

The Rosario Story

Rosario Beach is a special place that has inspired generations of visitors and residents alike. The mystery and allure of the rocky Intertidal areas draws thousands of visitors every year. It is also a place that is particularly sensitive to human impacts.

One single event powerfully illustrated the need for coordinated stewardship efforts at Rosario Beach:

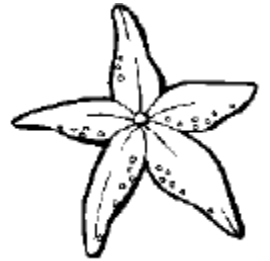


On May 16, 1995 during a -3.2 tide, 29 school buses, numerous vans and vehicles, carrying an estimated 1,200 people came to visit the Rosario Tide pools.

At the end of the day, the rocky tide pools looked like a barren moonscape due to the extensive trampling. Rangers and volunteers collected approximately 15 gallons of dead algae. They gathered approximately 20 gallons of dead invertebrates.

Populations of blue mussels, purple urchins, green urchins (many only babies the size of thumbnails), and red rock crabs were crushed to death under the wave of feet. Overturned rocks crushed and killed an unknown number of crabs, tube worms, and flat worms.

Students were seen throwing gumboot chitons off of the rocky cliffs, squeezing and burning sea cucumbers, and chasing oyster catchers off of their perches. Chopped up sea stars were found discarded on the upper beach. Sculpin, perch, and eel-like gunnels were pulled out of the water and left to suffocate and die on the rocks.



The effects of that trampling can still be seen at Rosario Beach today. Many species have not been seen in the area since 1995. Annual monitoring has guided our stewardship decisions including a new Intertidal trail through the tide pools.

Park staff and volunteers are committed to keeping this area open to human visitors by not repeating our negative impacts of the past and encouraging natural recovery of the area.

Please join us in this effort to preserve and protect a special place by:

- Before coming to Deception Pass; please read and sign the enclosed *Stewardship Agreement for Rosario Beach*.
- Review this information with students and have them sign a master agreement. (Have all students sign the back of 1 agreement to save paper).

We want to make this experience safe and enjoyable for everyone, especially the permanent residents of Rosario Beach.