WSU Beach Watcher Training
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Thank you for your interest in WSU Beach Watchers! Here is a compilation of the most frequently asked questions to help you understand the program better. If the answer that you are looking for is not here, please contact the Beach Watcher Coordinator at (425) 357-6020 or chrys@wsu.edu.

What is the purpose of the WSU Beach Watcher training?
The mission of WSU Beach Watcher program is to protect the Salish Sea's fragile environment through education, research and stewardship, from the mountains to the deepest waters. This cannot be achieved without dedicated community members, so each year we train individuals that are ready to immerse themselves into Puget Sound stewardship. The initial 80 hour training provides a consistent foundation of knowledge about the local region's habitats, wildlife, history, current issues and strategies for protection. In some cases, it provides each person with a new way of looking at the world around them. It is an investment that we make in each Beach Watcher because of the follow-through they provide as volunteer educators, researchers and stewards. Since our inception in 2006, WSU Snohomish County Extension Beach Watchers have donated over 64,000 hours of their time to a wide range of projects. *The Ebb Tide*, our newsletter, will give you a sense of what we do.

What's in the Training?
Who are the speakers? How is the curriculum organized? The training offers university-caliber presentations from local experts, a chance to see and understand parts of our landscape you may not have visited, and opportunities for group collaboration that provides practice in sharing the information you've learned and research approaches. An agenda highlighting the classroom sessions from the outdoor sessions is provided on the first day of training. The training facilitator also reminds people how to prepare for each field trip.

What about the schedule and food? Each training day starts at 9 am and ends at 4 pm; there are always 30 minutes allocated for lunch and two 15-minute breaks throughout the day. We do not always have access to a kitchen, so brown bag lunches are an excellent choice. The training facilitator will always bring coffee and tea and trainees are welcome to bring snacks to share with others.

Do we travel around? Although the training is based out of Everett, Beach Watcher trainees should be prepared to travel to various parts of Snohomish County, and/or adjacent Counties on occasion, for field trips; carpooling with other trainees is highly encouraged.

Is there any chance to engage with my classmates? On the last day of training, several groups present a culminating presentation that they would have worked on throughout the training. Time for group discussion is included in the training agenda. The last day of training is also graduation day where all training participants will receive their Beach Watcher badge.

Where and when will the 2018 training be held? The upcoming training in Snohomish County will be based out of the WSU – Everett Campus at 915 N Broadway Ave, Everett (near Everett Community College). It will be every Wednesday from March 21st through May 30th and will include three Saturday field trips on April 7th, May 5th, and May 19th. Each day we meet from 9 am until 4 pm. Every participant is expected to attend all training dates.

Is there homework? Yes, there is required reading and some background research. Those who do the homework get the most out of the training content.

Is there a fee for participating in the training? There is a $55 (electronic version) or $75 (hard copy version) fee for course materials. There is no enrollment fee.

What does the volunteer commitment look like? What kind of volunteering will I be doing?
Volunteers are expected to complete and report at least 80 hours of volunteer time over the next two years. Each Beach Watcher gets to craft their own volunteer experience – choosing the types of projects to work on, how far you would like to travel, and setting your own schedule. Projects that qualify for the 80-hour volunteer commitment must:

- Further Puget Sound protection;
- Engage in community outreach, public education, project development, restoration, research; or,
- Support the running of the WSU Beach Watcher program.

We currently have projects from Edmonds to Stanwood and to the east. There are many pre-existing projects and committees that new Beach Watchers can join, including summer low-tide interpretation in Edmonds, Mukilteo and Kayak Point, intertidal beach monitoring, stormwater pollution education, youth education, public seminar planning, water quality sampling, beach cleanups, beach surveys and festival education. Continuing education opportunities are provided year-long, so the learning never ends. Some Beach Watchers volunteer with other organizations. We do ask that a portion of your volunteering is with Beach Watchers.

How do I know if I'm eligible to become a Beach Watcher?
No experience is required - you don't have to be a professional biologist or teacher. You DO need to be enthusiastic about protecting Puget Sound and be available to work on Beach Watcher or other organization's projects after the basic training is completed. It is preferable if you are able to volunteer in Snohomish County.

I cannot attend this year's training dates. How can I find out when the next training will be offered?
Please contact chrys@wsu.edu or yolimar.rivera@wsu.edu to be placed on our training mailing list. That way you will receive first notice of the next available training.

What forms of payment do you accept? When should I pay?
WSU Beach Watchers accept checks or cash only. Unfortunately, we do not have the capability to accept credit cards. Some folks send us a check along with their application and that is wonderful, thank you! Otherwise, you can pay during your interview or on the first day of training.

Wait, there is an interview?
Yes, but don't worry! These "Get to Know You Interviews" are a conversation where you'll get to learn more about the WSU Beach Watcher program and have the chance to ask questions. They are also a good way for us to get to know you, and for you to know the training facilitator / Beach Watcher Coordinator. The half-hour interviews will be held prior to the first class at a mutually convenient time in early March.

Why is there an application process?
Because classroom size can be limited and we occasionally travel in field settings. We strive to ensure that everyone enjoys the best training experience possible.

When will I learn if I'm accepted into the program?
Applications will be reviewed as they arrive. We typically respond within a week to a week and a half of receiving your application. Upon review of your application, we will contact you to schedule the interview. You will know in the interview if the program is right for you and if you are accepted.

If I have questions or want to consult with someone about my participation in the program, who should I contact? Feel free to contact us at any time!

Chrys Bertolotto
Natural Resources Programs Manager
(425) 357-6020, chrys@wsu.edu

Yolimar Rivera Vázquez
Natural Resources Projects Coordinator
(425) 357-6029, yolimar.rivera@wsu.edu

Okay, I want to sign up for the training! How do I submit my application?
Apply to become a WSU Beach Watcher by submitting a completed application form to Chrys Bertolotto via email, fax, postal mail or hand delivered (see below). Completed applications must be turned in by March 7, 2018. You can find the application in our website or request one at chrys@wsu.edu.

Email: chrys@wsu.edu
Fax: (425) 338-3994

Mail or in Person: WSU Snohomish County Extension
Beach Watcher Program
600 128th St. SE
Everett, WA 98208

Who funds this program?
Beach Watchers are fortunate to have the support of organizations that value our work protecting Puget Sound. Our 2018 funding partners are Snohomish County Surface Water Management, Snohomish County Marine Resources Committee, the City of Mukilteo, Tulalip Tribes, Washington Department of Ecology, Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians, Snohomish County Airport, donations from volunteers and friends and Washington State University.