



Padilla Bay Newsletter

A Joint Publication of the Padilla Bay Foundation and Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve

Spring 2006



Padilla Bay

National Estuarine Research Reserve

Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve is managed by the Washington State Department of Ecology under the National Estuarine Research Reserve System established by NOAA.

www.padillabay.gov

swood@padillabay.gov

10441 Bay View-Edison Road
Mount Vernon, WA 98273
(360) 428-1558



The Padilla Bay Foundation is a membership-based non-profit organization formed in 1987. Its mission is to help preserve the Padilla Bay estuary in Skagit County, Washington, through support of Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve.

Padilla Bay Foundation
PO Box 1305
Mount Vernon, WA 98273
(360) 757-3234

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Marine-Foraging River Otter

2006 Smith/Aguero Presentation on the Environment

The river otter, *Lontra canadensis*, is an aquatic mammal found throughout North America, and is a key predator along the shores of the Salish Sea. Although river otters historically were trapped throughout the region for their pelts, this practice has largely stopped. Current threats include habitat loss, decreasing water quality, and increasing marine pollution. Because otters travel between the marine waters and land, they tell us a lot about the health of our nearshore marine ecosystem.

River otters in the marine inland waters of Washington and British Columbia forage both on land and in water. They eat invertebrates such as crabs and sea stars, as well as fish. They may also occasionally eat chicks of some marine birds. Social animals, both young and adults are fond of play such as sliding, dunking, wrestling, and playing tag and hide-and-seek.

Despite their charismatic behavior and long-time presence in the area, surprising little is known of the population dynamics, natural history, and overall health of local populations. Joe Gaydos, wildlife veterinarian and staff scientist with the Sea Doc Society (www.seadocsociety.org), has been involved in a study of river otters in the Pacific Northwest. He will be sharing his love of river otters and the preliminary results of his research on April 28, 2006, at the Padilla Bay Reserve.

Joe's presentation is made possible by the Smith/Aguero Trust, administered by the Padilla Bay Foundation. Registration is appreciated, either by calling the Reserve at (360) 428-1558 or online at www.padillabay.gov. Friday, April 28, 7:00PM. Refreshments will be provided.

Padilla Bay Foundation News

Thanks to Our Generous Donors! Now on to Phase 2.

The Foundation celebrated a very successful effort to raise \$138,000 for facility improvements at the Reserve. Matched with Federal dollars, this grew to \$455,400. We will now focus our energies on supporting the next phase of construction which includes energy efficient upgrades to the Breazeale House, seismic and structural reinforcements to the barn, photovoltaic cells mounted on the barn roof, and a “bunk house” for housing visiting researchers, students, and special program participants. One of the first groups to use the new residence will be a group of teachers who will develop Padilla Bay’s school curriculum to focus on new state requirements for students. This project is funded by a grant secured by the Padilla Bay Foundation. Our goal for Phase 2 is to raise \$30,000 by September 2006 to receive the full federal match.

New Brass Critter Available to Donors

This killdeer prototype—just back from the foundry—will join the other Padilla Bay animals honoring special donors to the Benefactors for the Bay campaign. Check the Padilla Bay web site for more information about this program and for the whole gallery of brass plaques available to people and organizations donating \$1000 or more to the Foundation.



Wildlife Cruise on the Viking Star with Libby Mills

Join us once again aboard the 55 foot Viking Star: the perfect viewing platform for an amazing variety of wildlife. Beginning in LaConner, we will explore Fidalgo Island’s rocky shores, tide flats and eelgrass meadow. The boat is enclosed and heated, with an outdoor foredeck. Hot beverages will be available, and snacks may be purchased. The \$32.50 cost of this 4 hour cruise includes a \$5 donation to the Padilla Bay Foundation. **Saturday, March 18, with boarding at 11:30 and departure at 12:00 noon.** Visit the Viking Cruises website at www.vikingcruises.com for more information. To register, send your name, address, email, and phone number with a check made payable to The Padilla Bay Foundation. Mail to: Attn: Glen Alexander Padilla Bay Reserve 10441 Bay View-Edison Road Mount Vernon, WA 98273



Padilla Bay Foundation

How You Can Help

Grassroots involvement is the core of Padilla Bay Foundation’s commitment to protect Padilla Bay and support the Padilla Bay Reserve.

Membership in the Foundation means you are contributing directly to environmental education and research right here in Western Washington.

Categories of membership are:

| | |
|---------------------|--------|
| Senior/Student | \$20 |
| Individual | \$30 |
| Family | \$40 |
| School/Organization | \$50+ |
| Supporting | \$60 |
| Sustaining | \$100+ |
| Small Business | \$100+ |
| Sponsor | \$250 |
| Patron | \$500 |
| Steward | \$1000 |

Send your contribution to:
Padilla Bay Foundation
PO Box 1305
Mount Vernon, WA 98273
(360) 757-3234
a 501 (c) 3 organization

Foundation Board Members

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Vice-president: Gail Smith
Secretary: Tom Smith
Treasurer: Deb Canon
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Terry Stevens - Advisory Member
Kay Reinhardt - Administrator



Spring Events

Presentations for March, April, and May

Samish People and the Estuary

Come join us and listen to Coast Salish artist Bill Bailey and traditional foods specialist Rosie Cayou share stories about the Samish people's relationship to the estuary, from their personal experiences and from their knowledge of local history. There will also be a discussion and tasting of traditional foods. This program will begin at the Breazeale Interpretive Center and conclude at the beach in Bay View State Park, so please dress for the beach. There is a \$5 parking fee at the State Park. **Saturday, March 4th, 10AM – 12:30PM.** Please register online or call the Interpretive Center.



Sharks

Enjoy a safe journey into the aquatic realm of sharks. The "King of the Ocean" has ruled for over 250 million years, with total efficiency. Learn about the shark's lifestyle, commercial value, and important role in the natural balance of the ocean. This program by marine educator, Alice Fulton will fascinate both adults and children. **Saturday, April 8, 1:00-2:30.** Please call or register online.

Wild Edibles of Spring

Come and witness the exciting new growth of spring. Join naturalist Marlee Osterbauer in this search for wild edible plants. She will share her extensive knowledge of plant uses and folklore.



Weather may be chilly, so dress appropriately. You may want to bring a notebook and pencil. **Saturday, April 22, 2:00-4:00.** Please register online or call the Interpretive Center.

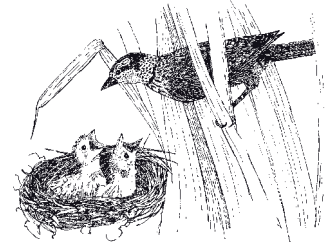
Nature Journaling

Keeping a nature journal is a wonderful opportunity to slow down, think, observe, and learn more about the natural world. It offers a connection to the earth and a time for reflection. Camano Island Beachwatcher, Dodie Markey will share ideas and techniques that help beginners and experienced "journalists" record their observations, thoughts and experiences. This

class is intended for adults 16 and older. **Saturday, May 13, 12:30-4:00.** There is a \$10 materials fee payable to the instructor. Please register online or call (360) 428-1558.

Habitat for Wildlife—One Yard at a Time

Members of the Fidalgo Backyard Wildlife Habitat project will present information on how you can attract wildlife to your yard. Topics will include: ideas for encouraging wildlife; what plants to use; where to get the plants; why and how to certify your yard as a backyard wildlife habitat; helpful resources; and great local examples. Started in June 2005 by Richard Bergner, Fidalgo Backyard Wildlife Habitat has set a goal of certifying 500 yards on Fidalgo Island by August 2008. FBWH's vision: fostering a community living in harmony with nature. **Saturday, May 20, 1:00-2:30.** Please call to register or register online.



Spring Songs – Birding by Ear

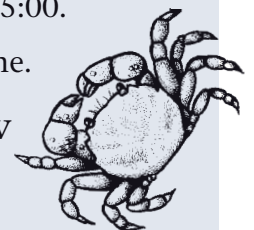
Join naturalist, Libby Mills, for a morning of watching and listening for birds around Padilla Bay. Perfect for beginners and experts alike, this class is a favorite. Wear warm, outdoor clothing, and pack binoculars, field guides, and snack or lunch. Binoculars are available for loan from the Padilla Bay Center. Each class limited to 15 participants. Please call to register or use our website. **Friday, May 26 and Saturday, May 27, 7:30-11:30.** (The singing starts early!)

The Breazeale Interpretive Center is open Wednesday-Sunday, 10:00-5:00.

Register online or by phone.

www.padillabay.gov

(360) 428-1558



Kayaking in Padilla Bay

Spring on the water! Enjoy a day of paddling along the shores of Padilla Bay. An Island Outfitter guide and a Padilla Bay naturalist will lead these trips. No experience necessary, just come with a lunch, water bottle, and warm clothing (rain gear, non-cotton layers, hat). Minimum age is 12, with people under 18 accompanied by a parent. Trips leave at 10:30 from Bay View State Park. Fee is \$65 per person for a 5 hour trip, with proceeds benefitting the Padilla Bay Foundation. There is a \$5 parking fee at the State Park. **Call Island Outfitters at 299-2300 to register. April 8, May 20, and June 3.**



Films and Videos:

Sundays at 1:00 & 4:00

| | | |
|-------|----|---------------------------------------|
| March | 5 | Affluenza (60 min) |
| | 12 | Escape from Affluenza (60 min) |
| | 19 | Green Driving/Oil and Water (20m) |
| | 26 | Padilla Bay (20 min) |
| April | 2 | The Magnificent Whales (60 min) |
| | 9 | Steller Sea Lions in Jeopardy (27 m) |
| | 16 | Where Have all the Orcas Gone? (40) |
| | 23 | Tide of the Heron (12 min) |
| May | 30 | The Northern Elephant Seal (14 min) |
| | 7 | The Intertidal Zone (17 min) |
| | 14 | The Secret World of Sharks, Rays (60) |
| | 21 | The Days of Salmon Traps (30 min) |
| | 28 | Estuary! (15 min) |

Spring Seminar Series Offered by WSU Skagit/Snohomish County Beach Watchers

Nearshore Ecology of Skagit County

March 17, 7:00PM Anacortes Library, 1220 10th Street

Come learn more about our local marine environments at a presentation by Dr. Jacques White, Marine Conservation Program Manager for The Nature Conservancy. Dr. White is a well-known expert on marine ecology and will provide interesting perspectives on our valuable marine resources and ecological treasures.

Pacific Northwest Tsunamis – Science, History and Planning for Skagit County.

May 11, 6:30PM Padilla Bay Interpretive Center, 10441 Bayview-Edison Rd.

Could a large offshore earthquake cause a tsunami that hits Skagit County? Come learn more at a presentation by Tim Walsh, Head of the Washington DNR Geologic Hazards Division and Mark Watkinson, Coordinator with Skagit County Emergency Management. These experts will present information on past events, recent scientific studies and inundation mapping, as well as emergency planning for Skagit County.

Monthly Youth Programs Offer Fun Learning

Mini Explorers are the 3-5 year old learners. We look at a new topic each month, with stories, games, hands-on observations, art projects, and plenty of action. Call the Interpretive Center to register or register online.

March 8 & 9, 10:00 & 1:00

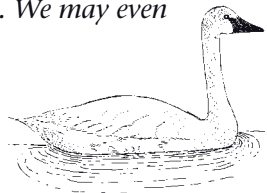
Crabs!—Everyone's favorite critter, crabs are really amazing.

April 5 & 6, 10:00 & 1:00

Wet and Wonderful Water!—Become a water drop on an amazing journey and find out why good clean water is more precious than gold.

May 3 & 4, 1:00 only

Cnidarians!—What's that, you say? We will learn about these transparent, pulsating, gelatinous jellies, anemones, and corals. We may even have some to touch!



Junior Ecologists are 6-9 year olds who have fun exploring the estuary. Excursions to the beach, science experiments, games, art projects, and studying life in the bay—this program is guaranteed fun! Call the Interpretive Center to register.

March 10 & 11, 1:00-2:30

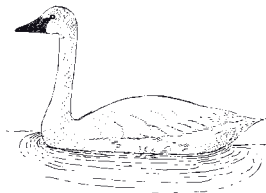
Sea Monsters - For thousands of years, stories have been shared about mysterious creatures in the sea. We'll hear the myths, learn the facts, and look close-up at some monstrous-looking creatures of the estuary.

April 7 & 15, 1:00-2:30

Hawk Watch - Learn about all the hawks that live in the Skagit Valley. Bring coat, hat, and binoculars if you have them—or borrow ours.

May 19 & 20, 1:00-2:30

Trees - Celebrate spring and explore the forests above the Interpretive Center. We'll see how important trees are for animals, clean water, clean air, and people.



A Softer Solution

By Sharon Riggs

Joe Bucek is an energetic man with an air of quiet confidence. He and Mary Heath purchased a house along the eastern shore of Padilla Bay five years ago. Their front window overlooks the bay with its seasonal moods, beauty and abundant wildlife. But living on the beach is not without its challenges. Storms, combined with winter high tides, pushed water over their eroded shoreline and into their side yard. This occasional flooding threatened their septic drainfield and even their house foundation.

Bucek approached Skagit County in 2000 to ask about solutions to the periodic flooding he was experiencing. It was the first time he'd heard about soft shore protection, which involves replacing the eroded high beach, protecting it with logs and root wads anchored in the beach and using gravels and rocks of the same size found on the beach to help dissipate wave energy. This alternative to placing concrete bulkheads, pilings, or rip-rap allows the beach to function in a complementary way with tides, currents, and wave energy. This approach does not impact neighbors in a negative way as bulkheads might by causing erosion on either side of the project. The anchored logs actually flex and may move, but do not float away, offering protection for many years.



For more information on bulkheads and soft shore protection, visit www.padillabay.gov/publications.asp and select "Soft Shore Alternatives to Bulkheads."

Bucek hired Jim Johannessen of Coastal Geologic Services to develop a soft shore protection plan that was acceptable to the County. It left the bulkhead on the south corner of his property in place and used a soft shore approach for the rest of the beach. With the plan in hand Bucek obtained the necessary permits: an Exemption from Shoreline Substantial Development from the County and a Hydraulic Permit (HPA) from the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife. The project took place over a four-day period in August, 2005.

Bucek potted native plants from the work site and the contractor stockpiled the dune grass removed from the upper beach. Large concrete blocks were buried in trenches as anchors for the logs, which were attached to the blocks with chain. The high beach was raised about a foot as was the side yard, and a small berm was created near the transition zone from yard to beach. The logs were placed near the front of the berm and gravel was placed around the logs. Bucek replanted the newly sculpted area with plugs of dune grass and native shore plants.



When asked why he chose a soft shore protection approach Bucek said, "It provides easy access to the beach, looks more natural than a bulkhead and it's the right thing to do for the environment and neighboring shoreline." This winter's storms will be the ultimate test and Bucek is hopeful that this solution is the right one.



New Padilla Bay Library for Public Use

Padilla Bay's new library is spacious, comfortable, and filled with resources for both staff and the public. A computer is available for internet research. Visitors can browse texts, periodicals, scientific journals, local map resources, and teacher curricula. There is a large selection of natural history resources, field guides, and standard textbooks on topics such as oceanography, estuarine ecology, zoology, botany, and local environments. The Padilla Bay Reserve publishes a Reprint Series and a Technical Report Series, including research reports, out of print agency reports, bibliographies, and student reports dealing with the Padilla Bay estuary. These are located in the library, but are also available for downloading on Padilla Bay's website.

Come and visit this great resource. Staff are happy to help you find something or answer questions, and we welcome suggestions for additions to our collection.

Research Reprints and Technical Reports are available in the new library.



Check Inside for the Winter Activity Schedule:

- Presentations
- Mini Explorers
- Junior Ecologists
- Films



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