PCSGA
PACIFIC COAST SHELLFISH GROWERS ASSOCIATION

Longlines

Volume 17 No. 3
Summer 2014

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PCSGA

PACIFIC COAST SHELLFISH GROWERS ASSOCIATION

The PCSGA works on behalf of its members on a broad spectrum of issues, including environmental protection, shellfish safety, regulations, technology, and marketing.

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Cover Photo: Growers shuck oysters at SLURP. Photo by Luke Kelly

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What the Tide Brought In *Notes from the Director*

From left to right: Connie Smith, PCSGA, John Finger and Eric Schlagenhauf, Hog Island Oyster, and Margaret Barrette, PCSGA Executive Director.

When I tell folks about the beginning of the oyster industry, I inevitably talk about how oysters fueled the California gold rush. The story winds its way to creating oyster towns such as Oysterville and South Bend, Washington, and eventually loops back to the successful industry that has built up in California and other Pacific Coast states over the past eight decades.

In May, the PCSGA Board conducted its first ever meeting in California and got to experience the industry there first hand. The PCSGA is building a California Shellfish Initiative to help improve the awareness and prominence of shellfish in the state. The board met in San Francisco, where we visited with our California members, heard about the state's abalone industry, and discussed a variety of issues with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the California Departments of Public Health and Fish and Wildlife.

After a day of indoor meetings, the PCSGA board ventured out and visited farms. The day started with a long and very windy ride through Marin County to meet Kevin Lunny and Ginny Cummings of Drakes Bay Oyster Company. We were greeted with fresh oysters and local delicacies. While there, we learned the latest in the legal battle to keep the oyster farm open.

A quick trip around the head of Tomalas Bay led us to Terry Sawyer and John Finger at Hog Island Oyster. In addition to nearly tripling the size of their San Francisco restaurant, Hog Island has completed several significant improvements at their farm to accommodate greater production, including a state-of-the-art, energy efficient building which may just be the BEST office space on the planet.

There are some amazing things happening for California shellfish. One of the hallmarks of the California Shellfish Initiative is an effort being led by the Humboldt Bay Harbor District, which is stimulating industry expansion by assuming the burden of getting areas permitted and then marketing the lands to potential growers. The region is also benefiting tremendously from a clean-up of millions of gallons of hazardous liquids and sludge from the former Samoa Pulp Mill, near Eureka. These two combined efforts could result in significant opportunities for the industry in California. It seems like the state and the farmers are gearing up for continued success in the future with a keen eye towards expansion.

I'm thankful that PCSGA board members got a chance to experience California industry first-hand. I am also thankful to Terry, John, Kevin and Ginny for being so welcoming and for the participation of and support from agency folks. Perhaps there will be another field trip in our future…can anyone say "Hawaii?"

Be well,
Margaret

PCSGA board members, staff, and friends, with Kevin Lunny and Ginny Cummings at Drake's Bay Oyster Shack.

Pearls from the Prez

All operations are in full motion at this time of year with a big push ahead of the hot weather. BBQ season is here and demand for oysters is at a high point with inadequate supplies all around. I am personally much happier during the daylight tides when we can all enjoy warmer weather and more sunshine. We had great news the other day with the progress toward eliminating the shellfish ban by China. Once the testing protocol is completely in place, our geoduck farmers will be back in shipping mode.

Now that I am back working full-time on our farm, I am finding it more difficult to break away for all of the typical ongoing volunteer activities at the PCSGA. Our business has greatly increased and every minute is quite valuable, as I'm sure is the case for most of you. That said, it is critical to our success to continue to inform the public and agencies of the value that shellfish have to the economy, water quality and the environment. If we don't connect with these folks outside of our job environments, they will sometimes pick up the wrong impression about our industry. They need our help to hear about the whole story.

We now have a new PCSGA employee, Ashley Fisher, who will be coordinating all of the volunteer activities. I appreciate the challenge that Ashley has in prying us away from our 24/7 jobs and spending some quality face-time with the public. She is a real charmer and I think that you should all get to know and work with her on some activities during the coming months.

Enjoy the summer. Work hard and profitably. I look forward to seeing you all at the conference this fall.

-Dave Steele

Meet Ashley

My name is Ashley Fisher, and I'm the new Outreach Coordinator at the PCSGA. So who is this new person who has joined the ranks? Well, that's me in the picture, holding a lamb on my family's sheep farm in Chiloquin, Oregon.

In my spare time I read, garden, and swing dance. I often camp or hike on my weekends. As for educational credentials, I earned a Bachelor's Degree in Politics from Whitman College and am currently pursuing a Masters in Public Administration at The Evergreen State College. I have a long standing interest in the place where agriculture and the environment intersect in healthy, prosperous ways for people, land, air, and water. I think I've found that place in the shellfish industry, and am thrilled to be here.

Shortly after arriving at the PCSGA, Margaret said that the shellfish industry is a special place, where growers are each other's competition, but they are also like family. You have each other's backs. What a beautiful thing. As your Outreach Coordinator, my hope is to create a space where you, our members, feel increasingly connected to the PCSGA and to each other. Thanks for the warm welcome aboard!

-Ashley

Ecosystem Services Photo Contest Winners

April's winning submission by Matt Smith shows how geoduck sleeves create a microhabitat supporting many species of macroalgae, crustaceans, echinoderms, and sponges.

May's winning submission by Brian Sheldon shows native drills gathering for spawn on a single oyster on a bottom culture bed in Willapa Bay.

June's winning submission by Larry Morgan shows bags of shell surrounding a nursery. The burms catch thousands of natural oyster spat during the spawn. Morgan's project creates habitat for fish, crabs, eels, and an abundance of marine plants and animals.

You could win, too! See contest rules and entry information at www.pcsga.org. One winner is selected each month for the $100 prize.

In Memory of a Nisqually Fisherman

Billy Frank Jr., an iconic tribal leader and tireless advocate for treaty rights, healthy salmon runs and clean water, passed away on May 5th, 2014. A beloved leader of and advocate for his tribe, and friend and partner with shellfish growers, he will be missed. The words on this page are shared by his tribe and grower members in his honor.

I worked with Billy and other shellfish leaders to secure the $33 million needed to fund the settlement under which the tribes would agree not to exercise their rights on commercial farms. After many meetings with assorted Congressional representatives, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Department of the Interior, and the White House, we were successful.

I also worked with Billy for years on Puget Sound restoration efforts. Through all of that I developed a tremendous respect and admiration for him. He helped me understand the true meaning of the treaties and gave me a whole new understanding of tribal culture and rights. He was an amazing leader and I feel honored to have known him.

-Bill Dewey, Taylor Shellfish

Billy understood that winning our [Nisqually] sovereignty meant playing the long game. He joined his father's cause for tribal sovereignty on the banks of Nisqually River in the fish wars of the 1960s, through the Boldt decision, and countless years leading the NW Indian Fisheries Commission and other efforts. Winner of the Albert Schweitzer Humanitarian Prize, he grew to become a beacon for tribal sovereignty movements around the world.

His fight was far greater than tribal sovereignty. He was an advocate for our planet's interests. Billy understood that when salmon and shellfish are plentiful, everyone benefits. Clean water, air and earth are vital for everyone. We all depend on the planet. This was his life lesson.

To meet Billy was to hug Billy. This was the uncle we knew and loved. Billy will be sorely missed and long remembered. His powerful voice and message will be heard for generations to come.

-Cynthia Iyall, Chair for Nisqually Indian Tribe

What I really remember about Billy was his amazing love of life, people, and his dedication to salmon and fishing. His love of the Nisqually and its resources resembled Justin Taylor's love and dedication to the bay and shellfish. Billy always said, "We can restore salmon and Puget Sound if we work on it together. We've got to work together!"

Once at a PSP Leadership Council meeting, I thanked him for supporting clean water for shellfish as one of our key benchmarks. He replied, "Shellfish need clean water and they're the best barometer we have for marine water. If they aren't healthy, the shellfish growers and tribal people who rely on them for food and their livelihoods are in deep trouble."

Billy was obviously a guiding light for Native people in the Northwest and across the country, including Alaska, BC, and Hawaii. He passionately spoke and acted in defense of the Puget Sound and its resources. We all need to do what we can to carry the torch that he so proudly held high.

-Duane Fagergren, Calm Cove Oyster Co.

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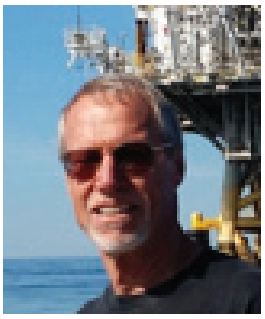
Welcome to Our New Members

Michael Ellis (left) and Peter Metcalfe of Clam Gardens of Alaska

Clam Gardens of Alaska

Peter Metcalfe, vice president of the Alaska Shellfish Growers Association, recently joined the Pacific Coast Shellfish Growers Association. Metcalfe, a life-long Alaskan, and his business partner Michael Ellis of Bremerton, WA, have been actively developing intertidal geoduck mariculture in central Southeast Alaska since 2005. After several years of experimentation, the two succeeded in getting geoduck to dig in and grow. "We rely on the Alutiiq Pride Shellfish Hatchery in Seward for our seed, and Seward is very far from our site," says Metcalfe. The key to their planting technique is a system of primary and secondary nurseries. Metcalfe and Ellis are now entering a partnership with Goldbelt Inc., the Alaska Native Corporation for Juneau, and forming Goldbelt Seafoods LLC, to develop intertidal geoduck farms at sites bordering Goldbelt-owned land.



Phil Cruver serves as Director, President and CEO of Catalina Sea Ranch, LLC

Catalina Sea Ranch

Meet Phil Cruver, Roger O'Brien, and Debbie Johnson, directors of Catalina Sea Ranch, LLC. Located nearly 10 miles off the coast of Long Beach, California, the startup company plans to harvest its first crop in the spring of 2015. Its origins are entrepreneurial: Catalina Sea Ranch is developing the first open ocean shellfish ranch in United States federal waters, pursuant to NOAA's new aquaculture policy. The company has teamed with the University of Southern California and California State University to research and identify genetic traits that will overcome challenging environmental conditions faced by the shellfish industry and enhance their ability to meet market requirements. Using cutting-edge molecular and computational technologies (no GMOs), they hope to accelerate natural selection processes to create genetic gains in bivalve fish.

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SLURP!

Debbie Granger, Bellingham Technical College (left), and Miranda Ries, National Fish and Oyster Co., celebrate their Shuck, Slurp, & Slam victory.

Falls Terrace Restaurant chef prepares a paella.

Long Road Winery pours a glass of wine for a guest.

This page photos taken by: Luke Kelly

SLURP is the Shellfish Lover's Ultimate Rejuvenation Party. This year marked SLURP's 16th anniversary. Not only is it a whole lot of fun, drawing in the local Puget Sound community, PCSGA grower members, restaurants, wineries, and breweries, but every penny raised is put into the PCSGA's Shellfish Restoration Fund. Money in the fund is awarded to people working to support shellfish and restore waters and habitats in which shellfish grow.

This year's SLURP netted over $25,000, of which $10,000 was awarded at the event. The rest will be distributed throughout out the year.

Highlights of the event include oyster bars hosted by PCSGA grower members, a live auction, a Shuck, Slurp, & Slam competition, live music, and fabulous shellfish dishes, wine, beer, and cider. SLURP was hosted by Fish Brewing Company, which opened up its brewery doors for the day.

A hearty thank you to all our growers, volunteers, and members who came out in support of SLURP. What a success!

2014 Shellfish Restoration Fund Recipients:

Pacific Education Institute
$7,000

Bellingham Technical College
$4,000

Puget Sound Restoration Fund
$3,000

Northwest Straits Foundation
$3,000

Grassroots Garbage Gang
$1,000

Washington CoastSavers
$500

The Peoples' Choice Awards Go To:

Best Shellfish Dish:
Xinh's Clam and Oyster House
Shelton, WA
Sauteed Clams and
Geoduck Wonton

Runner Up Shellfish Dish:
Acqua Via, Olympia, WA
Geoduck Spring Roll

Best Brew:
Fish Tale Brewery, Olympia, WA
Dark and Dry Apple Cider

Best Wine:
Chateau St. Michelle, Woodenville, WA
Sauvignon Blanc

Runner Up Wine:
Marchetti Wines, Olympia, WA
2012 Sangiovese

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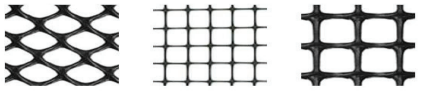

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Mike Mahmood and Tyler Zaugg, Alutiiq Pride hatchery technicians, with Ron Zebal.

Alaska Shellfish Growers Association Initiates Hatchery Audit

by Peter Metcalfe, ASGA

The Alaska Shellfish Growers Association (ASGA), a PCSGA affiliate, recently received an audit of Alaska shellfish hatcheries by Ron Zebal, whose work history includes 43 years of designing, building, and managing hatcheries along the Pacific coast and in countries such as New Zealand, Chile, and India.

In April, Zebal traveled to Alaska and made his initial survey of shellfish hatcheries: OceansAlaska in Ketchikan, and Alutiiq Pride in Seward. Both hatcheries are fully equipped with algae growing facilities as well as grow-out tanks in various configurations.

"OceansAlaska is in a dynamic turnaround from its original mission as a tourist-oriented science center, to its present mission as an oyster and geoduck seed production facility," Zebal reported. "Alutiiq Pride is pursuing its mission as a research facility."

Zebal expects to return to Alaska this summer to make a follow-up audit. The ASGA initiated Zebal's contract with the State of Alaska, Division of Economic Development. Weatherly Bates, ASGA's President, says that one of the principle objectives of Zebal's survey was to provide an informed and objective report on the condition and needs of Alaska's hatcheries. Bates assigned Peter Metcalfe, ASGA Vice President and an Alaskan geoduck farmer, to interview prospective consultants.

"My sense of what we needed was a 'McGyver,' someone who could solve problems with resources at hand. Zebal fit the bill," Metcalfe says. "He demonstrated his practical, hands-on experience during his initial survey in April, making recommendations that have since worked to accelerate growth of oyster and geoduck seed at OceansAlaska. He now has the trust of our hatchery managers and mariculture farmers and will be a person we will continue to rely on for advice as we go forward."

"I see a brilliant collaboration in the making, with Alutiiq Pride doing the research that OceansAlaska can apply to commercial production."

—Ron Zebal,
Executive Summary, "Alaska Shellfish Hatcheries Audit Initial Report"

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Kinetic Sculpture Race in Humboldt

By Greg Dale, Coast Seafoods Company

Every year on Memorial day we have the world championship kinetic sculpture race here in Humboldt, California. The race involves human powered sculptures that must be able to ride on roads, the beach, and cruise on water, while carrying all supplies needed for a three day race.

The Blue Oyster Cult "pushes" Coast Seafoods Co. boat during the race

The race starts in Arcata, travels by road to the beach and down a hill, through dunes and beach grass (locally known as Dead Man's Drop) to Manila. From there, competitors travel over a bridge into Eureka, where the racers spend the night camped on the waterfront. The next morning they go into the bay and make their way down the waterfront before having to ride to the Eel river, where they spend the second night. On the last day, they cross the Eel river and ride via road and riverbank into Ferndale for the finish.

This is a demanding course for your average motorized equipment, without any artistic demands. Make it human powered art and it gets really interesting. Competitors are a diverse group from around the world, and they have a lot of fun. We, the less creative, enjoy watching and, occasionally, lend a helping hand.

This year, the Coast Seafoods Company helped sponsor a sculpture built by Bill Pinnex and his wife, Jenny Weiss. They called themselves the Blue Oyster Cult. Their running theme was "What kind of noise annoys an oyster? A noisy noise annoys an oyster!"

The duo did a great job and finished the race, but had a problem in the water, so we assisted by letting them "push" our boat with a rope for about a mile and a half. This means they finished but didn't "ace" the course. Maybe next year.

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To learn more about the kineticgrandchampionship.com.

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Conference Funding Available for Grower Members

Consider applying for assistance through the PCSGA Enrichment and Development Fund. Funding is available to PCSGA grower members. Funds awarded can be used for airfare, hotel fare, or conference fees. To apply, submit a letter to the Board of Directors that states the amount requested and how funds would be used.

Agencies Tour Willapa Bay

On May 16, representatives from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the US Department of Agriculture, the US Department of Fish and Wildlife Service, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Governor Inslee's office, and the PCSGA traveled to Willapa Bay for a tour of Willapa Bay shellfish farms.

The tour started at the Port of Nahcotta and included views of clam beds, non-native eelgrass, oyster seed storage and oyster flip bags. It also included a boat trip to various parts of Long Island to view oyster longlines, oyster bottom culture, oyster hummocks, and oyster reserves. A luncheon discussion about invasive species in the bay concluded the day.

Attendees left with a better understanding of shellfish farming and the unique struggles facing Willapa Bay farmers, where nonnative eelgrass and burrowing shrimp are particularly prolific.

Brett Dumbauld, US Department of Agriculture, shows examples of native burrowing shrimp (left and right) and invasive ghost shrimp (center).

Bill Dewey, Taylor Shellfish, (front right) and Brian Sheldon, Northern Oyster Co., (center back) speaking with tour group as Will Stelle, Regional Administrator with NOAA and Connie Smith, PCSGA, listen. Photos taken by Ashley Fisher

Do you have questions about the National Shellfish Sanitation Program's model ordinance requirements for Time/Temperature?

Answers can be found at issc.org/ Time-TemperatureQandA.aspx

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Governor's Office Creates Shellfish Policy Advisor Position

From left: Ashley Fisher and Connie Smith, PCSGA, with Julie Horowitz, Governor's Shellfish Policy Advisor

Julie Horowitz is the new Shellfish Policy Advisor in the Washington State Governor's Policy Office.

Prior to joining the Governor's policy team, she spent four years as the Aquatic Rehabilitation Program Manager at the Hood Canal Coordinating Council. While there, she worked with counties and tribes in the watershed on water quality issues. Julie led an effort to establish a regional Pollution Identification and Correction Program with the goal of maintaining open shellfish growing areas and opening closed areas. She also coordinated development of a regional stormwater retrofit plan to improve water quality.

Julie's past experience includes working at the Ruckelshaus Center, a joint policy consensus center between the University of Washington and the Washington State University. She coordinated a multi-stakeholder process focused on critical areas of agricultural lands. Julie also studied shorelines, wetlands, and water quality in her undergraduate and graduate degrees. She's happiest with her boots in the mud.

Julie has already been meeting with PCSGA staff and grower members to hear thoughts on priorities and directions for the Washington Shellfish Initiative. She would love the opportunity to meet more PCSGA members and visit farms.

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WDFW to Survey for Forage Fish Habitat

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) will survey beaches for forage fish habitat in South Puget Sound on a monthly basis from June 2014 through June 2015. These surveys are designed to help researchers learn more about what factors influence where, when, and how frequently Surf Smelt and Sand Lance spawn in Puget Sound.

Forage fish are critical to marine ecosystems and an indicator of ecosystem health because they provide a conduit for energy and nutrients from primary producers to higher level consumers such as salmon, marine mammals, seabirds and even people. Since forage fish are planktivorous, many of the factors that influence shellfish populations may also influence forage fish.

During the beach surveys, WDFW crews will collect sediment samples to test for fish spawn, photograph habitat characteristics and take measurements at beaches in Thurston, Mason and Pierce counties. Beach surveys generally take no more than one hour per location, and locations will be selected at random from the roughly 450 miles of South Sound shoreline.

Phillip Dionne (WDFW scientist) will present information about this study and other forage fish studies at the 68th Annual Shellfish Conference & Tradeshow in September.

Questions about this study can be sent to Phillip at phillip.dionne@dfw.wa.gov. Landowners who don't want their properties included in the beach surveys can opt out by calling (360) 902-2552 or by filling out a form online at http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/research/projects/marine_beach_spawning/opt-out.html, and providing his or her name, property address and parcel number.

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China Shellfish Ban Lifted

In late May, China lifted its ban on shellfish imports from U.S. West Coast waters. The ban began in December when high levels of arsenic were found in geoducks from the Puget Sound, and paralytic shellfish poisoning was found in geoducks from Alaska.

The removal of the ban is largely due to an agreement between China and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA) regarding methods of sampling, surveillance, and monitoring of inorganic arsenic and paralytic shellfish poisoning in shellfish.

The NOAA has cleared the following intertidal growing areas and wild tracts for exporting geoduck to China:

- Stretch Island
- West Key Peninsula
- Nisqually Reach
- Quilcene Bay
- Hammersley Inlet
- Discovery Bay
- Totten Inlet
- Spencer's Cove
- Eld Inlet
- North Bay
- Harper Tract #08340
- Agate Passage Tract #06800

As additional areas are sampled, tested, and cleared for geoduck exportation to China, they will be added to the Washington State Department of Health website: http://www.doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/Shellfish/CommercialShellfish/ChinaBan.aspx.

Federal Permitting Roadmap in Process

Federal agencies are completing work on a new roadmap to streamline the permitting process for shellfish aquaculture. The strategic plan can be read at http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/NSTC/aquaculture_strategic_plan_final.pdf

July

8: *Board Meeting, Conference Call*
12: *Birch Bay State Park Shellfest*
19-20: *Allyn Days Geoduck Festival*
27:*Griffin Neighborhood Association Picnic and Farm Fest*

August

5: *Board Meeting, Conference Call.*
17*: Jazz and Oysters in Ocean Park*

September

21: *PCSGA Board Meeting*
22*: Annual General Members Meeting*
23-25: *68th Annual Shellfish Growers Conference and Tradeshow*

Current Events

120 State Avenue NE #142
Olympia, WA 98501