



## CURRICULUM FOR THE BIOREGION

### “Sound Learning Communities: Exploring the Salish Sea”

#### Syllabus for a Summer Field Course about Restoring Puget Sound

August 13-17, 2012

**Purpose:** The intent of the "Sound Learning Communities" project is to provide many more undergraduates with the knowledge, civic understanding, skills, and motivation with which to understand the threats to the Puget Sound ecosystem and both large-scale strategies and individual behavior-change required for restoring its health. Begun in the summer of 2009, the project's strategy is to engage 100 college and university faculty members and regional resource experts as a *community of learners* in an exploration of Puget Sound's ecosystems and human history, the current threats to its health, research on both the nature of the problems and the promise of solutions, policy alternatives, restoration initiatives, and the current state of education and communications regarding Sound restoration. In 2009, the Curriculum for the Bioregion initiative held its first two weeklong field courses focusing on King County/Elliott Bay/the Duwamish Watershed, and on Pierce County/Commencement Bay/the Puyallup Watershed. In 2012, we are holding this course focusing on northern Puget Sound and the Skagit Watershed. In 2013, we will offer a course for college and university faculty in the South Sound, with a focus on the Nisqually Watershed.

*Our gratitude to the Norcliffe Foundation and the Sustainable Path Foundations for supporting most of the costs of this course, including field-trip transportation and a day-cruise on Puget Sound, print and video resources, staff support, and many of our resource faculty and community experts.*

### Monday, August 13

*Beginning and ending times:* 8:30 to 4:30

*To bring:* Notebook or journal for taking notes; lunch and snacks. Optional but recommended: laptop computer with Google Earth downloaded

Opening and introductions to the course and to who's here!

Hosts for this week: Skagit Valley College: Claus Svendsen and Joan Youngquist

Remarks: Situating ourselves in the Salish Sea: Jewell James, Lummi Tribe

Workshop: Getting situated in the Salish Sea using Google Earth tools with Peter Selkin, UW Tacoma: this workshop has been planned in two steps, before and after our lunch break.

Small group brainstorm: Questions we'd like to explore tomorrow, on the water.

Using a systems approach to visualize and explore relationships

Final instructions about Tuesday's day on the water.

## **Tuesday, August 14**

*Beginning and ending times:* 8:45 to 4:00

*To bring:* Notebook or journal for taking notes; lunch and snacks and a tote-bag or daypack. Please dress for possible fog and cool breezes in the morning: windbreaker and warm layers! Wear shoes appropriate for the boat deck...hat, sunglasses, and sunscreen.

Day cruise on the *Lightkeeper* departing out of the Cap Sante Marina in Anacortes: Meet at the Cap Sante Marina at Dock B.

Today will be about doing Sound science: To learn what scientists and policy experts are telling us about the Sound's health, including the state of Orca populations, nearshore habitat health, and eelgrass beds. We'll also talk about critical remedies, such as marine reserves. Our resource experts today will be from two important Sound organizations: People For Puget Sound (Heather Trim, Maddie Foutch, and Ann Butler) and the Ocean Inquiry Project (Fritz Stahr and Nathan Ahlgren). In addition, we're delighted to have Ralph Haugerud on board from the U.S. Geological Survey and University of Washington: Ralph is one of the most expert geologists regarding the Sound's formation and loves to share his knowledge and abundant passion with groups like ours.

Further background on The Ocean Inquiry Project: the OIP educates students and community members of all ages through boat-based, scientific inquiry on Puget Sound, making them partners in estuarine research by contributing data to current projects and long-term databases. Its founder and director Fritz Stahr will tell you more about OIP and how any of us can make arrangements for OIP cruises.

## **Wednesday, August 15**

*Beginning and ending times:* 8:00 to 5:00

*To bring:* Notebook or journal for taking notes; lunch and snacks and a tote-bag or daypack. Please dress for possible cloudy/cool start to the day: windbreaker and warm layers! Wear shoes appropriate for walking outdoors under non-strenuous conditions....and hat, sunglasses, and sunscreen.

This is our day to go upstream into the Skagit River watershed, to explore issues of resource and watershed management. First, at Baker Lake, we will explore how Puget Sound Energy manages a successful Sockeye salmon program and at the same time is able to produce electricity with a minimal carbon footprint. Doug Bruland will showcase the Puget Sound Energy hatchery with its innovative spawning beaches and juvenile outmigration traps. This will be followed by a talk by Jon Vanderheyden, District Ranger Mt. Baker Snoqualmie National Forest. Jon will give an overview of the role of the US Forest Service today. The last talk at Baker Lake will be by Jon Riedel, who will give an overview of his climate change research conducted at Mt. Baker.

In the afternoon, Lauren Rich, resource manager for the Upper Skagit Indian Tribe will give an overview of the Hansen Creek restoration project, to include ecological, geomorphological, and social aspects of the project. At the end of the day, John Lombard will give a talk centered on the Skagit Futures Project (Envision 2060). This was a citizen centered vision for Skagit County in the next 50 years.

## Thursday, August 16

*Beginning and ending times:* 9:00 to 4:00

*To bring:* Notebook or journal for taking notes; lunch and snacks and a tote-bag or daypack. Please dress for possible cloudy/cool start to the day: windbreaker and warm layers! Wear shoes appropriate for walking outdoors under non-strenuous conditions....and hat, sunglasses, and sunscreen. Lunch today will be at the Taylor Shellfish Farm; Taylor will provide some shellfish to go with our lunch.

This is our day to explore more “downstream” issues. The day will begin at Fisher Slough restoration project where Jenny Baker of The Nature Conservancy will explain how a community partnership came together to improve salmon habitat at the upper estuarine area of the Skagit River. This will be followed by a quick visit to another restoration project at Wylie Slough in the saline portion of the Skagit River estuary, guided by Claus Svendsen.

Then, we’ll move to the Taylor Shellfish Farm at Chuckanut. Nicole Hopper, educator for Taylor Shellfish will be our host for embellishments to lunch (!) and a facility tour. We will explore the challenges for shellfish farmers – *Coliform* contamination and ocean acidification.

Finally we will return to Skagit Valley College for a presentation and discussion of a major resource issue facing the region: the proposals to transport coal (from the northern Rocky Mountains) through the Sound and on to Asia. Our informant will be Matt Krogh, North Sound Baykeeper.

Planning for Friday: Concept-map assignment and thinking ahead about curriculum planning conversations.

**Note: we would like a few people to bring laptops for taking notes tomorrow.**

## Friday, August 17

*Beginning and ending times:* 8:30 to 12:30

*To bring:* Notebook or journal for taking notes; lunch and snacks. Your revised concept map of Puget Sound/Salish Sea systems, and curriculum ideas. A laptop if it’s convenient.

Morning beverages, muffins and sharing of concept maps.

**Presentation:** What’s on the Horizon for Puget Sound Policy, with Ann Butler, People For Puget Sound, and Jennifer Gerend, Member of the Faculty, The Evergreen State College.

**Curriculum planning groups:** How are we thinking about integrating some of the themes and content of the week in our various courses? What questions are emerging for us? What additional resources do we need?

**Next steps:** Additional opportunities sponsored by Curriculum for the Bioregion for sharing ideas and with colleagues.

**Final course evaluation.**

Wrap-up and good-byes....

## ***Where Many Rivers Meet***

by David Whyte

All the water below me came from above.  
All the clouds living in the mountains  
gave it to the rivers  
who gave it to the sea, which was their dying.

And so I float on cloud become water,  
central sea surrounded by white mountains,  
the water salt, once fresh,  
cloud fall and stream rush, tree root and tide bank  
leading to the rivers' mouths  
and the mouths of the rivers sing into the sea,  
the stories buried in the mountains  
give out into the sea  
and the sea remembers  
and sings back  
from the depths  
where nothing is forgotten.  
from *Where Many Rivers Meet*

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