

County: Clallam
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PROGRESS REPORT: []

FINAL REPORT [X]

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West Elwha Beach Stewardship

Introduction

Since 2015 Clallam MRC has been involved with maintaining the West Elwha Beach through removal of marine debris and sponsoring a Sanikan and a dog waste facility. The marine debris removal commenced in 2015 after the City of Port Angeles banned the Fourth of July fireworks in the city. Beach cleanups were conducted in 2016-18 but discontinued in 2019 as no firework debris was found in 2018.



In 2016-18 the Clallam MRC members selected the West Elwha Beach Stewardship as a project for the summer intern program and most of the survey work was carried out by the interns. In the spring of 2019 the Clallam MRC members decided not to include the stewardship as an intern project. The primary reason for this was that the members felt that enough information on beach usage had been collected by the previous interns and, if continued, the survey effort should be “taken to the next level” which would be beyond what could be expected on a “running start” or undergraduate college student.

Clallam MRC has continued to sponsor and maintain the Sanikan and dog waste facility through the 2018-19 grant period. The large sign that Clallam MRC installed in winter 2017 is still displayed at the entrance to the beach.

Figure 1. Informative sign at the entrance to the West Elwha Beach sponsored by Clallam MRC.

This report summarizes the stewardship efforts conducted by Clallam MRC at the West Elwha Beach from October 2018 through June 2019.

Sanikan, Dog Waste Bins and Bag Dispenser



The Clallam MRC decided in 2017 to sponsor a Sanikan, two dog waste disposal bins, and a dog waste bag dispenser to meet the demand on high volume days, and also to reduce the distance to waste facilities and thereby encourage the visitors to use the facilities instead of leave waste on the beach and in the bushes. The initial facility only included one dog waste bin (Figure 2), but after tracking the waste disposed in the spring of 2017 Clallam MRC decided to install a second bin.

Figure 2. Sanikan, dog bag dispenser and dog waste bins installed by Clallam MRC.

Dog Waste Surveys

Between January 2018 and 2019, in an attempt to document the amount of dog waste at the beach and the potential impact of installing dog waste bins bimonthly surveys were conducted on the dike access trail coinciding with adding bags to the dispenser. The survey distance was about 950 ft. and during the surveys the number of dog poops were counted and placed in a plastic bag. At the end of the survey the weight of the dog waste was weighed using a hand held scale. After collecting this data for one year it was decided to discontinue the effort under the assumption that enough data had been collected to show a trend and to provide a baseline for potential future dog waste surveys at the beach. Figure 2 summarizes the results of the 26 dog waste surveys. Both the number of poops and the total weight vary greatly, however a downward trend can be seen especially in the number of poops. In one year 382 poops were removed weighing about 42 lbs; the monthly average was 15 poops weighing about 1.7 lbs.

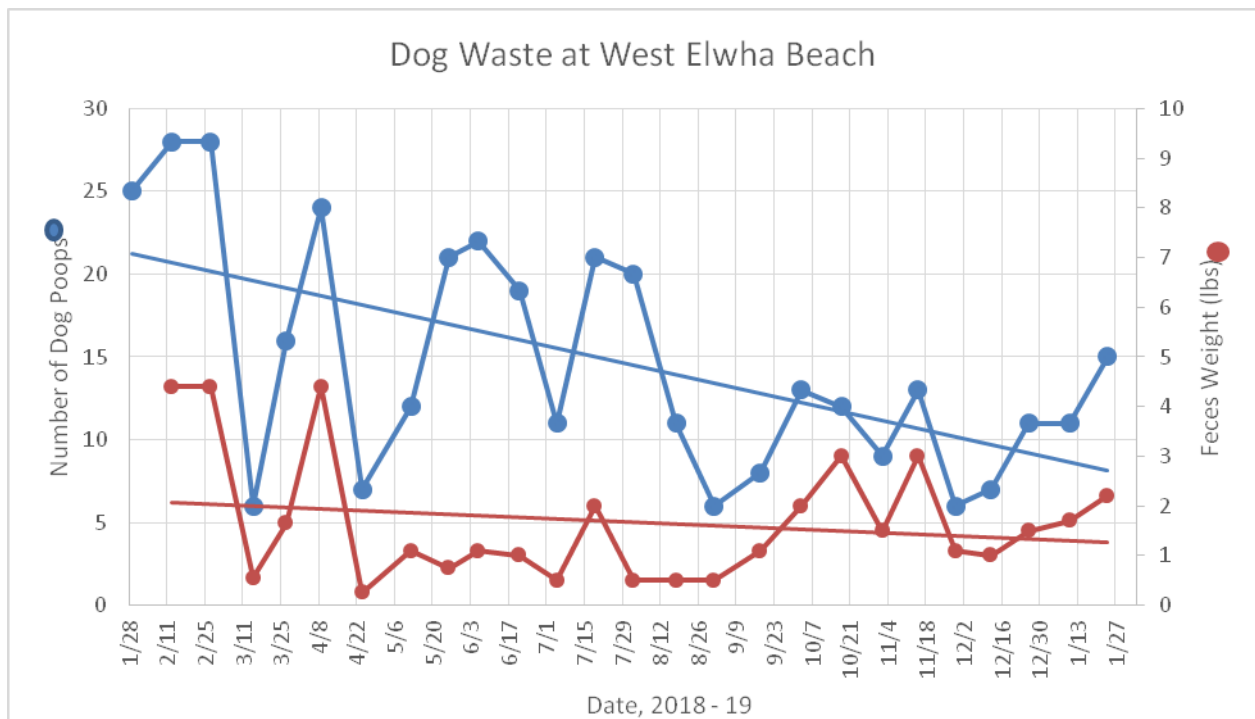


Figure 2. Results of dog waste surveys on the dike access trail (about 950 ft.) between January 2018 and 2019. Blue line is number of poops and red line is estimated weight of all waste collected during a given survey.

During the one year approximately 7,800 bags were distributed and assumed used by dog owners. The dog waste bins get emptied every 2 weeks. The employee of Bill's Plumbing, who has maintained the Sanikan and dog waste bins, has stated that "The Sanikan is well used, but not to the point of being unsanitary." Clallam MRC staff has received several positive comments when servicing the bag dispenser including "the beach looks much better now" and "thank you for maintaining the bag dispenser."