

**Marine Resources Committee Awards
2019 Conference – Everett, WA**



Clallam: Olympia oyster restoration

Clallam MRC shares some common projects with other MRCs, such as kelp and forage fish monitoring, as well as some projects unique to them like their summer internship program and training volunteer oil spill responders. They are active with community outreach, they monitor pigeon guillemot populations, and they sample remote beaches for biotoxins to allow for recreational shellfish harvest to remain open for a longer season.

This year, we would like to recognize the MRC for their Olympia oyster restoration project. The MRC began this work back in 2012, but 2019 was an exceptionally busy year for this collaborative partnership with the Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe.

Their original restoration site on Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe tidelands has grown to cover 1.5 acres since the MRC began this project. Olympia oysters are surviving, growing, reproducing and expanding their population area well beyond the bounds of the restoration site.



partners in marine conservation

The MRC also established a second restoration site in Sequim Bay, where they spread 100 bags of seed and 850 bags of shell in the last year.

Volunteers, tribal staff and the MRC's summer intern conducted population surveys at both sites, and two new test plots were assessed. The MRC has learned a lot through investigating new sites, even when they aren't found to be suitable restoration sites.

A feature article about the project ran in the Northwest Treaty Tribes magazine and the Peninsula Daily News.

Thank you Clallam MRC, for helping to bring back this important native oyster!



Jefferson: Community participation and public outreach

Jefferson MRC continued some of their signature projects this year, such as their voluntary no anchor zones to protect eelgrass and shellfish beds, Olympia oyster restoration, and installation of two new rain gardens. The MRC is also part of the regional kelp and forage fish monitoring programs.

This year, we'd like to recognize the MRC for their successful community participation and public outreach.

In the past year, Jefferson MRC hosted 13 outreach programs and activities covering a broad range of topics; presented at a variety of venues; and reached local audiences through magazines, blogs, movie theatre ads and newsletters.

They hosted their popular Digging for Dinner events for recreational shellfish harvest, held three Crabbing 101 workshops, and this year developed and launched a new event



partners in marine conservation

called 'Searching for Seaweed' to teach people about edible delicacies we find on the beach and highlight marine habitats and ecological connections

Jefferson MRC participated in the annual Port Townsend Wooden Boat Festival, where fourteen MRC volunteers staffed a popular booth with a focus on water and boating topics.

The MRC dedicated a significant amount of time to plan and host a community shellfish aquaculture education forum, tackling an important topic and gaining valuable insights on planning future events.

Thank you Jefferson MRC, for all you do to reach out to your community!



Snohomish: Derelict vessel removal

Like many other counties, Snohomish volunteers are part of the regional kelp and forage fish monitoring programs. They carry out recreational crabber outreach and host several mussel watch water quality monitoring sites. The MRC spearheaded use of the MyCoast app and this year launched a marketing campaign around it. They're also focused on big nearshore restoration projects like the one at Howarth Park where the field trip was held yesterday, and the upcoming restoration at Meadowdale Beach Park.

In addition to all of that and much more, today we'd like to recognize them for their outstanding leadership on derelict vessel removal in Snohomish County.

Removing derelict vessels helps improve water quality by removing toxics, and also improves habitat by removing physical barriers. **7** derelict boats were removed in 2018-2019 as part of this effort, and more than **16 tons** of marine debris removed.



partners in marine conservation

A state program allows the county to recover much of the removal costs, but without the leadership of the MRC to initiate and move the project forward, this work would not have been accomplished. This is the first time that the county operated as the local, authorized entity to remove these boats, and it was a clear success.

Snohomish MRC is our host county this year, so we'd like to acknowledge them and thank them for being part of planning the event.

Cheers to the Snohomish MRC for your continued success!



Island: Community education

Island MRC tackles a wide variety of projects, with a substantial set of monitoring programs including bull kelp, eelgrass, and forage fish. They work in coordination with the NW Straits Foundation and other partners on shoreline restoration projects like Cornet Bay and Sunlight Shores.

Recently Island MRC has increased their focus on outreach and education efforts, so this year we'd like to recognize those accomplishments. They have had a busy year of workshops, presentations, displays, events and written publications – strategies identified in an outreach plan developed by the MRC.

The MRC used their film 'Discover our Island Shores' as a springboard for a variety of outreach, including two well-attended screenings at local libraries. The film was distributed to a dozen classrooms in four schools, along with an accompanying classroom activity.



partners in marine conservation

The MRC hosted an art contest for local elementary students, drawing 70 entries with a theme of “what positive impact will you make on the Salish Sea”. They shared the winning results through a display in the County Commissioners’ office.

The MRC hosted workshops on sea level rise in partnership with Sea Grant, partnered with the NWS Foundation to host workshops for shoreline property owners, worked with the Department of Natural Resources to host two creosote identification workshops, and conducted outreach to recreational crabbers.

The MRC shared displays at a variety of local events, including a marine food web display installed at the Coupeville Library, created a short film about the MRC’s role in protecting and preserving the marine resources, established a newsletter to share their work, and even hosted the Governor at a site visit in July.

Thank you and congratulations Island MRC for such a successful year!



Skagit: Youth engagement

Skagit has always been a boots-in-the-mud group, and they continue that through their Olympia oyster and pinto abalone restoration, kelp and forage fish monitoring, and successful Salish Sea Stewards program that generates a new cohort of trained volunteers every year.

This year, we'd like to acknowledge the achievements of the Skagit MRC in engaging youth. A critical part of ensuring our work continues is through bringing in the next generation, which Skagit MRC excels at.

Following a pilot year in 2018, Skagit MRC expanded their Kids on the Beach program in 2019, reaching more than 100 8th grade students this spring and getting them excited about science, research and the marine environment. They've already hit the beach again in the 2019-20 school year, and adapted the program for a one-day event with a 5th grade class.

The MRC hosted their 16th annual Fidalgo Bay Day this year, which the MRC designed as a family friendly event. Kids' activities are plentiful, with indoor and outdoor interactive



partners in marine conservation

displays, crafts and a beach seining demonstration that always draws a crowd. This year their volunteer team included members of Mount Vernon high school's key club, who donated their time to work with younger visitors.

Thank you Skagit MRC, for helping to encourage the future stewards of the Salish Sea!



San Juan: Southern Resident Killer Whale recovery

San Juan MRC has taken on some big projects in the last year. They've launched a campaign for a Plastic Free Salish Sea, aimed at eliminating single use plastics in San Juan County. They've picked up their Marine Stewardship Area Plan to prepare for an update and revision to include the most recent information and re-engage their partners. They've taken the time to introduce their community to the members of the MRC through a series of videos shared through their social media.

San Juan County is in the center of one of the most high-profile issues in Puget Sound, though, so this year's award for the MRC is for their work to conserve and protect the Southern Resident Killer Whales.

This is not a new issue for the MRC, but over the last year they hosted a second community workshop, were involved in supporting county interests at the Governor's Task Force on SRKW recovery, expanded their Whale Warning Flag project and invested



partners in marine conservation

in a substantial boater education campaign where they shared the Be Whale Wise messages at dockside talks, presentations and regional and community events.

They extended the voluntary no go zone on the west side of San Juan Island, an area that is historically sensitive foraging and resting areas for the Southern Residents.

We all know there is still a lot of work ahead to save this iconic species, but many thanks to the San Juan MRC for your leadership in that effort!



Whatcom: Marine debris cleanup

Whatcom MRC has a diverse set of projects underway. They are part of regional forage fish and kelp surveys, they are restoring Olympia oysters and improving water quality in North Chuckanut Bay, and their North Sound Stewards volunteer training program continues to grow.

This year in particular, though, we'd like to congratulate the MRC on their beach cleanups. Whatcom MRC has done these for many years, but 2019 was a banner year.

The MRC partnered with BP and other Cherry Point industries to conduct a community beach cleanup in the Cherry Point Aquatic Reserve. More than 100 people showed up, cleaning ten miles of shoreline in just 2 hours.

The MRC partnered with the Surfrider Foundation, Lummi Island Heritage Trust, the San Juan MRC, and Northwest Indian College to conduct a volunteer led remote beach cleanup on Sucia Island Marine State Park. 60 pounds of microtrash was cleaned off the walkable shoreline areas.



partners in marine conservation

The MRC was joined by DNR and Drayton Harbor community members to cleanup a large amount of debris that accumulated along the Drayton Harbor shoreline. They removed more than a ton of trash, including 41 tires and 2 railroad ties.

On Lummi Island, volunteers picked up 440 pounds of trash from 5 miles of remote shoreline, accessed by charter boat supported by the Northwest Straits Foundation.

All in all that is over 2,500 pounds of trash in all shapes and sizes from nearly 20 miles of shoreline!

Thank you Whatcom MRC, for making the Salish Sea so much cleaner this year!

Final Notes:

- In the past year, MRC members and other volunteers contributed more than 10,200 volunteer hours in support of MRC projects.
- In addition to volunteer support, counties and project partners contributed more than \$250,000 to the work of the MRCs in the last year.
- 2019 marked the 20th anniversary for six of the MRCs – congratulations on the milestone anniversary!
- Thank you again to all of the members of the MRCs, as well as your many project volunteers and partners.