



**SHORELINE DISCOVERIES AT YOUR FINGERTIPS**

One small book is making a big difference in the lives of many Whidbey and Camano residents and visitors, who use its guidance to find just the right beaches for their trips to the edges of the Salish Sea.

"When our children were growing up," says long-time Sound Water Stewards (SWS) member Jeanie McElwain, "there was only ONE beach, and that was Double Bluff. That was the only place the kids wanted to go. Then we discovered a small black and white book which named 47 other beaches we could visit. Our choices of beaches expanded vastly! We began exploring and were amazed at the richness, the variety, and beauty we found—most public, local and free!"

That book is now titled *Getting to the Water's Edge on Whidbey and Camano Islands* and is available in stores and online. No longer small, it is 198 pages long, printed in full color on sturdy paper, and loaded with information about the 69 public access beaches it now features.

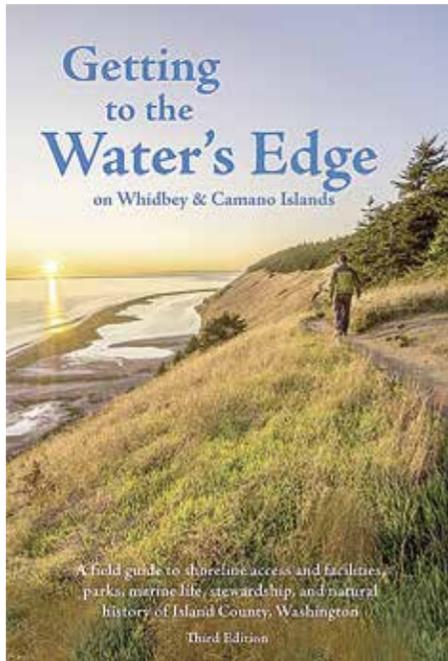
Its latest, and third edition, arrived from the printer just before the 2020 Fourth of July weekend and was an immediate local bestseller. Just over ten months later, 3,846 copies of the 6,000 copies ordered have already sold. And, surprisingly, 20 percent of sales are from outside Island County, some from as far as New Jersey and Guam.

Sound Water Stewards speculates it has sold so well because not only does this unique guidebook direct us to 69 public access beaches on both Whidbey and Camano Islands, it gives many practical and interesting details about each one.

*Getting to the Water's Edge* (GTWE), however, tells far more than what. It also reveals why.

"GTWE does bring in some money to support the organization, but mainly it is a tool for educating the public about the wonders of our beaches," says Allie Hudec, education coordinator for Sound Water Stewards, the nonprofit which owns and updated the book. "We hope that people not only find new beaches to explore but that they see their usual stops with a fresh eye. With information on geology, wildlife, and even history, this book takes a closer look at places we may already know. It also has some good tips on how to care for these unique places and the wildlife that call it home."

The book has an informative chapter on stewardship in a warming world and multiple short essays. This chapter includes what to do if you find a seal pup on the beach, how to report creosote-soaked driftwood,



the importance of picking up plastic and preventing contamination by caring for our septic systems.

To protect the beaches and the creatures who live on them is an especially important section — how to explore the beach without harming it —tells how to meet the beings at the beach safely. These guidelines are good to review whenever you may be meeting sea creatures, some of which are already at risk because they have been left high and dry by the water they depend on for their very lives. This section is handy for working with children or introducing visiting guests to whom the sea is a new experience.

And don't forget to turn to chapter four, the "Guide to Intertidal Life," where color photos and descriptions introduce you to some of the magical creatures you may be seeing.

There is a lot more in this information-packed book.

Yellow-toned information boxes describe many ways we can protect and support our tidelands and the sea that sustains them. They also give histories of those who lived here before us, information about other special areas to visit, (such as dog parks and 43 upland trails and trails systems), and essays on natural history from our glacial erratics, to marine birds, to the ghost shrimp which draw the gray whales to our shores.

Hudec, a long-time resident of Whidbey Island, tells us, "One of my favorite hidden gems is Glendale beach. It is a nice quiet spot where you can listen to the stream and watch the ferry and passing trains across the water. It's also a good spot to watch for passing whales! The information about the history and restoration projects at that beach made me look at it in a new light. I was shocked to learn that the little creek has salmon and that the location was home to a hotel and ferry stop in the early 1900s! I had no idea."

*Getting to the Water's Edge* can be purchased at local bookstores and shops on Whidbey and Camano Islands and nearby mainland shops. For a list of locations or to buy online, go to [www.soundwaterstewards.org](http://www.soundwaterstewards.org).

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