera marina*) with the many organisms associated with eelgrass habitats. This efficient and hard-working team completed their observations in just two hours.

Bill and Evelyn Blair rounded up a team of five to monitor at **Old Clinton Beach** on August 11th. Bill and Evelyn have helped on this beach for about 5 years but this was their first year as to serve as team captains there. Sunny weather beamed down on the team and a pair of bald eagles screeched encouragement as the group collected data on this scenic beach just up from the Clinton ferry landing. Stewart Congdon discovered a *Pectinaria* tube, minus its inhabitant. This tubeworm remnant had the characteristic perfectly aligned grains of sand worked into a shape akin to that of an ice cream sugar cone. Mary Kehl overturned a small boulder to reveal a woody chiton (*Mopalia lignosa*). This species is particularly fond of sea lettuce (*Ulva*) and there was a goodly amount of that; *Ulva* was documented to cover more than 50% of the area in three of the nine quadrats. The profile area was also blanketed by a considerable amount of eelgrass. Other organisms included rockweed isopods (*Idotea vosnesenskii*), flat-

worms, hermit crabs (*Pagurus* sp.), eelgrass limpets (*Lottia parallela*), and moonglow anemones (*Anthopleura artemisia*).
Mary Jo Adams, BW Class of 1999



Get to know Your New Beach Watchers Website



What do you know about the red-tailed hawk?



Or the characteristics of English ivy?



Photo by Mary Jo Adams

Old Clinton Beach Monitoring Team

By looking in the Beach Watchers Website: <http://www.beachwatchers.wsu.edu/island/essays/index.htm> and clicking on *Essays in Nature* you will find a number of interesting articles including these two newest ones, by Sheila Pera (red-tailed hawk) and by Pat Nash (English ivy).

Get to know our new Beach Watchers Website for lots of information, as well as reporting forms!



Dates to Remember

Upcoming Camano Island and Whidbey Island Events and Other Items of Interest



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WHIDBEY ISLAND

Friday, September 7, 8:30 a.m. **Breakfast with Beach Watchers**, Whidbey General Hospital Cafeteria
 Saturday, September 8, 4 p.m. **Deception Pass Cruise** - Cornet Bay
 Wednesday, September 12, 10 a.m., **Sound Waters Committee Meeting**, 1 NE 6th Street - Rm 116
 Friday, September 14, 8:30 a.m., **Breakfast with Beach Watchers**, Neal's Clover Patch, Bayview
 Tuesday, September 18,
 11 a.m. **Lighthouse Environmental Programs Meeting**, 101 NE 6th St., Coupeville, WA
 1 p.m., **Advisory Council Meeting**, 101 NE 6th St., Coupeville, WA
 Wednesday, September 20, 6:30 p.m., **Evening Educational Series**,
 Trinity Lutheran Church, Freeland
 Tuesday, October 2, 9 a.m., 2007 **Beach Watcher Training**
 901 NW Alexander St, Coupeville, (Tuesdays and Thursdays in October)
 Friday, October 5, 8:30 a.m. **Breakfast with Beach Watchers**, Whidbey General Hospital Cafeteria

CAMANO ISLAND

Saturday September 1, 7:30 p.m., **Summer Nature Program: Somewhat True and Amazing Tales of
 Historic Watercraft**, Camano Island State Park Amphitheater
 Thursday September 6 9:30 a.m., **Sustainable Program Development Meeting**,
 Camano Beach Watchers Office
 Tuesday September 11, 9 a.m., **Camano Monthly Meeting**, 141 N.E. Camano Drive, Camano Island,
 Saturday September 15, 9 a.m., **Guided Tour of Port Susan Bay Preserve Nature Conservancy**,
 Port Susan Preserve

BEACH WATCHERS AWARDS FOR 2007.

Leaders of the Year – Jim Somers and John Custer

Educators of the Year – Alice Blandin and Sammye Kempbell

Citizen Scientists of the Year – Mary Jo Adams and Bob Buck

Web Angels Award - Neal and Connie Clark

Diversity Award – Jill Hein

BW Supporter of the Year – Don Meehan

WAY TO GO ALL YOU VOLUNTEERS. YOU ARE ALL WINNERS!!



Deception Pass Cruise

Saturday, September 8th, leaving from Cornet Bay at 4 p.m.

YOU are invited to join fellow Beach Watchers on an open-deck boat ride through the waters of Deception Pass

During this one-hour tour, learn the history of Deception Pass, hear tales of the characters who navigated these waters, and see the bridge from the underside.

Cost is \$16.25 per person, including tax

Please reserve your spot with Jill: jillhein@comcast.net or 360-678-3891

Space is limited to 35 participants

<http://www.deceptionpasstours.com/index.php>

THIS IS A FUN GET-TOGETHER, NOT A BEACH WATCHERS FUNDRAISER

Beach Naturalists Celebrate at Seattle Aquarium

Seven enthusiastic Island County Beach Watchers attended a beach naturalist celebration at the Seattle Aquarium the evening of July 21st. The Island County group met and mingled with beach naturalists from the aquarium and other Puget Sound area organizations, listened as



Photo by Mary Jo Adams

Adam Lorio joins a group of Island County Beach Watchers at a celebration for beach naturalists at the Seattle Aquarium.

Véronique Robigou, research scientist from the School of Oceanography at the University of Washington, presented a fascinating account of her explorations of the hydrothermal vents that lie at extreme depths off our coast, and viewed aquarium exhibits including the brand new Window on Washington Waters with its fabulous 39 by 17 foot viewing window.

Beach Watcher Barry Dunn was enthralled by a diver demonstration of rockfish schooling up and following her as she did a funny little swimming kick through the water in the Window on Washington Waters exhibit, and Sammie Kempbell liked the cabezon that snuggled up to that same diver. Debbie Bitts reported that the evening's highlight for her was seeing a huge sturgeon prowling the waters of the underwater dome and in addition, she won a very cool hat playing Beach Naturalist Bingo! One familiar face in the crowd was that of Adam Lorio, Interpretive Specialist at Deception Pass State Park. This event was sponsored by the aquarium and COSEE (Centers for Ocean Sciences Education Excellence) and was a wonderful opportunity to learn and to network. Mark your calendar for November when the aquarium and COSEE plan to hold another much larger celebration, and you're invited!

Mary Jo Adams, BW Class of 1999



Camano Island BWs go for the “Outreach!”

A dedicated group of Camanistas took shifts July 20 to 22, manning the canopy at the Art-by-the-Bay event on the Island. When the wind and rain stopped at the end of the event, 22 names had been added to our contact list for 2008 training. In addition, there were several visitors who signed up to be notified of outings and program announcements. Even though this event was focused on art, interested folks were asking questions in just about every area of our expertise. Those working our booth agreed that Art-by-the-Bay should be on next year’s agenda for our educational outreach program.



Art-by-the-Bay Event

Again, our Camano Beach Watchers crew was brought out August 2 to 5 to man the information booth at the Stanwood/Camano Fair. Our setting was adjoining several other educational organizations, with all of us housed in one building. The display of water running through pervious concrete, set up by Scott Chase (BW '02), was a big draw, with folks asking how it worked and how was it made. A few more people signed up to be contacted for upcoming events. Several people we talked with at the display of intertidal monitoring were interested in being part of a monitoring event. That interest helped spawn the next event, called “What’s on the Beach?”



Stanwood/Camano Fair

The August 13th morning low tide found a small group of BWs assembling at Camano Island State Park, setting up displays, signs, and the canopy in preparation for giving a full demonstration of our monitoring process at 9:30 a.m. Along with the demo, plans were in place to teach about beach etiquette, Marine Mammal Stranding, and critter talks about what was found on the beach. The



Camano Island State Park monitoring demonstration



motive for giving a profile demonstration was to show potential training candidates our intertidal monitoring program on a weekend, since many are unable to attend during the work week. A "What's on the Beach?" blurb was published in the newspaper for the Saturday event, along with flyers throughout the park for all the campers in residence. Promptly at 9:30 a.m. we had a camping mom and children sign in. When the event was over at 11:30 over 30 people had made their own discoveries along the beach. Many folks were very appreciative of the effort we give to the study of the shoreline and expressed concern for the well-being of the waters and marine environment. At the end of our morning we held a debriefing and will incorporate the suggested improvements into our next "What's on the Beach?" program. All of the participating BWs agreed that they want to grow and nurture this program on our Island.

Tom Perry, BW Class of 2003



Whidbey Watershed Stewards Seek Workers

Whidbey Watershed Stewards is gearing up for this fall's Outdoor Classroom season, focusing on insects, mushrooms and decomposition. Volunteer training dates will be announced in September.

For our stream restoration project on Lower Quade Creek, we're looking for a few people to take on Lead Volunteer roles for fall planting days, helping John Hastings prepare the site and work with volunteers. Beach Watcher Anne Hayden has been filling that role, and we'd like a few more people to help when she's away.

As always, work with Whidbey Watersheds counts toward your volunteer hours. Contact Nancy Waddell at WWS to learn more about any of these opportunities: 360-579-1272 or info@whidbeywatersheds.org. Thank you!

IF I CAN DO IT, I KNOW YOU CAN

If I can evolve from Smith-Corona manual portable typewriter and crank mimeograph machine, and do this, you can too. We now have a continuous update on all our BW's volunteer hours. Here is how you log your hours.

First go to <http://www.beachwatchers.wsu.edu/island> Look at the left side of the screen in the green-shaded area, and scroll down to "Volunteer Info" Click on that and you will get a page that says:

Current BW Volunteers ...
[enter your hours with the new online system](#) (login required)

Click on those blue letters and you will get a screen that asks you to log in. If you are doing this for the first time you will need a pass word. So, enter your email address as requested, and then click on "I forgot my password". Never mind that you never had one. You will get an email with a password for you to use.

Then you can log in. You will get a screen with your name(s) on it in blue letters. Click on your name. You will get a screen with a number of boxes. Click in the box for the appropriate month. The box will expand. Type in the date of a single event. (2007 . _ Q refers to the quarter) Then click below on the box "Hours" and type in the number of hours including travel time. If it is appropriate, click on the box "People" and type in the number of people you talked to. Or skip to the list of activities and scroll down to the one that comes closest to what you did. A box will pop up on the right side that says "Add hours for..." Click on that and your hours will be entered.

The screen will change to one with a number of options. Check them out. You can look at your total hours by clicking on "Review all your hours." Or look at any other category and click on it. Your hours will have been totaled and entered on the BW data base. Is that cool or what!!

Stewart Congdon, Beach Watchers Projects Coordinator

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.

THANKS! To all the Beach Watcher Volunteers who contributed articles, typed, edited, and prepared the Beach Log for mailing. Kudos to Cheryl Bradkin, Arlene Stebbins, and Stewart Congdon who help pull it all together each month.



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.



Puget Sound Refinery

THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS

Town of Coupeville



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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
October 15, 2007**