



Library podcast

'We Are Puget Sound' Book Launch

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[00:00:35] Thank you so much for being here tonight. I'm Stesha Brandon, the Literature and Humanities Program Manager here at The Seattle Public Library. And as we begin this evening, I would like to acknowledge that we're gathered on the ancestral land of the Coast Salish people. We honor their elders past and present, and we thank them for their stewardship of this land. Welcome to Central Library. And thank you all for joining us for the official launch of We Are Puget Sound, presented in partnership with Braided River Mountaineers Books, Washington Environmental Council and Elliott Bay Book Company. We're grateful to the Connie and Gary Kunis Foundation, Seattle City of Literature and The Seattle Times for their generous support of library programs. Finally, we would like to acknowledge The Seattle Public Library Foundation for their support of library programs and events. Private gifts to the foundation from thousands of donors help the library provide free programs and services that touch the lives of everyone in our community. Thank you to any library foundation donors here tonight. Now, I am delighted to welcome Helen Cherullo to the podium. As the publisher at Seattle nonprofit publisher Mountaineers Books and the founder of the Braided River conservation imprint, Helen uses the power of beautiful images to publish photography books and create multimedia advocacy campaigns to draw attention to critically threatened ecosystems like the Salish Sea, the Arctic Refuge, Alaska's Bristol Bay and beyond. Through photography books that lead to multimedia presentations and exhibitions, Braided River works to protect western North America's remaining public lands. So here to introduce tonight's program, please help me welcome Helen Cherullo.

[00:02:20] Hello, everyone. I feel like I'm in a really good place to shout out that books matter and that books can change the world. Books offer entry to places, ideas and inspiration that we might not otherwise experience. Braided River books like We Are Puget Sound change perspectives. They activate and ultimately work to make us bolder protectors of the natural world. I'd like to thank The Seattle Public Library, Washington Environmental Council and Elliott Bay Books for making so much of this evening tonight possible. I'd also like to thank the many individuals, businesses and nonprofits who helped to support the making of this book, including every one of our tabling partners here tonight. This book is the result of many contributors, including numerous well-known Northwest nature

photographers whose images bring the Salish Sea to life, and you'll see that tonight. Since Mountaineers Books started dedicating efforts to conservation and advocacy books in the early 2000s through our Braided River imprint, we have partnered with scores of grassroots groups throughout North America to drive public policy decisions that have helped to protect millions of acres of public lands. This is land that all Americans own. We were honored when Mindy Roberts and her colleagues, David Workman and Brian Walsh, approached us with their bold ideas to tell powerful stories through words and images to protect and restore Puget Sound.

[00:04:11] They said that they wanted a Braided River book, and tonight is the launch. And here it is. So you can imagine what a pleasure it is for me to be able to introduce this book, as well as my esteemed colleague and publishing partner, Mindy Roberts. Mindy joined the Washington Environmental Council three years ago to lead the People for Puget Sound program. She told me that her passion was clean water for everyone. She wanted to work for an organization where her passion and her skills as a scientist could make a difference. And how perfect. The Washington Environmental Council's mission is to protect, restore and sustain Washington's environment for all. Her previous work helped to identify sources of pollution to Washington waters, streams, rivers, lakes and Puget Sound, as well as developing management solutions to clean it up. She earned her Environmental Engineering degrees from the University of California, Berkeley, M.I.T., Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution and a PhD from the University of Washington. It's my honor to introduce Mindy Roberts.

[00:05:33] Oh, thank you so much, Helen. For those of you who don't know Helen, she is a force, and this book would not have happened without your leadership or without the supremely talented staff at Braided River. Thank you so much for all of your work on this. We're very grateful. As Helen said, my name is Mindy Roberts. I lead the Puget Sound program for Washington Environmental Council and Washington Conservation Voters. And for over 50 years, our organization has passed, enforced and defended environmental laws that protect people, that protect lands, waters and wildlife. And we've done this through people power. That's really the key. Our focus areas, as you see up here, we focus on the waters and lands of Puget Sound, but we do work statewide on waters, as well. We also recognize that we need healthy forests for healthy waters and everything else. So we work on those areas. And importantly, WEC is currently working toward a just transition to a clean energy future. So that means reducing climate pollution, and it also means stopping the expansion of fossil fuel facilities throughout Washington state. You can imagine we're a little busy these days and all of the work that I just described, it's work that we do in partnership with a multitude of allies and other organizations. So we don't do this work alone. So why this book and campaign and why now? I serve on Governor Inslee's Orca Recovery Taskforce, and I can tell you firsthand, there is enormous public interest in the health of the orcas. Enormous interest in the health of salmon and also in the waters that sustain all of us. And that means people like me, who moved to this area 20 years ago from elsewhere.

[00:07:14] But it also means the people who have lived here for centuries and even millennia. The water is what connects all of us. And I've got to say, sometimes I don't know about you, but I just get assaulted by this barrage of bad news. Like there's just all this stuff happening in our world today, and it's just so easy to get caught up in a world of bad news and think about, well, how are we going to

absorb what may be millions of people who want to live in our community in the decades to come? How are we going to do that and yet retain who we are as a region? And I wanted to share tonight what gives me hope, and what gives me hope, frankly, are the remarkable people who are working for change in their communities, and they're leading us toward a better future. So a number of those folks are profiled in the book. Some of them include people like Laura James. She is chronicling what stormwater pollution looks like, but from a fish's perspective. And a little spoiler alert, it is nasty. What also inspires me are people like Kyle Peters and Emma Rodriguez, who are volunteering countless hours of their personal time teaching people about shorelines. And I understand there's a number of people who are in this book who are here in the audience. Would you please stand up if your name exists in this book, would you please stand up and be recognized? I know you're out there, up in the stands. Thank you!

[00:08:29] Let's give them a hand.

[00:08:34] So these are the people, frankly, who are fundamentally making changes, and those changes are going to benefit all of us.

[00:08:40] So, you give me hope. You keep us going. Thank you so much. So tonight, we're going to be sharing stories of people, of places, of creatures that define our region. And tonight is about this new book and also about this new campaign. For us at Washington Environmental Council, the question is not, can we recover Puget Sound? We absolutely can. Our question is, what are we going to need to succeed? And that's where all of you come in. And so tonight, our goal is we're strengthening public engagement. We're building political will for a renewed focus on Puget Sound and the Salish Sea and everything that that entails. So tonight, each of you will play a role in the future of the Salish Sea. And we'll be wrapping up with some actions that you can take in your lives, because those actions, together, are how we collectively build power. So tonight is also a celebration, is, as Helen mentioned, a book launch. The launch of our campaign as well. But it really is about people. The people are what makes this happen. I am so fortunate to introduce our four panelists tonight. As I call your name, if you can come on up.

[00:9:45] First is Sally Brownfield. Sally is one of the People of the Water, the Squaxin Island Tribe, that has lived on and with the water and its plants and animals for thousands of years. She is an educational advocate for the Squaxin Island Tribe, developing comprehensive early learning programs and providing education and ecological advocacy, political action and education options for student. She's also one of the 17 amazing people profiled in the book, and she was also the tribal reviewer for the entire project.

[00:10:21] Next is David Workman. David was a journalist with several newspapers before entering public service as a communication and education director for state agencies. He served as Executive Editor of state-published books and websites on natural resources, the environment, social and health services and technology. Dave is also the lead writer who brilliantly authored the stories of people and place in the book. Welcome, Dave.

[00:10:51] Brian Walsh is an environmental planner and nature photographer who has spent 30 years exploring the coastal lowlands and mountains of the Pacific Northwest with his camera. And through his photography of people, wildlife and landscapes, Brian expresses environmental advocacy for the precious places that we all cherish. Welcome, Brian.

[00:11:13] Darcie Larson is the Senior Manager for Community Engagement and Inclusion at the Seattle Aquarium. Darcie approaches her work with a race and social justice lens and is especially interested in how empathy can be a tool for connecting with people and animals in service of the aquarium's mission of inspiring conservation of our marine environment. Welcome, Darcie. And after our conversations tonight, we'll have time for your questions for the panelists, so be thinking of those. And in the meantime, please enjoy some of the images from the book as we chat.

[00:11:49] So, Sally, let's begin with you. Can you share with us a little bit about your Puget Sound? Where is it and what does it mean to you?

[00:11:57] [Speaking an Indigenous Language] That's a greeting in my language. [Speaking an Indigenous Language] My traditional name is [Speaking an Indigenous Language] name of my great-great-grandmother that my mother and my uncle gave to me to take care of. And so, wherever I walk and whatever I do, I do it always with understanding that I carry on from my ancestors. I'm from the very southern Puget Sound. I'm a citizen of Squaxin Island Tribe. And through the Medicine Creek Treaty, the Squaxin Island Tribe is made up of the seven most southern inlets of Puget Sound. So, myself, I was born and raised by a little area called Kamilche, and it's between Shelton and Olympia. It was, actually, they had post offices and everything else there before the bigger ones came, came up. And, I guess, the stories from my, my grandfather are also embedded out of what my Puget Sound was like, because we, that's what we learned from our relatives. And, when I hear this, it says, what about your Puget Sound? It's like, it's that water, there.

[00:13:26] It's like the breath of our people. It's the life blood that runs through all of us, just as it runs through the creeks come down and, and, that's, that's the blood. And, it's very peaceful. And it can be very dangerous. And so you have a respect and you learn that. You learn how to take care of it. It's just like our plants and our animals on the, the ground. They're there to support you and you're there to support them. So, you know, I grew up running around the beaches. There was plenty of places to go, or I thought so at the time. We knew when the smelt were coming in, and we'd all go down together and, and, get the smelt, and take care of them. So picking up the limpets, looking for the starfish and sand dollars and all those things that so many kids do, or we hope they can do. And that's, I guess that's a sense and a feeling of freedom and that connectedness, you know, and that's sometimes, if our kids don't have that opportunity to be in that, those places that are sacred and that have so much life, and they understand that it's, it is full of life. It's hard for, for them to be connected.

[00:15:05] Thank you. And with that history and perspective, what are some things that you've seen change and why does that matter?

[00:15:12] Oh, I've seen a lot of changes, but you want me to tell you the most recent? Now, we know where the logging companies came in. Now, my dad was a logger. And so, we also lived on Orcas Island, we lived in southeast Alaska, always on the water. But, um, my son is 47 years old, and the other day he looked at me, and he shook his head, and he said, Mom, I'm never going to see this again in my lifetime am I? Because Port Blakely owns a few hundred acres and in the past month, they clear-cutted all of it. And, uh, they clear-cutted most of it. The [unintelligible] Point Road goes right through it, and they did all of the upland, but they didn't cut right next to the beach. The other thing, in the early 80s, there was a creek and, um, the fish weren't running up it anymore. And, different people were saying how you need to use the hatcheries and this and that, whatever. So without telling anybody, my dad went down to that creek, and he took care of that creek. He took care of it with the kind of gravel that needed to be in that gravel, and he got some eggs, and he planted them in that creek. And today, there are still fish. They, they returned. Once that creek was taken care of and everything, they returned. And when they logged all that land, they did not, at least they saved that area around that creek. They didn't take those trees away. But, um, yeah, lot of it is development, population, businesses, and so, people don't have access. They can't even get to the water. I can't get to places to pick my berries or anything either. And, so it just really changes life. And, and what I was talking about, the connectedness. When I was thinking about coming up here tonight, I thought about my mother. She passed in '94, but, um, back in the 70s when we were doing a lot of the, the issues around the salmon and the Boldt decision and all of that, she wrote letters to the editor. She wrote one to Olympia. And, she always tried to do, she wrote this big, long letter. And, it was all about how can we all work together? It shouldn't be this group and that group. But we all, we all do live here together. But she ended this one, and so I wanted to share that. She says, "We would very much rather live in a natural life of our ancestors. But no, that cannot ever happen. So, we want a chance to make their living in a way that is familiar to us." She was talking about the fishing then, which we can't do much anymore because there's hardly any fish. Um, she goes on, "We can no longer walk the beaches, we did as children, and smell the mudflats, or show our kids how to poke a drumhead under a rock when the tide is out and listen to him drum at you and other simple things that make life more worthwhile. But we would like to pass on as much of our heritage as possible to our children."

[00:19:03] Thank you. And Dave, you interviewed Sally and, and, put pen to paper to tell her story with her. Can you tell us a little bit about your Puget Sound? What does it mean to you?

[00:19:14] Well, I'm a newcomer. I, I've only had a forty-three year love affair with Puget Sound. Unlike Sally's, whose goes back much longer. But after three years of working on this book and getting to know Sally and her stories, our sound and our Salish Sea mean even more to me. For me, it's a dazzling seascape. It's a dramatic landscape, it's intimate coves and freshwater streams. It's plants and animals from the deepest depths on up to the mountain tops. It's millions of people from diverse cultures and generations, some going back thousands of years in this place. And, um, for me personally, the sound is also a quiet beach all to oneself. It's sleeping on a gently rocking boat. Sometimes that happens at one of our marine state parks. It's being in a parking spot where you can just look out on sea and sky and mountains in the distance. And then sometimes, it's being up on the mountain top, looking out and seeing it all below from the top of the sound.

[00:20:19] Thank you. And, you ended up devoting a tremendous amount of time to this project over the past three years, even after retiring from public service. Why spent so much time on this?

[00:20:30] Well, it started over coffee. This fellow named Brian, who was a colleague of mine, asked me to coffee and tea, and we, he shared a vision he had of a book. So, we talked at this time and over future coffee and tea sessions. And, um, a concept emerged for us of telling the story of Puget Sound through voices and visions of people. So we, we thought about this idea. We decided we had to take it to someone that might give us a reality check. So we, we both have a great respect for Jay Manning, very active in our environmental community and our public life. He was the Department of Ecology director at a time when Brian and I worked there for Jay. Well, he liked our idea. He said we should go for it, and he made phone calls that opened up some of our first interviews. Well, as our interviews unfolded and more and more people like Sally and Emma and Andrew and others, as they shared their stories, those stories really motivated us to get this job done. And, um, then eventually, we soon, we got a chance to meet with Mindy. And Mindy had this vision of even more. It would be not only a book, but a multi-year, multimedia, like education campaign. Well, with her enthusiasm, our momentum became unstoppable. And then finally, for me, um, one of the things that kept me really engaged was when I would be writing the manuscript to turn it into our editors, Laura and Helen and others, if I came to a stopping point for a few hours and went away from the keyboard, the unfinished story would call me back. I'd have to get back and finish that story. And then, eventually, as we got more and more done, and we got closer and closer to the end, those stories of these people that you are meeting tonight, and we'll meet more in the pages of the book, their stories really propelled us and me to get the job done. And also not to let them down.

[00:22:38] Thank you, Dave. And Brian, you also have a full-time job and full-time career in environmental planning. Can you describe your special connection with Puget Sound?

[00:22:48] I moved to Washington State in 1976, so I could attend the Evergreen State College and then study in environmental planning. And it was, that was my first encounter with Puget Sound.

[00:22:59] In fact, I can remember a very early experience there, going down to the beach at the college and, and, wrestling with a gooey duck. That's not very many colleges, you get to do that, to wrestle, wrestle with your school mascot, and in some cases you can even eat the mascot. So that was kind of my first encounter with Puget Sound.

[00:23:15] But Puget Sound was my classroom, really, because the work I was doing, there was a lot of fieldwork, and we were collecting water quality samples and studying the effects of, of heavy metals in the marine environment, for example. And so I, I really had a deep understanding and appreciation for this, this amazing resource from those early days.

[00:23:35] More recently, my wife Gail and I were hiking. We did a hike down [unintelligible] Creek, and we got out to the Nisqually Reach. And there were these marine mammals that were frolicking in the water very close to shore, and I had never seen them before in the wilds, and they were harbor porpoise. And it just reminded me when I was at the Puget Sound Partnership, I heard the expression

that Puget Sound is like having Yellowstone at your doorstep, because where else can you think that you would see incredible creatures, whether they be orca whales or marine mammals, salmon, so many incredible species? It's not in a national park or wilderness area. It is literally at our doorstep here, and what an incredible place that we live in. And so that further motivated me in terms of this work. And then again, the opportunity to work with Dave whose just an outstanding writer and just a great colleague to work with, being able to connect with Mindy, who I'd worked with previously at the Department of Ecology, and through Mindy making the connection with Helen and her tremendous staff. That just really motivated me to, to continue to work on this project and helped to make it happen.

[00:24:35] Thank you. And Darcy tell us a little bit about your Puget Sound and what it means to you.

[00:24:40] So, I grew up in Bremerton, just across the water and lived on the traditional homelands of the Suquamish Tribe over there on the Kitsap Peninsula, and I essentially grew up as Sally was talking about, exploring the tide pools and the sea stars and the crabs, and that was my playground as a kid.

[00:25:00] I was fortunate enough. I'm old enough to remember when we got to run free during this summer. We basically, the kids were out all day, maybe come back for dinner, and I can even remember my younger sister almost floating across over to Port Orchard one day when the tide, she was on an inner tube, whoops. We rescued her. She was fine, but that was where I grew up, is playing among the tide pools. And, of course, here I am today. I work in a field where I help connect kids and adults with that marine ecosystem. I enjoy it in times with my family. I have, I'm lucky enough to have an old sailboat and spend time in the San Juans. And I've seen things like humpback whales from my boat, which is just amazing. I have worked on whale watch boats, and 15 years ago we used to say or 20, 20 years ago we used to say there are no humpback whales, and today there are. So, that's my experience, um, and lucky enough to see it every day from where I work.

[00:26:05] And, and you mentioned animals in particular, and you have a job that draws tens of thousands of people to the aquarium. Why do you think empathy matters and, in particular, empathy for animals?

[00:26:15] So over the past three or four years at the Seattle Aquarium, we've been working on a project that uses empathy as a tool for conservation behavior change. And, the social science research about this tells us that conservation behavior, any kind of behavior change, is complex. It's not as simple as just teaching people about it, so that they'll know it and then love it and then save it. If it were only that simple, I think we'd probably be farther along than we are. So there's internal motivators that we need to activate. There's external barriers, lots of complex things that go into it. Empathy has been shown to be a great tool, especially perspective taking. So folks that take the perspective of an animal or another person are more likely to make some kind of behavior change. And in our case, we're looking at asking people to do things like change their transportation choices and taking the perspective of even, you know, an orca, or even a sea star can actually help folks do that.

[00:27:16] And last summer, we witnessed an unprecedented event when the orca mother, Tahlequah, swam with her dead calf for 17 days and a thousand miles. And people all over the world were riveted by her story. Why do you think that Tahlequah and her calf gained such worldwide attention? And why did so many people connect with her on an emotional level?

[00:27:36] So I know for myself, I come from a very Western science-based education. I have a master's degree in biology and my rational brain was telling me that no one can understand what this killer whale is doing. Who knows what this behavior is. And the other part of my brain, a big part of my brain, was saying Tahlequah is sending us a message. We can't miss it. This mother is putting on this demonstration to the world that we've messed up. We've messed up. And, and the whole pod was mourning, and it just touched all of us. I think that grief, that both the mother's grief, the grief of the whole orca family, and then all of us, we, you couldn't help but miss it. And, so it was very poignant, um, something that, you know, unfortunately, we'll all experience in our life is that loss, but especially the loss of such a, a young calf that only lived for a short time. So, it really was a very visible symbol for all of us.

[00:28:36] In the, the visibility, the images of Tahlequah and her calf, they literally resonated with people from the Galapagos to Rwanda to stories from the Puget Sound were being told in South America and in Africa, as well. So, Brian, tell us a little bit more about photography. It's visual storytelling. You captured many of the images that are in the book.

[00:28:57] Maybe tell us a couple of them and, and, the backstory behind the images.

[00:29:03] Okay. There's several images that I was going to highlight. One is a picture of Anderson Island. It's on page 10 of the book. And last winter, my wife Gail and I went on our first trip to Anderson Island. For those of you who aren't familiar with it, it's in South Puget Sound. You take a ferry. It's not a Washington State ferry, it's actually a Pierce County ferry from Steilacoom over to the island. And it was kind of late winter time and foggy. I wasn't even sure what we'd be able to see that day, but we hopped on the ferry and decided to, to go anyway. And so we drove along the island and down. There's many parks along the way.

[00:29:36] And I was really hoping for a particular vista of Mt. Rainier, because from the island, you're looking fairly close to Mt. Rainier. And of course, that's the headwaters of so many of the rivers that drain into Puget Sound.

[00:29:48] And sure enough, just as we got down to Oro Bay and Jacob's Point, we were able to look across, and there was the image that I envisioned, and it was just magical. I mean, the mountain looked like a mirage there on the horizon. And the water and the forest, it really combined all the elements that I think of with Puget Sound. And so it's, it's a very iconic image.

[00:30:06] What just caught my eye is image, an image like this from another photographer. And it just makes me smile every time I see that. What were some of the other photographs that maybe caught your eye that were contributed by others?

[00:30:18] The photo I think of, there are many, of course, but one in particular, it was a photograph of shorebirds. And this is some Western Sandpipers. It's on page 50 in the book. And it's a photo by Gerrit Vyn. And shorebirds are fascinating creature. They're very small. And you've seen them probably on the shores of Puget Sound. They have a fascinating life history. These are birds that spend the summer nesting in the Arctic. And they travel thousands of miles and winter in Central and South America. It's one of the greatest migrations on the planet of the earth. And these creatures do it with these just small wings. And then they, they make this trip, and they stop in Puget Sound on their way either to or from these grounds. I've also read that their numbers are, sadly, are plummeting. And so their populations are under great, but what I like about this photo, it shows an abundance of these creatures. When I think of Puget Sound, it's not about a species here or a bird here or an animal there. Large flocks of these birds. And at one time, the skies were probably darkened with the numbers of these birds and other migratory birds in our region. So I think this book is an important symbol for us to think about what we've lost and what we have yet to recover is that sense of abundance.

[00:31:29] Thanks. And, and Dave, turning to you, in addition to Sally, you profiled some remarkable people, so I'm not going to have you pick your favorites, since there's several in the audience here, um, but tell us maybe a couple highlights that come top of mind.

[00:31:41] Well, they're all my favorites, but I saw some people here. I think I saw Andrew Schiffer. Are you here, Andrew, up there? So, wave your hand. And I see Emma Rodriguez and her family. Now, are there other people here that we interviewed who shared your story with us and with so many others? Ah, yes, good. Laura, correct? This is Laura, and you're gonna hear from Laura James. You'll want to find the people and the stories. They're truly inspiring. Well, Emma and a young man named Kyle Peterson never met each other until perhaps when they became beach watchers and beach naturalists in Snohomish County. Well, Kyle was 15 years old when we met him on a beach at Mukilteo.

[00:32:26] And with his mom's support, he has completed many hours of training to become a beach watcher and a naturalist. But I love Kyle's story of nature loving and also I love his story of family. Tahmina Martelly escaped war in her native Bangladesh when she was a young person. Then she studied in the United States and became a nutritionist. And then a few years ago, she moved to King County to work for World Relief Seattle. Tahmina inspired an amazing project that's still ongoing at Hillside Church in Kent. So Tahmina led many partners and more than a thousand volunteers in removing an asphalt parking lot at the church and replacing it with refugee garden plots. But, they did much more. They've also created a very significant water conservation project and also an innovative stormwater runoff project where they capture the water with the toxics, rather than let it go into the stream and head on down to Elliott Bay. Cassandra Houghton's journey as a champion of the sound began when she was a ninth grader, and she was in a history unit called Sounding Off on Puget

Sound. Well, she went on to college, graduated and became a student leadership coordinator for a group in, in this area called Sustainability Ambassadors. So, Cassandra is doing her part to help thousands of students do their part to protect our sound. And then Andrew Schiffer lives and works in the industrialized communities of Georgetown and South Park. He's helped to build rain collecting gardens, vegetation rehabilitation projects and ecological restoration. All of his work is designed to keep people and the sound healthier.

[00:34:23] And Dave, in addition to people, you told stories of place and some of the history of this place. As you were researching and writing, what was something that surprised you?

[00:34:33] We had lots of great expertise available to us. Brian Mendi and many others. People in this audience, Lynda. Did I see someone else who is one of our sources here of information? Lynda Mapes from The Seattle Times has done great writing and was a great source of information to point us in good directions. But we did have some aha moments. And I'll just tell of three. As recently as the 1960s, the city of Bellingham was using Puget Sound as their garbage dump. They would bulldoze trash, garbage, toxics, just debris, into the sound, into Bellingham Bay. Well, one day in 1963, there were these three college students who were appalled, and they pulled a stunt that stopped the bulldozing for a day. It was a symbolic gesture, but they stopped it for a day. And you'll read more about that story in the book. And you might even recognize, might have heard of one or more of these students from 1963. Another surprise is one that is very close to the heart of Sally, because the native oysters are a really important part of her life and culture. It was striking to me that a century ago, they were basically almost eliminated from our water. So these are the native oysters all up and down the West Coast, and they were almost gone because of the non-Indians exploiting the resource and also water pollution that went with that. But then they managed to make a comeback. They survive. They're tough, and they've found a way to survive. And lots of people, including Sally, have worked hard to bring those Olympia oysters back. And we still have them. And they're, one of the fun things I learned in our research was about our native octopus. So the, the giant Pacific octopus is so brainy, I learned, that some experts actually say they have a personality. And I just think that's really cool, and it's one more reason to love Puget Sound.

[00:36:32] A brainy octopus. I love it. So, Sally, Dave mentioned food gathering.

[00:36:37] You're also an archeological digger, a community leader. Very unique perspective on resources and culture.

[00:36:43] Anything else you wanted to share with us tonight?

[00:36:47] Well, he talked about the Olympia oyster, and it is, this is how big those Olympia oysters are. Most people don't even know about them. They think the Pacifics are, belong here. This shell here is probably eight hundred to a thousand years old, came out of a archaeological dig that I worked on down at Mud Bay, and that was a site where our ancestors had, it was a fishing camp and also hunting. So, there's lots of evidence of this. But yeah, then in some of my long past research, I started opening Olympia oysters when I was in seventh grade. That's how I bought my school clothes

and stuff. But they're always so special, and they're just so beautiful. No matter. You open them, and they all have a different look, the colors. Our people, long time ago, before the settlers came, they would make, you also, some of the teachings need to be retaught. They would make sleds, and they would lay on their bellies to put out the weight, so that they wouldn't crush these oysters, and they only took the biggest ones. And then when the settlers came in, they just trampled, and they took everything. And so, how do we live with our plants and our animals our, all of the lifeforms around us? There is a place out by where I live that one of my old uncles, I talked with a couple of the elders in my tribe, I known them all my life, and so I sat them down one day, and we want to talk about this. And so, they talk to me about ways to have wild cranberries. Well, we don't have them there anymore, because we weren't allowed anymore to take care of the land the way we used to take care of the land. So, we need to teach one another. We need to teach our children. I'm not sure, Mindy, if I remember your question, but.

[00:38:50] Well, well, you, you mentioned teaching. And in your world as an educator, you work with a lot of students. What are you hearing from your students? What are they thinking? What, what are they worried about, maybe?

[00:39:01] Well, I've taught all level of kids and students from little ones. I was a K-12 teacher for 20 years, and then I taught at Wazzu. And now I'm working with early learning, and it's really exciting. I always did a lot of environmental education with students. In fact, I taught at a public school that sits within the Skokomish Reservation, and on the edge there, there's a beautiful elderberry bush. It just so happens those elderberries come right, right when school starts. So, I take the kids out there, and they pick the berries. And so, you need to take off all those little stems. So they'd sit there and do that and, I'd teach them, and tell them stories about the berry, and we would, we would use them. So they know that there's, you know, there's an abundance of food or people always have an abundance. And today, I'm working with these little tiny kids, three-to-five-years old and down at Squaxin, we were the first licensed child care center. I guess they call it child care for those littlest ones. We have an outdoor program. We started last year, and they come, they suit up, doesn't matter what the weather is, and they're outside for four hours.

[00:40:22] And so, they're doing things like, last year, we have a creek that goes right down by our child development center. And we have, it's a nice forested area. And our biologists from the tribe, they tend to that creek and watch the salmon runs and everything. So last year, these little kids are out there, three-to-five-year olds in the rain suits, and biologists come by, and they actually helped biologists squeeze out and fertilize those eggs from the salmon and learn about the words. And, and they're watching the osprey that come down. There's one that especially comes down. They're able to, to see this. They were there playing outside, well not playing, they're working. And they really are at work. And they watch this osprey come right down and pick up a salmon out of the creek. Yeah, they are. Because when they're out there, there's some mole holes down there, and they're kicking around. And one little boy, they're shoveling. There's two little boys out there, and they're shoveling the dirt around those mole holes, and they're going, it's really hard over here. This earth is hard over here. And it's hard to shovel, and then the other one, they went over there, and they shoveled and they said, well, this one's easy, but as soon as I dig it up, it fills full of water.

[00:41:43] So, as little as they are, they're making all of these observations, and they're making the connections. I'm also on the board of Pacific Education Institute, and I'm on my local school board. And Squaxin has those first graders, every first grader in Shelton School District goes down. We have a place down Arcadia Point, and they go down there every year, and we have touch tanks, and we tell them about our culture, our stories. And it's right on the water. We have a wonderful biologist, Candace Penn, that works with them. And right now, we're developing a new field trip for third graders, and they'll come out to our museum, and we have an incubation thing to grow clams and study the clams. And so, those third graders will, will get to have that kind of an experience. So, although we can see so many changes and there's so much work that needs to be done, there's so much hope and excitement in those little kids' eyes, and they just light up when they get to be out in the elements with the earth and make a difference.

[00:43:04] What are you starting to see in public engagement in your role?

[00:43:08] So, people still want to have experiences, even though a lot of us are on our screens a lot, myself included. And, you know, seeing something on social media can help you learn. So, it's not that there's no value to that, but definitely parents and families are hearing about, perhaps, the risk of too much screen time. And so, I think we are really seeing people have that understanding of the benefits of nature, of getting out and getting your hands muddy and digging holes and seeing the difference between, you know, right near the creek or away from it. I remember doing that as a kid building these, like, mud puddle rivers and connecting them, and so I think that there is an understanding of the importance of touching and being in nature.

[00:43:54] Thank you, and just maybe as a 60-second lightning round wrap-up for everybody.

[00:44:00] Can you talk us a little bit about what, what gives you hope? Why are you hopeful? Why are you still at what you do? And let's start with Darcy.

[00:44:07] So, I look to the Elwha Dam removals and the resilience of salmon and other animals and nature to give me hope. I look to the kids as Sally was saying, the excitement and hope in their eyes and, really, kids of all ages. I think there is a renewed understanding. You know, I definitely grew up in a, as I said, very Western, white-centric culture. I am a white person and having gone through my own journey of understanding of the need to center communities of color, the Indigenous people of this region and throughout the world, and their wisdom and what they have to bring that has not been there. So, I am hopeful by the changes I'm seeing in our culture that will allow more voices to come and solve these very tricky problems.

[00:44:56] Ryan, how about you?

[00:44:58] I had a love of photography from an early age growing up in Pennsylvania, and I used to go to the state library in nearby Harrisburg, and I discovered books by the Sierra Club featuring the photography of Ansel Adams. And his life was a great inspiration to me.

[00:45:11] Not only that he was an incredible landscape photographer, but that, also, he was such a champion for the environment. It was the first time I realized that you, the power of photography to bring about environmental change, and it had a profound effect on my life and from that point forward, I decided to dedicate my career to the environment and to take pictures that show what an incredible place we inhabit.

[00:45:34] And so, the idea behind this book was part, you know, where's that book today? A book that could inspire young people, perhaps, to pursue their life in this area.

[00:45:43] And so, that was sort of the, the genesis of the idea sort of behind the book and going through, and, and connecting with Dave, these, these interviews with so many incredible people.

[00:45:53] I learned so much about the wonderful work that's being done every day here. It just inspired me. We hear a lot of bad news, as you say, Mindy, you read, you turn the newspaper on every day, and there's something bad you're reading about, and it's so easy to get discouraged about that. But hearing these stories and seeing the passion that people were bringing to Puget Sound was just uplifting for me. And so I, what brings me hope is people, and not just people, but the diversity, the cultural and social diversity of this region, which is one of the great strengths that we have.

[00:46:21] And I, I'm convinced that that is the key to the recovery of Puget Sound.

[00:46:25] Well, for my hopefulness, I thought of three examples from people we interviewed who shared their stories with us. And one of them is Ralph Monroe, and many of you've heard his name. And if you haven't, you'll want to read one of his stories in our book. But from a lifetime of volunteering in conservation efforts with thousands of school kids and scouts, Ralph is really impressed that kids have a conservation ethic that he thinks the elders could benefit from. And Ralph says, they're really showing us how we can take care of the planet. Then there's Norm Dicks, a former congressman, grew up on Puget Sound, Bremerton, lifelong salmon fisherman. He reminds us that we've done this before in Puget Sound country. We've saved a very polluted waterway. It's called Lake Washington. And when Norm was a kid, you couldn't go in Lake Washington. It had a nickname, Lake Stinko, because, yes, because of the pollution going into the water, the untreated sewage. So, in 1958, the voters here in our area voted for Metro, and they voted to tax themselves to create us a new system of collecting and treating waste and discharging it in a better condition. So, Norm's belief is we have the technical capacity right now to, to remove 90 percent of the toxics that are on our landscape, that get into the water, get into Puget Sound in rainwater. He says all we need is the will to do it.

[00:48:00] And then, lastly, Laura James, right here, a great diver, 5000 dives or more in Puget Sound, and she's a filmmaker. She's an undersea creator of visual imagery that will really educate us all. And she told a story that really got my attention. When they built the Olympic Sculpture Park several years ago, she recalls how when they tore the thousand feet of seawall out and created the more natural shoreline, immediately she began seeing the animals return- the plants, the kelp, the

eelgrass and the fish. And it even gets better than that. And when you read the book and read her story, you'll find out the rest of that story.

[00:48:45] There's a teaser.

[00:48:47] Sally? Well, I think the hope is always in our children, but they have to have the leaders, and it's only with the work of people in this room and others working together. And when I looked at the book, and I saw all the incredible people, and I'm going, "Oh, I didn't know that this one's doing that." And, I want to get to know all these other people that are in this book, you know, so it's really with all of us working together and understanding what a treasure that we have. And it's not a treasure that you hold up, but that you live with. And that really is a life force for all of us. And we need to make sure that it is for centuries to come.

[00:49:34] Thank you all very much for your passion and your perspectives. Let's give our panelists a round of applause.

[00:49:45] All right, so before we begin our Q & A, so hopefully you've got some questions primed for our panelists in a moment. Let's talk a little bit about what you can do for the recovery of Puget Sound.

[00:49:55] We mentioned at the outset this is a book launch, but also a launch of a campaign. And, in the book, I had the privilege to co-write the chapter on the future of the Salish Sea with Suquamish Tribe Chairman Leonard Forsman. And as we were developing our chapter, we shared our visions. What do we want our future to be? And we realized that we wanted the same thing. We wanted healthy and livable communities. We wanted vibrant salmon runs. We wanted thriving orcas, because those are what are so important to us today. And we want that for future generations as well. And we also realize that in the next few years, we're actually at a really interesting time in Puget Sound and Salish Sea recovery. There's all this groundswell of attention on what's happening with the orcas. And people are paying attention in numbers that I personally have not seen in 20 years. And it really is important for us to remember that as a society, we've got some big decisions to make over the next couple of years. So this is what gives me hope is all these people who are doing remarkable things in their community. And we talked about, well, how would we get to our vision of the future? And we realize that we can't do that work alone, which is where all of you come in. And so, we worked with 20 community leaders in our region to identify our 10 actions that you can take. And we realize that there's a lot of lists of actions out there. But what we were looking for were systemic changes. How are we really going to pivot at this point to a much improved future for, sorry, leaving a legacy for future generations? How are we going to do that? So these 10 actions will be rolled out on our website through 2020. Check them out at WeArePugetSound dot org. We're gonna take these one at a time. And the very first one we're gonna start with tonight is number one, which is to vote. Oh, for that, let me introduce my colleague. Kat Holmes is the field director for Washington Environmental Council.

[00:51:49] Thank you, Mindy, and thank you to all of our panelists for sharing your knowledge and stories of Puget Sound. And thanks to everybody in the audience for coming out tonight and for caring enough to attend. I know that I was very inspired by the stories and the pictures and everything that I've heard this evening. And that also gives me hope for the recovery of our beloved Salish Sea. But we can't just stop at kindling hope. As Mindy said, we really need to take action to recover these waters, lands in our communities. So, the first of our 10 calls to action is to vote. And voting and participating in our democratic process is one of the most profound ways that we can influence local, state and federal policies and decision makers. So, I'd love to hear by round of applause, is there anyone in the room that's eligible to vote for the first time on November 5th?

[00:52:49] I didn't, I didn't think so. It's okay. It's okay.

[00:52:53] Okay, again by round of applause, is there anyone in the room that voted in the August primary? Thank you very much. Now, if you are qualified to vote but not yet registered, I have good news for you. You can register to vote online tonight. Just go to the WeArePugetSound dot org website. Click the Take Action, and that's going to take you directly to the Secretary of State website, where you can register to vote online up until October 28th. Now, by show of hands, how many of you are registered and you received your ballot in the mail this week? Good, good. Okay, now keep your hand up if you've already voted.

[00:53:36] Okay, okay. That's good. That's good. Folks with hands up, you get a gold star. But if you haven't voted yet, no worries. I have not voted yet either. Okay. But I am going to. So if you're like me, and you haven't voted yet, I want you to pick a number between 0 and 10. Zero is you're not going to vote. Ten is you are definitely going to vote. So think of your number. Now, I'm going to have you turn to your neighbor and tell them your number and tell them why you picked that number instead of, like, a three.

[00:54:13] I mean it. Go ahead. [unintelligible] I always vote. I always vote. [unintelligible]

[00:54:20] And now, tell them when you're going to vote. Okay, for me, I haven't voted yet, but I'm definitely going to vote. I'm a 10.

[00:54:33] And the reason I picked ten instead of a three is that I know that there's so many issues that I care about that are impacted by local elections and elected officials that I want to make sure my voice is heard. And so, I'm going to vote this weekend at a ballot party that I'm organizing. We're going to get together. Friends are going to bring their ballots.

[00:54:52] Some people haven't. Sometimes people say voting is easy. Voting is kind of hard. There's a lot of things on there. You're like, I don't know what all of these words mean. So getting together with a friend and making it an event, that can be really fun. So, that's how I'm going to vote. Now, maybe you're too young to vote or not eligible to vote. Elections still have consequences for you, right? But I have good news for you. You can still participate in the democratic process. You can volunteer at a ballot party. You can volunteer on a campaign. You can do something as simple as

talking to your friends and family about issues that you care about. You can ask candidates where they stand on Puget Sound recovery, on orca and salmon recovery. Now, maybe you don't see yourself reflected in the system and in the process, and maybe you think your vote doesn't matter. Well, I have news for you as well. In local election years like this one, your vote actually has a huge impact, because there's fewer numbers of voters that are making these decisions.

[00:55:57] And some races will be won by as few as ten or twelve votes, maybe even fewer than that. So, I also want to point out that local elections often better reflect the diversity of our communities. So I'm challenging you, if you're feeling like, you know, my vote isn't going to make a difference. Go home, pull out your ballot and see if you can find an issue that really motivates you and inspires you. So, Election Day is less than two weeks away, and I really need your help. We need to get the word out on social media. And, I'm going to ask everyone to pull out their phones tonight, and we are going to take a selfie, so that we can put it on our new Instagram account @IAmPugetSound. Use a good hashtag. I didn't know any good hashtags, so I asked some young people, #voting2019, #WAvoter, or even #ElectionDayNovember5th. That's the one that I made up. Thank you, all. And remember, Election Day is November 5th. Please take action.

[00:57:08] We've got a couple of minutes for questions for panelists.

[00:57:11] And we'll run microphones around. The 800 million pound gorilla in the room right now is Cooke Aquaculture that's going to try to re-up all their pens with engineered triploid steelhead salmon and black cod, important commercial fishery to the whole West Coast. The SIPA comment period ends on October 30th. So, we got it, we got it home, delayed about a week. And I'm wondering, with all the threats that we have to Puget Sound, with the waste generated by the previous salmon farms, the escapes, the, the escapes that are definitely going to probably happen even with sterile triploid fish and all the other, the sea lice swarms, all the other threats from, from industrial aquaculture. If this campaign or WEC is going to take a position on restocking the farms. Also, Cooke made a deal with the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe. So that's their partners. They found a tribe to partner up on this whole venture. Most tribes are against it. But yeah, so that's my question. Where do you all stand? The aquarium, WEC, you know, all the other NGO's and orgs in the room. Sure like to feel, you know, hear what, what you guys feel.

[00:58:53] So, I don't know what the answer is to that. And, I think that is a really good point. For us, respecting tribal treaty rights is paramount, and in this particular case, you're right. Different tribes are in different sides of this. But they're one tribe on the other side of that, too. I don't know what the solution is, but I do think that this is a really good example of why the public needs to weigh in on, on topics where there are these public comment periods. I think we need to keep in mind all of the different impacts to Puget Sound, but certainly the Atlantic net pen failure and escape. That, that woke people up. A lot of people didn't even know that the, the pens were there in the sound. So, I think the more that we can get word out on things like that and just make sure that the public has voices in these types of questions, the better. And the State Environmental Policy Act, that was one of the fundamental statutes that WEC actually helped pass, back in the day.

[00:59:44] So, we believe strongly in public process for that purpose.

[00:59:48] Hi, perhaps, this is for Sally and, hopefully, Mindy will step in as well. But, you know, with the government, Governor Inslee has his Orca Task Force. But down at the south end of the sound, the Deschutes Estuary is trapped behind an artificial barrier. It's a, it's a reflecting pool for the capitol. Now, there's been a lot of work to open that up, to create an estuary. Some of the habitat that's been most destroyed and lost in Puget Sound. And how can we have hope that we're going to move forward on save, saving Puget Sound when we have had such a difficult time removing this artificial reflecting pool that we know is having negative impacts on the salmon, negative impacts on the orca and the whole sound?

[01:00:44] Well, I know that my tribal government has been in talks with Olympia for a long time about this issue. People go down there by the hundreds to walk around the lake, and it's gross. I mean it, it is. It's a, it's a contaminated cesspool. And it's, it's really, really sad. And there, there is such a natural, there could be such a natural beauty there. My father was born over in the Olympia area about 1926, I think. So, he always made sure we knew the history of that place, and it's through pressure, working with our people in Olympia, getting that activism going and, and through our processes, because it could. Look, look at what, look what we did with the Nisqually Delta when we allowed it to go back to how it's supposed to be. We could have that there as well. But, besides, you know, those other issues and being a reflective pool, there's, it's commerce. It plays a, a big role in all of our areas.

[01:02:13] I'm sorry, I don't remember your name, but from the aquarium, the biologist. I'm Darcie. Darcie. Yeah. Okay, nice to meet you. I'm really curious about what exercises that you're doing at the aquarium to teach empathy.

[01:02:28] I'm glad you asked. So, we have a document that we put together based on a, a literature search. There are other zoos and aquariums out there that are working on this, as well, including Woodland Park Zoo and Point Defiance, and identified six best practices. They include things like framing. So framing animals as unique individuals with personalities and a story that can be, for example, using a name for an animal. So, I think a good example of this is the Whale Museum has their orca adoption program many of you may be familiar with, that uses names like Tahlequah for, you know, Ruffles was J1. I remember him fondly, and, or J2. J1 was Granny, and maybe the other way around. So anyway, they have their J1 and, they have their L and alphanumeric, which was the way, as a scientist, we were sort of taught that you had to be very impersonal. Using a name is a way for people to see the animal as a unique individual. Imagination is another best practice. We have, you know, lots of opportunities for that with storytelling. Early childhood education is a perfect place for invoking imagination and having the kids actually take the form of a barnacle, for example, using their feet to, you know, kicking their feet in the air to filter out plankton like a barnacle. So yeah, we introduce these in our, many of our programs. On the beach, we try to use, especially, framings. So, we'll talk about a barnacle that doesn't have a face is an animal that may be a particular challenge to take the perspective of, but if we start talking about eating with their feet and their heads are glued to

the rock, we find there's kind of a barnacle epiphany. And all of a sudden, it goes from this weird lump on a rock to an animal. It's a living animal just like me.

[01:04:29] Hi, my question is, how do we, how do we engage and involve the enormous number of educated, probably fairly wealthy, techies and people who are coming to town? We're having a huge wave of people who have never lived here, obviously, and who probably have never tried to understand watersheds, particularly as one as complex as, as Puget Sound. I think there's a, we need to engage them, and we need to engage their corporate masters, as you will. And, that's a hard thing to do. And ideas?

[01:05:05] If anybody has ideas for how to do that, please talk to me afterwards. That is a perfect question. Great. So, we do need to talk with them. And actually, one idea is to try to get this book into their hands, so that they could also know this place and, and have that particular history. They were part of the audience when we talked about framing this book. Who would we want to talk to? And that's definitely that group. We know that there's some leanings there that we feel like if we can activate them, I think that that would be really powerful, both at the organizational level, but then also at the individual.

[01:05:39] I'm doing some outreach with Virtual Salish Sea, which is mentioned in the book. That's a virtual reality project. Sharing the underwater world of Puget Sound and the Salish Sea. And, I'm reaching out to the different tech companies for assistance with that. Like with Unity, I'll be there hopefully next month speaking to the whole Seattle office, if all goes well, about two to three hundred people. And, not just talking about the project, but why the project is so important. And I'm basically pitching it as an environmental story and an environmental pitch to garner some assistance from their developers, who, a lot of these large companies have after-hours programs where, you're encouraged, if you work there, to go do something after hours that it's a, it uses your talents and your skills for good. Basically, technology for good. A lot of what Microsoft does that as well. And so, I'm actively working, my boyfriend works in the tech sector. And so, I get him to make all the connections and hook me up. Get the, get the foot in the door, and then I go give these dog and pony shows to share environmental education with a very different group. Cause that's my target audience, the adults, because all they need is the information.

[01:06:59] People protect what they love. Right? But if they don't know it, how can they love it?

[01:07:05] Well said, and a good, good thought to end on. Thank you all very much. I wanted to wrap up with saying thank you to those Seattle Public Library for hosting our book launch event. Thank you to the funders who made this book possible and, also, thank you to the organizations who are tabling here tonight. Please take a couple of minutes to stop and, and chat with them. They're also making fundamental change in, in their communities.

[01:07:36] This podcast was presented by The Seattle Public Library and Foundation and made possible by your contributions to The Seattle Public Library Foundation. Thanks for listening.