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## TWO BEACH PROGRAMS OFFER FREE GUIDED FUN AND HANDS-ON EXPLORATION THIS SUMMER

Tiptoe through the Tidepools and Explore the Shore will provide hands-on learning about sea creatures; one will train participants how to be Citizen Scientists



Tacoma, Wash. – Ever wonder what it's like to run a finger over the back of a prickly pink sea star? Or hold the tiniest of ocean crabs in a hand? Or stroll along the beach at low tide, both learning about the animals there and helping catalog them for scientific research?

Tacoma Nature Center and Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium will show children, adults and families how to do all of those things this summer in two programs aimed at helping them learn more about Puget Sound's beaches and the creatures that live there.

The zoo's Explore the Shore programs are set for June 8, June 26, July 7, July 22 and Aug. 20 at Owen Beach in Point Defiance Park.

The Tacoma Nature Center will host the third of its 2013 Tiptoe through the Tidepools on June 22 and July 20 at Titlow Beach, 8425 Sixth Ave. in Tacoma.

All are timed to take best advantage of the low minus tides that reveal many of Puget Sound's most interesting shoreline creatures.

The events and programs are free and open to the public and reservations are not required. Bring sunscreen and wear shoes and clothing appropriate for walking on rough beach terrain.

Here's a rundown of upcoming programs:

**Explore the Shore** (for ages 5 and up): Zoo naturalists accompany participants on low tide beach walks, where kids and adults will learn to identify tide pool animals and record their presence and location for addition to the scientific Nature Mapping database (www. <a href="http://naturemappingfoundation.org">http://naturemappingfoundation.org</a>). Participants will learn about the biological diversity of local beaches and better understand how to protect them.

All programs have meet-up times so participants can get a brief introduction to the day before

the walk begins. They're designed to last about two hours, though people may want to explore the beach for a longer time.

- June 9, meet at 11:00 a.m.
- June 26, meet at 12:30 p.m.
- July 7, meet at 10 a.m.
- July 22, meet at 10 a.m.
- Aug. 20, meet at 9:30 a.m.

Explore the Shore takes place at Owen Beach in Point Defiance Park, 5400 N. Pearl St. Tacoma, WA

**Tiptoe through the Tidepools**: Family fun as Tacoma Nature Center naturalists help participants learn about life on the beach. There will be touch tanks and lots of opportunity to ponder the creatures that live on the shoreline.

- June 22, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.
- July 20, 9 a.m.-12 p.m.

Tiptoe Through the Tidepools takes place at the Titlow Park beach, located at 8425 6<sup>th</sup> Ave. Tacoma, WA

Both programs showcase the commitment of Metro Parks Tacoma to provide residents with

exercise, education and outdoor-based entertainment, said John Garner, the zoo's education curator.

"Explore the Shore gives people the opportunity to learn the art of citizen science, and they will go home with the skills needed to take a more active part in the protection of their local environment," Garner added.



The program also dovetails with the zoo's Wild Wonders Outdoor Theater live animal show, "Captain Adventure vs. Dr. Do-Nothing: The Quest to Get Outside?!" Garner said. "The show teaches the value of becoming a Citizen Scientist with simple activities like backyard bird counts, cataloguing beach creatures and participating in frog counts," he added.

For more information about Tiptoe Through the Tidepools call 591-6439 or go to <a href="https://www.TacomaNatureCenter.org">www.TacomaNatureCenter.org</a>.

For more information about Explore the Shore, go to www.PDZA.org or call 404-3665.