



Meeting: Northwest Straits Commission
Location: WebEx Conference Call
Date: April 24, 2020
Time: 10:00 AM-12:00 PM

[To join the WebEx meeting, click here.](#) Enter your name and email address and click "Join."
For audio conference, dial: 1-415-655-0001 or 206-207-1700, access code: 803 875 100

10:00 – 10:05	Welcome and introductions Approval of March minutes	Alan Clark, Chair
10:05 – 10:20	Legislative update	Senator Lovelett
10:20 – 10:30	NWSC committee reports Executive Committee External Relations Committee Science Advisory Committee Ad hoc Communications Committee	
10:30 – 10:40	Items for Commission decision Chair and Vice Chair appointment Rules of Procedure	Nan McKay Lucas Hart
10:40 – 10:50	NWIFC/Tribal update	Cecilia Gobin
10:50 – 11:00	Business items Webinar retreat reminder (Lucas) Green crab in Drayton Harbor (Allie) Virtual MRC Symposium series (Dana) MRC project presentations to Commission/ WebEx May Commission meeting (Lucas) Operations plan update (Lucas)	Staff
11:00 – 11:10	NWS Foundation update	Don Hunger, NWS Foundation
11:10 – 11:20	Puget Sound Partnership update	Jennifer Grimm, Puget Sound Partnership



agenda

11:20 – 11:50	MRC reports	MRC Representatives
11:50 – 11:55	Round table	All
11:55 – 12:00	Public comment	All



March 27, 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), Bob Cecile (Whatcom), Tom Cowan, Ron Thom, Chris Castner, Jennifer Grimm (Puget Sound Partnership-alternate), Nan McKay, Christina Koons (San Juan), Tom Doerge (Snohomish-alternate)

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

Others in Attendance: Caroline Gibson (Northwest Straits Foundation). Sarah Fiskin (Jefferson - alternate)

Absent: Cecilia Gobin (Tribal)

Welcome and Introductions

Alan opened the meeting and facilitated introductions.

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

Director's Report

Commission operations in the face of COVID-19: COVID-19 is changing the way that the Northwest Straits Commission works, but the staff are busy as ever. Staff are adapting to new work from home policies, adapting to event cancelations and postponements, and examining virtual event options in order to reach our objectives.

Retreat Update: Lucas is working with Don Hunger from the NW Straits Foundation to plan a webinar around NWS Initiative operations plan updates, a topic originally planned for the retreat. Climate change is a second retreat topic staff are considering for a webinar.

Ecosystem Coordinator Hiring: Lucas extended an offer to Alexandra (Allie) Simpson, she will start on April 1. Allie's temporary position is anticipated to last through August 2021. Allie will be working on a variety of projects, including the Green Crab response in Drayton Harbor.

NWS Commission - committee reports

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee recommended Alan Clark be nominated as Commission Chair and Elsa Schwartz be nominated as Vice Chair. The Commission elections will be held at the April 24.

External Relations Committee



The External Relations Committee gave an update on work Chris Castner and Lucas are doing to explore collaborative opportunities with NOAA. WA Dept. of Ecology has a new Director and Deputy Director, and Lucas is setting up a meeting with them to introduce the Northwest Straits Initiative.

Science Advisory Committee

The Science Advisory Committee met via WebEx, instead of their previously planned in-person meeting. Dr. Kathleen Wolf, a social scientist at University of Washington, is a new committee member. She has expertise with the links between human well-being with environmental health. The committee focused on developing a path forward on the Actions to Impacts project. The committee is strategizing on steps to take by developing proof-of-concept examples using select MRC project examples.

Ad hoc Communications Committee

The Communications Committee reviewed proposals from firms who responded to the Request for Qualifications and Quotations for the communications audit and plan development project. Sasha is working on completing the process for contractor onboarding. Staff anticipates work will begin in May.

Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission (NWIFC)/Tribal update

No update.

Business items

MRC Grants: Sasha has been working with MRC staff to prepare Year 2 grant agreements. Proposals/Amendments are due April 10. MRCs need to spend Year 1 state funds by the end of June.

NWSI Conference: Commission and Foundation staff have changed the Conference date by one week, to November 13-14 and the location to the Northwest Maritime Center in Port Townsend, WA.

NWS Commission Meetings: Commission staff have switched the locations of May and August meetings. Pending the COVID-19 situation, the May Commission meeting will be in Snohomish County and the August meeting will be in San Juan. Exact location pending.

Northwest Straits (NWS) Foundation update

Caroline Gibson provided an update:

- The Foundation offices closed 2 weeks ago, all staff are working remotely. They also implemented a hiring freeze in light of the COVID-19 situation, and canceled all other public events until further notice.
- Foundation staff issued a call for applications for the Opportunity Fund at the beginning of March. The deadline is May 8. Interested MRCs should demonstrate the need for funding a project or activity that's ready to roll. Contact Caroline Gibson for questions related to the Opportunity Fund.



minutes

- The Foundation released the first episode of the [Salish SeaFresh](#) series, a video series bringing awareness to the connection between sustainable seafood and marine ecosystem health.
- Lisa is exploring options for web-based Shore Friendly workshops.
- Foundation staff are continuing to plan for Orca forums in Island, Whatcom, and Skagit counties. Contact Caroline with suggestions for speakers, content or venues. Caroline is planning these for June-July.

Puget Sound Partnership (Partnership) update

Jennifer Grimm provided the following Partnership update:

- The Partnership has postponed Puget Sound Day on the Hill. They will consider rescheduling the event.
- The Partnership has [finalized the sign-on letter to Congress](#) and are seeking signatures from leading organizations. To be included as an official signatory to the letter, please provide the requested information at [this link](#) by April 14, 2020.

Kelp Plan Update

Dana Oster from Northwest Straits Commission presented on the Puget Sound Kelp Conservation and Recovery Plan. NW Straits Commission will release the plan during the week of March 30, 2020.

The six strategic goals of the plan are:

- Understand and reduce kelp stressors;
- Improve understanding of the value of kelp to Puget Sound ecosystems and integrate into management;
- Describe kelp distribution and trends;
- Designate kelp protected areas;
- Restore kelp forests;
- Promote awareness, engagement, and action from user groups, Tribes, the public, and decision-makers.

Successes of the plan thus far:

- DNR has committed to leading a kelp research and monitoring forum and a policy and management forum for the next two years.
- In the Puget Sound Partnerships vital sign revision effort, MRC kelp surveys along with DNR and Samish Indian Nation kelp data are being proposed as a kelp canopy indicator to support a marine vegetation vital sign (depending on final vital sign count and approval from the Leadership Council).
- Fostered collaboration between agencies, organizations, and citizens that have a stake in kelp conservation and recovery.

Challenges moving forward:

- No funding for any agency to dedicate a staff member to coordinate implementation and to monitor progress of the plan.



- Maintain the momentum of the report and partners who have collaborated on it, and ensure implementation of the plan.

MRC reports

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

Clallam

Alan said that the MRC reviewed projects for their 2020-21 grant at their March meeting. Members of the MRC have interviewed candidates for their MRC intern programs. Members of the Climate Change subcommittee are reaching out to county commissioners to set up meetings, but that effort is on hold in the wake of COVID-19.

Island

Elsa said that Island County Commissioners have suspended all advisory committees under the Dept. of Natural Resources, which includes the MRC. All MRC activities, including April MRC meetings, have been suspended.

Jefferson

Jeff said that MRC activities have been curtailed significantly by COVID-19 but the MRC is still meeting via WebEx.

San Juan

Christina said the MRC is continuing Southern Resident Killer Whale outreach (including Be Whale Wise and Whale Tales curriculum). The MRC is considering how to modify outreach for this spring and summer. The MRC is developing a website for Plastic Free Salish Sea. The MRC hosted the Marine Managers' Workshop on March 10-11 at Friday Harbor Labs.

Skagit

Pete said the MRC hosted the first session of the Salish Sea Stewards before they had to cancel in-person meetings. The MRC is working to set up digital meetings so that the Salish Sea Stewards program can continue digitally.

Snohomish

Tom said the MRC has transitioned to remote meetings. Elisa Dawson has been hired for the full time position as lead MRC staff member. Snohomish County has not yet rehired the half time position that Elisa vacated. The MRC is continuing the pilings prioritization project.

Whatcom

Bob said students from Western Washington University presented at their March meeting on their analysis of MRC projects. Dr. Brooke Love leads the collaboration between the students and the MRC. The Climate Impact Committee will speak during the MRC's Speaker Series in April.



minutes

Round table

- Dana said that there is interest from the MRCs about revamping the Symposium in some way because MRCs want to hear about other projects. Dana will work on a solution to address the interest from the MRCs.
- Lucas gave thanks to the commission staff for excellent work under ever-changing conditions.

Public comment

There was no public comment.

* The next regular Commission meeting will be on April 24 by WebEx.*

**RULES OF PROCEDURE
FOR THE
NORTHWEST STRAITS COMMISSION**

REVISED October 8, 2018

Introduction

In 1998, in an effort to address the serious decline in marine resources in the Northwest Straits, Congress authorized The Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative (HR 3461) (the Initiative). This legislation created the Northwest Straits Commission (Commission), an umbrella organization encompassing a network of seven county-based Marine Resource Committees (MRCs). The Commission provides technical assistance, integrates scientific information, develops ecosystem-level coordination and guides funding for the MRCs. These Rules of Procedure (Rules) describe the structure of the Commission as well as the process and procedural rules which govern the Commission and its members.

1. Organizational Model

The Commission is a regional coordination and support body. Among its many goals are the following:

- to deliver technical assistance to MRCs;
- to fulfill all Commission responsibilities as described in the [Murray/Metcalf Report to the Convenors](#);
- to create a strong identity for the public and decision-makers that brands the Commission as a partner in Salish Sea recovery;
- to develop reasonable skill sets within the program; and
- to be cost effective.

To achieve these goals, the Commission will:

- employ a small administrative staff, supervised by a director (the Director) and augmented by additional program staff as needed;
- maintain shared offices/infrastructure at the Padilla Bay NERR;
- use Commission committees to streamline effectiveness;
- develop science, economic and outreach partners;
- establish an independent panel of science experts;

- coordinate with MRCs to develop and address regional education/outreach, funding, science, training and community relations;
- meet Commission benchmarks for performance, as prescribed by the Initiative and monitor MRC progress towards achieving Performance Benchmarks; and
- work in coordination with the Northwest Straits Foundation.

2. Membership

There are thirteen members of the Commission. Each of the seven MRCs shall have a representative on the Commission. Internal MRC rules govern the selection of their representative to the Commission and determine the duration of that representative's term. The Governor of the State of Washington is allotted five appointments, each on a four-year rotating term. One of those is required to represent the Puget Sound Partnership. The final seat is a tribal representative appointed by the Secretary of the Interior.

3. Alternates

The seven MRCs are encouraged to appoint alternate representatives to the Commission. The MRCs are further encouraged to send their appointed alternate to as many Commission meetings as possible, so that the Commission and the alternate will be familiar with each other in the event the regular member is unable to attend. When the regular appointee is absent, the alternate may fully participate in the Commission meetings including making decisions, whether by consensus or vote. Gubernatorial appointees may nominate an alternate, whose appointment will be subject to approval by the Commission. The Department of the Interior appointee may appoint an alternate.

4. Officers

A Chair and a Vice-Chair will be elected for a term of one year at the Commission's regular meeting in April, or at the next scheduled meeting of the Commission if no meeting is held that month.

5. Committee Structure

To streamline effectiveness the Commission uses a standing Executive committee.

The Executive Committee will be comprised of the Commission Chair, the Commission Vice-Chair, the chairs of any other committee, the Director and the Director of the Padilla Bay NERR (ex officio). The Executive Committee shall have no fewer than two MRC representatives. In the event that the Executive Committee has only one MRC representative, an at-large MRC representative will be appointed by the chair of the Commission.

Additional committees and/or ad hoc committees may be formed from time to time. The chairs of these committees must be a member or alternate of the Commission. Interested individuals may join these committees at the discretion of the committee chair.

6. Meetings

The Commission will meet monthly on the last Friday of the month or at such other time as is agreed upon by the Commission. The meeting venue will rotate around the region to facilitate participation by the MRCs and county commissioners/councils. Conference calls may take the place of in-person meetings as agreed upon by the Commission. The Chair may schedule special meetings.

The minutes of each meeting shall consist of decisions, future agenda items and documentation of the most important discussions. A draft of the previous month's minutes will be circulated to all Commission members for review prior to the meeting.

Guidelines for Northwest Straits Commission and Foundation overlap:

1. Hold joint meetings of the Commission and Foundation Executive Committees once or twice a year.
2. Encourage representation between members of the Commission and the Foundation Board where appropriate.
3. Ensure that the chair and vice chair of the Commission and president and vice president of the Foundation Board receive agendas and approved minutes for one another's meetings.

7. Open Public Meetings

All meetings of the Commission shall be open and public and all persons shall be permitted to attend. All actions shall be taken in open session. No action shall be taken in executive session. Executive sessions in which the general public is excluded may be convened for the following purposes:

- a) to review negotiations on the performance of public contracts when public knowledge regarding such consideration would cause a likelihood of increased costs;
- b) to receive and evaluate complaints or charges brought against a commissioner or employee;
- c) to evaluate the qualifications of an applicant for employment or to review the performance of an employee.
- d) To discuss with legal counsel representing the Commission litigation or potential litigation when public knowledge regarding the discussion is likely to result in an adverse legal or financial consequence to the Commission

Notice of any official Northwest Straits Commission meeting (in person, conference call or other means) should be made to the public as well as practical means to participate.

8. Quorum

A simple majority of the members of the Commission shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. The existence of a quorum is determined at the beginning of the meeting. In the event members leave during the meeting, the quorum requirement is still met.

9. Agenda

The Chair will approve the final draft agenda that will be sent to members at least three days before the meeting. The agenda shall always allot time for public comment. Requests for agenda time should be sent to the Commission office two weeks prior to a meeting.

10. Decision-Making Approach

The Commission shall use a “modified consensus” model for decision-making. All efforts will be made to reach consensus. Consensus means that all parties involved in decision-making share a sense that they have reached a common resolution. Consensus for the Commission will be seen as an agreement that all participants in the decision-making process are, at a minimum, “willing to live with” or “have no opposition” to the decision. If full consensus cannot be reached, a simple majority plus one may call for the issue to be put to a vote. A vote would then require a simple majority plus one to pass.

Voting by proxy is not allowed.

When making decisions, the Commission will determine consensus using the following approach:

1. A member of the Commission makes a motion to take action on an issue being considered by the Commission.
2. A Commission member seconds the motion.
3. Chair facilitates discussion.
4. Following discussion, the Chair asks “are there any objections to the motion? If not, we have consensus.”

11. Representing the Commission

The Chair and the Director are authorized to officially represent the Commission to others. Other Commissioners may officially represent the Commission only when specifically authorized by the Commission, the Chair or the Director.

12. Conflicts of Interest

12.1 Commission members who believe they may have a real or potential conflict of interest in regard to Commission business shall disclose the circumstances of the conflict to the Commission.

12.2 Commission members must comply with subsection 12.3 when the following circumstances apply or it is reasonably foreseeable that they will apply:

- a) the member is beneficially interested, directly or indirectly, in a contract, sale, lease, purchase, or grant that may be made by, through, or under the supervision of the Commission, in whole or in part; or
- b) the member accepts, directly or indirectly, any compensation, gratuity or reward from any other person beneficially interested in a contract, sale, lease, purchase, or grant that may be made by, through, or under the supervision of the Commission, in whole or in part; or
- c) the member either owns a beneficial interest in, or is an officer, agent, employee or member of, an entity that is engaged in a transaction involving the Commission.

12.3 If required by subsection 12.2 above, the member must:

- a) Recuse himself or herself from discussions by the Commission regarding the specific contract, sale, lease, purchase, grant or transaction; and
- b) Recuse himself or herself from any vote by the Commission on the specific contract, sale, lease, purchase, grant, or transaction; and
- c) Refrain from attempting to influence any other member or employee in any discussion or vote regarding the specific contract, sale, lease, purchase, grant or transaction.

12.4 The prohibitions contained in subsection 12.3 do not prohibit the member from using his or her general expertise to educate and provide general information on the subject area to other Commission members.

13. Adopting Policy

The Commission may, from time to time choose to adopt a new policy, endorse an initiative or comment on an issue of concern.

13.1 Requests for adopting a resolution/position statement must be in writing.

13.2 Requests for adopting a resolution/position statement must be sponsored by a Commissioner or a MRC.

13.3 Sponsored requests are referred to the Executive Committee for consideration. The Executive Committee may alter the language of the resolution/position statement. If approved by the Committee, the resolution/position statement is introduced to the full Commission at a regular meeting.

13.4 Immediately following introduction, the Commission will send a memorandum to the MRC chairs notifying them of the proposed resolution/position statement. During the two-month period following notification, the MRCs may choose to endorse, oppose or comment upon the proposed resolution/position statement.

13.5 Action by the Commission on the resolution/position statement may be considered at a regular meeting.

13.6 Sections 13.1 through 13.5 above may be waived in whole or in part by a consensus of the Commission.

14. Commenting on legislation (section approved by Commission September 2019)

The Commission may, from time to time choose to comment or provide testimony on proposed federal, state or local government legislation.

14.1 Requests for the Commission to comment on legislation should be in writing.

14.2 Requests are referred to the Executive Committee for consideration. The Executive Committee may recommend alterations to comment language and refer the original comment along with alterations to the Commission for approval.

14.3 If approved by the Commission by consensus, the comment or testimony will be provided to the appropriate legislative body or committee.

14.4 Where time does not allow for Commission consensus, the Executive Committee may waive 14.1-14.3 and provide comment if approved by committee consensus.



Commission staff highlights- [April 2020]

Kelp Conservation and Recovery Plan – The Plan is completed and awaiting final signatures for the vision statement before final release.

Staff update – Allie Simpson joined the Commission staff starting on April 1 as the Ecosystem Program Coordinator.

MRC grant update – Commission staff is meeting with each MRC staff to coordinate on any revisions to year one of the MRC grant and adding any year two projects. State funds that are part of the year one grant award expire on June 30 and staff is working with MRCs to ensure funds are expended. MRCs have completed the quarterly reporting and Commission staff is working with Ecology fiscal staff to process the payments to counties.

MRC Lead staff meeting – Commission staff hosted two WebEx meetings of MRC staff in lieu of a previously-scheduled in-person meeting. Topics covered included operations and projects during the stay home order, MRC project presentations, liability insurance coverage, among other topics.

MRC Virtual Symposium – The NWSC and NWSF launched the MRC Virtual Symposium web series to feature a different MRC each meeting. The series will be every other Thursday from 3:30 to 5:00 pm. To register for the events go to: <https://nwstraits.org/get-involved/events/>.

Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference – Commission staff participated in the virtual event April 21-22, including a presentation from Dana Oster on kelp.

Project database - Commission staff continued testing on the project database being developed by volunteer Richard Austin. The database will help us track projects carried out by MRCs and the Commission, including detailed information such as funding sources, timeframes, partners, and locations. Commission staff will be able to begin entering data into the database in the near future.

Retreat Webinar – Lucas continues to work with Hilary Wilkinson on organizing the NWS Initiative retreat webinar agenda, scheduled for April 30th 12:30 – 2:30 p.m.

Meeting attendance –

Lucas and Dana attended the virtual Skagit MRC meeting 4/9.

Lucas and Sasha attended the virtual Whatcom MRC meeting on 4/2.



Commission staff highlights- [April 2020]

Allie, Lucas, and Dana attended weekly Statewide European Green Crab meetings.

Dana attended the Forage Fish PSEMP meeting 4/10.

Sasha and Dana attended the Snohomish MRC meeting 4/15.

Dana and Allie attended the Drayton Harbor Green Crab Management meeting 4/16

VIRTUAL MRC SYMPOSIUM

**DURING EACH EVENT IN THE SERIES, ONE MRC
WILL HIGHLIGHT PROJECTS, SUCCESSES AND
LESSONS LEARNED!**

April 23, 3:30 - 5:00 pm
-- Featuring Jefferson MRC

May 7, 3:30 - 5:00 pm

May 21, 3:30 - 5:00 pm

June 4, 3:30 - 5:00 pm

Work with your MRC
to schedule your spot
in the series!

Coordinate with Dana Oster
(oster@nwstraits.org)

**FIND MEETING LOGIN INFO FOR EACH EVENT:
NWSTRAITS.ORG/GET-INVOLVED/EVENTS**



MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Clallam

Month/Year: April, 2020

Submitted by: Helle Andersen

Membership/Leadership changes (including new members, departing members, changes to chair/vice-chair, NWSC representative/alternate, staff): In October 2019 Mike McHenry resigned from the Clallam MRC and in November 2019 Pete Schroeder resigned. These positions have not been filled.

Events/Meetings (including upcoming events/meetings and/or information on meetings/events from past month such as number of participants or highlights): The April meeting will be held April 20th as a WebEx meeting with a reduced agenda because of COVID-19. Topics on the reduced meeting agenda include: Introduction of Video and Spring Interns, 2020 Internship and Fellowship Programs, Outreach to Recreational Crabbers, 2020 Clallam MRC Workshops, NWSC updates, project updates and good of the order.

Funding updates (newly-awarded grants, in-kind support or other funding commitments): None

Project Updates (progress from past month on existing project, any new projects identified, project activities):

Forage Fish: Sampling was cancelled for the month of April because of Covid-19.

2020 Internship Program: On March 25th four candidates were interviewed for the Green Crab Internship with the Makah Tribe and Angelina Woods was selected as the intern. On April 2nd two candidates were interviewed for the Smolt Trap Internship and because both candidates were excellent the subcommittee decided to hire both of them. Because of Covid-19 this tasks associated with the Smolt Trap internships will change to include more online tasks.

Other (anything not covered above, including local issues of interest to the regional group, advisory actions the MRC is taking, questions to the Commission, etc.): None

Photos: Pictures of the three interns hired in April – Anika Avelino, Alissa Lofstrom and Angelina Woods.

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Island

Month/Year: April 2020

Submitted by: Anna Toledo

Membership/Leadership changes (new/departing members, changes to chair/vice-chair, NWSC representative/alternate, staff): None.

Events/Meetings (events/meetings from past month with any noteworthy highlights and information on upcoming events):

Past Meetings/Events:

- The April MRC meeting was cancelled due to direction from the Board of Island County Commissioners to ensure all staff were available to address needs for the COVID-19 response.

Upcoming Meetings/Events:

- April 24, 12-1pm: The MRC will participate in a virtual town hall to celebrate Earth Day, hosted by Island County Commissioner Janet St. Clair. Details available [here](#).
- May 5, 3-5pm: MRC meeting via WebEx. Topics: project planning, operations updates.

Funding updates (newly-awarded grants, in-kind support or other funding commitments): None.

Project Updates (project activities and highlights from the past month, any new projects identified):

Forage Fish: MRC monitoring activities have been suspended at this time, due to COVID-19 precautions.

Seining: Seining at Cornet Bay has been suspended at this time, due to COVID-19 precautions.

Hoypus Point and Possession Point Restoration Feasibility: Blue Coast Engineering is developing the feasibility study, and will provide a presentation at the June MRC meeting.

Outreach: Kelly Zupich is coordinating with MRC and SWS to offer a streaming version of “Discover Our Island Shores” to local students during Earth Week (April 20-24). Students are also invited to participate in an art and essay contest. The submissions from finalists will be available for viewing and voting for the People’s Choice Awards on the MRC and SWS websites in May.

Communications Plan (Funded through NWSF Opportunity Fund): The communications subcommittee has developed a draft communications plan, and met to discuss next steps with the Opportunity Fund grant.

Other (anything not covered above, including local issues of interest to the regional group, advisory actions the MRC is taking, questions to the Commission, etc.): None.

Photos (photos of recent projects or members—include project, photo credit and additional info):

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Jefferson

Month/Year: April 2020

Submitted by: Monica Montgomery

Membership/Leadership changes (new/departing members, changes to chair/vice-chair, NWSC representative/alternate, staff):

Judy Surber, our City of Port Townsend rep, will be stepping back from MRC work temporarily as the City has had to furlough several employees and she's taking on a significant increase in her workload.

Events/Meetings (events/meetings from past month with any noteworthy highlights and information on upcoming events):

Past Events/Meetings

- Mar 18 – Adelma forage fish survey
- Mar 24 – Exec Committee meeting via Zoom
- Mar 25 – Q&A with previous Coordinator via Zoom for interested newer (and current) members to help with the onboarding process
- Mar 27 – NWSC monthly meeting via WebEx
- Apr 3 – MRC lead staff meeting #1
- April 7 – Education & Outreach subcommittee meeting
- Apr 16 – MRC lead staff meeting #2

Upcoming Events/Meetings

- April 20 – Education & Outreach subcommittee meeting #2
- April 21 – MRC Executive Committee monthly meeting
- April 23 – Virtual MRC Symposium meeting #1
- May 5 – MRC monthly meeting
- May 7 – Virtual MRC Symposium meeting #2
- May 8 – Strait ERN LIO Spring quarterly meeting
- May 19 – MRC Executive Committee Meeting
- May 21 – Virtual MRC Symposium meeting #3

Funding updates (newly-awarded grants, in-kind support or other funding commitments):

Nothing to report at this time.

Project Updates (project activities and highlights from the past month, any new projects identified):

1. Monitoring:

- a. **Fort Townsend:** Forage fish sampling is completed for the winter 2019-2020 spawning season. Lab results found surf smelt and sand lance eggs in surveys done between Nov 2019 and Feb 2020. We plan to resume surveys in October 2020.
- b. **Adelma Beach:** Forage fish sampling was done on April 15 by the couple who own the property.

- c. **Kelp:** Project lead plans to start reaching out to team members to prep for the summer season.
2. **Rain Gardens:** Working with the City Asst Engineer Laura Parsons to determine Public Work staff availability to install one rain garden in June, as well as finalizing which of several priority locations will be installed. Due to the suspension of the NWSF Opportunity Fund, the second installation site may be at Cape George.
3. **Education & Outreach:** Subcommittee is meeting for the second time on April 20 to reprioritize outreach efforts and grant spending with social distancing measures in place.
4. **Olympia Oysters:** Still waiting to see if Taylor Shellfish can provide shell this year.
5. **Voluntary No-Anchor Zones:** Bridget Kaminski-Richardson (DNR) is working on consolidating and updating Right of Entries for all 3 sites.

Other (anything not covered above, including local issues of interest to the regional group, advisory actions the MRC is taking, questions to the Commission, etc.):

NWSF Opportunity Fund: Due to the Foundation's suspension on all outstanding grants and contracts funded through individual donations to the Opportunity Fund, work on the rain garden workshops and installation at Cape George stopped as of the end of Friday, April 17th. The MRC may still continue with the installation at this site per task 3 of the Commission grant.

Shoreline Landowner Outreach: Project lead has connected with her neighbor along Dabob Bay who is very interested in a beach walk/learning more about shoreline armoring and nearshore restoration. Sarah has shared 2 other contacts, both new property owners, with Lisa Kaufman to follow up on.

Crabber Outreach: Leftover outreach materials from last year were inventoried (44 complete packets remain). Subcommittee is discussing the possibility of hosting the crabber outreach workshop online some time during the last two weeks of June. Troy and Jason are willing to speak. Need to reach out to a Tribal rep or employee and WDFW staff to speak as well.

Photos (photos of recent projects or members—include project, photo credit and additional info):

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: San Juan County

Month/Year: April 2020

Submitted by: Frances Robertson

Membership/Leadership changes (new/departing members, changes to chair/vice-chair, NWSC representative/alternate, staff):

No changes to leadership.

Two temporary research assistants hired, one for the Plastic Free Salish Sea project and one a continuation of the NWSF 2019 internship for help with the MSA Plan revision.

Events/Meetings (events/meetings from past month with any noteworthy highlights and information on upcoming events):

The April MRC meeting was held via ZOOM on the 2nd April.

The MSA subcommittee met on the 1st April 20,

The Plastic Free Salish Sea Steering committee held their monthly call on the 7th April.

No upcoming in-person meetings or events are planned.

The MRC, in their capacity as the CAG will join the TAG and SFBF review panel for virtual site visits in early May. As usual, this event will take the place of the May MRC meeting.

Funding updates (newly-awarded grants, in-kind support or other funding commitments):

The San Juan MRC has had its contract with the NWSF for \$10,000 awarded through the NWSF Opportunity Fund cancelled due to a loss of available funds at the Foundation. This will have implications for the larger marine spatial planning effort that the MRC and County is undertaking on behalf of the endangered Southern Resident killer whales.

Project Updates (project activities and highlights from the past month, any new projects identified):

SRKW:

- The final whale warning flag report was submitted to the Marine Mammal Commission and will be published on the MRC website by the end of the month.
- The MRC is partnering with San Juan County Parks to design and construct a boater safety kiosk for installation at the County Park on the west side of San Juan Island. This Kiosk will have information on safe boating, Be Whale Wise, the Kayak Education and Leadership (KELP) program and will also have a life vest loan station.

PFSS:

- A temporary research assistant was hired through the County to help the PFSS steering committee conduct research and produce a market research report and tool kits on reducing single use plastic. The RA has begun this research and meets with members of the steering committee each week.
- The Steering committee are continuing their monthly calls and pivoting where needed to address concerns related to COVID-19 and the roll back of reusable bag allowances.
- The MRC will be publishing community guidance on how individuals can continue to reduce their consumption of single use plastic during these challenging times.

MSA Plan Revision:

- A draft Marine Managers Workshop report was completed and submitted in partial fulfillment of the second quarterly report. The report is currently being revised and will be sent to workshop participants and invitees by the end of the month.
- The NWSF Research Fellow, Abigail Ames was hired by the County as a temporary Research Assistant to continue the second half of her effort for the project. She is continuing to contact experts and marine managers to conduct short interviews to gather information for inclusion in the plan.

Other (anything not covered above, including local issues of interest to the regional group, advisory actions the MRC is taking, questions to the Commission, etc.):

The MRC are alarmed at the apparent cancellation of Opportunity grants from the NWSF, there continue to be many questions and concerns related to this.

April 22nd brings the 50th Anniversary of Earth Day. This month the MRC was asked to make an Earth Month Pledge in lieu of the planned Earth Day activities around the County. MRC member Phil Green documented the return of Western bluebirds to his nesting box on his blog Bird Recorder. Phil has a passion for recording bird song and for photography, many of the images we use on our website and on our social media pages are Phil's. Jeff Dyer of Lopez Island took the pledge to "Just love and appreciate the Earth more than ever" Jeff is making a commitment to go electric, move off fossil fuels, he is tilling his garden with "Tille" his electric rototiller!

What is your #earthmonthpledge ?

Photos (photos of recent projects or members—include project, photo credit and additional info):



MRC member Jeff Dyer tilling his garden with his e-rototiller as he continues his efforts to move away from fossil fuels, while MRC administrator is packing her groceries at the car to avoid having to use single-use plastic or paper bags at the grocery store.

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Skagit

Month/Year: April/2020

Submitted by: Tracy/Pete

Membership/Leadership changes (new/departing members, changes to chair/vice-chair, NWSC representative/alternate, staff): Nothing new to report.

Events/Meetings (events/meetings from past month with any noteworthy highlights and information on upcoming events):

- **MRC Operations and Monthly Meeting- April 9:** Skagit MRC held a Webex meeting on April 9. The MRC Grant has been amended to include Year 2 projects and budgets. There are no new projects planned for Year 2. The quarterly grant progress reports and the 2019 MRC Annual Report have been completed and submitted.

Funding updates (newly-awarded grants, in-kind support or other funding commitments):
No updates.

Project Updates (project activities and highlights from the past month, any new projects identified):

- **Salish Sea Stewards:** 26 participants registered for the Salish Sea Stewards training. Classes started March 10th. Unfortunately, due to COVID 19 health concerns, the rest of the classes through the end of March had to be postponed and the remaining classes will be held through Zoom video-conferencing. The field training will take place after it is determined safe to do so. The Zoom classes will take place every Tuesday from 1pm – 3pm. The first Zoom class was held August 7, with around 34 participants online. Jude is facilitating the classes which consist of a quick overview on how to use Zoom followed by two or three presentations and a question and answer period. The participants are also asked to participate in polls and breakout sessions to make it more interactive.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** The date for this year's event has been set for Saturday, August 29, 2020 at the Fidalgo Bay Resort. Skagit County's new intern is coordinating Fidalgo Bay Day this year. Jay Lind is the MRC Event Chair. We looking for volunteers to take the lead in planning and coordinating the chowders and kids craft activities. The Shannon Point Touch tank will likely be available for the event this year. Diver Laura confirmed that she will host her virtual reality diving experience. Rosie Cayou's no-host salmon BBQ lunch and fry bread has also been confirmed. The Friends of Skagit Beaches will once again be sponsoring and coordinating the Discovery Passport activity. A half page ad was supposed to be placed in the 2020 Skagit Valley spring/summer Recreation & Activity Guide, but the publication was canceled due to COVID-19 restrictions on public gatherings. We will also need to be prepared to cancel Fidalgo Bay Day this year if the COVID-19 restrictions continue through the summer.
- **Bowman Bay Restoration:** Beach seining and forage fish surveys at the restoration site have been canceled until further notice due to COVID-19. The next plant maintenance party was originally scheduled for May 29th to coincide with Skagit Water Weeks, but has been canceled as well. The Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group decided to suspend all volunteer work parties until mid-July. They still plan on watering and weeding at Bowman Bay on May 29th, but without the help of volunteers.
- **Forage Fish Surveys:** Forage fish surveys have been canceled until further notice due to COVID-19. Although social distancing could be practiced while doing the forage fish surveys, most of the survey sites have been closed to public access as a result of the statewide Shelter in Place mandate. The 2019 Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve Forage Fish Survey Report is now complete and available.

- Kids on the Beach: The classroom visits for Mount Vernon, Sedro-Woolley and Concrete School Districts were originally scheduled to take place later this month and the beach activities were supposed to take place in May. The planning, logistics, and curriculum were all ready to go. Unfortunately, the schools are now closed for the remainder of the school year due to COVID-19, so Padilla Bay staff are looking into other options including a virtual curriculum. The Sedro-Woolley School District already expressed interest in participating in a virtual class. We are also hoping to shift the programs that were planned for this spring into the fall and next spring.
- Pinto Abalone Recovery: Surveys started up again in February and continued through at least part of March. We are currently waiting on an update the Puget Sound Restoration Fund to find out more details about the work that has been accomplished. We are currently working with PSRF on a detailed QAPP required by the MRC Grant.
- Olympia Oyster Restoration: Paul plans to collect cultch bags to monitor oyster recruitment in Fidalgo Bay in a couple of weeks, as long as he can get access to the sites. It is uncertain whether or not more cultch bags will be put out for next year. It will likely be a minimal sampling year. Paul has been working on updating data from the work that was done last year and has also been working on his upcoming presentations for an upcoming Salish Sea Stewards Zoom class.
- Kayak Kelp Surveys: A kelp WebEx meeting was held on Friday March 6th from 9:30am-11:30am to review the MRCs' 2019 kelp monitoring season data. Surveys are supposed to start again in July 2020.

Other (anything not covered above, including local issues of interest to the regional group, advisory actions the MRC is taking, questions to the Commission, etc.):

Photos (photos of recent projects or members—include project, photo credit and additional info):

MRC Monthly Report**County:** Snohomish**Month/Year:** April 2020**Submitted by:** Elisa Dawson

Membership/Leadership changes (including new members, departing members, changes to chair/vice-chair, NWSC representative/alternate, staff):

None.

Events/Meetings (including upcoming events/meetings and/or information on meetings/events from past month such as number of participants or highlights):

Elisa Dawson attended the MRC Lead Staff call on April 3rd.

Elisa Dawson hosted an MRC Zoom test-out session on April 9th.

The MRC had their monthly meeting April 15th via Zoom virtual conference call. MRC Members Susan Tarpley, Bob Hillmann, Tom Doerge, Paul Clampitt, Laura Gurley, Mike Sadler, Natasha Coumou Tim Ellis, Kip Killebrew, Julie Schlenger, Sarah Brown and Mike Ehlebracht attended the meeting. Staff Elisa Dawson attended. Sara Maxwell was excused from the meeting. The MRC has a presentation from Kathy Ketteridge on the Pigeon Creek #2 Opportunity Fund Project, and drafted ideas for their 2020-2021 grant project.

Funding updates (newly-awarded grants, in-kind support or other funding commitments):

No updates at this time.

Project Updates (progress from past month on existing project or any new projects identified):

MRC Grant 2019-2020 Task 2: The MRC and ESA have completed their prioritization framework. Due to COVID-19 concerns, field work is currently being evaluated. The MRC will likely need to write a COVID-19 response plan to conduct field work, which will require information on how the MRC will meet social distancing requirements. Field work should be done late May or early June.

Task	Completion Date
Task 1. Compile Piling Information and Assemble GIS Database	January 31, 2020
Task 2. Develop Draft Prioritization Framework	February 28, 2020
Task 3. Field Verification of Pilings	May 31, 2020
Task 4. Conduct Prioritization and Prepare Project Report	
• Draft report	July 7, 2020
• Presentation of draft findings to Snohomish MRC	July 15, 2020
• Final report	August 31, 2020

Nearshore Beach Restoration at Howarth Park and Everett Nearshore Project (Opportunity Fund Project): The primary goal for this project is to evaluate the feasibility of replacing the culvert for Pigeon Creek #2 under the BNSF railroad at Howarth Park in Everett with a larger box culvert or small span bridge and restoration of the lower creek and adjacent floodplain. Kathy Ketteridge finished the final report, and presented to the MRC at the April Meeting.

Nearshore Restoration Estuary and Salmon Recovery Program (ESRP) Learning Grant and Forage Fish Monitoring: Dan completed the final task of this grant to review the data from the year and give feedback on other MRC forage fish work. Once his final invoice is received we will close out this grant.

Below projects are other projects of the MRC funded by SWM fees:

Crabber Education: The MRC has secured a spot at the county campus to display how to properly rig a crab pot from June 29th – July 11th.

MyCoast: Many new reports on derelict boats have come up in Snohomish County. The MRC continues to work with DNR..

Derelict Vessels: See above.

MRC Outreach Subcommittee: The MRC is investigating if their document “Beneath the Salish Sea,” made by Florian, could be available through online platforms. Currently, the film is available by DVD. If it could be made available online, it would be easier to share for remote learning instruction.

Oil Spill: Snohomish County WSU Extension has been working on a model volunteer oil spill response project. The MRC is taking part as a stakeholder and advisory member. There will be a meeting this spring to discuss the work. Susan Tarpley is the MRC’s representative.

Meadowdale: Logan Daniels will be presenting updates at the May 20th MRC meeting. At this time, construction for the project is scheduled for 2021.

Kelp Project: Elisa Dawson plans to attend the May 6th conference call on kelp planning. Tom Doerge is beginning to assess dates in July and August for monitoring in Snohomish County.

Mussel Watch: No updates at this time.

Port Susan and shoreline landowners: MRC Members gave feedback to Lisa on their outreach brochure for the Shore Friendly program.

Upcoming Events:

- MRC Meeting May 20th.

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: WHATCOM

Month/Year: APRIL 2020

Submitted by: AUSTIN ROSE

Membership/Leadership changes (new/departing members, changes to chair/vice-chair, NWSC representative/alternate, staff):

Events/Meetings (events/meetings from past month with any noteworthy highlights and information on upcoming events):

- The MRC hosted their April MRC meeting via zoom. The meeting featured a presentation from City and County staff about the Whatcom County Climate Change Advisory Committee and climate change action planning underway. Lucas Hart, NWSC Director provided a NWSI 101 for current and new members to the Whatcom MRC.
- The May MRC meeting is scheduled to be held via zoom. This meeting will feature Melissa Miner, UC Santa Cruz, who will provide an update on sea star wasting syndrome, in particular, recent efforts to better assess (and possibly protect) sunflower star populations as well as respond to marine disease events in general.
- MRC staff and the MRC Chair participated in Drayton Harbor European Green Crab Emergency Management meeting to keep informed on management decisions and an incident command structure moving forward. It is anticipated that is the MRC will be involved with trapping effort as well as any education and outreach efforts.
- The MRC will provide a presentation on a project included in their grant proposal to the NWSC at their May 29 meeting

Funding updates (newly-awarded grants, in-kind support or other funding commitments):

Project Updates (project activities and highlights from the past month, any new projects identified):

- MRC staff are working to develop a QAPP for the pilot Olympia oyster restoration project.
- MRC staff and Whatcom County Public Works staff are working to address questions and comments from Ecology on the Chuckanut PIC QAPP.
- Forage fish surveys are continuing on a monthly basis with only the MRC intern Bridget Moran. No volunteers are participating in MRC field work due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The North Sound Stewards are planning to use iNaturalist to keep volunteers engaged during the COVID-19 pandemic. A meeting was held on April 13 to plan to host a summer long BioBlitz similar to what was done by the Port Townsend Marine Science Center.
<https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/port-townsend-marine-science-center-bioblitz-2019>

The MRC chose three locations in Whatcom where volunteers could gather data – Semiahmoo Park, Marine Park, and Little Squalicum Park. The goal is to have volunteer capture (by photo) what species they find, share the data through the app, and allow others to help with identification.

Other (anything not covered above, including local issues of interest to the regional group, advisory actions the MRC is taking, questions to the Commission, etc.):

Photos (photos of recent projects or members—include project, photo credit and additional info):