

Padilla Bay Newsletter

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

Spring 2017



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.

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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.

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For more news, research updates, program details, see our website at www.padillabay.gov.

To request materials in a format for the visually impaired, call the Reserve at 360-428-1558, Relay Service 711, or TTY 877-833-6341.

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Farewell and Best Wishes to Alex

We don't really like the idea of Glen (Alex) Alexander retiring after 27 years as Padilla Bay's education coordinator, but we will send him off on April 30 with well-wishes and thanks for his hard work, entertaining songs, and many years of dedicated service.

Tens of thousands of school children know Alex as the Estuary Soup Chef. Saturday visitors see his helpful face behind the front counter in the interpretive center. Environmental Educators at Estuarine Research Reserves around the country know him as a clear-thinking leader on national initiatives and projects. Hundreds of "Mini Explorers" have helped him turn the crank of the cider press and learned about the legacy of Edna Breazeale and her brothers. Educators with organizations in the Pacific Northwest know Alex as a great organizer and team member.



Alex (who lives in Bellingham) has ridden his bike to and from work nearly every single day since 2008. We calculate he's kept about 21 metric tons of carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere. Way to pedal, Alex! You're an inspiration to us all. We look forward to seeing you biking along the backroads of Whatcom County and beyond in the coming years, and suspect you will thoroughly enjoy retirement.

Welcome to Rich Childers

The Northwest Straits Commission recently welcomed Rich Childers as their new director. Selected from a pool of highly-qualified candidates, Rich comes to the Commission from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, where he has worked since 2000 and served as the shellfish policy lead since 2005.



“It is such a privilege to join a team with so much talent and enthusiasm towards protecting our marine resources,” says Rich. “It truly is an honor to serve as your new director.”

Rich’s interest in marine issues goes back to the start of his career as a commercial diver in Santa Barbara. He left the commercial diving world to pursue a career in fisheries, earning a bachelor’s degree in marine fisheries at Humboldt State University and a master’s degree in parasitology from Oregon State. Rich spent four years on the coast of Ecuador working for the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission managing tuna fisheries and effecting changes in fishing methods to reduce dolphin mortalities in the tuna fishery. He’s been managing shellfish fisheries in Puget Sound since 1995 and is enthusiastic about working more closely with the local Marine Resources Committees.



Imagine a Touch Pool Experience

Thanks to generous donors and the “Taste of Padilla Bay” fundraiser last August, we are moving ahead with plans for a touch pool in the aquarium room. The conceptual design is ready. Stay tuned for ways you can contribute to this long-anticipated project!

Endowment Fund

Did you know the Padilla Bay Foundation has an endowment fund? To learn more about how your gift can last far into the future, check the Skagit Community Foundation’s website at www.skagitcf.org.

Foundation Board Members

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Padilla Bay

National Estuarine Research Reserve

Spring Events

Presentations for March, April, and May 2017

Spring Birding by Ear

There's no better time of year to learn to identify birds by sound as well as sight. In March, the early migrants and local residents are setting up territory. By late April, the croud is loudly competing for airtime. Join naturalist, Libby Mills, listening and looking for spring birds around Padilla Bay. Be prepared for a **slow** walk around the reserve uplands. (Bring warm clothes and a warm drink. You may want a lightweight folding chair.) Binoculars and field guides are available at the Interpretive Center. Meet in the Padilla Bay parking lot. **Saturday, March 25 and Friday, April 21, 8:00AM-12:00PM.** Please register online or call the Interpretive Center.

Aquarium Tour and Fish Feeding

Come and find out what's new and exciting in our aquariums. Join aquarist, Mark Olson for a behind-the-tanks view of the system, and a close-up look at the amazing critters in the tanks. **Saturday, April 8, 11:00AM.** No need to register. Just join us in the aquarium room at 11:00AM.



Incorporating Native Plants in Your Home Landscape

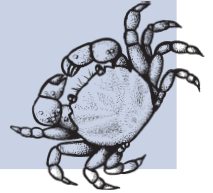
Come learn about the importance of incorporating native plants into your home landscaping, not just for the bird life you will attract, but for a host of benefits. Learn about some of the lesser known native plants that thrive here in Skagit County, as well as ones that can be used to solve landscaping problems. Presenter, Brenda Cunningham is a retired biologist, Skagit County Master Gardener and Garden Manager for Washington Native Plant Society display garden. **Saturday April 29 1:00-2:00PM.** Please register online or call the Interpretive Center.

The Breazeale Interpretive Center is open to the public Tuesday-Saturday, 10:00-5:00.

Call or register online.

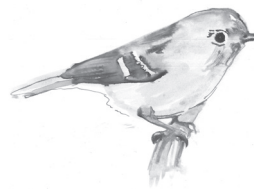
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Songbirds of Your Backyard and Beyond - Part II

If you're up and out at dawn, you know there's a lot going on outside. If you're curious not only about *who* is making the racket but also *why*, then this class is for you. David Drummond, wildlife biologist/naturalist will teach this two session, in-depth class about Passiformes or perching birds. He will cover field ID, habitats, range, breeding and behaviors of 6 Northwest families of 27 species. We will learn about: swifts, swallows, martins, thrushes, warblers, tanagers and grosbeaks. You will have a week between sessions for personal study and field observations at home and can bring your questions and/or photos to class. So, dust-off your binoculars and field guides and learn more about our feathered neighbor friends! **Saturdays May 6 and May 13, 1:00-2:30PM.** Please call or register online.



Friends of Skagit Beaches Lecture Series

Coming up this spring at the Northwest Educational Service District 189 Building, 1601 R Ave, Anacortes, these lectures are free and open to the public.

March 17, 7:00PM. Sounds in the Salish Sea, Scott Veirs, Ph. D., Oceanographer, President Beam Reach Marine Science & Sustainability School, Seattle, WA

April 21, 7:00PM. Exploring the Salish Sea Floor, Gary Greene, Ph. D. Marine Geologist, Director Moss Landing Marine Labs, Tomolo Mapping Lab, Orcas Island, WA

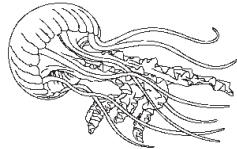
Check the Friends of Skagit Beaches website for more information: www.skagitbeaches.org.

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 2 weeks before program to register.

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

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!*



April 5 & 6, 10:00AM & 1:00PM
Crabs!—*From their fierce pinchers to eyes on stalks, crabs are really amazing. Come and meet some face to face.*

(No May Mini Explorer program. See you in June.)

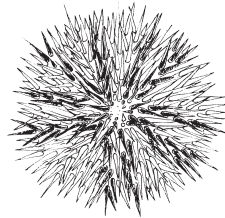
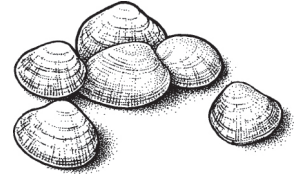
Junior Ecologists are 6-9 year olds who have fun exploring the estuary. Excursions to the beach, science experiments, games, art projects, and studying life in the bay—this program is guaranteed fun! Call the Interpretive Center 2 weeks before program to register.

March 17 & 18, 10:30-12:00AM

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.*

April 21 & 22, 10:30-12:00AM

Bivalve Bash—*We'll unlock some of the secrets inside the 2 closed shells of Padilla Bay's clams, oysters, mussels, and their friends.*



May 5 & 6, 10:30-12:00AM

Adaptations—*Finding food, staying safe, or finding a mate: adaptations help plants and animals in all kinds of ways.*



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Breazeale Interpretive Center
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