

ANNUAL REPORT *Friends of Skagit Beaches*

November 2017



2017 - The Highs and Lows

For Friends, 2017 will be remembered as a year marked by both several highs and one huge low. The highs? Marquee events like our Winter Lecture Series, Fidalgo Bay Day, and the Fidalgo Shoreline Academy all set attendance records and were hugely successful on many levels. Two new active and extremely talented individuals joined the Friends' Board of Directors this fall. They are already making huge contributions! The low? The Coastal Volunteer Partnership (CVP) officially ceased to exist on November 15, 2017.

There is no way to overstate the huge hole created by the demise of the CVP in the process to recruit, train, and coordinate the activities of future volunteers. Friends was a major driving force behind the formation of the CVP in 2014-15 and we recognize how critically important a viable and sustainable volunteer program is to our mission and the entire community. As such, Friends has taken on a leadership role partnering with the Skagit Marine Resources Committee (SMRC) to chart a path forward in 2018. I am optimistic that a plan can be worked out to sustain the key functions of the former CVP, including a strong volunteer program. Stay tuned for further updates on our progress.

As we look ahead to 2018, Friends remains committed to and takes pride in providing the community with high quality environmentally focused public education like our Winter Lecture Series and the Fidalgo Shoreline Academy. Based on the surveys we collect and the ever increasing attendance at these events, we know lots of people are concerned and want to learn all they can about their environment. Further, many want to know how they can become engaged in activities that can make a difference. Friends is in the unique position to connect with these concerned citizens, arm them with solid scientific information, and suggest ways they can become actively engaged. This is a service to the community that Friends can be immensely proud of!

We also look forward to continuing our great working relationship with the SMRC and the Samish Indian Nation to co-host the popular Fidalgo Bay Day event that engages kids and families in a celebration of Samish culture, local marine bounty and stewardship. Additionally, Friends' will continue its support for selected activities sponsored by organizations that share our vision and goals, like the Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve Citizen's Stewardship Committee (FBARCSC), Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (PBNERR), Anacortes High School Green Club, Pacific Biodiversity Institute, and others.

By renewing your membership, becoming a new member, and/or making a donation, you send an unequivocal message that you care about preserving and protecting our wonderful, but fragile, marine environment. Friends is an all volunteer organization doing amazing work with modest resources. Your support is vital to our mission.

Thank you for supporting us in 2017! We look forward to bringing you more great Friends events in 2018!

Wayne Huseby, President

What's Inside

- Message from the President
- Your Board of Directors
- Financial Report
- Winter Lecture Series
- Fidalgo Shoreline Academy
- Fidalgo Bay Day
- Featured Project
- Ways to Help
- Annual Meeting

Your Board of Directors

The Board welcomed two new members in 2017, Gina Johnson and Jennifer Herron. Vacancies were created when Bill Clark and Phyllis Bravinder resigned from the Board in July (see below). Per Bylaws, vacancies can be filled by an affirmative vote of the remaining Directors. Both ladies were unanimously approved by the Board and became official Board members on September 27th. Per Bylaws, each will be up for re-election in January at the Annual Meeting.

Gina Johnson hails from Connecticut and recently retired from a career in the northeast with the state and national park systems. She brings a wealth of administrative and management experience to the Board. Now a permanent resident of Anacortes and a recent (2017) graduate of the Salish Sea Stewards program, Gina has become a very active volunteer, including heron and harbor porpoise monitoring as well as helping at the Wolf Hollow Wildlife Rehabilitation Center. Gina is an active member of several FOSB committees, including the 2017 Fidalgo Shoreline Academy, 2018 Lecture Series Planning Committee, Fundraising Committee, Branding Committee and the CVP Transition Task Force.



Jen Herron also recently moved to Anacortes after retiring from a career in academia where she served as the Director of Admissions for Saybrook University in Seattle as well as adjunct faculty in the Leadership and Organizational Development Master's degree program. Jen is also a recent (2017) graduate of the Salish Sea Stewards program. With her background in electronic media, Jen has really helped improve our on-line impact, particularly with our Facebook account. Jen also brings strong leadership and administrative skills to the Friends Board. She was selected by her peers to chair the critically important CVP Transition Task Force. Jen is also an active member of the 2018 Lecture Series Planning Committee, Fundraising and Branding Committees.



As excited as we are to have Gina and Jen join our Board, two directors, Bill Clark and Phyllis Bravinder resigned in July. Both were significant contributors to the Board and FOSB sponsored events. Each has indicated they intend to continue their support for FOSB activities, but we will miss their smiling faces at board meetings.

Regan Weeks, current FOSB Secretary, announced in late October that she will be stepping down from the Board at the end of the year. Regan has served on the board with distinction for the past five years doing a great job documenting all of our meetings, managing our on-line document storage, and keeping us all informed. Regan has graciously agreed to stay on until the end of the year helping with the transition to our new Secretary, Barbara Lechner, a current board member.



Protecting Skagit County shorelines and marine waters through education, citizen science, and stewardship.

2017 Board of Directors

Wayne Huseby, President
Beckie Arnold, Vice President
Dick Shiley, Treasurer
Regan Weeks, Secretary
Betty Carteret, Past President
Karen Richman
Barbara Lechner
Gina Johnson
Jennifer Herron

Our Partners

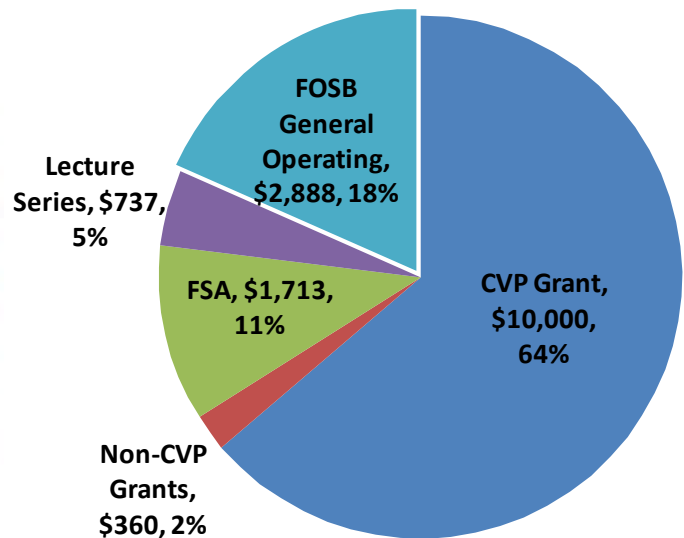
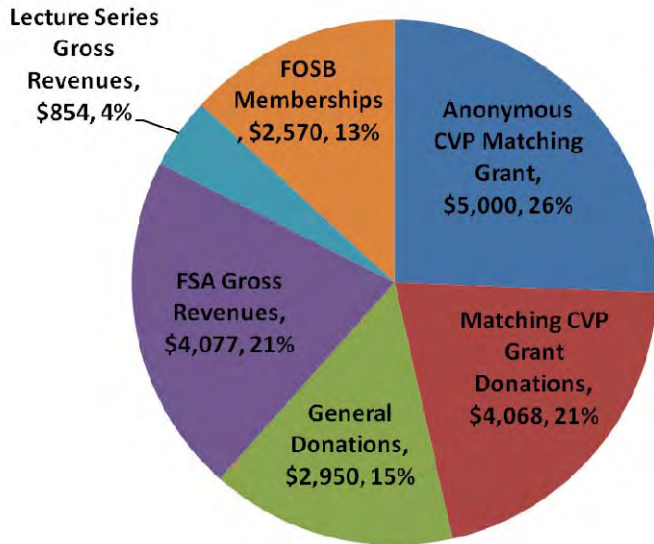
Friends works closely with many other local organizations to further our mission.

- Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve & Foundation
- Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve Citizens Stewardship Committee
- Skagit Marine Resources Committee
- Samish Indian Nation
- City of Anacortes
- Port of Anacortes
- WA Dept. of Ecology
- WA Dept. of Natural Resources
- Anacortes High School Green Club
- Northwest Straits Foundation

2017 FOSB Financial Report

2017 FOSB Income - \$19,519

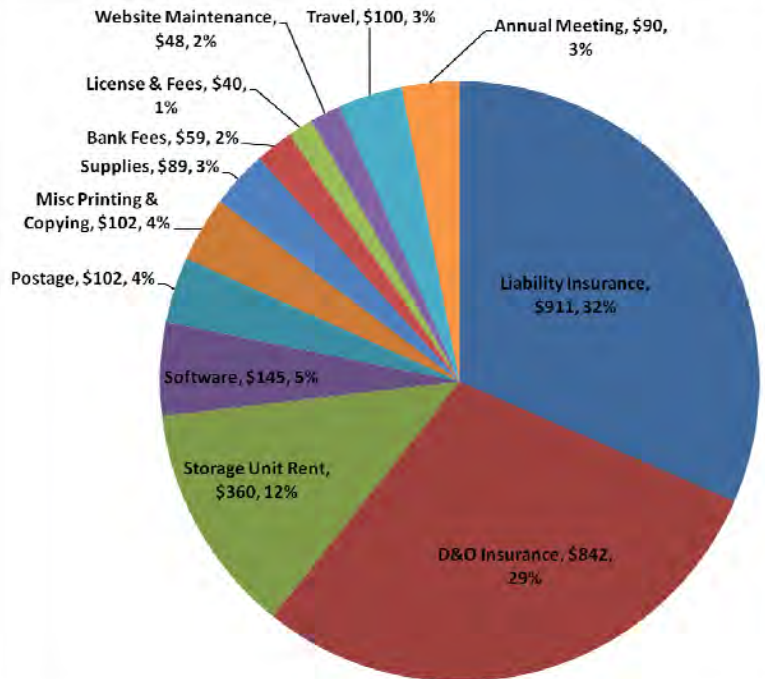
2017 FOSB Expenses - \$15,698



2017 FOSB Cash Balance Sheet

2016 Beginning Balance	\$3,275	
2017 Income		\$19,519
2017 Projected Expenses		(\$15,698)
2017 Net Income		\$3,821
Projected 2018 Beginning Balance	\$7,096	

2017 FOSB General Operating Expenses - \$2,888



Notes:

1. The anonymous \$5,000 CVP grant and \$4,068 collected in matching funds is a one-time event for 2017
2. Total FOSB income without anonymous grant and matching funds was \$10,451
3. Membership revenues in 2017 increased by 38% (\$2,570) over 2016 (\$1,860)
4. General (non restricted) donations in 2017 increased 37% (\$2,950) over 2016 (\$2,150)
5. Insurance (liability and Directors & Officers) is single largest (61%) operating expense
6. Printing and copying costs listed are general and do not include costs for event publicity
7. Travel is a contingency only

Winter Lecture Series - Another Attendance Record!

Another all-time attendance record was set for the 12th annual Winter Lecture Series with a total of 696 people attending! That is a whopping 35% increase over 2016! The huge increase in attendance can largely be attributed to our first lecture, *"The Whales are Coming"* with John Calambokidis, research biologist with the Cascadia Research Collective in Olympia, WA. There is some uncertainty over the actual number of people in attendance that evening since many people were standing and crowding into anywhere there was space! Unfortunately, many simply turned around and left once they saw the size of the crowd. Our best estimate is that approximately 290 people attended that lecture! The Reid Harbor Room is capable of seating a little over 160 people so we were in totally uncharted territory! Fortunately, the crowds for the remaining lectures returned to more "normal" levels so we didn't have to activate our "emergency" procedures. The working theory for such a huge crowd was a combination of three factors, (1) everybody loves the whales, (2) the lecture immediately followed a local women's march that evening, and (3) our heavy promotion in local and on-line media. At any rate, the trend towards larger and larger crowds has the Planning Committee thinking about future alternatives?

The Lecture Series team decided to "pilot" offering coffee, tea, and cookies prior to the beginning of each lecture. We discovered, to no one's surprise, that our lecture crowd really likes their coffee, tea, and cookies! Since donations more than paid for the supplies and people seemed to really enjoy the perk, we will be doing it again in 2018. Many thanks to the ladies that come in early to make the coffee and bake the cookies!

Friends is extremely proud to associate our name as the sponsor of the Winter Lecture Series. We feel these lectures offer the citizens of our community a tremendous opportunity to learn about some of the great work being done by regional scientists and researchers on a broad range of environmental topics. We are confident that citizens, armed with research-backed information, will make sound environmental choices and become better stewards of the environment.



Fidalgo Shoreline Academy - New Venue, New Season, New Heights

The 6th annual Fidalgo Shoreline Academy (FSA) was held on Saturday, October 21st at the Northwest Educational Services District 189 (NWESD) Building. Although the Academy is our primary fundraising event, the mission is to provide the community with a high quality educational experience on a broad range of environmental and cultural topics. By all accounts, our first event at the NWESD was a resounding success, setting an all-time record for attendance with 128 registered guests! According to the surveys collected and the comments received, the venue, topics, and speakers were appreciated and all given high marks.

Dr. Phoebe Barnard, Executive Director of the Pacific Biodiversity Institute, gave the keynote address, *When Rome Is Burning*. Dr. Barnard's message was that we humans are having a profound effect on the planet. Some changes are obvious while others are more subtle but just as impactful. Taken together, these changes are very harmful to delicate ecosystems leading to a reduction in the overall biodiversity of living things. Dr. Barnard argues that a collaborative holistic data driven approach is needed to comprehend what is actually happening so that governments and individuals can take the actions necessary to reverse the trend. She challenged each of us to become proactive and engage in the issues in whatever way we can.

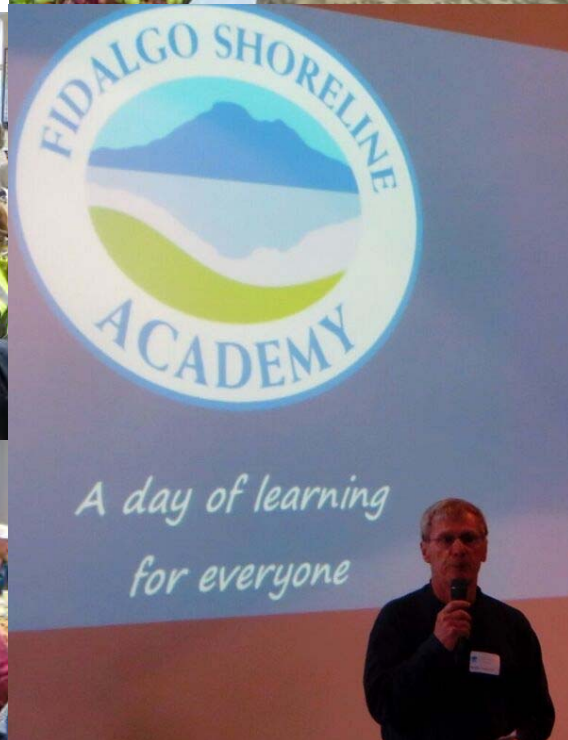


At the recommendation of the 2016 FSA Planning Committee, the event was moved from spring to fall and from the Fidalgo Bay Resort (FBR) to the NWESD. Feedback from attendees, exhibitors, and speakers, suggest the changes were well received. Compared with the FBR, the NWESD can accommodate significantly more people, has more classroom space, and offers superior audio/visual capabilities. The move from a spring to fall event was done for two primary reasons; (1) attract more school teachers and (2) avoid competing with other spring events, including Whidbey's Sound Waters.



With the larger facility, we were able to increase the number of indoor "classrooms" per breakout session from two (2) to three (3) (a fourth was added to the early afternoon session) and the capacity of each "classroom". We believe these factors helped to boost overall attendance. One of the guiding principles of the Academy is that we try to have something for everyone. This year, topics ranged from bats to bees to rockfish to algae to building wooden boats to the history of the Anacortes waterfront. There was truly something for everyone! Some selected facts about this year's Academy:

- 128 registered guests
- Gross income of \$4,195 with a projected net of around \$3,000
- 10 breakout sessions plus keynote
- 80 of 120 surveys were returned
- 15 – 20% of attendees were from outside of Skagit county
- 10 teachers registered for clock hours
- 6 AHS AP Environmental Science/Green Club students attended
- 10 Skagit Valley College students
- 6 Exhibitors



Fidalgo Bay Day - Getting Better Every Year!

The 14th annual Fidalgo Bay Day was held on Saturday, August 12th at the Fidalgo Bay Resort. This was the fifth year that the Skagit Marine Resources Committee (SMRC) has joined forces with Friends and the Samish Indian Nation to sponsor this very popular event. For many of us, Fidalgo Bay Day is one of the highlights of the summer, combining fun for the whole family, learning, and great food.



Evolving from a Trail Tales initiative to celebrate National Estuary Day coincident with Fidalgo Bay Day, the “Discovery Passport” activity sponsored by Friends’ has turned out to be a great addition to the day’s events, growing in popularity each year. The concept is to engage members of the entire family in “a journey of discovery” by visiting passport stations deployed in and around the Resort. At each station, visitors learn from Friends’ volunteers something about the Bay, its marine life and/or how to be good stewards. After visiting and learning, their passports are stamped. Prizes are awarded to kids that visit a prescribed number of passport stations. This year, over 200 passports were issued and 100 prizes awarded. Both record numbers!

Since the event is free and no tickets are required, an accurate visitor count is not possible. However, we estimate that 400 visitors spent at least part of their day at the event learning about marine ecosystems and the plants and animals that live there. The goal of the event is that people, especially the kids, will take what they learn and share with others.

Besides the “Discovery Passport” activity, other highlights for the kids included: touch tank from Shannon Point Marine Center; beach seining demonstration; gray whale skull display from Deception Pass State Park; interactive educational exhibits hosted by local organizations; craft tables; coloring contest; face painting; and games. Some of the finest chowders (Adrift, Johnny Picasso, MaryAnn), grilled oysters and clams (Taylor’s), and barbequed salmon (Bill James - Samish) found anywhere on the planet were available! The winning entry in the coloring contest (lower left) will be used on the cover of next year’s passports.



Featured Project - Mobile Interpretation Station for Surf Smelt

Rain or shine, a group of dedicated citizen scientist volunteers (many are Friends members) led by Pete Haase, has been diligently surveying beaches for surf smelt eggs on Fidalgo Bay, Marches Point, Smilk Beach, Guemes Channel, and Bowman's Bay since 2012. Their work is part of a Sound-wide project managed by the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife. The purpose is to gather long-term year round information about the spawning habits of surf smelt, an important food source for many marine birds and fish.

For the past couple of years, whenever the weather was decent and the public was expected, Friends members Michelle Marquardt and Barbara Lechner setup their mobile Surf Smelt Interpretive Station at sites where Pete's crew would be sampling. They use incredibly



ingenious props, posters, and information sheets to engage a curious public and explain

what a surf smelt is and what the sampling crew is doing. The idea and funding for the station was part of a Trail Tales initiative. Besides being at the beaches, Michelle and Barbara have taken their mobile station to events like the Salmon Festival. They have even been invited to take their station into the school classrooms to tell the story of the little fish to the kids!



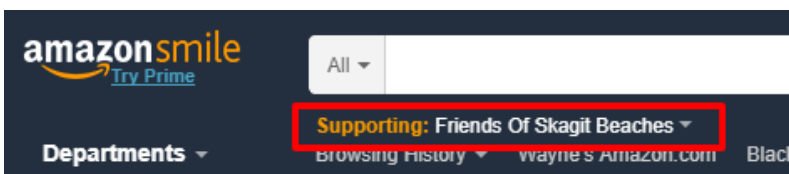
The work that Michelle and Barbara are doing represent the highest ideals of what Friends of Skagit Beaches is all about. Thank you ladies for all you do!

Other Ways to Help Friends

If you are an Amazon shopper, did you know there is a really easy way to contribute to Friends? It's called AmazonSmile. It is a website operated by Amazon with the same products, prices, and shopping features as Amazon.com. The difference is that when you shop on AmazonSmile, the AmazonSmile Foundation donates 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible products to the charitable organization of your choice. Of course, we suggest Friends of Skagit Beaches!

What Do I Have To Do?

First, you MUST use the AmazonSmile site rather than the regular Amazon site in order for your purchases to be eligible for a donation. Simply go to <https://smile.amazon.com/> and log on to your account as you normally would. Second, you MUST select **Friends of Skagit Beaches** as the charity you are supporting for the shopping session. To select **Friends of Skagit Beaches** (if not already selected), simply mouse over the "Supporting:" box just below the site's search bar and then click on the [change](#) hyperlink (see screenshot below). Here you will be able to enter **Friends of Skagit Beaches** into the search bar. Click the "Select" button next to **Friends of Skagit Beaches** and you are done and ready to shop!





P.O Box 481
Anacortes, WA 98221

PLACE
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Friends of Skagit Beaches Annual Meeting

Saturday, January 13, 2018; 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Padilla Bay Breazeale Interpretive Center

Featuring Jack Hartt

Retired Deception Pass State Park Manager

The Friends' Board of Directors cordially invites members, family, friends, and interested community members to our Annual Meeting. The business portion of the meeting will consist of a short presentation on the "State of Friends" followed by the election of new Board members. Immediately following (about noon), everyone is invited to join us for lunch and socializing. After lunch, a short update from the CVP Transition Task Force will be given. The day ends with a presentation by Jack Hartt, recently retired Park Manager at Deception Pass State Park. Jack will reflect back on his 40 year career sharing his thoughts on the past, present, and future of the state park system.

Your Friends' Board is providing all lunch setups, an entrée, and beverages. Please feel free to bring a favorite side dish to share with others.

We hope to see you in January!



Contact Us

Email or call one of our Board members for more information about our organization and its programs.

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