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**Beach Cleanup Summary Report for the  
Whatcom Marine Resources Committee  
September 23, 2014 through September 30, 2015**

Whatcom County Public Works – Natural Resources

For  
Whatcom County Marine Resources Committee

September 30, 2015



## **Preface**

The MRC has partnered with the Surfrider Foundation – Northwest Straits Chapter to develop a Whirlwind Beach Community Stewardship Program, which includes a series of community-based beach cleanups along Whirlwind Beach. The MRC's primary role in this program has been to promote beach cleanup events and recruit volunteers for cleanup efforts.

## **Beach Cleanups**

The MRC co-hosted four beach cleanups at Whirlwind Beach on January 3, May 16, July 5, and September 20 (International Coastal Cleanup Day). These cleanups are advertised on the MRC website and through the MRC's e-mail list serv. They are also advertised through the Surfrider Club at Western Washington University. On average, approximately ten to fifteen people participate in these beach cleanup events. The MRC and Surfrider have invited RE Sources for Sustainable Communities to partner in these cleanup events, which has added to the amount of volunteers and promotional exposure. The City of Bellingham always transports the trash to Sanitary Services for disposal, which has been helpful in terms of having a vehicle large enough to haul the material.

## **Discussion**

Partnerships will continue to be vital to the success of these cleanups. Wild Whatcom and the North Sound Kiteboarding Community often conduct beach cleanups in the same location and near the same time. The MRC and Surfrider should try to coordinate events with other organizations to ensure that volunteers are not cleaning the same area of the long stretch of beach. In addition, the education and outreach potential increases the more people are involved to help. It would be ideal for volunteers to learn about the impacts of marine debris in order to influence more to be conscious and considerate of the issue – establishing best management practices to decrease the amount of debris at this beach. The City of Bellingham is currently working to create a park at the beach entrance, which will encourage public access to this area. If funding becomes available, the MRC and Surfrider would like to work together to install outreach signs to educate beach visitors on proper beach etiquette.

Over this past year, the beach cleanups have transitioned to being managed by the Surfrider Chapter Chair to being managed by students in the Surfrider Club at Western Washington University. It has been difficult to keep in steady communication with these students as they are full time at school, work, and volunteering elsewhere. In the future, the MRC will continue

to support this work as their time allows. With limited volunteer capacity on the committee, it has been hard to commit to a number of cleanup events throughout the year.



International Coastal Cleanup 9/19/2015 at Whirlwind Beach. Photo by: Wendy Steffensen