



## minutes

**June 29, 2018 • 9:00am-3:00pm**  
**Pacific Rim Institute**  
**Northwest Straits Commission meeting**

### **Attendees:**

**Commission Members:** Paul Clampitt (Snohomish-Chair), Alan Clark (Clallam - Vice Chair), Elsa Schwartz (Island), Jeff Taylor (Jefferson), Ron Thom, Tom Cowan, Barbara Bennett (Island-alternate), Christina Koons (San Juan), Karin Berkholtz (Puget Sound Partnership alternate - phone)

**Commission Staff:** Nicole Jordan, Sasha Horst, Lucas Hart, Dan van Hees

**Others in Attendance:** Caroline Gibson (Northwest Straits Foundation), Tarrell Kullaway (Northwest Straits Foundation), Kathleen Pozarycki (Snohomish MRC staff), Tracy Alker (Skagit MRC staff), Cheryl Lowe (Jefferson MRC staff), Sarah Brown (Snohomish MRC member), Austin Rose (Whatcom MRC staff), Phyllis Bravinder (Skagit MRC member), Pete Haase (Skagit MRC member), Sarah Fisker (Jefferson-alternate), Doug Stark (Whatcom MRC member), Dan McCarty (Natural Resources Division Manager at Skagit County Public Works).

**Absent:** Sheida Sahandy, Cecilia Gobin, Jerry Masters, Nan McKay, Bob Cecile, Nate Biletnikoff

### **Welcome and Introductions**

Paul opened the meeting and facilitated introductions.

The minutes from the May Northwest Straits Commission meeting were approved as written.

### **MRC Presentations**

Each MRC presented a proposed project for the upcoming year. The Commission and other attendees provided feedback during a question and answer period following each presentation.

1. **Skagit MRC, Pete Haase – Kids on the Beach**
  - a. Pete presented on the Kids on the Beach program which the Skagit MRC piloted this year. The MRC worked with Conway Middle School to coordinate an educational program for 50 eighth grade students. The students learned how to write research proposals, conduct field research and perform statistical analysis, and then present their research findings at a Science Symposium on May 11 at Fidalgo Bay Resort.
  - b. The Commission discussed the value of collaborating with local schools on MRC projects and the importance of choosing age ranges which complement the project. The audience also expressed interest in updates in how the project progresses in future years.
2. **Snohomish MRC, Sarah Brown – MyCoast**



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- a. Sarah presented on the 2019 goals for the [MyCoast](#) smartphone app, which included: developing a marketing campaign, creating materials to be shared among all the MRCs and beyond, and placing advertising in various local and regional media outlets. Washington Department of Natural Resources is funding the license that will make the app available statewide. The app will be available to use in other counties starting in September.
  - b. The audience discussed different purposes for the app. Several MRCs are interested in using the app to help engage the public in their work. There was concern about the limited overall engagement for the grant dollars spent, and questions about whether the data is eventually used.
3. **Clallam MRC, Alan Clark – Elwha Beach Stewardship**
  - a. Alan presented on the MRCs efforts to steward the newly-formed Elwha Beach resulting from the removal of dams on the Elwha River, with a focus on reducing pet waste. The MRCs goals are to: continue supporting an intern focused on Elwha Beach stewardship; continue dog waste surveys year round; conduct educational outreach about the impacts of free-running dogs and dog waste, and; continue funding the portable toilet, dog waste bag dispenser and dog waste bins.
  - b. The Commission discussed the challenge of securing a long-term solution for stewardship of the area. Suggestions for outreach at the beach included demonstrating the scale of the pet waste problem by flagging spots where pet waste has been picked up and having volunteers on site during times of high usage. The MRC was encouraged to engage regional stakeholders.
4. **Jefferson MRC, Cheryl Lowe and Sarah Fisker – Public Forum on Shellfish Aquaculture**
  - a. Cheryl and Sarah asked the audience to act as a focus group to help decide on key topic areas for a proposed Shellfish Aquaculture Forum. The forum's goal is to increase public understanding of shellfish aquaculture issues, methods and impacts, emphasizing fact-based, science-based information.
  - b. Commission and audience members discussed each potential topic, provided suggestions, and voted by a show of hands on which topics they thought were important to include in a forum. Input included creating topic stations which people can circulate through, choosing a few key topics to focus on and/or combining topic ideas.
5. **San Juan MRC, Christina Koons – San Juan MRC's Southern Resident Killer Whale Recovery Efforts**
  - a. Christina presented on the San Juan MRC's project to educate boaters on whale conscious boating habits. The project consists of two components: outreach and education addressing boater behavior around Southern Resident Killer Whales and habitat restoration and monitoring to evaluate the effectiveness of increasing compliance.
  - b. Commissioners praised the MRC for working on the transboundary issue and utilizing messaging from Canadian efforts for consistency.
6. **Island MRC, Barbara Bennett–Community forum outreach**



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- a. Barbara presented on the MRCs community forums, which focus on building relationships and educating citizens on marine-related issues. Forums are structured with time for a guest speaker, educational presentation, and discussion.
  - b. The audience discussed the minimal costs of hosting the forums and the benefit of having an evaluation at the end of forums and other outreach events. MRCs were interested in how other MRCs coordinate and organize forums.
7. **Whatcom MRC, Doug Stark–North Sound Stewards**
- a. Doug presented on Whatcom MRC’s new volunteer training program, North Sound Stewards. The program was set up to train volunteers specifically in support of MRC and other citizen science projects. The MRC looked at similar programs, such as Skagit MRC’s Salish Sea Stewards volunteer training program.
  - b. The audience discussed the benefit of the exit survey, which evaluates volunteer knowledge and attitude changes. They also discussed the various methods of administering volunteer training programs by MRCs.

### **MRC 2018-2019 Grant Proposals**

The Commissioners reviewed and approved the MRC project list by consensus.

### **Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

### **Business Items**

June 30 marks the end of the state fiscal year. Travel reimbursement requests should be submitted as soon as possible to MRC or Commission staff.

The 2018 MRC Conference will be held November 16-17 at the Fort Worden State Park and Conference Center in Port Townsend, Washington. Nicole handed out “save the date” cards for MRCs to hand out at their next MRC meeting.

- Action: Ideas for conference topics or presenters can be forwarded to Sasha Horst at [horst@nwstraits.org](mailto:horst@nwstraits.org).
- Action: Questions on lodging, registration and logistics can be forwarded to Nicole at [jordan@nwstraits.org](mailto:jordan@nwstraits.org).

\*The next Commission meeting will be on July 27, 2018 from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM by WebEx Conference Call\*