



minutes

February 28, 2020 • 10:00 AM-12:00 PM
WebEx – Conference call
Northwest Straits Commission meeting

Attendees:

Commission Members: Alan Clark (Clallam-Chair), Elsa Schwartz (Island-Vice Chair), Pete Haase (Skagit), Jeff Taylor (Jefferson), Sarah Brown (Snohomish), Bob Cecile (Whatcom), Tom Cowan, Ron Thom, Chris Castner, Jennifer Grimm (Puget Sound Partnership - alternate), Sarah Fisken (Jefferson - alternate), Nan McKay, Christina Koons (San Juan)

Commission Staff: Lucas Hart, Katie Harris, Sasha Horst, Dana Oster

Others in Attendance: Caroline Gibson (Northwest Straits Foundation), Emily Grason (Washington Sea Grant)

Absent: Cecilia Gobin (Tribal), Laura Blackmore (Puget Sound Partnership)

Welcome and Introductions

Alan opened the meeting and facilitated introductions.

The minutes from the January Northwest Straits (NWS) Commission meeting were approved as written by consensus.

NWS Commission - committee reports

Executive Committee

The committee discussed partnership opportunities with NOAA and other updates on recent topics such as the retreat.

External Relations Committee

External Relations Committee gave an update on the [Derelict Vessel Bill](#), which is moving forward in the Washington State Senate, and a bill regarding bulkhead replacement with soft shore techniques (SB6147). Lucas and Chris Castner met with NOAA and discussed opportunities for coordination and collaboration. Lucas will be in Washington, DC for Puget Sound Day on the Hill on April 28-29.

- Action: Caroline and Lucas will share the report with the assessment regarding bulkhead permitting.
 - [Net Change in Permitted Shoreline Armor](#), WA Department of Fish and Wildlife, October 2019.

Science Advisory Committee

The committee will meet in person in Tacoma on March 23 to plan their activities for the coming year. There are numerous conferences that might be of interest or relate to the Northwest Straits Initiative:

- [Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference](#) in Vancouver, B.C. April 19-22.
- [Columbia River Estuary Conference](#) in Astoria, OR. April 28-30.



minutes

- [National Conference on Ecosystem Restoration](#) in Portland, OR, August 2-6.
- [National Coastal and Estuarine Summit](#), Providence, RI. October 4-8, 2020.

Ad hoc Communications Committee

The committee reported that the Request for Qualifications and Quotations for a communications audit and plan creation closes on March 4.

Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission (NWIFC)/Tribal update

There was no Tribal update at the meeting.

Business items

Retreat planning

The Northwest Straits Initiative Retreat will be on March 26-27 at Padilla Bay. Staff will distribute the full agenda by March 20 or March 23. Lucas sent questions to MRCs that will help guide a conversation about support needs, techniques for engaging volunteer leaders, and several other topics that relate to action items in the NWSC strategic plan. The deadline for responses is March 16. A few other agenda topics being considered by the planning committee include Northwest Straits Initiative role in climate change topics, innovative ideas on community engagement, and elected official engagement.

Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference sessions

Multiple MRCs will present their work or speak on panels during the conference. Northwest Straits Commission and Foundation will also present. The program with session abstracts is available online at <https://ssec.confex.com/ssec/2020/meetingapp.cgi>.

Ecosystem Coordinator hiring

NWS Commission staff are in the final stages of hiring for a temporary Ecosystem Project Coordinator position. That person is anticipated to begin in mid-March or early April. One of their tasks will be to coordinate the European Green Crab response in Drayton Harbor during Spring/Summer 2020.

Northwest Straits Initiative Conference: November 6-7

The Northwest Straits Initiative will hold our annual conference at Fort Worden on November 6-7, 2020. Please save the date!

Kelp Monitoring- Certification needs

NWS Commission staff are developing a more robust safety protocol for kelp monitoring work. Dana is working with Don and Caroline and others to find strategic partnerships for kayak trainings or certifications. If you have other ideas for ways Northwest Straits Initiative can provide trainings, or you know groups of people who have those certifications, reach out to Dana.

Kelp WebEx



minutes

The March 6 Kelp WebEx will focus on summarizing 2019 kelp data and MRCs reporting on their surveys. NWS Commission staff will also host an all-day workshop on May 6 to plan for the 2020 kelp survey season, discuss project goals, and hear updates from project partners. The Puget Sound Partnership's vital sign revision includes a proposed marine vegetation vital sign (that includes eelgrass and kelp) and the MRC data would contribute to the kelp canopy area indicator.

MRC Symposium

The Commission and Foundation will host an MRC Symposium at Padilla Bay on April 3. MRCs will have an opportunity to share projects they are working on and discuss how to strengthen or replicate projects with other MRCs.

Database development

Volunteer Richard Austin is continuing his work in developing the database. Richard has provided prototypes and staff provided feedback.

MRC contract amendments

The due date for MRC year two project proposals is April 10. Contact Sasha Horst for more information.

Northwest Straits (NWS) Foundation update

Caroline Gibson provided an update:

- The call for applications for the Opportunity Fund will be open soon. The application period will be open for 60 days. Contact Caroline Gibson for more information. This round of funding has \$20,000 total.
- Lisa Kaufman visited many MRCs and presented on the Shore Friendly Program.
- A new Director of Advancement is expected to start at the Foundation in March.
- Don Hunger is serving on the planning committee for the Northwest Straits Initiative Retreat.

Puget Sound Partnership (Partnership) update

Jennifer Grimm provided the following Partnership update:

- Puget Sound Day on the Hill is April 28-29 in Washington, DC.
- The EPA approved \$50,000 to Northwest Straits Commission via Puget Sound Partnership, which will support the Ecosystem Project Coordinator position's time coordinating the European Green Crab emergency response in Drayton Harbor during Spring/Summer 2020.

Green Crab Update

Emily Grason from Washington Sea Grant presented on their European Green Crab monitoring and management program. Acting early on Green Crab gives the best chance for efficient and effective management. Washington Sea Grant is working closely with various management agencies and is aiming to manage green crab while the population is still in "prevent and eradication" stages.



Puget Sound Partnership alternate for Laura Blackmore: Jennifer Grimm

The Commission moved and approved by consensus to appoint Jennifer Grimm as the alternate for Laura Blackmore of the Puget Sound Partnership.

MRC reports

Monthly reports for each MRC are available by visiting this link: <http://www.nwstraits.org/archive/>

Clallam

Alan said that City Councilmember Trisha Suggs is the new city representative on the MRC. There are still seats open on the MRC. Emily Grason from Washington Sea Grant presented on European green crab. The deadline for the spring internship program is March 9. The MRC will also have a video intern from Port Angeles High School, who will highlight the work of the MRC.

Island-

Elsa said that Hoypus Point and Possession Point restoration feasibility assessment is moving along. The MRC participated in the Great Northwest Glass Quest. Island MRC held a strategic planning retreat this month. Elsa urged other MRCs to take NWS Commission staff up on the offer to present the "Northwest Straits 101" presentation to their MRC.

Jefferson-

Jeff said that the MRC is adding a new index site for forage fish monitoring. Monica Montgomery is the new MRC lead staff member. WA Dept of Fish and Wildlife staff will train MRC members on new procedures with automated tools. The City of Port Townsend will update MRC on latest update on the sewer outflow project.

San Juan-

Christina said that the MRC is planning for the marine managers' workshop on March 10-11. There is one open position on the MRC. Karin presented at Sound Waters University regarding Plastic Free Salish Sea. The MRC gave away 60 whale warning flags at the Seattle Boat Show. Phil Green will serve as alternate to the Commission. The county has formed a subcommittee to explore alternative funding strategies for their county marine program. Christina sits on that committee.

Skagit

Pete said the MRC has given feedback to the retreat and symposium. The Salish Sea Stewards class begins March 10. Fidalgo Bay Day will be on August 29. The MRC will resume plant maintenance at Bowman Bay in the spring. The MRC is hosting a joint event at Bowman Bay as part of Skagit Water Week.

Snohomish

Sarah said the MRC has six new members, with a broad range of expertise. The MRC is identifying and prioritizing creosote pilings. The MRC co-hosted a starlight beach walk.



minutes

Whatcom

Bob said the MRC has new members. Lisa Kaufman came to the February meeting to talk about the Shore Friendly program. The MRC has been working with BP Cherry Point and Department of Natural Resources to put in more interpretive signs at Cherry Point Aquatic Reserve. MRC members attended a meeting led by Washington SeaGrant and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife to set up a management group to handle green crab in Drayton Harbor.

Round table

- Lucas mentioned that the Puget Sound Partnership is scoping several strategies for raising additional funds for Puget Sound recovery. This is part of their mobilizing funding campaign.

Public comment

There was no public comment.

- * The next regular Commission meeting will be on April 24 by WebEx. The Northwest Straits Initiative Retreat is on March 26-27 at Padilla Bay.*