



partners in marine conservation

2015 Conference – Session Descriptions

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 6

Field Trip: Weaverling Spit Restoration

Hosted by the Skagit MRC, Todd Woodard

Weaverling Spit in Anacortes, Skagit County, is the site of a shoreline restoration project that replaced eroding shoreline with engineered soft shore protection and enhanced habitat to encourage forage fish spawning. The project goals also included restoring riparian vegetation, mitigating the impacts of climate change, and protecting a registered archeological site.

MRC Chairs and Vice Chairs

Al Bergstein, Jefferson MRC

MRC chairs and vice chairs are encouraged to attend this informal discussion session designed especially for them. You'll have a chance to compare notes on some of the challenges and joys of chairing MRCs. *(for chairs and vice chairs only please)*

Northwest Straits 101

Ginny Broadhurst, Northwest Straits Commission and Caroline Gibson, Northwest Straits Foundation

This interactive session will cover the essential information you should know as a member of the Northwest Straits Initiative, including historical background on why the Northwest Straits Initiative was created, the different roles of the Commission and the Foundation and a sampling of regional and local projects. New and veteran members are encouraged to attend and contribute to the discussion.

Puget Sound Shellfish Fisheries: Managing and Policing Harvest Grounds and Markets

Moderator: Caroline Gibson, Northwest Straits Foundation

Rich Childers and Mike Cenci, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Where do all the geoduck go?! Rich Childers and Mike Cenci are guaranteed to thrill with tales of the skyrocketing demand for shellfish in international markets, and resultant increase in poaching of Dungeness crab, geoduck and other species. Don't miss hearing about the amazing regional and global export of seafood from Puget Sound, and the daily challenges facing Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife enforcement.

Climate Change Adaptation in Puget Sound

Moderator: Ginny Broadhurst, Northwest Straits Commission

Presenters: Lara Whitely Binder, UW Climate Impacts Group; Kate Dean, North Olympic Development Council; Dr. Jamie Donatuto, Swinomish Indian Tribal Community

Straight out of the Northwest Climate Conference in Coeur D'Alene, Lara Whitely Binder will update us on what's happening at Washington state and national levels. We'll learn about a groundbreaking and multi-stakeholder effort to build climate change resilience on the Olympic Peninsula from Kate Dean, and Dr. Jamie Donatuto will share information on the impacts of climate change on cultural food systems, and where along the coast may be most vulnerable.

Communicating Science in the Legislature and Beyond

Senator Kevin Ranker, Washington State Senate and Ashley Ahearn, Environmental Reporter at KUOW

Senator Ranker and reporter Ashley Ahearn will share knowledge and have some fun talking about the state legislature, climate issues and strategies for effective communication.

Using Cinematography to Encourage Conservation

Dr. Florian Graner, Sealife Productions

Introduction from Scott McCreery, BP

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7

MRC Project Highlights

Introductions: Lucas Hart, Northwest Straits Commission

Jeff Ward, Clallam MRC; Sasha Horst, Northwest Straits Commission; Kathleen Herrmann, Snohomish MRC

Clallam MRC Internship Program: Jeff Ward from Clallam MRC will share information on their summer internship program. This program has successfully engaged a new audience in the work of the MRC, while providing great results that contribute to the MRC's goals. Learn how they structured the program, what their accomplishments were, and the value of this opportunity to them and the community.

Social media and You: Social media is a tool that can be used effectively to share information about your work. This session will highlight what you're already doing that can be easily transformed to engage important audiences – even if you don't know a hashtag from a twitter handle.

#CatchMoreCrabSnoco: Learn how Snohomish County MRC used social media as a tool in their social marketing campaign to encourage recreational crabbers to employ best practices and reduce the number of recreational crab pots lost in local marine waters.

All hands on deck: cooperative research to recover Puget Sound's rockfish

Kelly Andrews, NOAA Northwest Fisheries Science Center

Introduction from Dr. Ron Thom

Yelloweye and canary rockfish populations in Puget Sound were listed as "threatened" under the Endangered Species Act in 2010. Much of the evidence for delineating these populations was based on genetic evidence from other species, their general life history characteristics, and the geographic isolation of Puget Sound. Kelly will present preliminary results from a recent project in cooperation with recreational fishermen which could hold important implications for rockfish recovery planning now underway by NOAA and WDFW.

Illuminating Data Needs in Puget Sound Nearshore

Dr. John Vavrinec, Pacific Northwest National Laboratory

Introduction from Dr. Tessa Francis

Learn about a developing Sound-wide system of sensors to track changing conditions in eelgrass and kelp beds, and potential opportunity for MRCs to participate in this project.

The Nearshore: Why We Care About It

Moderator: Ian Jefferds, Northwest Straits Foundation

Paul Schlenger, Confluence and Snohomish MRC; Jamey Selleck, Natural Resources Consultants and Skagit MRC; Dr. Megan Dethier, UW Friday Harbor Labs and San Juan MRC; Dr. Tom Good, NOAA NFSC

What do we mean when we say Nearshore and why do we care so much about it? Come to this session to be reminded about the many facets of nearshore ecology and its important role as nexus between the marine and terrestrial ecosystems. You will get up-to-the-minute in-depth insights from working scientists into the importance of the nearshore to forage fish, salmon, birds, and intertidal critters. And you will hear the latest results of investigations into the effects of hard armoring on the nearshore. This session will prepare you for the subsequent session Nearshore Restoration Priorities and Funding.

Kelp Mapping and Monitoring: MRC Progress to Date

Moderator: Dr. Tom Mumford

Alan Clark, Clallam MRC; Marta Branch, San Juan MRC; Elinor Hines, Whatcom MRC; Dr. Lucas Hart, for Jefferson MRC; Dr. Linda Rhodes, Island MRC; Traci Sanderson, Snohomish MRC

This session features kayakers and project leads from six MRCs who engaged in 2015 pilot surveys, documenting the distribution and density of local bull kelp beds. Renowned kelp expert Tom Mumford will guide discussion around improving data collection, safety concerns and training sought by MRC volunteers, and the potential integration of this new regional project with pending rockfish and other monitoring efforts by NOAA and state agencies. Help us prepare for the 2016 field season!

Nearshore Restoration Priorities and Funding

Moderator: Shannon Davis, Northwest Straits Foundation and Jefferson MRC

Jay Krienitz, WA Dept of Fish & Wildlife; Rich Carlson, US Fish & Wildlife Service; Mike Ramsey, Recreation and Conservation Office

We know why the nearshore is important to the health of our marine ecosystem. This session will feature discussions of how federal and state agencies and programs are translating that understanding into restoration program priorities and project funding opportunities. Programs featured include the Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program, the US Fish and Wildlife Service Puget Sound Coastal Program (and more), and several programs of the Washington Recreation and Conservation Office.

Posters and Interactive Displays

The lunchtime session on Saturday will feature interactive exhibits, posters and displays from the seven MRCs, the Northwest Straits Commission and the Northwest Straits Foundation, as well as conference sponsors.

Vessel Traffic in the Salish Sea

Moderator: Jeff Ward, Clallam MRC and Northwest Straits Foundation

Captain Joe Raymond, US Coast Guard; Stephanie Buffum, FRIENDS of the San Juans; Sara Thompson, WA Department of Ecology

Presenters Captain Joe Raymond, Stephanie Buffum and Sara Thompson will provide information on current and expected marine vessel traffic in the Salish Sea. Traffic safety, risk of spills, impacts to marine life and local economies are some of the issues that will be discussed as well as the emergence of new proposals for Liquid Natural Gas, coal terminals and pipelines which create the need for more vessels.

MRC Awards

Presenters: Ginny Broadhurst and Jerry Masters

As a closing to our annual conference, we will celebrate the work carried out during the past year from each MRC. A variety of environmental stewardship projects and the associated outreach will be featured.

In addition to the MRCs, we'll thank Dr. Terrie Klinger for her service on the Northwest Straits Commission, as she finishes her term as a Commissioner.