

West End Natural Resources News

A publication of the North Pacific Coast Marine Resources Committee (NPC MRC) and NPC Lead Entity for Salmon Recovery.

Issue No. 8 July 2015

TEN YEARS of Achievements by the Hoh River Trust

By Mike Hagen

In 2002, the Western Rivers Conservancy and the Wild Salmon Center began purchasing property for a landscape-scale habitat restoration project in one of the best remaining places for salmon in the U.S. – the Hoh River.

refuge and a place for compatible human recreation. Our mission complements DNR's Olympic Experimental Forest and the Federal Northwest Forest Plan. The property acquisitions were financed by Section 6 Endangered

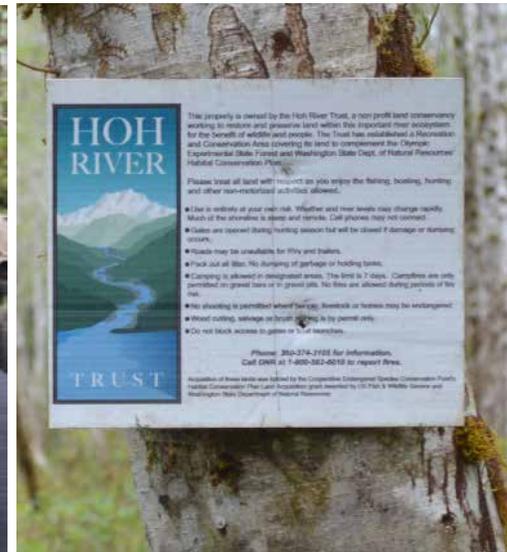


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Mike Hagen (left) discusses a recent fish passage project with Deb Kucipeck, Nicole Rasmussen and Rich Osborne.



The Hoh River Trust boundary sign has become a familiar site north of the river. Photos: Tami Pokorny

The project now encompasses 7,000 acres of timberland and river bottom. At 29 miles long and often more than a half-mile wide, the conservation site creates a nearly contiguous corridor of undeveloped land connecting the interior portion of Olympic National Park to the Pacific Coast.

The Hoh River Trust (HRT), a nonprofit organization, was formed in 2005 to act as the local land owner and manager with the goal of developing a species-rich and age-diverse natural forest that would provide a healthy riparian habitat to benefit salmon and wildlife. HRT lands function primarily as a wildlife

Species Act funds and many private donations. HRT operates under a DNR conservation easement to ensure the protection of these lands in perpetuity. HRT utilizes donations and public grants for projects primarily; most of our operating expenses come from timber income.

To date, HRT has pre-commercially thinned about 3,300 acres and is now commercially thinning overcrowded older stands that need diversification under more protective rules than the DNR uses. We work under an agreement with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that allows us to manage stands to

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TRASHION SHOW! page 12

the age of 60 after which we may intervene to make sure there are enough snags to provide cavity nesting habitat and enough downed wood for prey species and soil protection. HRT thins from below (i.e. harvesting the smaller trees while leaving the largest) to optimize tree growth. After the last thinning, stands will be variable and patchy, appearing to have had natural blowdown. Openings are planted with tree species missing from the original forest mix.

After thinning, sunlight will reach the forest floor once again. New trees and brush will grow and provide a healthy understory within the older forest. We've finished working through our overstocked 65-67 year old hemlock and spruce stands and have transitioned to a much longer period of thinning younger forest stands. Since we don't clear cut, harvest expenses are relatively high; often more than 50% of the stand value. We are required to do forest restoration, even when it is expensive.

HRT achieved one of its original goals in autumn 2014. Every blocked fish bearing stream under its control was reopened for juvenile salmon passage. This not only benefits the forest ecology but also benefits both sport and tribal fisheries. Many of these streams have not had salmon in them since the 1940s. As a result of our forest management practices, HRT has also achieved notable height growth in thinned plantations, and huckleberry and sword fern are developing in a healthy understory that was formerly choked by dark stands.

We continue to implement restoration projects with the ultimate aim of restoring industrial plantations to near "old growth" characteristics. How does one accomplish this in a human timeframe? The western Olympic Peninsula's tremendous productivity, its nearly intact species baseline, and a minimum of unrepairable human disruption offer many



Pole Creek Bridge (Completed in 2010 in through a partnership with PCSC, Jefferson County, and others). Photo: Mike Hagen



Larson Timber Management creating an opening at the Black Forest near MP 10.5 on the Upper Hob Road (2010). Photo: Mike Hagen

advantages. Our plan is to accelerate tree growth in both wild and plantation stands using normal silvicultural methods. Sitka spruce, western red cedar, Douglas fir, and black cottonwood – the most common tree species on the coastal peninsula – are all capable of fast growth when given optimal light, water, and nutrients. Coastal Olympic Peninsula may become the refuge for both wild salmon and listed birds while restoration elsewhere in the state catches up.

Big game projects include producing small openings (½ to 1.5 acres) in thinned conifer plantations for elk pasture and edge dependent species. All HRT lands are open for walk-in hunting and most gates are opened in-season.

As a forest landowner, we are required by DNR to maintain good drainage on our system roads and to close and restore old obsolete roads. We've decommissioned over ten miles of unneeded road and removed our 22 worst culverts. The plan also identified roads needed for recreational access. These are kept open and are in frequent use. We constructed a major bridge on a forest haul road and were partners in replacing four other bridges on county roads. Depending on funds, there are several more to go.

Our protection and restoration efforts wouldn't be possible without partnerships across a wide range of people, businesses, and organizations. HRT looks forward to exceptional working relationships with the community and tourists to care for the lands and ensure they continue to benefit fish, wildlife, and human recreation.

While HRT is not an advocacy organization, it is actively involved in Washington Coast Region and WRIA 20 salmon recovery planning. We have several Olympic Peninsula Board members and employees in both Forks and Port Angeles. It is our intention to recruit most of our board on the peninsula in the future. For more information about HRT, visit www.hohrivertrust.org. We welcome inquiries and volunteers.



Campers' crew. Photo: Karlyn K. Langjahr

Washington Coast Cleanup 2015 – Success by Any Measure

By Tami Pokorny and Jon Schmidt

Almost 1,600 volunteers from as far away as Ellensburg made April 25, 2015 one of the biggest coast cleanup efforts ever by hauling away more than 19 tons of plastic and other debris for proper disposal and recycling.

Neah Bay saw 146 volunteers alone, including members of The Mountaineers and staff from the US Coast Guard. Makah tribal members greeted volunteers, provided logistics and passes for free admission to the museum. Over 3,000

pounds of debris were hauled off at that location. Volunteers paid particular attention to separating out and processing 15 bags of recyclables.

The Ozette cleanup overwhelmed the capacity of the dumpster. Several volunteers made multiple six-mile round trips to the beach to collect debris. For the first time, Friends of Olympic National Park provided the barbeque there.

Boy Scout Troup 1498, from Sequim cleaned beaches south of the Hoh River in partnership with the Tribe. They hauled four pickup loads of material away – a record amount. Kalaloch area beaches were combed by 246 volunteers. A Student Conservation Association group from Centralia brought in about 50 people. They found and removed several large items including part of a skiff.

NPC MRC member Roy Morris and Nancy Messmer from Lions Club International coordinated a professional video crew to report on the cleanup and build awareness of the marine debris issue around the Pacific Rim.

Jon Schmidt of Washington Coast Savers noted, “The weather should be given some credit for the record turnout but really it was the volunteers who made the choice that weekend to spend their time cleaning their favorite beach, we love our volunteers!”

Fall’s International Coast Cleanup is coming up on September 19! Watch the CoastSavers website, <http://www.coastsavers.org>, for more information.

Save the Date
*International
Coastal Cleanup
September 19, 2015*

*More info:
www.coastsavers.org*

Local Educators Strive for Preparedness Ahead of Earthquakes and Tsunamis

By Tami Pokorny



As soon as the shaking stops, follow the signs. Head for high ground or inland and stay there until you receive the official “all clear” from authorities. Carry a NOAA weather radio for broadcast alerts. Andrew Winck, emergency manager for the Makah Tribe, points to an evacuation route sign in Neah Bay. Photo: Tami Pokorny

A mega-earthquake rocked the coast of the Pacific Northwest on January 26, 1700 at about 9 p.m. Since then, the ground has lain silent. Or, has it?

That question and many others were answered last fall when K-12 teachers, park interpreters, MRC members, and emergency managers from up and down the Washington Coast participated in Oregon State University’s “Cascadia Earthscope Earthquake and Tsunami Education Program (CEETEP)” at the ONRC in Forks.

The 4-day training was exceptional. It launched a wave of enthusiasm and creativity of its own. Participants acted through schools, communities, agencies, and organizations to improve our understanding of earthquake-related risks and to consider how we may become better prepared. At Forks High School, for example, science students constructed models of evacuation towers that they then shared with the public. CEETEP workshops were held in six locations as far south as Arcata, California with support from a grant from the National Science Foundation.

Another “full rip” earthquake along the Cascadia Subduction Zone – like the one that occurred 315 years ago – would release colossal amounts of pent-up energy as the rocky margins of two of Earth’s crustal plates rupture and grind past each other. The plates are currently locked together by friction. This friction will eventually be overcome by the regional geological forces driving the two plates together.

While standing at the Quillayute Airport with CEETEP instructor Dr. Beth Pratt-Sitaula of Central Washington University, the participants learned about a network of GPS receivers being used to track ground movements over time. Each year at the Quillayute location, the receiver moves three-quarters of an inch to the northeast. That rate equates to nearly 18 feet of accumulated movement since the year 1700. In the next big earthquake, geologists expect the rocks will essentially bounce back to the southwest a similar distance in only a few minutes. The process will also warp the coast’s landscape downward by three feet or more. Meanwhile, the profile of the seafloor could also change rapidly triggering undersea landslides and tsunami waves at the ocean’s surface.

Previous intervals between major quakes on the coast have been 250 years or longer. What can be said about the timing of the next big quake is that the probability of such an event increases with each passing year. A major earthquake is inevitable. The four largest earthquakes ever recorded – Chile (1960 Magnitude 9.5), Alaska (1964 Mag. 9.2), Sumatra (2004, Mag. 9.1) and Japan (2011 Mag. 9.0) all lie in geological settings similar to our own.

Preparedness begins with greater awareness of the risks and then doing what you can ahead of time to protect your-



Every October, the Great Washington Shake Out is held. Millions of people worldwide practice Drop, Cover and Hold and other earthquake drills. Learn more about preparing for earthquakes by visiting <http://shakeout.org/washington> and click on “Resources”.



*CEETEP participants at the Olympic Natural Resources Center in Forks.
Photo: Tami Pokorny*

self and your family during the event, and to manage your needs in its aftermath.

Dr. Pratt-Sitaula shared this personal preparedness story with CEETEP participants a few short months after the training. Her husband's family is from Nepal:

“...Nepal has now experienced two major earthquakes in the last three weeks (Mag 7.8 April 25 and Mag 7.3 May 12). I cannot tell you how grateful I am that I stuck to my guns and did the best I could to make sure that both my family and worksite were properly prepared. Our family houses were undamaged by either quake. The family reported that the training and knowledge they had about what to do was hugely helpful in getting through the events without panic. Everyone found each other within an hour of the Mag 7.8 earthquake because they all knew where to meet. They had supplies. They knew to expect aftershocks and, while the aftershocks were still very stressful, the family has been able to recover more quickly

emotionally because the whole thing was not a great unknown.

I know there are times that all of you probably feel like voices in the dark as you try to move your communities towards greater earthquake and tsunami resilience. I just wanted to share my story of how very, very glad I am that I kept plugging away at earthquake resilience in the little pocket of Nepal that I was able to affect. I know that the seeds you all are planting now will be part of the flower of a more resilient future for Cascadia.”

There are many great sources of information on earthquake and tsunami preparedness. One is the Washington State Emergency Management Division website at <http://mil.wa.gov/emergency-management-division>. Click on “Preparedness” at the top.



Beth Pratt-Sitaula describes how the EarthScope GPS receiver at the Quillayute Airport is moving along with earth's crust in response to geological forces. Photo: Tami Pokorny



Emcee Ian Miller welcomes the audience to the second annual River & Ocean Film Festival. Photo: Tami Pokorny

2nd Annual River & Ocean Film Festival

By Ian Miller

The River & Ocean Film Festival, held on April 25 after the Washington Coast Cleanup, was a really outstanding event that, true to its goal, highlighted the many facets of rivers and oceans on the west end of the Olympic Peninsula. The response to this year's event was outstanding. On the film-maker side of things we far exceeded our expectations and ended up with more films than we could show. On top of that, many of the submissions were uninvited, suggesting word about this film festival is starting to spread among Pacific Northwest film-makers. On the audience side, we increased attendance by 50% over last year.

In total, there were 12 films screened during the festival and several included images from the West End. The festival highlight was the world premier of *Discover Your Olympic Coast* which was shot here by renown underwater cinematographer Florian Graner. This film is being made available in high definition format to K-12 teachers on the coast. Contact tpokorny@co.jefferson.wa.us for more information.

There were also films about extreme kayaking on Graves Creek, the challenges faced by oyster farmers in Willapa Bay, the simple joys of Pacific Northwest rivers (as seen through the eyes of a child), and the annual Surfing and Traditions surf contest held in La Push. The films truly do provide a glimpse into a wide range of activities, environments, and perspectives on the Olympic Peninsula that many of us don't get in our daily lives. This is why we hold the event, to use the power of film as a tool for better understanding where we live.

A few other "new" things about this year's event also helped to make it bigger and better. First, we were able to hold it in the brand new Rainforest Arts Center in downtown Forks. Not only did the central location provide the event with increased exposure, but also the venue was fantastic – spacious but with great audio-visual equipment and a really nice atmosphere. And, we partnered with the Forks High School Senior Parents, who provided a dinner and dessert to accompany the films. That was a really nice touch that also benefited the students of Forks High School.

Missed this year's event? Do two things - first check out the web page (<http://wsg.washington.edu/community-outreach/outreach-detail-pages/river-and-ocean-film-festival/>) where most of the films from this year are posted. Then keep an eye out for announcements about next year's film festival.

Natural Resources Options Program MENTORSHIPS TO JOBS

By Dan Lieberman

Employability on the West End of the Olympic Peninsula will always involve skill sets linked to natural resources. The North Olympic Peninsula Skills Center's (NOPSC) Natural Resources Option Program provides high school-aged students with experiences that may lead towards locally-relevant natural resource jobs.

Natural Resources Options is essentially a service-learning class. Students from Forks and La Push who enroll in the program choose among sponsoring organizations, such as Olympic National Park and Washington Sea Grant, and participate in real projects alongside natural resource professionals. Successful students from this first year course can enroll in 'Natural Resources 2' internships which involve greater responsibility as well as the possibility of earning a small stipend. Both program levels are provided free to participants and sponsor organizations.

There were six NPC MRC student interns during first semester of the 2014-15 school year and five of them completed internships. Among the student interns are:

Cole Johnson conducted beach surveys with Olympic National Park and he's designing another set of natural resources thank you cards for use by the NPC MRC and others. Cole interviewed Trashion Show and Coastal Cleanup participants for blog posts and an article. Cole is considered a reliable and detail-oriented physical and intellectual worker.

Skyla Dawkins supported both the Trashion Show and Coast Cleanup in April in many roles. For example, she designed and built an entry for the Trashion Show for her sister Bella to wear. Skyla regularly conducted field surveys for COASST and marine debris. In her mentoring work with

three other students, Skyla showed great maturity.

Taylor Graham was a crew member for the Pacific Coast Salmon Coalition (PCSC) and participated in Forks Food for Thought “Dig In” school garden club. He’s creating a poster focused on salmon habitat restoration projects for natural resources organizations to use. Taylor has become increasingly excited to help others learn and accomplish their projects with PCSC.

Scott Archibald began first semester as an intern but due to other school-related commitments, “did not follow through with my original plan.” His second semester internship product is a poster depicting how he and his co-workers at the PCSC built the wood mural at the new Rainforest Art Center. Scott has a new appreciation for how informative and persuasive art can be.



Romario Bello with his original salmon life cycle carving. Photo: Dan Lieberman

Despite student successes and the continued growth of the Natural Resources program on the West End and across the North Olympic Peninsula, the program was almost eliminated in the spring of 2015. Vocal public support rescued the program’s future.

NPC MRC member Roy Morris regularly volunteers his expertise and guidance, which has been invaluable. “As I have observed the development of this important program for our communities over the years, I have seen continuous improvement. The student presentations at NPC MRC meetings demonstrate that,” he commented.

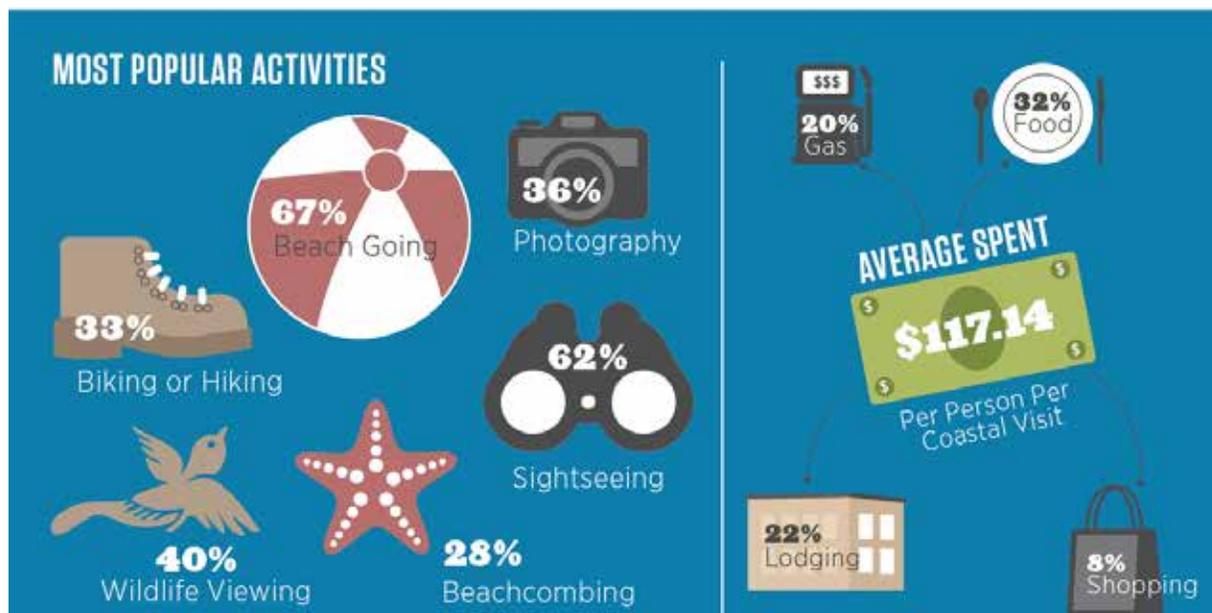
To learn more about the Natural Resources Options and see student work samples, please visit www.nopsc.org/naturalresources. For questions about the program and enrollment, please contact teacher Dan Lieberman (dlieberman@portangelesschools.org; 360/565-1892).

Recreational Uses of the Washington Coast

The Surfrider Foundation, in partnership with Point 97 and Washington State, recently completed a study of the non-consumptive recreational uses of Washington’s coastal areas.

Using a survey approach, it found that the state’s residents make an estimated 4.1 million visits to the coast and spend an average of \$117.14 per trip on things such as food, lodging,

transportation, and shopping each year. At that rate, coastal recreation contributes more than \$481 million dollars to the state’s economy in trip-related expenditures annually. The most popular activities include going to the beach, enjoying the scenery, viewing wildlife, taking photographs, and hiking or biking. Learn more at <http://msp.wa.gov/connect/news>.



Source: Washington Coast and Ocean Recreation Study.

- 6,500 Surveys completed
- 17,500 Data Points Collected
- See Recreational Use Maps Here: www.msp.wa.gov/explore

Students Study Beaches and Debris

By Helle Andersen

Forty-five sophomore science students from Forks High School and teachers John Hunter, Margo Peterson, and Megan Rains hiked to Second Beach on a foggy day in May to study the beach and to survey it for logs and marine debris. The field trip was supported in part by the NPC MRC.

Dr. Ian Miller, coastal hazards specialist for Washington Sea Grant, and Helle Andersen, marine scientist for Feiro Marine Life Center (FMLC), led the activities. On the North Coast, the shape and function of beaches are influenced by the presence of large logs that have washed up above high tide. The beach survey gave students the opportunity to get a sense of the volume and positions of these logs as they measured their lengths and diameters. Students also gained insight into the beach profile and why the logs accumulate where they do.

Other students armed with flags, ropes, frames and sieves sampled the beach along a randomly selected line, or transect. They followed specific instructions that have been developed by COASST to specifically gauge the types and volume of marine debris, in addition to its potential to harm wildlife. Students were instructed to measure each individual piece of plastic debris and to determine whether it would crumple or whether it was sharp, shiny, or poisonous.

In a separate but related MRC-funded project, Peninsula College student and FMLC intern Alisha Mate is working with Helle to assess the presence of the “micro” debris on four beaches between Kalaloch and Norwegian Memorial. Micro debris is defined as five millimeters or smaller. The small size increases the likelihood of exposing animals near the base of the marine food chain to negative physical and chemical effects.

Alisha has been actively surveying the beaches, identifying the debris in the laboratory, helping with data analysis, and presenting results. She feels that, “this kind of work is very important if we ever want to understand the actual scope of the waste problem in our oceans. Hopefully this project and projects like it will help provide a sense of urgency towards combatting the problem.”



The class arrives at Second Beach. Photo: Ian Miller



Peninsula College student Alisha Mate scoops material from a wrack line on Second Beach for Feiro’s Marine Debris Survey. Photo: Helle Andersen

Sea Star Wasting Syndrome and the Fate of Sea Stars in ONP

By Tami Pokorny and Dr. Steven Fradkin

Sea stars (commonly referred to as starfish) are colorful, iconic, long-lived predators that inhabit the rocky shoreline of the North Olympic Coast. Populations of ochre sea stars (*Pisaster ochraceus*) and over 21 other sea star species have been afflicted by a disease since 2013. In June of that year, Olympic National Park Coastal Ecologist Steven Fradkin first noticed something awry at Starfish Point (Beach Trail 4) on the park's south coast. Ochre sea stars there had visible white lesions and many had lost arms that wandered about by themselves.

This discovery was the first documented occurrence of what has become a broader sea star mortality event that has swept over the entire west coast of North America, including the Salish Sea. Millions of sea stars have been killed from Baja California to southern Alaska. Between 20 to 75 percent of the ochre sea star population has been lost at several locations along the North Olympic Coast.

Although diseased sea stars continue to be observed in many areas of Olympic National Park, signs that populations may have a shot at recovery are visible. While high levels of disease were observed during the winter, disease levels have been decreasing markedly as summer has approached. Additionally, many sea stars that lost arms show signs of regrowth, and individuals with healed lesions have also been observed.

In some coastal areas, there appears to be an increase in the number of baby ochre sea stars. The question remains whether baby stars will continue to grow or eventually fall victim to the syndrome. Ochre sea stars, for example, don't reach sexual maturity until five years of age so long-term recovery of populations may hinge on if, or how long, the stars can remain healthy.

Now known as Sea Star Wasting Syndrome (SSWS), the disease frequently causes the stars' arms to separate from their bodies, their internal organs to fall out from holes caused by limb loss, and eventually the animals are rendered to goo. As a result, these vital members of the coast's rocky intertidal zone, cherished for their beauty and their role as keystone predators responsible for shaping the community structure, are increasingly absent or scarce.

Sea stars are top predators with a large role to play in maintaining biological diversity along rocky shores. For example, stars influence the lower extent of sea mussel colonies by attacking them from below as the tide ascends and withdrawing into the sea to digest their meals as the tide goes out. This results in areas dominated by mussels in the higher zones and algae in lower ones – with a wide diversity of creatures making up each of the two distinct types of communities.

A densovirus (a kind of parvovirus) is at least partly to blame according to a recent study by scientists from Cornell and Western Washington University. In addition to sea stars, the virus was also found in sea water, plankton, sediments and water filters from public aquariums, sea urchins and brittle

stars. In the last few months urchin disease symptoms have been reported in southern California and Baja California. Co-author Drew Harvell commented in a press release, "It's the experiment of the century for marine ecologists. It is happening at such a large scale to the most important predators of the tidal and subtidal zones. Their disappearance is an experiment in ecological upheaval the likes of which we've never seen."

The distribution of afflicted stars coast-wide is being tracked and international group of professional and citizen scientists through a database created by the Pacific Rocky Intertidal Monitoring Program at UC Santa Cruz pacificrockyintertidal.org. More recently, an effort to also track the location of clusters of juvenile sea stars was initiated (<http://gordon.science.oregonstate.edu/marine1/juvenilesmap.html>). In Washington, juvenile stars are seen near Bellingham, Everett and in southern Hood Canal, but none have been reported along Washington's Pacific Coast yet. A wonderful "Juvenile Sea Star Identification Guide" is available to anyone willing to help search for them. To view the guide, enter its title into an Internet search engine. Scientists are interested in specific observations on the health of juvenile sea stars that are less than one inch in diameter or smaller than a quarter.

Five species of sea stars once commonly seen along the coast have experienced high mortality from sea star wasting disease (SSWS):

Morning sun star (*Solaster dawsoni*)

Mottled star (*Evesterias troschelii*)

Giant pink star (*Pisaster brevispinus*)

Ochre or purple star (*Pisaster ochraceus*)



ONP crew conducting sea star monitoring at Sokol Point. Photo: Steven Fradkin

Marine Spatial Planning Update

Through a public process, a new plan for Washington's coastal and marine environments is under development which will determine the most appropriate locations for new human uses: our first Marine Spatial Plan.

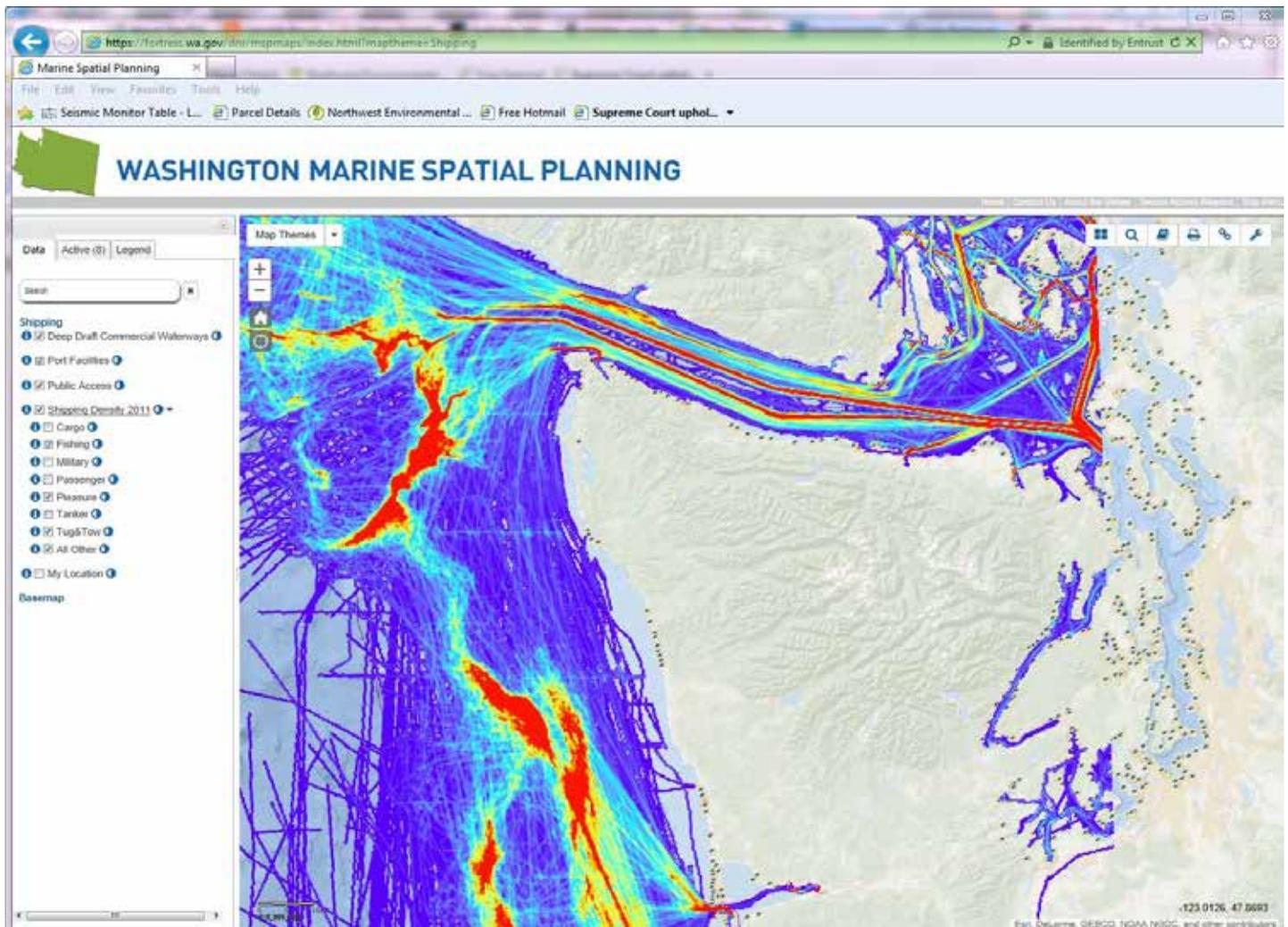
Efforts to collect data in support of the plan are now essentially complete. The Washington Coast Marine Advisory Council (WCMAC) has begun its work with state agencies to develop policy recommendations through the summer and fall. This winter, they'll produce specific map-based recommendations and identify possible mitigation measures.

A first draft of the plan is anticipated next summer. The plan will begin with a section to describe current conditions, existing uses of the coast, and trends. Economic, recreational,

and wildlife uses of the coast will then be discussed as well as new information about the seafloor, ocean conditions, and areas potentially suitable for energy-related facilities. A GIS-based section will analyze how new uses, existing uses, and the environment will interface. It will assess which areas experience more or less conflict between existing and potential new uses.

A recommendations section will provide background on the regulatory framework as well as the Marine Spatial Plan's recommendation themselves. These will include designations for specific areas as well as general policy recommendations to meet the requirements and goals of the plan. This section of the plan will also provide instruction on how the recommendations should be implemented.

To participate in the planning process, attend WCMAC or MRC meetings (www.msp.wa.gov/events/month) or contact planners through the MSP website.



Our coast is a busy place. Vessel traffic is just one category of information available for viewing through the Washington Marine Spatial Planning mapping application (<http://www.msp.wa.gov>). Others include marine life, habitat, physical oceanography, and additional human uses.



Many of the participants in the 2014 Coast MRC Summit visited Point Grenville with Quinault Indian Nation Marine Resources Scientist Joe Schumacker. The group discusses encountering a deceased Dahl's porpoise. Photo: Tami Pokorny

2014 Coast MRC Summit at Pacific Beach

Thanks to the generosity and hard work of the Surfrider Foundation, The Nature Conservancy and Grays Harbor MRC, the four coast marine resources committees held their annual summit on October 23-25, 2014 at Pacific Beach Resort and Conference Center. Presentations spanned topics ranging from oil transport, razor clams, shoreline master programs, fishing reserves, ocean acidification, and effective communications with elected officials. It was exciting to hear about a new initiative, the Washington Coast Works Sustainable Business Competition (<http://wacoastworks.org>), from Mike Skinner of Pinchot University. The program will provide seed money to selected entrepreneurs to develop sustainable businesses through a local, competitive process that has been used successfully in Southeast Alaska.

The next Coast MRC Summit will take place at La Push on October 15-17, 2015.



Dan Ayres, biologist for WDFW, discusses razor clam management in Washington State. Photo: Tami Pokorny

Beauty and the Beach Debris – Forks’ First Trashion Show

By Cole Johnson and Dana Wu



*Dana Wu in her Tarp-tastic suit.
Photo: Tami Pokorny*

This year, Rain-Fest River & Ocean Days hosted an event never before seen at the festival: a Trashion Show. The spectacle was held on April 24th in celebration of our beautiful beaches and to honor the volunteers who planned to participate in the coast cleanup that very next day.

Trashion art combines environmentalism with creativity and has been around for years. In the 1990s, people began crafting wearable arts out of plastic waste to celebrate Earth Day, and, long before that, people utilized salvaged materials to

create clothing. Trashion blends fashion with beach trash and surplus items – hence the portmanteau, “trashion”.

Fork’s inaugural Trashion Show exceeded all expectations. It began with entertainment from musical guests Slim Howly and Sandy Summers of Port Angeles and a slideshow presented by Washington CoastSavers. ONP Marine Ambassador Skyla Dawkins, who entered trashion designs in the show, said that the evening was, “awesome and really fun. Everyone looked amazing!”

Models walked a circular runway created by Master of Ceremonies Sarah Tucker of Port Angeles (dressed as a glamorous housefly) to show off their trashion creations to the delight of the audience. Examples of costumes included an English bulldog dressed as Star Wars’ Darth Vader adorned with plastic picnic forks and lead by his human, Hank Walker, dressed as a Sith Lord with a sign that read: “The Empire Strikes Back ... against beach litter!” and, “Don’t join the Dark Side, clean up your trash!”



*Emma Grayce Fleck in French Recycle-ution. Emcee Sarah Tucker provides the details of the costume made from plastic garbage bags and materials purchased years ago from the Boeing surplus store.
Photo: Tami Pokorny*



*Bella Dawkin models Skyla Dawkin's ensemble, “Trashy Dress”.
Photo: David Schmidt*

Prizes in various categories were awarded by judges Wendy Bennett, Forks High School art teacher, Rod Fleck, attorney-planner for the City of Forks, and Helen Freilich, the waste reduction specialist for the City of Port Angeles. Skyla and the other winners received prizes and gift certificates donated by local artists and businesses.

First prize went to trashion artist Suzanne DeMasso of Port Hadlock for her glorious dress entitled “French Recycle-ution” modeled by FHS student Emma Grayce Fleck. The dress incorporated a feather-like skirt made of individually ironed plastic grocery bags. Trashion Show co-organizer Dana Wu wore a sophisticated design of her own creation, a suit made from a brown tarp and assorted marine debris recovered from Ruby Beach. Jon Schmidt, Washington CoastSavers amazed as well with his original shotgun shell kilt constructed with shells collected near Sequim. He commented afterwards, “CoastSaver volunteers are passionate and dedicated to the cause of keeping our beaches clean. The Trashion Show was a great opportunity to have some fun and celebrate our efforts.”

Other costumes included “Plastic Princess”, “This Dress is Garbage”, “Titanium” and “Skeletor, Scourge of Eternia and Would-be Master of the Universe and Conqueror of Castle Gray-skull” – presented by designers and models as young as ten years old.

The Trashion Show’s impact on the community will likely be lasting. Because of the local attention it received, this event has increased awareness of how much trash is actually washing up on our local beaches. Marine debris is quickly becoming a huge problem.

Events like the Trashion Show are important because they open eyes and encourage people to make choices that protect the environment. We look forward to another Trashion Show next April!



*Jon Schmidt in the shotgun shell kilt he designed himself.
Photo: Tami Pokorny*



Slim Howly and Sandy Summers provided live entertainment at the Trashion Show. Photo: Tami Pokorny



The judges’ corner – Helen Freilich, Wendy Bennett, and Rod Fleck. Photo: Tami Pokorny

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Roy Morris (Citizen 1, Clallam)
Rich Osborne (Citizen 2, Clallam)
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ONP sea stars face an uncertain future. See article page 9. Photo: Steven Fradkin