



Session Descriptions

Friday, November 16

Short and Sweet Success Stories: MRC Ignite

Ignite is a fast-paced style of presentation where speakers have five minutes to share a concept, accompanied by 20 slides that auto-advance after 15 seconds. MRC representatives will kick off the conference by “igniting” the audience with compelling stories from throughout the region. These short and sweet success stories will showcase stimulating ideas to spark further conversation and action throughout the day and beyond.

Understanding Tribal Treaty Rights in Western Washington

Indian tribes have always inhabited the watersheds of western Washington, their cultures based on harvesting fish, wildlife, and other natural resources in the region. Through a series of treaties negotiated with tribes in the mid-1850s, the tribes ceded most of their land, but also reserved certain rights to protect their way of life. Including the right to continue to take fish, hunt, and gather. Understanding these tribal treaty rights is critical for the work we all do in and around Puget Sound. This session will help improve our collective understanding of those rights, and will include some time for questions and answers.

Southern Resident Orca Recovery

Impassioned efforts to protect the region’s remaining 74 Southern Resident orca whales are making local and national headlines on a regular basis. In March 2018, Governor Inslee signed Executive Order 18-02, designating Washington state agencies to take immediate actions to benefit the Southern Residents, and establishing a Task Force to aid in their recovery. In this session, we’ll hear directly from Task Force members about the recommendations to, and response by the Governor; the biggest threats to Southern Resident orcas, and what’s being done locally by San Juan MRC to reduce the impacts of vessel traffic on these amazing animals.

Looking Forward: the Next Twenty Years

As the Northwest Straits Initiative hits our 20th anniversary milestone, we’ll take a few moments to think about our hopes and dreams for the future, write them down, and collect them in a basket woven by a celebrated weaver from Tulalip Tribes. Those messages will be carried forward to members of Congress, including Senator Patty Murray. You’ll have an opportunity to share your thoughts during this session and/or in writing at the evening reception where the baskets will be displayed.



20th Anniversary Reception

Mystery solved: want to know why you were handed cash when you registered? Excited to learn what your fellow MRC members are up to? Join the Northwest Straits Foundation for a pre-dinner reception where all your questions will be answered!

Saturday, November 17

Indicators of ecosystem health: Actions to Impacts

Actions to Impacts is aimed at assessing the impact of Marine Resources Committee activities on Puget Sound recovery and protection. Where can we start? With program and project design. In this session, we'll hear from a panel of people with diverse expertise in Puget Sound who will share their thoughts on their own fields, and provide advice and tools to the MRCs for impact assessment.

MRC Story-Crafting: building and sharing our personal MRC stories

In this interactive session, you'll design and practice talking points about why you are involved in your MRC and the greater impact the Initiative has on our Salish Sea. We will share examples of stories that inspire public, private, and community investment/engagement in our work, and you'll have an opportunity to collaborate with other MRC members to begin crafting your own story. Whether you are talking to your county elected officials, your local newspaper reporter, or your neighbor, you'll leave the session feeling prepared and confident to engage more people in the Northwest Straits Initiative.

Marine Debris: Taking Action to Clean up the Salish Sea

From large scale derelict fishing gear to microplastics, marine debris takes many forms. This session will discuss research and action within the Salish Sea with a focus on how citizens can contribute to the understanding and prevention of this widespread problem.

A window into the future: Sea-Level Rise, Storms, Citizen Science and Visualization Tools

This session will describe three complementary efforts designed to help communities visualize, analyze and understand what sea-level rise, future storms, and other drivers of changing coastal hazards will mean in Puget Sound in the decades to come. First, the USGS Puget Sound Coastal Storm Modeling System, now being developed, will deliver detailed coastal flooding simulations under sea-level rise and storm scenarios. Second, the now-statewide MyCoast app has reporting tools to document and visualize impacts from storm surge, tides, and waves, providing essential information for understanding and modeling changing coastal hazards. Third, newly-released



relative sea-level rise projections from the Washington Coastal Resilience Project. Collectively, these efforts will provide important new tools for visualizing and estimating changing coastal flooding hazards and the anticipated impacts for communities and infrastructure, coastal habitats, and coastal restoration projects.

Senator Patty Murry: video address

Senator Patty Murray, along with Congressman Jack Metcalf, were instrumental in establishing the Northwest Straits Initiative back in 1998. We'll have a brief message directly from Senator Murray to share her thoughts on the Initiative's accomplishments.

No bull! The devastating consequences of losing Nereocystis (bull kelp) ecosystems

This dynamic presentation will describe the fascinating biology and ecology of the bull kelp, the ecosystems it creates along the West Coast, and the services (e.g., fisheries, cultural significance) these ecosystems provide for us. The importance of bull kelp will be illustrated by the confluence of factors that resulted in its dramatic recent and continued decline along the northern coast of California. Dr. Carr will describe ongoing efforts to better understand and guide the recovery of bull kelp forests. MRC members are guaranteed new information and ideas toward kelp surveying and recovery in the Salish Sea.

Closing Remarks: Buck Meloy

A prolific writer and storyteller, as well as an original member of the Whatcom MRC and the Northwest Straits Commission, Buck Meloy has a unique perspective on the Initiative and a well-honed ability to tell a great tale. At our closing session he'll share a story of the Initiative's history to remind us all how far we've come in this first twenty years, and how much our history shapes our culture as an organization. He'll also help with a drawing for a grand prize for the event finale!