



Meeting: Northwest Straits Commission
Location: WebEx Conference Call
Date: July 31, 2020
Time: 10:00 AM-1:00 PM

[To join the Zoom meeting, click here.](#) Meeting ID: 845 6330 3405 Passcode: 655732
For audio conference, dial: +1 253 215 8782

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|---------------|---|--|
| 10:00 – 10:05 | Welcome and introductions Approval of June minutes | Alan Clark, Chair |
| 10:05 – 11:15 | Communications Audit + Plan | Consultant team from Maul, Foster and Alongi |
| 11:15 – 11:20 | *Stretch and Bathroom Break* | |
| 11:20 – 11:35 | Committee reports Executive Committee External Relations Committee Science Advisory Committee | |
| 11:35 – 11:50 | Business items Restore America's Estuaries grant submissions European green crab update Commission meeting schedule | NSWC Staff |
| 11:50 – 12:00 | Puget Sound Partnership update | Jennifer Grimm, Puget Sound Partnership |
| 12:00 – 12:10 | NWS Foundation update | Caroline Gibson, NWS Foundation |
| 12:10 – 12:30 | MRC Reports | MRC Representatives |
| 12:30 – 12:50 | Emerging issues breakout session | All |
| 12:50 – 12:55 | Round table | All |



agenda

12:55 – 1:00

Public comment

All

30 minute post-meeting open discussion – join if you'd like.



June 26, 2020 • 10:00 AM-1:00 PM
Zoom – 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, Chris Castner, Sarah Brown (Snohomish), Nan McKay, Ron Thom, Jennifer Grimm (Puget Sound Partnership – Alternate), Christina Koons (San Juan)

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

Others in Attendance: Anna Toledo (Island), Austin Rose (Whatcom), Barbara Bennett (Island), Frances Robertson (San Juan), Ed Halloran (Island), Don Hunger (Northwest Straits Foundation), Caroline Gibson (Northwest Straits Foundation), Neil Harrington (Jefferson), Monica Montgomery (Jefferson), Kate Elliott (Maul Foster and Alongi), Sidney Counts (Maul Foster and Alongi)

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

Welcome and Introductions

Alan opened the meeting and facilitated introductions.

Approval of Minutes

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

NWS Commission - committee reports

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee postponed the joint executive committee meeting until August. The committee recommended that all virtual Commission meetings previously planned to be in-person be extended to three hours to assure there is enough time to cover all topics.

External Relations Committee

Tom Cowan reported that the Committee discussed an overall budget defense strategy due to the economic downturn. This includes working on collaborative opportunities with federal partners. Separate from budget discussions, the committee talked about building partnerships with tribes, such as through re-establishment of the tribal committee and focusing on projects that involve tribes. In addition, the Committee considered how to create connections with business interests, including maritime industries (Blue Marine), and understand the need for strengthening relationships with county councils/commissions throughout the NW Straits. MRCs: please let the External Relations Committee know if you would like support in strengthening key relationships.

Science Advisory Committee

Ron Thom reported that the Committee is focused on measuring our social impacts as well as ecological impacts through the actions to impacts project. This is an expanded vision beyond just net ecosystem improvement (the original focus). The expanded scope recognizes and includes the broad direct and indirect cumulative benefits of the projects MRCs carry out, as well as the unique bottom up Initiative



model that supports the MRCs. The Committee's next step is to outline a framework and anticipated outputs from the model developed. The Committee's next meeting is July 1.

Budget review and year two MRC projects

Last June the Commission approved a two-year budget. Lucas outlined some revisions to the budget since that time, including an increase in \$50K for green crab work in year two, a \$2,000 increase per MRC from the year one grant amount, an increase in Commission staff FTE which covers Allie's time on green crab, and additional coordination support with funds that were originally planned for database creation.

The Commission approved the revised budget by consensus, allowing for flexibility for minor adjustments based on the pending federal approval of Ecology's indirect rate.

The Commission also approved the year two MRC projects by consensus.

Director's Report

Commission Staff are being furloughed one day per week in July, and one day per month through November. Furloughs apply regardless of the source of funding for staff positions, which are federal funds.

NWS Commission Meetings in person: August is tentatively planned for San Juan, but the Executive Committee will discuss that meeting and future plans for in-person meetings. Lucas described some key considerations before meeting in person:

- NWS Commission staff would need to be cleared for travel by Ecology.
- All counties should be in Phase 4 of the Washington Safe Start plan (able to protect high risk populations).
- Members of the Commission need to be comfortable with meeting in person.

The Commission can also consider intermediate steps toward in person meetings, such as hybrid in-person/virtual meetings when the time is right.

MRC Representative Reports to the Commission: With shortened virtual meeting times, there is less time available for Commission business. To maximize efficiency, the Executive Committee recommended MRC representatives to verbally share two or three highlights from their monthly reports. An updated MRC report template will include a section for those highlights. All Commissioners are encouraged to read the full written report of each MRC. This is an experiment that we'd like to try starting in July, and MRC representatives are encouraged to share feedback so that we can continue to fine tune the virtual meetings and ensure MRCs are able to share their work effectively.



Zoom meetings: We will now use Zoom for Commission meetings, which offers better functionality and the ability to do breakout groups. Some meetings may continue to be hosted with our WebEx account.

Kelp Conservation and Recovery Plan: We released the Kelp Plan in early June. Some notable outcomes so far have been:

- Over 500 page views of the kelp plan webpage
- EPA section 10 requested a presentation for staff on the NWS Commission and Kelp Plan work
- Pew Charitable Trust signed onto the vision statement, and are scheduling a meeting with Lucas and Dana to talk about kelp focused work and strategy.
- The Commission received positive responses and thanks from Governor Inslee's office, as well as Reps. Jayapal and Schrier's staff.

A key gap that was identified was lack of status and trends. Our kelp monitoring helps to fill that gap. That will be the Commission's primary focus. NW Straits Commission also acts as a "traffic director" for information requests in regards to kelp research.

The Commission has a strong relationship with the Foundation on kelp monitoring. The Commission needs additional funds to move some of the recommendations in the plan forward.

Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is committed to the next two years coordination of policy/planning and research (two different departments).

Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission (NWIFC)/Tribal update

Cecilia Gobin shared the June 2020 Marine Conditions Bulletin from NWIFC in advance of the meeting.

Puget Sound Partnership update

Jenn Grimm reported that the PUGET SOS is in the Senate Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) and the House infrastructure package, which would authorize up to \$50M/year for five years for Puget Sound recovery efforts, would create a Puget Sound office within EPA, make the Federal Task Force permanent. The Senate version of the WRDA bill also contains provisions from PUGET SOS, including the \$50M/year authorization.

The Puget Sound Days on the Hill are virtual events. The next sessions will be June 26 (with Senator Murray, Senator Cantwell's staff, and Rep Smith's senior staff) and July 10 (conversation with Representatives McMorris, Rodgers, Larsen, and DelBene). More information here:

<https://psp.wa.gov/psdoth2020.php>

The Puget Sound Leadership Council adopted an updated set of Vital Signs and indicators for the biophysical parts of the ecosystem, and the proposed approach to developing the 2022-2026 Action Agenda, at their meeting on June 10.



Northwest Straits Foundation update

Don Hunger reported that the Foundation is at the end of their fiscal year. He praised the Foundation board and staff for their adaptability. Don reported that more than 200 people attended the crabber outreach workshop, which was held virtually. Foundation staff are developing a number of videos. The Foundation has created a visioning strategy that Don will share with the Commission.

MRC Project Presentations

Jefferson – Olympia oyster restoration

Neil Harrington presented on the MRC's project to restore Olympia oysters. Neil described the enhancement efforts the MRC leads at Discovery Bay, which includes spreading oyster shell for Olympia oyster to "land" on, and monitoring the oyster population. The MRC is examining additional sites at Mystery Bay and Dabob Bay for possible additional plots.

Island – MRC Communications and needs assessment

Barbara Bennett presented on the MRC's communications and needs assessment. The MRC completed a needs assessment in 2016 – 2017, which identified the need for a communications plan for the MRC. Some of their outcomes were that outreach is a dialogue, and needs to be strategic and tailored. The MRC's communication plan is here: <https://www.islandcountymrc.org/media/19408/2020-mrc-communications-plan.pdf>

San Juan- Community based efforts for Southern Resident killer whale (SRKW) conservation

Frances Robertson explained that the County hosted a workshop in 2017 that provided key input into the Governor's Killer Whale Task Force and other local and regional efforts. Frances also explained the introduction of the Whale Warning flag, and the partnership with the Soundwatch boater education program. Frances explained how the MRC determined compliance rates. Frances reported that the MRC is identifying high priority SRKW foraging habitat for a dedicated marine spatial planning effort. The MRC released the [Whale Warning flag report](#) in April 2020.

Communications Audit + Plan

Kate Elliott from Maul, Foster and Alongi (MFA) explained the overall scope and timeline of the project. Kate reviewed the findings from the communications audit and interviews. She identified key challenges, including confusion regarding roles and responsibilities within the Initiative, and lack of internal shared baseline knowledge about Northwest Straits, as well as inconsistent voice and formatting across communications platforms.

The Commissioners discussed what resonated with and/or surprised them about the findings.

- Some people were not surprised, saw clearly communicating about our identity as a fundamental challenge.
- People have different levels of experience of knowledge and there was still a lot of confusion regarding roles and responsibilities.

- There are commonalities across the organization. Some felt that explaining why there are differences would be helpful.
- Helping onboarding for new members and explaining what resources are available to them.

Kate outlined one key challenge: lack of internal shared baseline knowledge about Northwest Straits and confusion between the arms of the organization:

- Similar names
- Some overlapping work (projects)
- Different work focus areas

The attendees broke out into small groups and discussed the roles of the Foundation and the Commission using the following prompts:

- Was it easy or difficult to describe the roles and responsibilities of the Foundation and the Commission?
- Was it easy or difficult to understand the roles and responsibilities of the Foundation and the Commission?
- If you found it difficult to describe or understand, why do you think that was the case?
- Other thoughts from your discussion groups.
- What actions would you recommend for improving understanding about roles and responsibilities?

Responses to these prompts, and recommendations from the Commission will be integrated into the final audit report and communications plan.

Round table

There were no round table items.

Public comment

There was no public comment.

* The next regular Commission meeting will be on July 31.*



**Executive Committee Meeting
July 6, 2020 • 11:00am-12:00pm
Conference Call**

Committee Members: Elsa Schwartz, Alan Clark, Ron Thom, Tom Cowan

Commission Staff/Support: Sasha Horst, Lucas Hart, Katie Harris

Not in attendance: Jude Apple

Liability coverage for MRCs –

Lucas got feedback on the kayak monitoring safety protocols and liability questions from various people at other agencies and industries. The Commission is developing safety protocols with the Foundation that will roll out next summer. No further action from the Executive Committee is needed.

Joint Executive Committee meeting –

Lucas introduced the idea of an in-person joint Executive Committee Meeting with the Foundation in August or September. One of the main agenda items would be to review the MOU between the NWS Commission and Foundation. The Committee decided to plan for an in-person joint Executive Committee Meeting in September.

Next steps:

- Lucas will coordinate with Don to see if the Foundation's Executive Committee is also comfortable with an in-person meeting.
- Katie find a venue that meets the criteria set forth by the committee for a safe meeting location, including but not limited to covered outdoor space or a large indoor space where we could be properly socially distanced, in a county in Phase 3 (possibly Island County).
- Katie will add this to the August Executive Committee agenda to revisit in early August, given the ever-changing conditions due to COVID-19.

MRC Match –

The NWS Commission is required to match its federal funding (\$850K in 2020-2021) 1:1 with non-federal funds. A large portion of our match capacity currently comes from state funds (\$455K). Additional match comes from volunteer hours, county funds and in-kind project support. If an MRC or MRCs use their state funds or other match sources (such as volunteer hours) as match for a third-party grant, the Commission may not have enough to cover our federal dollars, or may be at risk of "double dipping" (using the same match sources for two different awards). We would either need to find match somewhere else (get another non-federal grant) or return a portion of our federal funding. In order to prevent this situation, we need a general match policy that is consistent across the organization.

Current estimate of where NWS Commission match comes from currently: 55% state funds, 20% volunteer hours, 20% county funds, 5% in kind/Foundation.

Suggested matching policy: The NWS Commission is required to provide non-federal matching dollars for federal funds. To ensure we are able to meet our required match and avoid duplicate use of matching funds, all funds provided to MRCs by the NWS Commission and the MRC contributions to projects that are supported by those funds (volunteer hours, in-kind support and county funds) should not be considered as available match for third-party grants without prior review and approval by the Commission operations manager or director.

Ron asked whether the work of the Science Advisory Committee is eligible as match. Sasha responded that it is, and that she can coordinate with Dana to discuss how best to collect the information.

Tom recommended that the policy also include a set of criteria for the review and approval process.

Next steps:



- Sasha and Lucas will draft a set of criteria, share with the Executive Committee.
- When the criteria is ready, the Committee will bring forward the suggested matching policy and criteria as a recommendation to the full Commission for review and approval.

Upcoming Commission meetings –

The Committee recommended that the August meeting be held virtually, not in person. At the August Executive Committee, the Committee will plan for the subsequent months in regards to in-person or virtual meetings, including reassessing if an in-person meeting in San Juan in September is reasonable.

Next steps:

- Katie will tell the Commission that the August meeting will be virtual.
- Katie will add an item on the August Executive Committee agenda to discuss Commission meeting schedule.

October/November Commission meeting –

The Committee recommended that the Commission meet on October 30, and not have a Commission meeting in November.

Intergovernmental Committee for the Commercial Whale Watching Licensing Program-

Christina Koons would like the Commission to have a presentation on the whale watch licensing program. She and Frances Robertson sit on the Intergovernmental Committee for the Commercial Whale Watching Licensing Program. The committee is considering rules that will apply to whale watching vessels. The Committee recommended that the group present to the Commission.

Next steps:

- Lucas and Katie will coordinate with Christina to find a Commission meeting at which to have a presentation.

Commission meeting breakout groups –

Any suggestions on topics we should include for breakout discussions during Commission meetings? Jeff Taylor suggested using topics from committee reports. Another topic he suggested is a discussion around MRC advisory activities, which would be a nice follow up to the recent MRC symposium. We could also bring in presenters and have breakout groups discuss the topic at hand.

Next step:

- Committee members will send Lucas breakout discussion ideas.

International Alliance to Combat Ocean Acidification (attachment) –

Due to Commission staff attendance on ocean acidification (OA) webinars organized by the [OA Alliance](#), the Commission has been asked to join the alliance as an affiliate member.

Next step:

- Lucas and Ron will talk to Dana about having the Science Advisory Committee discuss this and present a recommendation back to the Executive Committee.

Timing of Executive Committee meeting –

The Committee discussed the timing of the monthly meetings, especially as they relate to the Commission meetings. The Committee decided to keep the same time and date for the Committee meetings for the time being, but will consider shifting to a Monday later in the month.



Commission staff highlights- [July 2020]

Communications Audit and Plan: Lucas, Sasha and Katie met with the consultants on July 8 and debriefed the exercises and outcomes from the June Commission meeting. The consultants have completed the communications audit portion of the contract, and submitted their final report for that task.

Virtual MRC Symposium: The San Juan MRC was featured in this month's virtual MRC Symposium series July 23rd. The two featured projects were an oil spill risk and consequences presentation on a collaboration between the San Juan MRC and LIO, and an update on Plastic Free Salish Sea and the current state of recycling.

Green Crab: Allie worked with WDFW and WSG to complete a protocols document and a draft management plan for green crab removal in Drayton Harbor. Trapping continues throughout Drayton Harbor with more areas being trapped each week. Since trapping began more than 90 green crabs have been caught. As more help is consistently needed, Allie has coordinated with the WCC crew from NSEA to assist with trapping efforts when able.

Quality Assurance Project Plans (QAPP): NWSC Staff continue to work with MRCs and the Ecology Quality Assurance Coordinator to complete and approve project QAPPs. These documents outline protocols and historical data for various projects being led by MRCs and the Commission, and are a required element for projects funded by the EPA National Estuary Program (NEP) funding. At this point, all projects using NEP funds have a completed and approved QAPP (pending Jefferson Olympia oyster QAPP approval). QAPPs are valid for five years, so the next several years will require only an addendum for any updates. Thanks to all MRC staff and project leads who contributed to these.

MRC grants: Payment requests and progress reporting submitted by MRCs for the April-June 2020 period are being processed by Commission and Ecology staff. This period has firm deadlines in order for the state to close out their fiscal year. Amendments to MRC grants for the 2020-21 projects are complete for five counties, and the remaining two are now ready to be processed.

Project database: Richard Austin completed additional updates and revisions to the database, and Commission staff continues to input historical data to build out the database and allow for additional testing. The initial plan is to populate the database with the past two years of MRC projects, and then continue adding as MRCs complete projects (annually). Commission staff will add historical data as time allows.

Kelp: Dana and Lucas presented the kelp recovery and conservation plan to EPA Region 10 staff on 6/30. They're working with the Puget Sound Partnership to arrange presentations to the Ecosystem



Commission staff highlights- [July 2020]

Coordination Board and Leadership Council. On 7/23, Dana and Lucas met with PEW Environmental Trust staff to discuss next steps for the kelp conservation and recovery plan.

Meetings Attended:

Dana attended: Statewide European green crab meeting 7/14, Snohomish MRC 7/15, Clallam MRC 7/20, ESRP technical reviewer meeting 7/30

Lucas attended: Skagit MRC 7/9, Science Advisory Committee 7/16

Sasha attended: Skagit MRC 7/9

Allie attended: Statewide European green crab meeting 7/14, Science Advisory Committee 7/1 & 7/16, Whatcom MRC green crab committee meeting 7/16, Drayton Harbor European green crab meeting 7/30

REMAINING
2020
MEETING
DATES

JULY

31

AUGUST

28

SEPTEMBER

25

OCTOBER

~~30~~
29

NOVEMBER

DECEMBER

11

 Northwest
Straits
COMMISSION

Puget Sound Partnership
Monthly Report

Month/Year: July 2020

Federal Updates (budget/priorities/activities):

- The House Appropriations bill contains an additional \$5M for the Puget Sound Geographic Program. If that also passes the Senate, then funding for our NEP will have increased by \$10M over two years. That's fairly astounding. Our deep thanks go to Congressman Kilmer and his team, and to all who have participated in the Puget Sound coalition advocating for funding.

State Updates (budget or legislative activity):

- We wrapped up the Virtual Puget Sound Days on the Hill events on July 10. These also were successful, with between 100-200 people on each call. Senator Murray and staff from Senator Cantwell's office participated, along with Congressmen Kilmer, Heck, Schrier, Jayapal, DelBene, Larsen, and McMorris Rodgers, and staff from Rep. Smith's office. We are talking about doing more virtual events in August and October, so please stay tuned.

Opportunities to Engage with Partnership Products:

- The Leadership Council adopted the vision for the 2022-2026 Action Agenda at its June meeting, so we're working hard with our partners on an approach to execute it. We will welcome the NWSC's participation in that process.

Announcements:

- The Leadership Council also adopted revisions to our Vital Signs and indicators. These revisions addressed some long-standing issues and critiques and will make our recovery system stronger.
- The Partnership will continue to require telework until 6 weeks after King, Pierce, and Thurston counties are in Phase 3, and we will strongly encourage teleworking until we reach Phase 4. All of our meetings will remain virtual during this time.



**Northwest Straits Foundation
Monthly Report to Commission**

Month/Year: July 2020

Programs

1. ESRP and NEP Coastal Watershed Grants have been a primary focus the last couple weeks. The NWSF is requesting funds for restoration projects at Hoypus Point (Deception Pass) and Polnell Point (NAS Whidbey). Also continuing work on the Coastal Resiliency concept, identifying opportunities where house relocation might be considered and opening the door for restoration and protection of feeder bluffs and forage fish beaches.
2. Clark's Point: Lisa met with the Clarks and members of the HOA to discuss the project and next steps. Awaiting consensus of the group before developing a landowner agreement. Design and permitting will be funded through Shore Friendly.
3. Identified one potential new future project at Clayton Beach (Larrabee State Park).
4. Continuing toward construction at Seahorse Siesta this fall. Permitting moving slowly for Similk Bay, but construction could still happen in late fall.
5. Derelict Gear: Port Townsend and Dungeness Bays surveys were complete at the end of June, 117 potential pots detected in PT and 72 in Dungeness. Completed 3 days of removals just before the season started and will continue on closed crabbing days (Tues and Wed). Virtual crabber workshop in partnership with WDFW was held on June 25th with over 100 in attendance. Feedback has been wonderful. To date, video has had 510 views and audio 21 plays.
6. Monitoring: All permits and permissions are now in place and the monitoring season is scheduled and has begun. Other than MRC-managed forage fish surveys, we are not working with volunteers this season due to COVID-19.

Advancement

1. Salish SeaFresh episode #2 launched July 16; highlights partnerships, science and commitment to Olympia restoration for environmental and commercial benefit.
2. Awarded \$60K from The Russell Family Foundation for general operating support and marine fellows.
3. Continually updating/populating the Foundation's grant matrix as sources align with our programs and goals. Funding requests pending (August deadlines) total \$296K, for grants ranging \$5K-\$100K.
4. Working with Caite on fundraising outreach strategies. Ongoing coordination and support for a variety of Foundation operations, including MRC and funder communications, NWS Initiative history project, and permission for use of basking shark image by Ray Troll.

MRC Monthly Reports to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Clallam

Month/Year: July 2020

Submitted by: Helle Andersen

Key items (two or three) for verbal report-out by MRC rep:

- The Clallam County has confirmed three new alternates.
- On July 13th the smolt trap interns, mentors and Lower Elwha project biologist did an outfall survey at the lower 1 mile of Tumwater Creek. The information has been shared with the City of Port Angeles.
- In partnership with SeaDoc Society the Clallam MRC is working on compiling an educational outreach package centered on the book "Salish Sea" <https://www.juniorseadoctors.com/> to be given to 275 students in the Boys & Girls Club Lunchbox program.

Membership/Leadership changes (new/departing members, changes to chair/vice-chair, NWSC representative/alternate, staff): The Clallam County has caught up with the process of filling our positions. We had to get a resolution through the Commissioners, the County then had to advertise the positions for at least a week and then Covid-19 struck. The County has confirmed Harold Kline as District III alternate, Lance Vail as District I alternate and Ioana Bucio as Academia alternate.

Events/Meetings (events/meetings from past month with any noteworthy highlights and information on upcoming events): None

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):

Smolt Trap Internships: On July 13th the interns, mentors and Rebecca Paradis, project biologist at the Lower Elwha Tribe, did an outfall survey of the lower 1 mile for the City of Port Angeles. Rebecca brought an YSI enabling the group to take WQ measurements. The information from the survey has been compiled and shared with the City of Port Angeles. The interns will assist Jamestown Tribe with a snorkel survey in Dungeness River in late July or early August. The interns will present the results and what they have learned during the internships at the Intern Celebration August 17th.

Video Internships: Through July the two interns have continued filming members and volunteers working on MRC projects. The video internship subcommittee, other MRC members and staff have worked on the script for the video. The goal is to have all parts of the video completed by end of July giving the two interns about 3 weeks to complete the first draft of the video before school starts.

Forage Fish Surveys: Clallam MRC continued to collect the monthly samples at Cline Spit and Ediz Hook. The samples are being stored at the County until WDFW is ready to accept them. The last two months the samples from Cline Spit have contained lots of eggs.

Pigeon Guillemot Surveys: The about 30 volunteers from the MRC, OPAS and local residents continued to conduct the surveys which will end in September. The MRC Fellow Alisa Taylor has been trained in entering the data into the database.

Shellfish Biotoxin Surveys: Clallam MRC continued to collect shellfish samples every other week.

Kelp Monitoring: On July 23rd Clallam MRC performed the first kelp bed survey at Clallam Bay. Alan Clark, Jeff Ward and Alisa Taylor led the effort. The two video interns were also there filming the effort.

Educational Outreach: In partnership with SeaDoc Society the Clallam MRC is working on compiling an educational outreach package centered on the book "Salish Sea" <https://www.juniorseadoctors.com/> to be given to 275 students in the Boys & Girls Club Lunchbox program.

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: Island

Month/Year: July 2020

Submitted by: Anna Toledo

Key items (two or three) for verbal report-out by MRC rep:

- **New member:** We welcomed Andi Kopit as our newest MRC member. Andi is completing her Master's Degree in Pollination Biology, and brings extensive experience in scientific research and education.
- **Hoypus Point and Possession Point restoration feasibility study:** The feasibility study at both sites and conceptual design at Hoypus Point is complete. The NWSF is applying for funding for permitting, final design, and construction at Hoypus Point, and the MRC will continue to support and partner on this work.
- **Crabber outreach:** We have distributed "Catch More Crab" handouts to hardware stores and marinas. We have also made handouts, crab gauges, and rot cord available at the County offices and by contacting MRC members or staff.

Membership/Leadership changes (new/departing members, changes to chair/vice-chair, NWSC representative/alternate, staff): We welcomed Andi Kopit as our newest MRC member. Andi is completing her Master's Degree in Pollination Biology, and brings extensive experience in scientific research and education.

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

Past Meetings/Events:

- June 26: Presentation at NWSC meeting.
- July 7: MRC meeting via WebEx. Topics: Coastal Restoration Toolkit, Port Susan MSA, Outreach Needs Assessment

Upcoming Meetings/Events:

- August 4: MRC meeting via WebEx. Topics: Kelp, Outreach Needs Assessment.
- August 6: MRC Virtual Symposium – Island MRC.

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: Monitoring continues at Hidden Beach and Ala Spit, and has restarted at Glendale and Cornet Bay. Three new volunteers have joined the Hidden Beach monitoring team, and several more volunteers have expressed interest in the program. We are interested in having these volunteers trained by WDFW. In the meantime, new volunteers are assisting current project leads. Staff member Ann Prusha will be helping coordinate forage fish volunteers.

Bull Kelp: Four new and returning volunteers on Camano have joined the bull kelp monitoring team and have received training. Volunteers have started surveys at Possession Point, Ebey's Landing, Polnell Point, and Lowell Point.

Hoypus Point and Possession Point Restoration Feasibility: Blue Coast Engineering completed the feasibility study for nearshore restoration opportunities at Hoypus Point and Possession Point. In addition, they developed a conceptual design at Hoypus Point. The MRC provided a letter of support to the NWSF in seeking funding for Hoypus Point restoration permitting, final design, and construction.

Outreach – Art Contest: The MRC and Sound Water Stewards (SWS) have partnered on a summer art contest, with the theme “Design Your Own Salish Sea Creature.” Winners will be announced in August.

Crabber Outreach: The MRC is offering free crab gauges, rot cord, and “Catch More Crab” handouts to interested crabbers. While volunteers have not been stationed at boat launches as in past years, Camano crabbers can contact Scott Chase, and Whidbey crabbers can visit the Island County Department of Natural Resources office during certain hours to pick up the materials. In addition, “Catch More Crab” handouts have been distributed to hardware stores, marinas, docks, and other public locations.

Port Susan MSA: Scott, Elsa, and Anna met with Lisa Kaufman and Snohomish MRC staff and members to discuss a potential update to the Port Susan MSA plan in 2022. The team decided to focus on updating outreach materials – such as digitizing and updating the progress report card, incorporating new information, and conducting outreach. The team will meet quarterly to continue planning.

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 Board of Island County Commissioners will be working with a policy consultant who will assist with advocacy at the state level. Commissioner Janet St. Clair asked the MRC for any particular issues of importance to bring forward. The MRC stressed the importance of continued support for the MRC’s monitoring efforts, and engagement of the MRC in the SMP update process.

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



Bull kelp volunteer training. (Photo credit: Vernon Brisley).

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Jefferson

Month/Year: July 2020

Submitted by: Monica Montgomery

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

Nothing to report.

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

Past Events/Meetings

- June 25 – Oly oyster workday (spread clean cultch)
- June 26 – NWSC meeting
- June 30 – Strait ERN LIO working group: Oil spill prevention
- June 30 – E&O subcommittee mtg w/ local artists
- July 9 – Virtual MRC Symposium (Island MRC)
- July 13 – Rain garden subcommittee tour of potential sites in PT
- July 15 – Rain garden subcommittee meeting
- July 18 – Kelp team's 2nd survey
- July 21 – MRC Executive Committee Meeting

Upcoming Events/Meetings

- July 23 – Virtual MRC Symposium (San Juan MRC)
- July 24 – Forage fish sampling at Dabob Bay
- July 24 – Oly oyster restoration site assessment at Mystery Bay
- July 31 – NWSC Meeting
- August (?) – Kelp team's 3rd (and last) survey of the season
- August 4 – MRC monthly meeting
- August 6 – Virtual MRC Symposium (Island MRC)
- August (17-20?) – Oly oyster restoration site assessment at Mystery Bay
- August 18 – MRC Executive Committee Meeting
- August 28 – NWSC Meeting

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

The MRC is working with NWSF (Caroline) on submitting a coastal watersheds grant, to include the installation of two additional rain gardens in collaboration with the City of Port Townsend.

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

1. Monitoring:
 - a. **Forage fish - Fort Townsend:** Nothing to report till October.

- b. **Forage fish - Adelma Beach (Index):** The property owner (MRC member) continues to sample monthly.
 - c. **Forage fish - Dabob Bay (Index):** The next sampling is planned for July 24 and will be carried out by the property owner (MRC member) and MRC Coordinator.
 - d. **Kelp:** First survey of the summer season occurred on June 26 with three MRC volunteers (two MRC members and one resigned MRC member). Volunteers found a shallow fringing bed between the tide line and ~8ft depth, then another deeper patch between ~17 and 23ft. The second survey took place on July 18 with the help of four MRC volunteers.
- 2. Rain Gardens:
 - a. Subcommittee members were provided with a map/locations of potential rain garden sites in Port Townsend with a rubric for ranking each site for installation. MRC staff and a volunteer toured the sites in-person with safe distancing on July 13, and the subcommittee met via Zoom on July 15 to decide rankings. The subcommittee is planning the next rain garden installation for the SW corner of Adams and Clay streets. It is a highly visible site (i.e. great for educational opportunity) in uptown Port Townsend and would capture stormwater runoff from Lawrence St., a relatively busy road. The installation is planned for some time in late August – early September 2020.
- 3. Education & Outreach:
 - a. The subcommittee met with local plankton artists to discuss potential collaborations for the end of summer. The subcommittee is scheduling a follow-up meeting to discuss the MRC's role in this collaboration in more detail, as well as to start planning outreach efforts for the second year of the grant with COVID-19 precautions in mind.
- 4. Olympia Oysters:
 - a. Two MRC volunteers and MRC Coordinator spread shell at the Powerline site on June 25. The subcommittee is planning a beach walk at Mystery Bay (limiting to four volunteers) to assess potential Olympia oyster restoration sites on July 24. Oyster monitoring at Discovery Bay is planned for August 2, and another beach walk to assess potential Olympia oyster restoration sites in Dabob Bay is planned for some time August 17-20.
- 5. Voluntary No-Anchor Zones: The subcommittee will be discussing ways to assess boater compliance with the navigational buoys since the Wooden Boat Festival – the busy weekend when this assessment has been conducted in the past – will be held virtually this year.

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.):

PT Sewer Outfall (advisory project): Nothing to report.

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

June 23 – Discovery Bay oyster (Lagoon area); Photo credit: Neil Harrington



June 25 – Discovery Bay oyster (Powerline area); Photo credit: Monica Montgomery





MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: San Juan County

Month/Year: July 2020

Submitted by: Frances Robertson

Key items (two or three) for verbal report-out by MRC rep:

- The Plastic Free Salish Sea initiative officially launched on July 20, 2020 during Plastic Free July
- Outreach efforts to boaters continue in earnest throughout the County and region in partnership with Be Whale Wise.
- The MRC partnered with UW Friday Harbor Labs and residents of False Bay Biological Preserve to conduct a visitors-use survey.

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

A new member has been recommended for consideration by the County Council.

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

- The MRC met via Zoom for our monthly meeting on July 2nd.
- Lead Staff Frances Robertson presented the MRC's SRKW efforts to the NWSC June meeting
- MRC Vice-Chair Karin Roemers-Kleven and lead staff Frances Robertson participated in the Friday Harbor Film Festival panel event to discuss the impact of plastics.
- MRC members presented to the MRC Symposium July 23.

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

- County support for the Marine program is in jeopardy for 2021 due to the economic downturn resulting from the COVID pandemic. County staff continue to seek additional grants to support both their and the MRC's efforts for San Juan County's marine resources.

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

PFSS:

The PFSS website and toolkits were officially launched on July 20 during Plastic Free July. A press release in the local press was published and the initiative was also featured on a news clip by KNKX public radio broadening the reach of the initiative.

In addition to these outreach efforts, PFSS lead and MRC Vice-Chair Karin Roemers-Kleven and MRC lead staff Frances Robertson participated in a panel discussion with the Friday Harbor Film Festival in association with the screening of A Story of Plastic and Karin presented the effort for the July 23rd MRC Symposium.

The press-release is available here: <https://www.sanjuanjournal.com/news/plastic-free-july-goes-local-with-the-launch-of-the-plastic-free-salish-sea-campaign/>

MSA Plan update:

Work continues with MRC research assistant Abigail Ames assisting with the research needed to update the MSA Plan. A review of the progress made to the strategies identified by the 2007 MSA plan was completed. Conservation biodiversity target updates are in the process of being drafted. The MSA Plan subcommittee met in July.

SKRW:

Signage for the Boater Safety Kiosk being created for San Juan County Park was finalized, the kiosk is due to be installed later this summer. With the high levels of boating activity in the County outreach for the flag and Be Whale Wise information in general has increased. MRC members are assisting Soundwatch with installing Be Whale Wise signage at public and private marinas on Orcas Island. Additionally, whale warning flag signage is at the Port of Friday Harbor during weekends and additional signage is being created for Roche Harbor.

A summary of the MRC's accomplishments related to their SRKW recovery efforts since 2018 was presented to the Northwest Straits Commission on June 24th by Lead Staff Frances Robertson.

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.):

MRC members engage in a variety of efforts outside of the formal MRC projects. This month saw MRC members continued outreach efforts at the False Bay Biological Preserve on San Juan Island during the 4th of July holiday weekend that also coincided with extreme low tides. These efforts involved conducting a short visitors surveys to better understand user patterns of the preserve.

MRC Members also continued to take part in the newly launched beach cleanup effort on San Juan Island. This saw 15 members of the community gather at American Camp to collect marine debris and plastics at Granny's Cove. The group focused on trying to remove small plastic pieces (micro-plastics). Many small plastic items were picked up. Beach meet ups are planned to occur monthly at different beaches around San Juan Island.

The MRC is also beginning to create a series of articles detailing the history and work of the MRC in the County. The first of these articles, written by MRC member Jeff Dyer is due to be submitted for publication in August.

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



MRC and False Bay volunteers conducting visitor-use surveys during the July 4th weekend.



The Plastic Free Salish Sea website was officially launched on July 20.

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Skagit

Month/Year: July/2020

Submitted by: Tracy/Pete

Key items (two or three) for verbal report-out by MRC rep:

- Skagit MRC provided a letter supporting the trestle/causeway removal and replacement proposal.
- Volunteers are starting forage fish surveys again in Skagit County.
- Skagit MRC member Paul Dinnel is featured in the Northwest Straits Foundation's latest episode of the Salish Sea Fresh video series highlighting Olympia oysters.

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 Monthly Meeting- July 9:** 17 people attended the Skagit MRC Webex meeting on July 9. In addition to the NWSC and NWSF reports and MRC project updates, Kari Odden with the Skagit Land Trust presented one of their proposed conservation projects on Samish Island. Skagit MRC provided a letter supporting the proposal.
- **Next MRC Monthly Meeting- August , 9am-10:30am** (Webex)

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:** The last class was held June 9th. 21 participants completed the virtual Salish Sea Stewards training. A survey went out to class participants to help evaluate the program. The new volunteers are all very eager to start volunteer work. An in-person gathering for all of the Salish Sea Stewards will be scheduled as soon as it is determined safe to do so. Darla Gay Smith will be replacing Rachel Best as the new MRC Project Lead for the Salish Sea Stewards.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** As an alternative to Fidalgo Bay Day, we will be creating a Scavenger Hunt Activity Guide that will be similar to the Discovery Passport to help get families engaged in fun educational activities that focus on nature and the environment. It will be promoted in the local papers and online and will be widely distributed to local businesses that are open to the public. Past participating organizations have been invited to be part of the Activity Guide. So far we've heard back from several who have expressed interest in participating. We will create an event website and Facebook page for organizations and participants to share photos and posts about the activities and experiences. We hope to have the Activity Guide finalized by mid-August.
- **Bowman Bay Restoration:** Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group (SFEG) staff completed watering and weeding at the site on June 26, July 10, and July 24. The shoreline plantings at the site are looking really good. SFEG plans to do some very small volunteer work parties at the site in August. SFEG is also working on a Bowman Bay Stewardship Guide for volunteers. The Puget Sound Partnership is

working on a short video about the restoration project. The NWSF staff and volunteers involved in the project were interviewed for the video.

- Forage Fish Surveys: Forage fish surveys have started back up at Marchs Point restoration site and Fidalgo Bay sites this month with a smaller number of volunteers.
- Kids on the Beach: Annie England with Padilla Bay NERR, did an excellent job adapting the KOTB curriculum into a virtual program that is easily accessible to teachers and students. We will be scheduling a meeting soon to determine the next steps for planning next year's program. A final report will be available before the end of this grant period.
- Pinto Abalone Recovery: Field work is done for the season. PSRF recently completed a detailed QAPP that has been approved by Ecology.
- Olympia Oyster Restoration: Paul and his son are conducting oyster monitoring and restoration work this year without the help of other volunteers due to COVID-19 restrictions. In addition to distributing 20 oyster cultch bags around Fidalgo Bay, they also put out shell strings in conjunction with Puget Sound Restoration Fund's sampling methods to monitor oyster recruitment and settlement. They also put out shell tiles every two weeks to monitor biweekly oyster settlement in Fidalgo Bay for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.
- Kayak Kelp Surveys: Kelp surveys took place July 17 at Shannon Point, July 18 at Coffin Rocks, and July 23 at Biz Point.

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):

The Skagit Forage Fish Survey Crew back at work practicing safety guidelines in the time of COVID-19. (Photos by Pete Haase)





MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Snohomish

Month/Year: July 2020

Submitted by: Elisa Dawson

Key items (two or three) for verbal report-out by MRC rep:

- MRC Piling Grant: All pilings in the Snohomish Estuary have been mapped, field verified, and analysis is currently underway to prioritize pilings for future removal. A draft report will be available to stakeholders for review from July 22 – August 17th. A final report will be available to the public mid-September
- MRC and SnoCo Beach Watcher joint in-person crabber education was cancelled for 2020 season due to COVID-19. Instead, the MRC spent \$300 of paid advertising using Snohomish County Government's Social Media pages. 18,584 people watched videos on crabber BMPs.
- MRC has collected their yearly kelp monitoring data at Edmonds, Meadowdale, and Mukilteo. Additional monitoring is scheduled at Hat Islands and another round at Edmonds for August.

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

Kip Killebrew is on a leave of absence to care for his sick sister during July, August, and September.

Paul Clampitt continues his leave of absence as he is dealing with COVID-19 impacts to his business.

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

Laura Gurley, Mike Ehlebracht, and Elisa Dawson attended a Pilings Subcommittee meeting on June 25th.

Tom Doerge and Elisa Dawson completed Kelp Monitoring at Meadowdale on July 6th.

Tom Doerge, Traci Sanderson, and Elisa Dawson completed Kelp Monitoring at Edmonds on July 7th.

Elisa Dawson had a conference call with DNR staff and consultant ESA to discuss MRC Pilings Grant work on July 9th.

Elisa Dawson submitted grant materials to the NWSC on July 9th.

Elisa Dawson attended Puget Sound Day on the Hill July 10th.

Tom Doerge, Tim Ellis, and Elisa Dawson completed Kelp Monitoring at Mukilteo on July 20th.

Elisa Dawson attended the Washington Sea Grant Webinar on Sea Level Rise on July 21st.

Elisa Dawson had a conference call with City of Edmonds staff to discuss partnerships on July 22nd.

Elisa Dawson met with Snohomish County Beach Watchers Staff to discuss partnership opportunities for 2021 on July 23rd.

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):

MRC Grant 2019-2020 Task 2: All pilings in the Snohomish Estuary have been mapped, field verified, and analysis is currently underway to prioritize pilings for future removal. ESA presented initial findings at the MRC July 15, 2020 monthly meeting. A draft report will be available to stakeholders for review from July 22 – August 17. A final report will be available to the public mid-September.

| 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 Changed to June 22 |
| 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): Bob Hillmann is working on getting the signs from this project installed. After signs are installed, the grant will be closed out.

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

Crabber Education: MRC and SnoCo Beach Watcher joint in-person crabber education was cancelled for 2020 season due to COVID-19. Instead, the MRC spent \$300 of paid advertising using Snohomish County Government's Social Media pages. 18,584 people watched videos on crabber BMPs. Videos were provided by the Northwest Straits Foundation.

| | Weight Crab Pot | Rig Line | Total |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|----------|--------|
| Unique People Saw Ad | 196 | 31,928 | 32,124 |
| Video Plays | 72 | 18,512 | 18,584 |
| Post Reactions (Likes or other) | 0 | 37 | 37 |
| Shares | 0 | 13 | 13 |

MyCoast: Reports continue to come in. Snohomish County has opted not to do outreach about the app during COVID-19 concerns when public land closures are rapidly changing.

Derelict Vessels: Staff Elisa Dawson has gotten SWM management approval to work on the removal of 4 derelict vessels in the Snohomish Estuary. The goal is to remove the vessels this fall.

<https://mycoast.org/reports/58693>

<https://mycoast.org/reports/58690>

<https://mycoast.org/reports/58625>

<https://mycoast.org/reports/56296>

MRC Outreach Subcommittee: No updates at this time.

Oil Spill: Susan is waiting to hear from WSU Beach Watchers for the final chosen date for the proposed September model oil spill group training.

Meadowdale: Logan Daniels and Elisa Dawson are working on the HPA permit documents for the Meadowdale Project.

Kelp Project: MRC has collected their yearly kelp monitoring data at Edmonds, Meadowdale, and Mukilteo. Additional monitoring is scheduled at Hat Islands and another round at Edmonds for August.

Mussel Watch: No updates at this time.

Port Susan Marine Stewardship Area: The Port Susan Subcommittee met with the Island County Port Susan Subcommittee on June 22nd to discuss a 10 year update to the 2012 Port Susan Conservation Action Plan. The collaborative team decided to meet quarterly to continue discussions about updates to the Port Susan Report Card in collaboration for a potential grant funding opportunity in 2021.

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.):

Upcoming Events:

- MRC August meeting has been cancelled.
- Next MRC Meeting is September 16th

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

MRC Member Tom Doerge and MRC Volunteer Traci Sanderson monitor kelp at Edmonds on a gloomy day, July 7, 2020. Taken by Elisa Dawson.



MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Whatcom

Month/Year: JULY 2020

Submitted by: Austin Rose

Key items (two or three) for verbal report-out by MRC rep:

- The MRC will host a virtual European Green Crab forum, tentatively scheduled for August 12. The intent is to provide a general background on green crab, why they are a problem, how to identify them, what to do if you find one and current information about green crab found in Drayton Harbor.
- On July 23, the MRC/WWIN hosted a Drought Contingency Forum to share information about drought vulnerability and preparedness in Whatcom County, and drought contingency planning at the federal, state, and local levels. Recording will be available on the MRC website.
- The MRC provided a letter of support for the Port of Bellingham's grant applications to the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account and Washington Wildlife Recreation Program, for a small watercraft dock in Fairhaven, and potential to create a small pocket beach. There is potential for the MRC to do some forage fish monitoring in the area to help support the project

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

- Austin Rose (MRC staff) must take 32 hours of furlough through the month of July.

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

- The MRC did not hold a July meeting due to the July 4 holiday
- The next MRC meeting is scheduled for August 6
- On July 23, the MRC/WWIN hosted a Drought Contingency Forum to share information about drought vulnerability and preparedness in Whatcom County, and drought contingency planning at the federal, state, and local levels. The forum featured speakers from the Bureau of Reclamation, WA Department of Ecology, WDFW, RH2, Whatcom County Ag Water Board, and more who discussed how drought could impact fisheries, public water systems, self-supplied residential systems, agriculture, and forestry as well as plans to mitigate and respond to drought.
- The MRC will host a virtual European Green Crab forum, tentatively scheduled for August 12. The intent is to provide a general background on green crab, why they are a problem, how to identify them, what to do if you find one and current information about green crab found in Drayton Harbor. Locals will be interested in information about potential impacts on Drayton Harbor Oyster Co. Emily Grason (WA Sea Grant), Allie Simpson (NWSC), and Chelsey Buffington (WDFW) are anticipated to be speakers for this event.

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):

- The first kelp survey of 2020 took place at the Aiston Preserve.
- The North Sound Stewards program hosted a virtual beach walk on July 23. This beach walk taught volunteers how to use the MyCoast app to tag large debris for DNR removal. In addition, the walk showcased intertidal critters and features and those observations were uploaded to the Whatcom iNaturalist Marine Shoreline project.

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 provided a letter of support for the Port of Bellingham's grant applications to the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account and Washington Wildlife Recreation Program, for a small watercraft dock in Fairhaven, and potential to create a small pocket beach.
- The MRC also provided an updated letter of support for the Lummi Island Heritage Trust's grant application to ESRP for continued work on the Aiston Preserve restoration.

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



Eleanor Hines and volunteers conducting kelp survey at the Aiston Preserve. Photo credit: Eleanor Hines.



Kelp bed under T-Span at Aiston Preserve.
Photo credit: Eleanor Hines