

Miller Bay Guardian

This & previous issues are available, in color, on our website - www.friendsofmillerbay.org

Fall 2023

Paul's Perspective

We are honored to have Christine Rolfes, our North Kitsap County Commissioner, as our 2023 Annual Meeting speaker on November 8, 2023. We appreciate the opportunity to host her at the Suquamish House of Awakened Culture. Her brief biography is available on-line. Christine will share perspectives the value of forests to our communities.

The Friends of Miller Bay Board thanks Michael Flynn for guiding the FOMB through a nine-month reorganization planning process to better serve our mission. Read about what is being accomplished in this newsletter. FOMB will vote on adoption of proposed changes at the Annual Meeting. Michael has been nominated as the next President, a measure of our confidence in his leadership and vision. We will also vote on several new, highly experienced board members to work with us all in realizing these changes.

I am humbled to follow past FOMB Presidents Bob Ellis, Lane Holdcroft, and Dick D'Archangel who have all served on our volunteer Board. In turn the Board is appreciative of the community's decades of support advancing the FOMB mission.

FOMB efforts have resulted in the purchase and permanent protection by the Great Peninsula Conservancy (GPC) of (1) the Cowling Creek Forest Preserve; (2) the Miller Bay Preserve; and (3) the current effort to protect the Forest by the Bay. We are more than halfway to the \$160,000 goal. We need to wrap fundraising by the end of 2023. Every dollar counts. Your donation is tax-deductible. Check out the Forest by the Bay drone video on our website. The magnificent trees we will protect there have grown to the height required by our native flying squirrels who spend their lives above the forest floor. Together, we are mighty.

FOMB has accomplished the following:

Kick-started the GPC's Grovers Creek Watershed with a \$200,000 donation. Grovers Creeks is the largest stream flowing in Miller Bay and directly impacts the Bay's water quality and biota.

Worked with Trout Unlimited and the Squamish Tribe to restore natural spawning chum salmon to Cowling Creek. This spectacular event is witnessed annually by citizens and school children.

Blocked a proposed dock application that would have extended a dock into the middle of the Bay.

Conducted numerous Cowling Creek Center public educational events focused on salmon, birds, bats, amphibian, native and invasive vegetation, and Olympia oysters.

Secured county grants to remove illegal culverts on Cowling Creek and the Elders Tributary.

Built and maintained the Cowling Creek Forest Preserve Trails that offer public access to its second growth rain forest.

Conducted annual Miller Bay marine bird monitoring open to public participation.

Many other FOMB efforts have benefited our Bay.

As Michael Flynn notes elsewhere in the newsletter, the new Board will build on these many successes, implementing structural changes to sustain deeper and more responsive collaboration with all FOMB, current and new. Teresa Dwyer and her dauntless family and friends crew deserve our collective thank you. We treasure your leadership, enthusiasm, and passion to keep Miller Bay a special place to live and raise children.

Friends of Miller Bay Annual Meeting

Featured Speaker
Christine Rolfes

North Kitsap County Commissioner

Suquamish
House of Awakened Culture

Wednesday, November 8 at 7 pm

Our Mission: To improve quality of life by preserving natural habitats in the Miller Bay Watershed

FRIENDS OF MILLER BAY OFFICERS

President, Paul Dorn
Vice President, Dick D'Archangel
Secretary, Nancy D'Archangel
Treasurer, Richard D'Archangel

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Michael Flynn Stephen Growdon
Janine Moss Sharon Nichols Stafford Smith

Newsletter Editors

Dick and Nancy D'Archangel
Elizabeth Kozleski, Guest Editor

Build the Pond: Frogs will love you

Tom Doty, Ph.D.

Tom lives on Miller Bay and is an emeritus professor of biology. A park steward for North Kitsap Heritage Park, he is very passionate about the plight of amphibians. Tom contributes regularly to the FOMB newsletter.

As a result of breeding habitats destruction, amphibians (frogs and salamanders), 20% of all vertebrate species, are in catastrophic decline. Agricultural practices, including forestry and alternate land use, almost never protect the temporary ponds and intermittent streams in which amphibians breed. A recent Supreme Court ruling on wetland protection made things worse. The ruling eliminates the Federal government's ability to control any land with "puddles, ditches, stock ponds, vernal pools, drainages, and any water feature that does not have a continuous surface connection" to a navigable water.

The potential loss of amphibians is an existential crisis. Amphibians play critical roles in ecosystem dynamics. For example, *Ensatina*, a familiar local species of salamander, has recently been shown to increase carbon sequestration (burial of wood before oxidation converts it into atmospheric CO₂) in Oregon by up to 17% by eating the bugs that eat downed wood. Research continues to reveal other such substantive contributions by amphibians to local healthy ecosystems.

Based on extensive research findings, North Kitsap Heritage Park (NKHP) stewards suggest that pond construction can reduce, and even reverse, the amphibian population decline. Effective pond construction includes digging new ponds as well as rehabilitating ponds that may have filled with enough organic debris that they are no longer able to support amphibian metamorphosis from larvae to adult forms.

The entrance to North Kitsap Heritage Park at Miller Bay Road features three such ponds. Any one of them benefit greatly by removal of excess sediments. NKHP stewards anticipate a project lasting only a few days utilizing a long-reach front end loader and a couple of dump trucks. They are hopeful that the Parks department and local volunteers will support this effort.



Our "vision" for FOMB is an organization that is ...

Respectful Responsible Energetic Communicative
Effective Environmental Respected Transparent
Resourceful Compassionate Social Thoughtful
Passionate a Community Inspirational
Efficient Concerned
Informative Organized Connected Sustainable
Educational Timeless Valued Networked Collaborative
Impactful Legacy Responsive Scalable Fun
Inclusive Accountable Opportunistic

Thank you!

FOMB supporters who attended the cabin tour at Nooschkum in late August had a delightful time. We can't thank the following people enough for their contributions:

Jeremy Hewett, Miller Bay Marina, for the use of his facility

Liberty Bay Auto for the use of their shuttle van.

Laurie Williams for coordinating the wonderful event.

To all the families at *Nooschkum* for making this event possible.

A resounding thank you to all!!

FOMB is Evolving: Why Change?

Sheri Flynn

For over 30 years a few dedicated folks have been working tirelessly to preserve, protect and restore natural habitats around the Miller Bay watershed. Their accomplishments have been impressive. They spearheaded the acquisition of two critical habitats: Cowling Creek Forest Preserve and the Miller Bay Preserve for Land Trust preservation. They have been steadfast in raising awareness about the ongoing work to preserve Miller Bay for the future of all the creatures who call it home.

Given the increasing urgency of climate change and land-use development in North Kitsap, FOMB needs more volunteers to achieve our vision to sustain the natural beauty and resources of Miller Bay. With this in mind, our leaders recruited new board members to sustain and expand the organization's reach. Growing the organization through more members and increased participation is key to achieving those goals.

With the intent to become more inclusive, more responsive, and to build FOMB's capacity to anticipate challenges and respond in ways that are timely and impactful, a FOMB Change Committee formed.

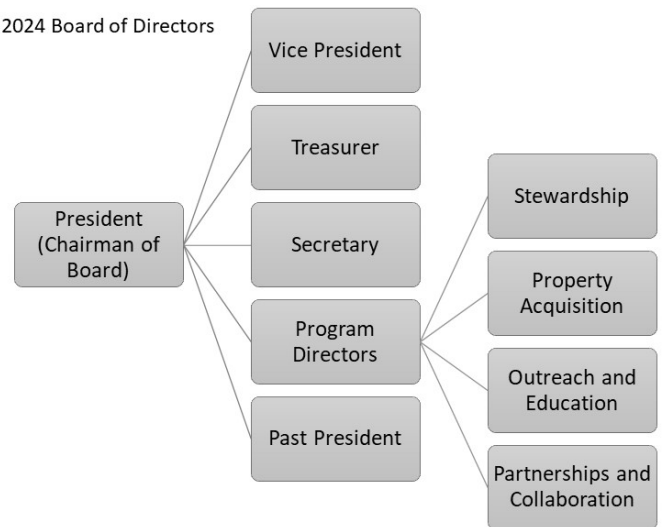
Led by Michael Flynn (see his bio in this newsletter), six FOMB members (Paul Dorn, Nancy D'Archangel, Carol Haskins, Becky Hall and Sheri Flynn) worked through a careful, inclusive process to hone goals to support the FOMB mission. A task assessment helped them to evaluate work/volunteer hours. They were then able to brainstorm work flows and processes, review the organization structure and bylaws, identify communication needs and tools, and outline job descriptions for specific roles.

"It's really important that we ensure the incredible legacy of the FOMB founders and honor their efforts through continuing conservation work well into the future." – Michael Flynn

The result is a set of defined goals, an organization chart with active, contributing leadership positions to support our FOMB goals: (1) Stewardship & Restoration, (2) Outreach & Education, (3) Property Acquisition & Preservation and (4) Partnerships & Collaboration. Governance and management will be the shared responsibility of the 4 elected officers: President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer. The Board will create an Annual Plan and Budget for 2024. They along with the Change Committee have recruited an incredible group of talented, knowledgeable and experienced individuals that align with our specific organizational goals.

The slate of new leaders will be presented to the General FOMB membership for approval at our Annual Meeting November 8, 7:00 pm at the House of Awakened Culture Center, Suquamish.

FOMB 2024 Board of Directors



Planning and Communication are our core competencies moving forward. Transparency and accountability will be a constant in our processes and operations. Change is challenging, transition is hard, and using new structures and reporting behaviors requires practice and learning. We are up for the challenge! If you are interested in building a collaborative community of inspired, informed members, we welcome you to GET INVOLVED! Contact us at info@friendsofmillerbay.org. We will be forming committees to help support our efforts.

So few have accomplished so much! Think of what we will accomplish with more active members. We hope you will be inspired to work together with FOMB to sustain our beautiful environment!

Sheri Flynn moved here 5 years ago with her husband, Michael. She has been an accomplished public relations leader and an active member of community organizations. Thank you, Sheri, for being an active member of FOMB!

Buffleheads: Becoming the FOMB Logo

Michelle Amicucci

The Friends of Miller Bay's (FOMB) logo is a Bufflehead, one of Miller Bay's lovely seasonal diving ducks. Nancy D'Archangel explains how it came to be:

An oil spill north of Seattle drifted across the Sound. Some of it ended up in Doe-Keg-Wats, north of Indianola. Everyone worried that it would also drift south into Miller Bay. Quantifying what would be lost got us thinking that perhaps we needed an inventory of the birds & marine life that lived and visited Miller Bay. Indianola resident, Fay Linger, one of Kitsap Audubon's most experienced birders offered to help. She set up a bird counting protocol using 5 locations around the bay. She led 2 years of monthly counts. She encouraged both novices and experienced birders to join her and shared her knowledge with all. One of her most impressive lessons happened when someone spotted a "Sea gull". "There is no such bird as a Sea gull!" she would rant. "They are gulls!" That mistake was rarely made more than once!

Around this time FOMB decided to design a logo. Choosing a waterbird seemed like a good idea. I wanted something flashy like a merganser or a grebe and asked Fay what might be the best choice. She responded that it had to be the Bufflehead. Miller Bay was the perfect hangout for these little ducks, and that was that! Fay was a force to be reckoned with! Sadly Fay passed away in early 2013 but FOMB still uses her excellent birding protocol. Most of us have grown to appreciate our little Buffleheads.

Bufflehead (*Bucephala albeola*) is one of North America's smallest diving ducks, abruptly vanishing and resurfacing, bobbing like a cork as it feeds on aquatic invertebrates. Males are black-and-white from a distance. A closer look at the head shows iridescent green and purple feathers offsetting the striking white patch at the back of the neck. Females and first-year males are a subdued gray-brown with a neat white patch on the cheek. Buffleheads are amongst the last to leave their breeding grounds and one of the world's most punctual migrants, arriving on their wintering grounds within a narrow margin of time. They nest in tree cavities close to the water, or in abandoned homes of flickers and woodpeckers.

Buffleheads breed near lakes in forests where conifers mix with poplars and aspens. Their species name, *Bucephala*, was inspired by the flat, domed forehead of the American Bison and is derived from the Greek word meaning ox-headed. This is most noticeable when the male puffs out the feathers on the head, thus greatly increasing the apparent size of the head.

Source: *All About Birds and Wikipedia*



Meet Our New Board Members

Michael Flynn

Michael and Sheri Flynn have been living on the Bay for five years. A long-time paddler, sailor, hiker and environmentalist, Friends of Miller Bay was a natural organization for Michael to join! He has been an Educator, Computer-Aided Design (CAD) expert, Operations Director, Consultant and "Change Agent" for both small firms and Fortune 500 Companies. An early retiree, he enjoys getting outside, woodworking, reading, travel, spending time with his wife and their kids (on both coasts), and mostly, life on Miller Bay.



Stephen Growdon

Stephen and Kristi Growdon have owned a summer home on the Bay for 24 years. Protecting and preserving natural environments is very important to Stephen, so Friends of Miller Bay's mission resonated with him. Stephen has worked in both public and private sectors— He worked in Finance & Operations prior to making a significant career change. He recently retired after 18 years teaching in public high school. Stephen is an avid and dedicated cyclist and long-distance runner. He is also an aficionado of Washington wines. In summer months, you'll see him paddling his orange kayak on Miller Bay!





Olympia Oyster Restoration Work

Paul Dorn

To save the cost of hiring professionals to complete the complicated Olympia oyster permitting process, the FOMB Board volunteered to “do it ourselves”. Mercifully, the permitting process will be complete this year. This fall, we will transfer the Olympia oyster seed purchased from the Puget Sound Restoration Fund (PSRF) from temporary Clam Bay growing/storage pallets to Miller Bay. Delays included: (1) Covid; (2) a critically important tideland owner that took two years to locate; (3) out of country travels; and (4) the competing demands of grandkids, family, major surgery, and (5) learning to prioritize retirement’s amazingly limited time. My apology to everyone who’s been anxiously awaiting the re-introduction of Olympia oysters to Miller Bay.

Despite these bumps, we’re making progress. We just retrieved our third year of monitoring stations on August 28th and 29th. The stations provide baseline data. They are comprised of three sets of sterile Pacific oyster shell set on wood stakes, placed at two locations selected by the PSRF Olympia oyster experts. Microscopic examination of these stations found larval Olympia oyster spat recruited to the shell. It’s unlikely this spat could have come from the nearest large population, Liberty Bay, as Olympia larval spat typically don’t drift far from home. It’s good news to see some recruitment coming into the bay. It’s also unlikely that these baby Olympia oysters could have come from the on-going Olympia oyster garden we established on He-

reen tidelands north of the Nooschkum spit in 2018 because Olympia reproductive success depends on a large breeding population. Interestingly, baby Olympia oysters are growing on the plastic net covers of the Oyster Garden. Amazingly, both the Miller Bay Olympia oyster garden and our monitoring stations came through without discernable mortality, indicating quality habitat that should promote future recolonization success.

Green Crab Threat Continues

Betsy Cooper

The invasion of European Green crabs on the West Coast is proceeding. Since Green Crabs are effective clam predators and prolific breeders, it is a significant problem on the WA coast. In the Salish Sea they became apparent in 1998. Subsequent years found them in Sooke Bay; San Juan Islands the Pacific Coast mouths of Wa’atch and Tsoo-Yess rivers and Wescott and Padilla Bays and Dungeness. In 2021 the Lummis captured 70,000 green crabs in sea ponds. Many more coastal estuaries are under threat of invasion. For 9 years Washington Sea Grant has deployed volunteer monitoring teams to identify other Green Crabs locations. A total of 398 traps were set across 10 sites over several nights at the same and adjacent locations where the initial crab was found, capturing a total of 13 additional green crabs. It means they are there and will need additional attention to try to keep the population from spreading. Given the size of the crabs, it is estimated that the first crabs were floating around as larvae in 2020, while others were hatched in 2021. Because this is a new detection area, it’s important to get as much information in as short a time as possible to inform the next steps in management.



Green crabs (right) were captured alongside the residents of some of the estuary habitats, like this graceful crab (*Metacarcinus (Cancer) magister*, left).

While finding green crabs is the main goal of this monitoring, it also has created an amazing long-term data set about the other critters in the area. At least 7 species of crabs, and 10 species of fish, have been observed in the traps along with snails and other critters. We have seen no Green Crabs in Carpenter Creek or Doe Keg Wats. It is important that all of us be on the lookout! If have found one, take a photograph and record the location, report to 1-888-933.9247 or go to invasivespecies.wa.gov/ report-a-sighting.



PO Box 37
SUQUAMISH, WA
98392

Mark your calendar for 7pm on Nov.8 for our Annual Meeting

Forest Above the Bay: More than Half-Way There

Nancy D'Archangel

This two acre property just off Indianola road is important not only for its majestic old trees and all that they do for the environment, but also because it is connected to the Indianola Woodland Preserve (IWP). Walking the trails in the IWP gives you an appreciation for how beautiful this forest is. The Forest Above the Bay project was launched in late spring and within a month almost \$90,000 was raised. We are more than halfway there. To complete the purchase, we need another \$70,000. Additional donations or year end contributions would be welcomed.

Upon completion of this sale, Great Peninsula Conservancy will donate the land to Kitsap County while retaining a conservation easement to protect it "in perpetuity" as part of the IWP. We were happy to have the approval of the Suquamish Tribe for this project.

Once again we are indebted to Teresa Dwyer for heading up our fundraising efforts. She recruited a dynamite team to assist her including Brent and Donna Souter, who designed our fundraising materials and took the fabulous pictures.

Do yourself a favor and take a walk in the IWP if you've never done so. This forest "cathedral" will renew your spirit. The Forest Above the Bay property is off to your left near the high end of the IWP although it remains without

trails. Adding to this gem of a forest less than 2 miles from downtown Indianola seemed like a very worthy cause and will do so much to protect the water shed. We hope you agree! If you wish to donate or have questions please contact us through our website: info@friendsofmillerbay.org

Forest Above the Bay Update

\$93 K →

— **\$160 K**
Goal

We're in the final push
Let's save these magnificent Trees.

