**Race to recycle**

Belfair Elementary School student Domingo Lopez-Zacarias drops an item into a recycling bin during a relay race to identify the categories of waste while participating in an activity station Friday at the GreenSTEM Summit at the Salmon Center.

**Learning to be green**

**Area students learn about environment at the annual GreenSTEM Summit**

By BRIANNA LOPER brianna@masoncounty.com

Julie Beals’ eyes were wide behind her glasses as she watched the intricate movements of fly-fish fly tying.

The Grapeview School fourth-grader picked out colorful feathers and strings, and watched with awe as a volunteer worked. She giggled excitedly as the volunteer wound the last knot and handed her the complete fly.

Beals was one of nearly 550 students from who districts around Hood Canal attended the GreenSTEM Summit on June 3 at the Salmon Center in Belfair.

“It’s been really fun,” Beals said. “We’ve learned a lot about different stuff, like the crop cycle and salmon.”

The Salmon Center has partnered with the Pacific Education Institute for nine years to put on the student gathering, which brings students from six school districts to the Belfair-based center to learn about all aspects of the environment.

The program is not mandatory, but teachers are invited to participate in the program, which integrates STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) into their curricula.

By Monday, the teachers had to submit ideas for activities that would integrate science and technology into their curricula. Many of the ideas were submitted before the beginning of the school year, which is why they were approved.

**Port to continue boat ramp repairs**

**Fair Harbor public boat launch is crooked, cracked**

By BRIANNA LOPER brianna@masoncounty.com

Port of Grapeview commissioners met last week to approve several motions that could be the next step toward a new public boat launch.

The port is working to correct the Fair Harbor boat launch, a concrete ramp set at an angle that encroaches on private property next to it. The ramp also has an unnecessary curb in the middle and is cracked, so port commissioners hope to re-do the ramp.

Commissioner Glenn Carlson said the meeting was held “for the sake of expediency” so that as funding was secured, the port could move ahead with the project.

Two commissioners — Carlson and John Anderson — voted to approve a resolution to hire a biological consultant to comply with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' requests that the port ensure no endangered species are living where the work will be completed.

Commissioner Lowell Mahugh was absent from the meeting.

The two port commissioners also approved a motion to hire a certified tubal surveyor, which is required by the state Department of Natural Resources.

Both resolutions rely on the port securing some funding for the project, which Carlson said they hope to see.

Resident, WSDOT work to make state Route 106 safer

By BRIANNA LOPER brianna@masoncounty.com

As the number of year-round residents along the South Shore of Hood Canal increases, more homeowners are noticing dangerous drivers along state Route 106.

Residents who live along the road have been working with the Washington State Department of Transportation, to come up with solutions to curtail drivers who speed and pass at inappropriate times on the windy road.

During a meeting Friday at Alderbrook Resort & Spa, residents, WSDOT staff and county officials met to discuss the next course of action.

“People in this group have very strong feelings about speeding on this highway, and we feel like there’s a lot of it going on,” said resident Dan O’Neal, who helped organize the meeting.

In response to these concerns, WSDOT has installed four new electronic flashing speed signs on state Route 106, which will be operational this week to remind drivers of the 40 mph speed limit. If a driver is speeding before reaching the sign, the sign will flash the driver’s speed to remind them of the limit.

The signs face both ways on state Route 106 near the Happy Hollow and Sunset Beach areas.

The state will also install flashing lights in the crosswalk across the road at Alderbrook Resort & Spa, which will activate when a pedestrian presses a button.

“With all of this stuff, we’re looking at will it influence the fast drivers, if they’re already ignoring the 40 mph sign,” said Steve Bennett, with WSDOT.

“Especially distance-wise and time-wise — how long will it last?”

The department of transportation installed speed readers near Happy Hollow and Sunset Beach a few weeks ago that rely on Bluetooth devices in cell phones or cars to record a car’s speed between two points. Results showed that the average speed in those places is around 62 or 43 mph.
GreenSTEM: Students present projects to other schools

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and math) learning with real-world projects.

"It was great to have so many happy
and energetic kids running around," said Salmon Center Executive Director

Mandy Harlow.

The day starts with about a dozen stations from environmental-based
organizations, where students rotate through to learn about topics such as
using maps, salmon habitat, recycling and bacteria.

Jason Wells, from Mason County
Public Works, taught a station on geo-

graphic information systems, or GIS, and
how maps help people in different ways.

"This is something that I've always
enjoyed and been passionate about,"
Wells said. "So hopefully, it will spark
an interest with some of the kids and
they'll love it too."

Harlow said the stations are a good
learning tool because it gives students
a chance to get out of the classroom and
learn in a different way.

"Not everyone learns the best listen-
ing in a classroom," she said. "With this
students can feel and touch things, and
really do some hands-on learning."

After a no-waste lunch, which taught
the students how to look for foods that
cause no trash or waste, students gath-
er in groups to present on the findings
of individual class projects they have
completed throughout the school year.

"It's more than a day to just learn
about the environment," Harlow said.
"It's also communication training and
public speaking when they present
these projects."

Teachers select a project topic at
the beginning of the year, and student
projects require research, compile data
come to conclusions.

This year's projects included tra-
ing butterflies, sampling water qu-
ity and raising salmon in a class
tank, Harlow said.

The GreenSTEM Summit

founded in 2007, after a similar
program, Environmental Explora-
ted funding.

Harlow said the Salmon Center
local teachers didn't want to see
opportunity go away, so they cre-

GreenSTEM to fill its place

"Gosh, it's just one of those events
that is phenomenal for kids in
area," Harlow said.

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