



Meeting: Northwest Straits Commission
Location: Zoom Conference Call
Date: October 29, 2020
Time: 10:00 AM-12:00 PM

To join the Zoom meeting, [click here](#). Meeting ID: 875 1078 0809
For audio conference, dial: +1 253 215 8782

Passcode: 133082

10:00 – 10:05	Welcome and introductions Approval of September minutes	Alan Clark, Chair
10:05 – 10:20	Welcome from Rep. Lekanoff	Rep. Lekanoff
10:20 – 10:35	Committee reports Executive Committee External Relations Committee Science Advisory Committee	
10:35 – 10:40	Directors Report	
10:40 – 10:45	Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission/ Tribal update	Cecilia Gobin, Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission
10:45 – 10:50	Puget Sound Partnership update	Jennifer Grimm, Puget Sound Partnership
10:50 – 10:55	NWS Foundation update	Don Hunger, NWS Foundation
10:55 – 11:35	Washington Hatcheries Presentation	Ken Currens and Adrian Spidle, NWIFC
11:35 – 11:50	MRC Reports	MRC Representatives
11:50 – 11:55	Open discussion breakout groups	All



agenda

11:55 – 12:00

Public comment

All

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



September 24, 2020 • 10:00 AM-12:30 PM
Zoom – Conference call
Northwest Straits Commission meeting

Attendees:

Commission Members: Elsa Schwartz (Island-Vice Chair), Pete Haase (Skagit), Jeff Taylor (Jefferson), Bob Cecile (Whatcom), Sarah Brown (Snohomish), Christina Koons (San Juan), Tom Cowan, Ron Thom, Cecilia Gobin (Tribal), Nan McKay, Jenn Grimm (Puget Sound Partnership- Alternate)

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

Others in Attendance: Kate Elliott (Maul Foster and Alongi), Sarah Fiskén (Jefferson MRC- Alternate), Austin Rose (Whatcom MRC), Don Hunger (NWS Foundation), Caroline Gibson (NWS Foundation)

Absent: Laura Blackmore (Puget Sound Partnership), Alan Clark (Clallam-Chair), Chris Castner

Welcome and Introductions

Elsa opened the meeting and facilitated introductions.

Approval of Minutes

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

NW Straits Commission Committee Reports

Executive Committee

Elsa reported that the Executive Committee has reviewed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the NWS Commission and NWS Foundation, and recommended approval of the MOU by the full Commission. Lucas explained that the MOU describes and clarifies the roles and responsibilities between the Commission and Foundation. The Commission decided to wait to make a decision on the MOU to allow MRC representatives to gather additional input.

Elsa reported that the Executive Committee reviewed a memo from the Science Advisory Committee encouraging the Commission to join the International Alliance to Combat Ocean Acidification (OA Alliance). The OA Alliance encourages members to create action plans. The Commission approved joining the OA Alliance by consensus.

Next steps:

- Lucas and Don will draft a message to help guide Commissioners on what type of feedback Lucas and Don are looking for on the MOU.
- MRC representatives will share the MOU with relevant individuals and gather feedback. Comments on the MOU are due back to Lucas on October 16.
- Lucas will follow up with OA Alliance to formalize our commitment/joining.



External Relations Committee

Tom Cowan reported that the committee did not meet in September, but are planning to meet in October. Congressman Rick Larsen is planning visits to MRC sites across the Northwest Straits in October.

Science Advisory Committee

Ron Thom reported that the Committee is advancing the Actions to Impacts diagram. Ron reported that Jen Steger from NOAA will participate in the Actions to Impacts project. Ron spoke with Kristin and Alexandra from the Puget Sound Partnership about their behavior change questionnaire.

Business Updates

Existing County Support to MRCs

Lucas explained that the document about MRC support to the counties was included in the packet as a result of a question from Nan at the August meeting. It is intended as a summary of information about how MRCs currently operate within their counties and what support they receive from their county.

European green crab update

Allie Simpson reported that the European green crab team has caught 203 green crabs in Drayton Harbor. Allie explained that the team has increased capture rates in the last two weeks. Allie reported that the team trapping on the Lummi Peninsula have caught more than a thousand green crab, which is unsettling. Allie explained that the Drayton Harbor team has shifted over to Lummi to address that area because of the large numbers.

Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission (NWIFC) update

Cecilia Gobin reported that she and Lucas have scheduled a presentation on hatcheries for the NW Straits Commission at the October meeting. WDFW has released draft Environmental Impact Statement on [commercial whale-watching licensing program](#). The comment period closes October 23.

Puget Sound Partnership Update

Jenn Grimm reported that the Action Agenda update is in progress, and she encouraged people to participate in the Partnership's virtual workshops on October 1 and October 7. Jenn reported that the Partnership is hiring for two positions- [Monitoring Network Coordinator](#) and [Adaptive Systems and Accountability Program Manager](#).

Northwest Straits Foundation Update

Caroline Gibson reported that the Foundation has been focused on Shore Friendly, including creating promotional videos. Caroline introduced the "Passport to Marine Adventures" program that Kenny Clarkson is developing in conjunction with local businesses.



Communications Audit + Plan

Kate Elliott from Maul, Foster and Alongi (MFA) shared the draft communications plan and Northwest Straits Initiative (NWSI) fact sheet.

The implementation plan is grounded in the three key findings from the audit and interviews. Below are the descriptions of what Commissioners and MRC members are responsible for doing, and what Commission staff are responsible for doing.

1. Confusion between roles of each arm of the Initiative
 - a. Commissioners and MRC members: Attend NWSI 101 presentation
 - b. Commission Staff: Revise onboarding process and materials, offer NWSI 101 presentation twice per year
2. No common baseline understanding of the Initiative
 - a. Commissioners and MRC members: Memorize elevator pitch and key messages, use fact sheet when discussing the Initiative
 - b. Commission Staff: Update materials with consistent messaging, integrate key messages moving forward
3. Difficulty sharing information beyond the NWSI community
 - a. Commissioners and MRC members: Ensure materials you have are updated and handy
 - b. Commission Staff: Develop targeted external materials

Participants broke out into small groups and discussed the following questions:

- What did you think of this process?
- Did you learn something new?
- Who would you share the new elevator pitch and key messages with?
- Share an “a-ha moment”

MRC Reports

Clallam –

Clallam MRC published a video completed by the MRC intern. The climate change subcommittee met with Commissioner Bill Peach. Clallam MRC volunteers are winding down their field season, with only forage fish sampling continuing after September.

Island –



Elsa reported that the MRC is partnering with Whidbey Island Conservation District, NWSF, and other partners to celebrate Orca Recovery Day, October 17. Events will include an orca forum, trivia night, art contest, and online eco-challenge. MRC Lead Staff Anna Toledo was interviewed on the [Northwest Fish Passage podcast](#), where she highlighted the work of the MRC, including bull kelp and forage fish monitoring, as well as outreach and restoration work. Construction will take place next month at Seahorse Siesta, where the MRC has been partnering with the NWS Foundation. The restoration at this private community will involve the removal of a barge and bulkhead at the toe of a feeder bluff.

Jefferson –

Jeff Taylor reported that [Olympia oyster](#) and [eelgrass/no-anchor zones](#) videos are up on the NWSC Vimeo and YouTube pages, available to view and share widely! Jeff said that the MRC will be finishing completion of a second rain garden installed this year, on September 23, in Uptown Port Townsend (corner of Benton and Clay Streets).

San Juan -

Christina reported that the MRC will be participating in the Fall Great Islands Clean-up (www.plasticfreesalishsea.org/events). The first phase of the Marine Stewardship Area Plan update is nearing completion, with the drafting of updated Conservation Biodiversity Targets. The MRC has begun an outreach effort within the local community through a series of news articles written by MRC members.

Skagit -

Pete Haase reported that the MRC is hosting a virtual presentation by Paul Dinnel on Olympia Oyster Restoration in Fidalgo Bay- October 7, 4pm-5pm. Planning is now underway for the 2021 Salish Sea Stewards training. Kimberly Cauvel from the Skagit Valley Herald published an article about Fidalgo Bay Day 2020 Scavenger Hunt.

Snohomish -

Sarah Brown reported that the MRC finalized the [Snohomish Estuary Pilings Report](#). Phase 2 of that project will start in October. MRC Kelp Lead Tom Doerge joined WA Department of Natural Resources staff at Edmonds kelp beds to collect health data on kelp. The MRC continues to engage in derelict vessel removal, in partnership with DNR. They have posted four derelict vessels in the Snohomish Estuary for removal. Removal is planned for late October 2020.

Whatcom -

Bob Cecile reported that the MRC received 62 applications for two of their internship opportunities (Forage Fish Survey Intern and North Sound Stewards Volunteer Coordinator Intern). Applications are



minutes

currently under review by MRC members. Candidates will be chosen by September 23. Bob explained that the MRC's Public Speakers Series continues to need more MRC member support – particularly by way of subject ideas. The group would like to communicate marine related issues to a more diverse audience and thus expand the expertise of speakers (i.e. professors, artists, activists, historians, performers, journalists).

Emerging Issues Breakout Session

Topics discussed included:

- Overdomestication of Puget Sound, loss of biodiversity. An idea was raised to bring a speaker to the Commission to discuss Puget Sound biodiversity changes.
- Update with the Marine Stewardship Area Plan, San Juan County is going to do a social and economic impact report of the Salish Sea. The MRC has concerns around marine resource capacity in San Juan Islands and how to incorporate these concerns into policy and planning.

Public comment

There was no public comment.

* The next regular Commission meeting will be on **Thursday, October 29.***



**Executive Committee Meeting
October 5, 2020 • 11:00am-12:00pm
Conference Call**

Committee Members: Elsa Schwartz, Ron Thom, Alan Clark, Jude Apple

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

Not in Attendance: Ron Thom, Tom Cowan

NOAA meeting

Lucas and Chris Castner met with NOAA staff regarding NWS Commission collaboration. Three primary points of potential collaboration are:

- Southern Resident Killer Whale Recovery
- Chinook Salmon Recovery
- NOAA Veterans Corps
- Community education

Lucas plans to have further conversations as opportunities present themselves.

Upcoming meetings update

Lucas updated committee on an upcoming MRC Chairs meeting intended to understand how MRCs are maintaining engagement in the world of COVID and to share successful engagement methods. Lucas also said that a gubernatorial appointee meeting is scheduled to discuss the role of these seats on the Commission.

Rick Larsen site visits

Lucas said that Rep. Rick Larsen has been visiting with MRCs in his district to learn about their projects and impacts. The following is when Rep. Larsen has or will hold site visits at MRC project sites:

Snohomish: September 28, Pilings inventory project

Island: October 7, Seahorse Siesta and Sunlight Shores restoration

Whatcom: 9October 9, Aiston Preserve

San Juan: Late October, (TBD)

Skagit: October 14, Kids on the Beach and Salish Sea Stewards

October Commission Meeting

Lucas explained that the October Commission meeting will be on October 29 at 10 am. A few highlights of the agenda include:

- Introduction from Rep. Lekanoff
- Hatcheries Presentation - Ken Currens and Adrian Spidel from the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission
- Whale Watching Licensing Presentation
 - Lucas has suggested postponing this presentation until after the Dept. of Fish and Wildlife has finished their process.

Upcoming Commission Meetings

- October 29 – 2.25 hours
- December 11- 2 hours



Memorandum of Understanding

Northwest Straits Foundation and Northwest Straits Commission

Partners in Marine Conservation

This Memorandum of Understanding is made by and between the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Foundation, a Washington non-profit corporation with its principal place of business at 1155 North State Street, Suite 402, Bellingham, WA 98225, (“the Foundation”) and the Northwest Straits Commission, 10441 Bayview Edison Rd. Mount Vernon, WA 98273 (“the Commission”), who collectively may be referred to, for the purposes of this MOU, as the “Parties.”

The purpose of this MOU is to formalize and detail the working partnership between the Foundation and Commission. It explicitly lists and defines areas where the Parties collaborate. It is a reference for Foundation board members, Commission members, staff members, Marine Resources Committee members and partners to understand easily the relationship between the Parties in marine conservation.

The mechanisms by which the Parties collaborate and their respective responsibilities are not stipulated in this MOU. Instead, they are addressed through planning instruments identified in this MOU (e.g. Strategic Plan, Operating Plan, and Partnership Project Plan). This MOU and all related instruments are non-binding.

I. STATEMENT OF ORGANIZATIONAL MISSION AND ROLES

The Foundation’s mission is to raise funds to conduct and support locally-driven marine restoration, stewardship and education programs. It was incorporated for the following purposes:

- A. To undertake activities which are exclusively scientific and educational within the meaning of Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, as the same may be amended from time to time, for the purpose of fostering understanding, preservation, and restoration of Marine Resources of the Northwest Straits region.
- B. In furtherance, but not limitation, of the foregoing scientific and education purposes, the Foundation shall:
 - 1. Support research, monitoring, restoration, stewardship and education programs and activities to protect the marine resources of the Northwest Straits region, both at a local and ecosystem level;
 - 2. Promote coordination of research, restoration and education activities undertaken by the Foundation with other organizations that promote similar activities, including but not limited to the Commission and the seven County Marine Resources Committees (MRCs), Tribes, and federal/state/local agencies and

- universities;
- 3. Receive by gift, device, bequest or otherwise, money, grants, contracts or other property, or any estate therein, legal or equitable, and to hold the same and distribute it, or the income therefrom, for the promotion of the foregoing purposes;
- 4. Solicit grants and contributions; and
- 5. Do any other act incidental to or connected with the foregoing purposes or in advancement thereof, but not for the pecuniary profit or financial gain of its members, directors, or officers, except as permitted under Article 6 of the Not-for-Profit Corporation Law.

The Commission's mission is to protect and restore the marine waters, habitats and species of the Northwest Straits region to achieve ecosystem health and sustainable resource use. The Commission shall:

- A. Provide funding, training and support to the seven county-based MRCs;
- B. Facilitate regional coordination among the MRCs and connect MRCs' work to regional planning processes such as, but not limited to, the Puget Sound Partnership Action Agenda and Puget Sound Nearshore Estuary Restoration Program; and,
- C. Manage regional projects that are of interest to all MRCs as funding and staff capacity allows.

Northwest Straits Initiative ("the Initiative") is the umbrella name that encompasses the Commission, the Foundation and MRCs, collectively.

The Foundation and the Commission seek to collaborate with each other (hereafter referred to as "Partnership"), and with other public and private partners, to implement marine conservation and restoration, monitoring, education and advisory work. The Parties agree to advance this Partnership through the following shared goals and strategies, to the extent that each Party's respective resources, funding and authorities permit.

II. PARTNERSHIP ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Areas of Collaboration

Through this Partnership, the Parties will collaborate toward the goal of supporting stewardship through conservation and restoration, monitoring, education and advisory work in the Northwest Straits region of the Salish Sea by:

- A. Developing and coordinating the Initiative's strategic plan;
- B. Developing and implementing an Annual Operating Plan
- C. Planning, coordinating and implementing select programs;
- D. Collaborating with MRCs;
- E. Researching and assessing collaborative funding opportunities;
- F. Planning and hosting conferences, workshops or events;
- G. Developing relationships with relevant agencies and units of government;

- H. Coordinating public and internal communications; and,
- I. Sharing organizational resources.

Each of these areas of collaboration is described more fully below.

Developing and Coordinating the Initiative's Strategic Plan

The Parties will create an Initiative strategic plan, on a five-year cycle. It will be reviewed annually to ensure that its goals remain paramount for the Initiative in light of current financial, ecological, political and social drivers. No changes will be made to the plan unless a majority of both Commission members and Foundation board members deem it warranted to sustain our work.

This MOU does not preclude either party from creating its own strategic plan, independent of the Initiative strategic plan.

Developing and Implementing an Annual Operating Plan

The operating plan is an administrative tool that enables each organization to establish goals, tasks and outcomes based on the Initiative's strategic plan so that progress can be tracked and measured. Operating Plan tasks are detailed under the following themes in the 2019-2024 strategic plan: Stewardship; Structural Support to MRCs; Measuring Progress; Engagement and Partnership; Messaging; and Long-Term Stable Funding.

The Parties agree to work collaboratively to:

- Create an annual operating plan that implements the strategic plan and reflects joint and independent programs and projects of the Commission, Foundation, and MRCs toward achieving its goals;
- Implement the operating plan and update achievements on a quarterly basis; and,
- Report biannually on progress to the Foundation, Commission and MRCs.

Planning, Coordinating and Implementing Select Programs

The Foundation and Commission will evaluate and develop collaborative opportunities in support of Initiative priorities listed in the Strategic Plan, through the development of an annual Operating Plan. These opportunities may include:

- A. Protection and restoration projects for nearshore and marine habitat;
- B. Monitoring of and reporting on restoration sites and projects;
- C. Community projects that connect people to local marine ecosystems for environmental, cultural and economic benefit;
- D. Education programs that increase awareness, skills and knowledge to support marine stewardship;
- E. Exploring partnerships with other organizations, including public agencies, schools, businesses, and community-based groups, to expand opportunities in marine conservation; and,

- F. Work on emerging issues highlighted in grant opportunities or local, state, or federal plans.

Implementation of any specific program or work related to this MOU is contingent upon sufficient funding commitments, and shall require the execution of a separate written agreement that is signed by all relevant parties.

Collaborating with Marine Resources Committees

Marine Resources Committees are county-based committees of local volunteers appointed by their local elected officials to: identify priorities and implement projects to protect local marine resources; advise their county governments on issues and policies affecting marine resources; conduct scientific and data gathering projects to inform local management of marine resources; and engage their communities and build improved stewardship of the local marine environment.

The Parties' relationships with MRCs are different, collaborative, and complementary, due to their establishment and structure as outlined in Section I of this MOU. The Commission will provide funding, training and support to the MRCs. The Foundation will raise funds to conduct and support its marine restoration, stewardship and education programs, collaborating with MRCs on local projects. Collaborative relationships may be monetary or non-monetary. As organizational capacity and funds allow, the Parties agree to:

- A. Provide support to MRCs for project research, planning and implementation;
- B. Support MRC projects that promote stewardship and make measurable improvements in our marine environment;
- C. Collaborate in raising public and private funding for projects and programs as allowed under the authority of the Initiative; and,
- D. Connect scientists from around the region with local projects to integrate scientific practices and standards in the Initiative's work.

Researching and Assessing Collaborative Funding Opportunities

Both Parties may work collaboratively to expand funding sources for marine conservation programs and projects conducted in partnership by the Parties. The purpose is to increase public and private sector awareness, engagement and support for this work.

When pursuing these opportunities, each party will commit an agreed upon amount of staff and resources toward such joint development efforts.

The Parties may also work to identify and form additional partnerships with MRCs, other organizations or agencies, in a manner that enables and encourages high levels of "opportunistic" collaboration and support for environmental stewardship. Partnerships might be with public agencies, other non-profit entities, educational institutions, businesses, funders and/or community-based organizations.

Any or all such collaborative programs or projects shall be non-exclusive and shall not limit either party from independently pursuing partnerships, funding, programs, or other opportunities at each Party's sole discretion. The Parties will keep each other informed on programs and projects they are carrying out or pursuing independently.

Planning and Hosting Conferences, Workshops or Events

The Parties may work collaboratively on activities and events for audiences either internal or external to the Initiative. This includes MRCs, public agencies, elected officials, educational institutions, business partners, non-profit organizations, financial supporters and the public.

This does not convey nor imply that either Party is obligated to support an event or activity promoted by the other. The Parties may collaborate, if so choosing, to the extent that each Party's respective resources, funding and authorities permit.

Organization of any specific conference, workshop or event related to this MOU is contingent upon sufficient funding, and shall require the execution of a separate written agreement that is signed by all relevant parties.

Developing Relationships with Agencies and Units of Government

Both Parties will work collaboratively to inform and educate select governmental agencies, state legislators and Congressional and tribal representatives, and local government officials about this Partnership. The Parties will also work collaboratively to further the shared mission of expanding opportunities for marine conservation within the Initiative framework. The current mechanism for this work is the External Relations Committee comprised of members representing both Parties.

The Parties' activities may include meetings to educate and inform officials about our work, submitting letters of support or concern regarding legislation related to the Salish Sea, providing field trips highlighting restoration needs and outcomes, and strengthening awareness about the Initiative.

Coordinating Public and Internal Communications

The Parties agree to collaborate in the development of outreach materials describing this Partnership, their mutual program goals, and the funding and program opportunities that are available from potential funders and agency partners. Such activities may include, but are not limited to, the development of:

- A. Informational brochures
- B. Web and internet-based communications;
- C. Public presentations;
- D. Articles in the media, newsletters for professional organizations, and e-communications

The Parties agree to collaborate on an annual report summarizing the collective outcomes and impacts of the Initiative on Puget Sound recovery and demonstrating how federal and state base funds that support the Initiative have been leveraged.

The Parties agree to designate one or more staff members from each organization to meet monthly to review current communications activities and emerging opportunities.

The Parties may choose to work together to publicly launch and conduct public outreach about this Partnership, through press releases, media outreach, web-based promotions, and other strategies.

The Parties may also collaborate to publicize and promote the Initiative through outreach events and opportunities such as volunteer service days, education programs, and other opportunities mutually agreed to by the Parties.

Sharing Organizational Resources

Both Parties will make good faith efforts to commit such staff and resources to the Partnership as are necessary and feasible, and to ensure that workload is equitably shared. Specific resources committed under this MOU may include:

- A. Provision of match to the other Party in support of third-party grant applications;
- B. Communication to the public through channels such as Twitter and Facebook;
- C. Technical support on joint and individual projects; and,
- D. Work on projects of shared interest.

III. GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

In carrying out this Partnership, both Parties agree that:

Term and Termination: This MOU shall commence as of the date upon which it is executed by both Parties, and shall continue in effect for three (3) years thereafter, which term may be renewed by a written statement signed by both Parties.

Amendments: The Parties reserve the right to amend this MOU from time to time, in writing as may be mutually agreed. No amendment hereto shall be effective unless written and signed by authorized representatives of both Parties.

Relationship of Parties: This MOU shall in no way constitute or give rise to a legal partnership between the Parties. All operations by each party under the terms of this MOU shall be carried on by it as independent contractor and not as an agent for the other. Each Party will be responsible for its own acts and the results thereof, and neither party shall be responsible for the acts of the other parties or the results thereof, incident to performance of the work under this MOU. This MOU in no way restricts either Party from participating in similar activities or arrangements with other public or private agencies, organizations, or individuals.

Volunteer Insurance: The Foundation shall insure volunteers through its current general liability insurance, which provides not less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence for bodily injury and property damage, subject to the usual and customary policy conditions. At its request, the Commission may be added as a named insured to the extent its interests may appear.

The Commission may elect to insure volunteers through the Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve for specific projects coordinated by Commission staff. Volunteers entered into the volunteer pool can qualify for L & I coverage through the Washington State Department of Ecology. Projects must first be vetted to meet the Department of Ecology's criteria. In order to qualify for coverage, volunteers must be properly trained and they must report their hours.

Confidentiality: During and after the performance of this MOU, each Party shall regard as confidential and proprietary any information which, when provided, is designated as confidential by the disclosing Party ("Confidential Information") or which reasonably appears to be confidential. Confidential Information shall not include information that is within the public domain. The Party receiving such Confidential Information shall not, without the disclosing Party's prior written consent, at any time (i) use Confidential Information for any purpose other than in connection with the performance of its obligations under this MOU or (ii) disclose any portion of Confidential Information to any third party or parties.

Compliance with Laws: Each Party shall comply with all applicable laws and regulations.

Assignment: Neither Party may assign this MOU without the prior written consent of the other Party.

The Parties agree that electronic signatures of this MOU, if executed by a designated signatory of each respective party who has authority to sign agreements, shall be deemed a valid and binding execution of this MOU.

Terms: This MOU becomes active for a period of three (3) years starting the day it is approved and signed by the board of the Northwest Straits Foundation and by the Northwest Straits Commission.

Principal Contacts for implementing this Agreement are:

Don Hunger, Executive Director
Northwest Straits Foundation
1155 North State St. #402 Bellingham, WA 98225
don@nwstraitsfoundation.org Office: 360-733-1725

Lucas Hart, Director
Northwest Straits Commission
431 Water Street, Port Townsend, WA 98368
hart@nwstraits.org Office: 360-391-7190

Anne Murphy, Chair
Northwest Straits Foundation

Date

Alan Clark, Chair
Northwest Straits Commission

Date

2021-23 Marine Resources Committee Grant Timeline - **DRAFT**

<u>Task</u>	<u>Deadline</u>
Commission issues request for draft project list from MRCs MRCs requested to share a summary of anticipated projects with high-level overview of approach and project goal, along with identifying any other anticipated sources of funding or additional funding needs.	January 2021
Commission issues request for proposals to MRCs Request for Proposals (RFP), including grant process and schedule, sent electronically to MRCs by Commission staff. Proposal will be for a two-year award period.	March 15, 2021
MRC/Commission consultations Consultation meetings between MRC staff and project leads and Commission staff to review RFP, project details (including measurable outcomes and goals) and online application system (EAGL).	March-April, 2021
Funding opportunity opens in EAGL Online grant opportunity opens in Ecology Administration of Grants and Loans (EAGL) system. Applications will be initiated and sent by Commission staff to MRCs. MRCs are encouraged to review all user roles at the recipient end before completing application.	May 3, 2021
Application deadline to Northwest Straits Commission MRCs must submit applications through the Ecology Administration of Grants and Loans (EAGL) system by end of day (11:59pm).	June 8, 2021
Project review and evaluation Internal review by Commission staff to ensure that proposal meets RFP criteria. Proposals will also be reviewed the Science Advisory Committee and other technical advisors as needed. Clarification or additional information from MRCs may be requested.	June-July, 2021
MRC Presentation to Northwest Straits Commission MRC presentation of one proposed project to the Commission at its monthly meeting. Science Advisory Committee will be invited to attend presentations.	May 28 or June 25, 2021
Grant approval A Northwest Straits grants subcommittee will conduct final review of proposals and make recommendations for approval to the Northwest Straits Commission.	July 30, 2021

**Prepare Grant Agreements****August 2021**

Commission and MRC staff will prepare grant agreements to move forward for processing and signature by Ecology and affiliated counties.

MRCs' beginning project date**October 1, 2021**

MRCs are encouraged to expedite processing through the county system by organizing ahead of time where possible.

Amendment opportunity for year two revisions/additions**February-March, 2022****Project review and evaluation****April 2022**

New projects to be reviewed by Commission staff, Science Advisory Committee and/or other technical advisors as needed. Clarification or additional information from MRCs may be requested.

Project amendment approval**June 2022**

A Northwest Straits grants subcommittee will conduct final review of year two proposed projects and make recommendations for approval to the Northwest Straits Commission.

Year one state fund expenditure deadline**June 30, 2022**

Year one state funding must be spent by the end of June, 2022. Extensions are not possible.

Prepare year two project amendments**July 2022**

Commission and MRC staff will prepare grant amendments to move forward for processing and signature by Ecology and affiliated counties.

Year one EPA fund expenditure deadline**September 30, 2022**

The first year of EPA funding must be spent by the end of September, 2020. Extensions are not possible.

Year two state fund expenditure deadline**June 30, 2023**

The second year of state funding must be spent by the end of June, 2023. Extensions are not possible.

Grant completion date**September 2023**

All grants must be fully expended and all projects completed by September 30, 2020. Extension beyond September 2023 is not possible.

**Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission
(NWIFC)
Monthly Report**

Month/Year: October 29, 2020

Project updates:

- *2020 State of Our Watersheds Report*: This report is being finalized and preparing for print/publishing. The projected finish date is December 2020.
- September 2020 Marine Conditions Bulletin out now. See attachments.

Legislative updates: N/A

Emerging issues:

- **2020 Nationwide Permit Reissuance, USACE.**
 - The Army Corps has initiated early action and public comment process to update and reissue all Nationwide Permits (NWP). Permits issued by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (the Corps) authorize various types of development projects in wetlands and other waters of the United States. The Corps' regulatory process involves two types of permits: general permits for actions by private landowners that are similar in nature and will likely have a minor effect on jurisdictional waters and wetlands, and individual permits for more significant actions.
 - The current NWPs are not set to expire until 2022. However, this 2020 reissuance would replace the current NWPs and would be in place for the next 5 years. Comments on the proposed changes to NWPs are due November 16, 2020.
 - NWPs that NW Straits Commission may be interested in reviewing and commenting on:
 - NWP 3 and NWP 13 Concerning maintenance of structures or fill in water or overwater (i.e. bulkheads, rip rap, docks etc.) and NWP13, concerning permitted Bank Stabilization activities.
 - NWP 10 Moring Buoys
 - NWP 22 Removal of Vessels
 - Two NEW NWPs one of which concerns permitting activities of seaweed mariculture.
 - NWIFC is working with member tribes to submit comments on both the NWP reissuance as well as comments to proposed regional permit conditions that come from Seattle District Army Corps.
 - Under sec. 401 of the Clean Water Act, the state Dept. of Ecology, Tribes with treatment as a state, and EPA (for waters outside jurisdiction of tribes or state) must also issue a 401 certification for NWPs; certifying that NWPs will meet or will not impair water quality standards set forth by the certifying authorities.
 - Under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (CWA), a federal agency may not issue a permit or license to conduct any activity that may result in any discharge into waters of the United States unless a Section 401 water quality certification is issued, verifying compliance with water quality requirements, or certification is waived.

Additional helpful links:

- View the Federal Register Notice re: 2020 Nationwide Permit Reissuance. Comments are due November 16, 2020. <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2020/09/15/2020-17116/proposal-to-reissue-and-modify-nationwide-permits>

September 2020

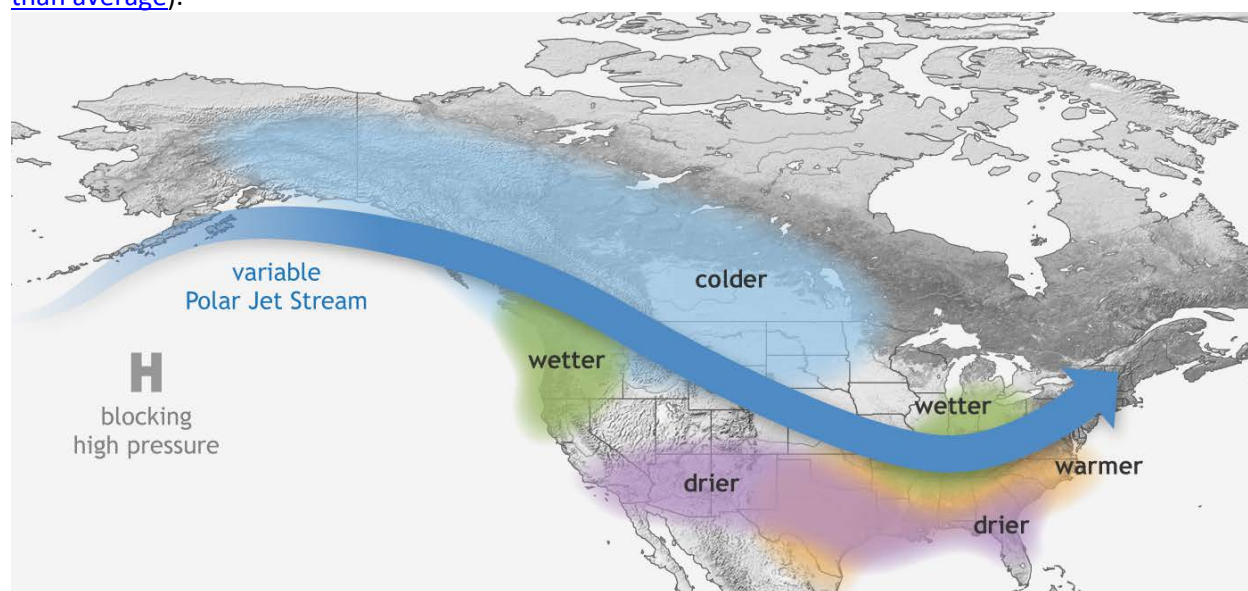
NWIFC Marine Conditions Bulletin

Summary

Offshore conditions are mixed – we are currently experiencing a large marine heatwave but are also in a La Niña that is predicted to last through at least next spring. A persistent, strong hypoxic event lasted for most of the summer on the southern portion of the outer coast, clearing (in shallower waters at least) with the recent storms. For the Salish Sea, hypoxic conditions are present in Hood Canal and east of Whidbey Island. Summer phytoplankton blooms have led to beach closures in many areas, and conditions bear watching with the recent rain and warm weather events.

Regional Indicators

ENSO – We are currently in an La Niña, with a 75% chance of these conditions persisting through the spring. NOAA has released a [La Niña advisory](#), stating that La Niña conditions were present in August and would likely persist through the winter. La Niña conditions tend to be good for salmon recruitment, as conditions are cooler and coastal upwelling is stronger. In general, conditions in the PNW tend to be wetter and cooler than average (9 out of the last 11 moderate to strong La Niña's have had [wetter than average wintertime conditions](#) and 7 out of the last 11 moderate to strong La Niña's have been [cooler than average](#)).

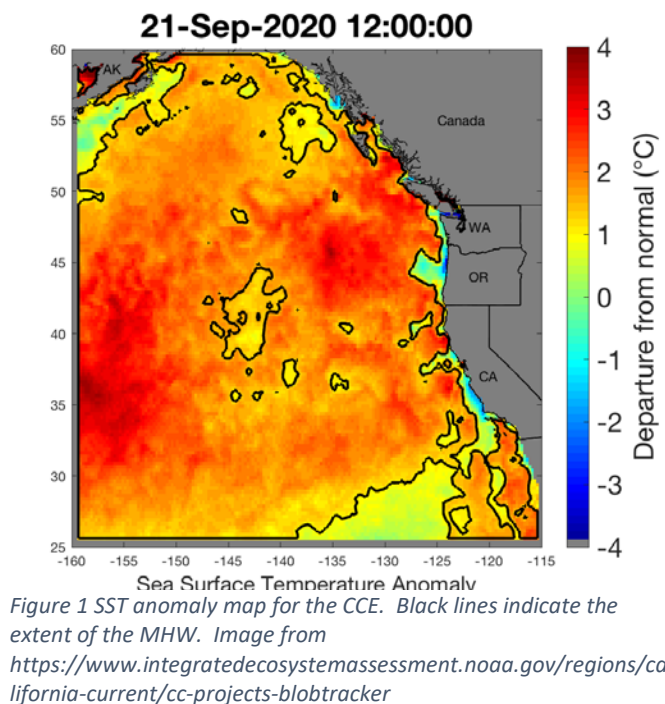


Wintertime La Niña pattern. Map by Fiona Martin for NOAA Climate.gov.

Pacific Decadal Oscillation and North Pacific Gyre Oscillation – Currently the PDO is in a cool phase and the NPGO is negative. The PDO is a long-term Pacific Ocean fluctuation, historically on the scale of 20-30 years, although more frequently in recent years. The PDO is derived from sea surface temperature (SST) anomalies in the NE Pacific, and during cool phases coastal SSTs on the US West Coast tend to be cooler and more productive. NPGO is a variation in sea surface height (which are influenced by

upwelling and large-scale circulation). Negative NPGO values are associated with decreases in subarctic source waters, lower nutrients and chlorophyll-*a* (Chl-*a*) and lower overall system productivity. However, [recent research](#) has shown a weakening in the relationship between the PDO and NPGO and regional ecosystems.

Marine Heat Waves – There is currently a large MHW off the West Coast, which has been increasing in size through the summer. The depth of the warm water is relatively shallow, so conditions will not likely persist through the winter. NEP20b, which formed earlier this summer has expanded in recent weeks to become the largest MHW by area (~9.8 million km²) since monitoring began. The portion near the WA and OR coast appears to be held at bay by strong coastal upwelling, although that may change with our recent weather system. NEP20b is relatively shallow, with warm waters only extending 30-50m deep (as compared to the Blob, which had warm water extending down to ~300 m deep). As the fall and winter storms develop this warm water mass will likely be mixed with cooler waters from depth, and the MHW will not likely persist through the winter.



Drought – Conditions in the PNW are likely to be warmer and drier than normal in September, and warmer and wetter conditions will likely be present through December. The exception for the below-average precipitation was the Olympic Peninsula, which experienced above average precipitation. Drought conditions in central WA, OR, and CA are likely to continue or worsen through at least October. For more information see <https://climate.washington.edu/outlook/>.

Outer Coast

Conditions at a Glance – SST on the outer coast current ranges from 11-13°C at the mouth of the Strait, 14°C at the NOS station near La Push and 14-16°C near Grays Harbor (based on data from NOS stations available on the [NANOOS portal](#)). Chlorophyll-*a* concentrations for the last 8 days are high along the coast north of La Push and from Grays Harbor southward, and are low in the Juan de Fuca Eddy. This likely reflects upwelling favorable conditions earlier in the month followed by the recent storms with downwelling favorable winds pushing nutrient rich waters on shore. Dissolved oxygen data from the Chá Bă mooring shows decent conditions at depth, with a brief period of hypoxia around September 18th. The OOI mooring off Copalis Beach records persistent, severe hypoxia at 29 m depth that persisted for most of the summer and ended abruptly when the storms last week mixed the water column.

HABs – All beaches on the Outer Coast are still seasonally closed, although there was recently a recreational razor clam opener. The September 11th HAB Bulletin had the HAB risk as medium due to uncertainty in offshore data and low concentrations of biotoxins.

Salish Sea

Conditions at a Glance – SST in the Salish Sea currently ranges from 13°C at the mouth of the Strait, 14°C near Bellingham, 11°C near Admiralty Inlet, and 13-15°C in the South Sound and Hood Canal.

Chlorophyll-*a* concentrations over the last 8 days (from remote sensing data) are high near the mouth of the Strait, especially near Vancouver Island, and from Tacoma north along the coast. The LiveOcean model is predicting hypoxic conditions in bottom waters on the east side of Whidbey Island, most of Hood Canal, and bottom waters that are close to hypoxic in much of the Strait. Data from the ORCA buoys show that the model predictions are fairly accurate. The hypoxia in Hood Canal is like due to strongly stratified conditions, with surface mixed layers that extend 5-20 m deep. The ORCA buoy near Twanoh shows an interesting feature – a strong subsurface Chlorophyll-*a* maximum that has persisted for the past 2 months.

HABs and Beach Closures – There is currently a seasonal Vibriosis advisory in effect through the end of September for all Hood Canal waters south of Brinnon. Waters to the north and all of the Strait are closed for all species of shellfish except for waters inside Whidbey Island (except for waters inside of Camano Island), and many of the beaches in these areas are also closed for harvest. Nearshore waters from Tacoma north to Evert, Budd Inlet, and waters near Port Angeles and Clallam Bay are closed due to pollution. For more information see <https://fortress.wa.gov/doh/biotoxin/biotoxin.html>. Additionally, swimming at Saltwater State Park is closed due to a 1.2 million gallon sewage spill

Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 many monitoring activities such as [Eyes Over Puget Sound](#) are currently suspended.

Research of Interest

[Abalone populations are most sensitive to environmental stress effects on adult individuals](#) – New research into which life stages of Abalone are most vulnerable to environmental stress has found that their adult stage is the most sensitive. The models used in the study predicted that factors such as decreased recruitment and larval survival changes had small negative impacts, and that parameters that affect the size and/or survival of adults are more important. While Abalone are primarily a concern in California, this study does serve as a reminder to consider a species whole life cycle when considering vulnerability and restoration.

[Reduced ecological resilience jeopardizes zero loss of biodiversity using the mitigation hierarchy](#) – A new paper shared by Gary Morishima (and forwarded on by Amy Seiders) as part of the Net Ecological Gain Advisory Team discussions. This study demonstrates that that “no net loss” is not the same as “zero loss”. Under no net loss, biodiversity losses due to human activities are balanced by compensatory efforts (i.e. creating new wetlands when destroying existing ones). However, this is a delayed compensation approach (the existing resource is degraded immediately and the compensation takes time develop) that will lead to future biodiversity losses, and the effects are greatest when the impacts are large and the compensation delays are long. The authors advocate for using fixed targets rather than net outcomes.

[Warming and acidification threaten glass sponge *Aphrocallistes vastus* pumping and reef formation](#) – New research is highlighting vulnerabilities of the glass sponges that make up unique reef systems in the Pacific Northwest (the only known glass sponge reefs in the world). Warming and acidification have significant negative impacts on the sponges, and irreversible damage is possible at temperatures 0.5°C above current conditions.

[The Impacts of Ocean Acidification on Marine Ecosystems and Reliant Human Communities](#) – For those interested in a comprehensive review of the impacts of OA on ecosystems and communities, Doney et al. provide a good place to start. This review looks at ecosystem services such as fisheries, aquaculture and shoreline protection, highlighting our current understanding and gaps.

[Temperature and salinity, not acidification, predict near-future larval growth and larval habitat suitability of Olympia oysters in the Salish Sea](#) – Lawlor et al. look at the temperature, salinity and OA constraints on Olympia oyster larval growth, finding that under current and future conditions they are not negatively impacted by OA and are spawning at temperatures below their optimal growth rates. They do note that they only consider the larval stage, and does not look at bottlenecks associated with settlement or metamorphosis.

[Trophic pyramids reorganize when food web architecture fails to adjust to ocean change](#) – While not focused on the PNW, this study does provide a look at how trophic structures could change in the future. They find that in some cases food webs can be inflexible, and in mesocosms mimicking future ocean conditions they found that biomass expanded at the top and bottom of the foodweb increased, suggesting a transition to a state of collapse.

[Coastal processes modify projections of some climate-driven stressors in the California Current System](#) – This study looks at using downscaled models for sections of the CCS to improve future climate change projections. They find that the predicted changes within the CCS are consistent with global models, but

the magnitude and spatial variability of the changes differ, emphasizing the importance of improving our understanding by which coastal processes interact with large-scale drivers of change.

[The challenges of detecting and attributing ocean acidification impacts on marine ecosystems](#) –

Attribution of climate change to changes in the environment is non-trivial and often poorly documented. This study focuses on four relatively well-studied marine groups, highlighting the challenges with attribution (and how rarely this has been done). They then outline a potential strategy forward on how to remedy this.

[Thermal displacement by marine heatwaves](#) – This study looks at marine heatwaves in terms of how far an organism would have to travel to find waters that are similar in temperature to what they are used to, demonstrating that during severe MHWs species can be displaced by 1000's of km. While their results have not been fully confirmed, past evidence (such as species displacement during the Blob years) does support their findings. They conclude by noting that species displacement by MHWs is something that needs to be considered in management decisions.

[Fragmented kelp forest canopies retain their ability to alter local seawater chemistry](#) – Kelp forests have been championed as potential refugia for OA sensitive species, however, they are becoming increasingly fragmented. This study looks at smaller, fragmented kelp forests during the summer, finding significant increases in pH associated with them, with the largest increase near their outer edges (likely due to great light penetration). They do note that while their study is limited to time period, fragmented kelp forests do have the potential to provide diurnal and seasonal refugia.

[The changing physical and ecological meanings of North Pacific Ocean climate indices](#) – The Pacific Decadal Oscillation and the North Pacific Gyre Oscillation have been important tools in predicting ecosystem responses to regional climate, and are widely used by fisheries managers. Since the late 1980's there has been a weakening in the correlation between the PDO/NPGO and regional physical and ecosystem responses, likely due to the weakening of the Aleutian Low (a persistent atmospheric feature that helped govern regional climate in the North Pacific). Reliance on these indicators should be treated with caution now and moving into the future.

Puget Sound Partnership
Monthly Report

Month/Year: October 2020

State Updates (budget or legislative activity):

The 2021 legislative session begins January 11, 2021 and goes 105 consecutive days. The Legislature must adopt an operating budget for the 2021-2023 Biennium and is likely, but not required, to also adopt a capital budget.

Of particular interest to NWSC:

In 2019, the State Department of Revenue issued guidance stating that grants for habitat restoration are subject to B&O and retail sales and use taxes. The Department has submitted proposed agency request legislation to clarify that habitat restoration grants are exempt from these taxes. It must be approved by the Governor's Office and the Office of Financial Management before it becomes an official agency request bill.

The Regional Fisheries Coalition is advocating for non-profit organizations to be exempt from business and occupation and retail sales and use taxes when they receive grant funding from a government entity for habitat or salmon restoration work (RCW 82.04.4339), including indirect grants often referred to as "contract agreements."

The Senate Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources & Parks Committee had a virtual work session on this topic on October 20, 2020. The link below will take you to a recording of the TVW broadcast of the work session. The relevant portion of the work session begins at about 1:36:20.

<https://www.tvw.org/watch/?clientID=9375922947&eventID=2020101007>

Opportunities to Engage with Partnership Products:

- The Partnership is continuing the 2022-2026 Action Agenda update process. The update process is currently focused on developing desired outcomes for reducing adverse effects on the ecosystem, also known as stressors. Recent workshops provided an opportunity for recovery partners to contribute their thinking to identifying those stressors and grouping like stressors together. Future workshops will provide opportunities for partners to contribute their thinking to desired outcomes that are being identified for reducing these stressors. Keep an eye for updates and opportunities to participate on the [2022-2026 Action Agenda update website](#) including the next workshop on November 17th.
- In August, MRCs were made aware that the Partnership was circulating a questionnaire to glean insight about the barriers and challenges partners face as they implement projects and programs that change behavior to support Puget Sound recovery. The Partnership received over 140 responses to its questionnaire and is currently working with Cascadia Consulting Group to analyze the results. Findings from the questionnaire will inform how the Partnership can support recovery partners in the implementation of projects and programs that change behavior to support Puget Sound recovery. Additionally, MRC's responses to the questionnaire will be shared with the NWSC to support its work to develop a toolkit for MRCs. We greatly appreciate the time and effort that so many put in to complete the questionnaire.

Northwest Straits Foundation Work Updates

October, 2020

Projects

1. After submitting LOI we've been invited for a full proposal NOAA Marine Debris Program's latest RFP. The proposal is a two-year project removing crab pots from Anacortes-Padilla Bay area with a commercial crabber targeted outreach campaign. Unlike other areas we've found approx. 70% of pots lost here to be from the commercial sector. Partnering with NRC, Swinomish Tribe, and potentially other tribes and the State commercial fleet. Will train and deploy divers from the commercial fleets, Swinomish has confirmed their interest.
2. The monitoring season has wrapped up aside from continued monthly forage fish spawning surveys. Data is being compiled and analyzed now in preparation for a gray literature report to be produced by March 2021. We will co-author on the report led by UW analyzing results of monitoring efforts Puget Sound-wide.
3. Monitoring NTA will be extended through Dec. 2022, waiting on final budget approval. Budget includes new funds and use of unspent funding to allow for more staff support while we continue to have restrictions on working with volunteers.
4. Bowman Bay seining will resume in January with staff support until we may work with volunteers on this project once again.
5. The second Shore Friendly video series will be released within the next two weeks. If you haven't seen the first one, it's on the NWSF website.
6. Seahorse Siesta barge work is rescheduled to start the week of October 26. It's been delayed again.

Advancement

1. We hosted our 1st Virtual Orca Forum, an Orca Recovery Day event in partnership with Whidbey Island Conservation District and the WWU/Salish Sea Institute. Presenters Rich Osborne, Jacques White and Deborah Giles each did a terrific job. 135 households joined from 4 states and BC. Feedback has been great. We plan more educational forums on other topics (TBD) in months ahead.
2. We received two grants totally \$12K for virtual communications during the pandemic. This is indicative of a trend of foundations pivoting to small grants to support established non-profit partners with community engagement while they can't connect in person.
3. We are launching a pre-recorded live music and conservation profile series on November 12. It's called "Salish Sea Strings." It's a combination of live performance and interview with a conservationist (scientist, manager, educator, tribal, etc) working in the NWS. The first episode includes Bellingham band Bob Fossil and Jason Morgan. Our goal is to build episodes including musicians and conservationists from each of the seven counties.

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Clallam MRC

Month/Year: October 2020

Submitted by: Helle Andersen

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

- Two new members – Ann Stafford and Alisa Hasbrouck. Alisa participated in the September meeting and both came to the October meeting.
- The Fellowship contract with Alisa Taylor was extended for seven months.
- The members approved the 2020-21 educational outreach plan which includes several new outreach events in response to Covid-19.

Membership/Leadership changes (new/departing members, changes to chair/vice-chair, NWSC representative/alternate, staff): Two new members - Ann Stafford will be the representative for Tourism & Recreation and Alisa Hasbrouck will be the alternate for City of Sequim.

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

The Clallam MRC meeting was held Monday Oct. 19th. Nicole Naar, Ph.D. candidate at UC Davis, gave a presentation on kelp aquaculture. Other topics included member discussion and approval of the Clallam MRC Educational Outreach Plan 2020-21, forage fish sampling and a discussion of processing the samples in-house, improving Clallam MRC mapping capabilities by purchasing one year subscription to ArcGIS, and NWSC and project 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 Sampling: Sampling was conducted at Ediz Hook Oct. 15th and the sampling at Cline Spit will take place Oct. 28th. Lisa Hillier from WDFW will come to this sampling event and training new volunteers and provide a refresher training for old volunteers.

Climate Change Subcommittee: The subcommittee met Sept 29th to prioritize the MRC actions based on the meetings with the three commissioners. The actions include presentation at the NW Development Council, reach out the business community and Port of Port Angeles to create a better connection, kelp agriculture, county and cities greenhouse gas inventory, and reach out to residents on the west end.

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): None

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Island

Month/Year: October 2020

Submitted by: Anna Toledo

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

- **Congressman Larsen visit:** Congressman Larsen visited two restoration sites to learn about the MRC's work. He visited Seahorse Siesta, where a barge and bulkhead will be removed at the toe of a feeder bluff this month. He also visited Sunlight Shores, where a bulkhead made of creosote-treated wood, rock, and debris, was removed in 2018.
- **Orca Recovery Day proclamation:** The MRC presented a proclamation to the Board of Island County Commissioners regarding Orca Recovery Day. The Commissioners passed the resolution, proclaiming October 17, 2020 Orca Recovery Day in Island County.
- **Forage fish training:** Lisa Hillier from WDFW will be conducting an on-the-beach training for new forage fish volunteers in November.

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:

- October 6: MRC meeting via Zoom. Topics: Community Litter Cleanup Program, Voluntary No-Anchor Zones
- October 17: Orca Recovery Day. Events with partners listed below:
 - o October 14: Orca forum hosted by NWSF
 - o October 15: Trivia night hosted by NWSF
 - o Month of October: Orca-inspired art contest in partnership with Sound Water Stewards
 - o Month of October: Eco-challenge to record actions taken to support orca recovery

Upcoming Meetings/Events:

- November 3: MRC meeting via Zoom.
- November 5: Last day to log activity for [MRC Eco-challenge team](#)
- November, date TBD: announce winners of art contest

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 Cornet Bay, Hidden Beach, and Glendale. We will be adding Hoypus Point in October, and possibly Sunlight Shores in the upcoming months. Ann Prusha received a WDFW forage fish training, and has been helping coordinate and support the forage fish volunteers. Lisa Hillier (WDFW) will be coming to Whidbey on November 10 to provide an on-the-beach training for new volunteers.

Bull Kelp: Volunteers finished surveys in September. Data were collected from four kelp beds this summer: Polnell Point, Ebey's Landing, Possession Point, and Lowell Point. Linda Rhodes put together a report summarizing the project from fall 2019 through summer 2020. She will submit a more complete report in December once the September 2020 data have been analyzed. Key findings included that kelp beds were equivalent or slightly smaller than beds in 2019, and surface temperatures were slightly lower than in 2019.

Outreach – Needs Assessment: The needs assessment subcommittee hosted a training for MRC members who will be conducting interviews with County Department heads, staff, elected officials, and partner organizations. Interviews are expected to begin in November once the questionnaire has been finalized.

Outreach – Eelgrass Storymap: Ann Prusha will be leading the development of the eelgrass storymap. She will be working with volunteers from the eelgrass monitoring team and MRC members to develop an outline for this interactive educational tool.

Outreach – Orca Recovery Day: The MRC partnered with Whidbey Island Conservation District, NWSF, and several additional partners on events to recognize Orca Recovery Day, October 17. Events included an orca forum and trivia night hosted by NWSF. An art contest and eco-challenge are ongoing throughout the month of October, and winners will be announced in November.

Island County Commissioner Janet St. Clair requested that the MRC draft a proclamation declaring October 17, 2020 Orca Recovery Day in Island County. The Board of Island County Commissioners passed the proclamation.

Congressman Larsen visit: Congressman Rick Larsen visited two restoration sites – Seahorse Siesta and Sunlight Shores – in Island County to learn about the work of the MRC. Both projects have been partnerships with the NWSF. At Seahorse Siesta, MRC Chair, Kelly Zupich, shared about the work of the MRC. Community members and Lisa Kaufman shared about the project, which is scheduled to begin this month. The project will involve the removal of a grounded barge and bulkhead from the toe of a feeder bluff.

At Sunlight Shores, Anna Toledo shared about the MRC's role in outreach and monitoring at restoration sites, as well as the connection with the Shore Friendly program. Lucas Hart shared about the NWSC and the impact of federal support. Lori Clark, Island Local Integrating Organization Coordinator, shared about the value of leveraging partnerships. Lisa Kaufman explained the project details. Community members shared about the habitat and recreational benefits of removing shoreline armor.

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):



Left: Possession Point kelp bed. Credit: Ron Beier. Right: Kelp crab in kelp bed. Credit: Linda Rhodes.



Left: Kelly Zupich shares about the accomplishments of the MRC with Congressman Larsen at Seahorse Siesta restoration site. Credit: Anna Toledo. Right: Congressman Larsen visits Sunlight Shores restoration site. Credit: Lance Porter.

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Jefferson

Month/Year: October 2020

Submitted by: Monica Montgomery

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

- We completed installation of the rain garden at Clay and Benton Streets in Uptown Port Townsend! The homeowners are committed to maintaining it and the neighbors are thrilled. We didn't realize just how popular Clay Street is for pedestrians and cyclists who travel it to avoid the busier Lawrence Street, so it serves as both a great neighborhood amenity and educational opportunity (while reducing the amount of contaminants flowing into PT Bay).
- No-anchor zone subcommittee swapped out summer buoys in Port Townsend Bay to prep for the winter.

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

- Sept 21 – MRC presentation to the BoCC
- Sept 23 – Rain garden installation @ Clay & Benton Streets in Uptown PT
- Sept 25 – NWSC meeting
- Sept 29 – Forage fish sampling at Dabob
- Oct 6 – MRC Monthly meeting
- Oct 15 – Forage fish sampling at Adelma
- Oct 18 – Swapped summer buoys with winter buoys in PT Bay
- Oct 20 – Executive Committee meeting
- Oct 20 – MRC lead staff meeting

Upcoming Events/Meetings

- Oct 26 – Forage fish sampling at Dabob
- Nov 10 – MRC monthly meeting
- Nov 20 – Executive Committee meeting
- Nov – Forage fish sampling at Fort Townsend
- Nov – Forage fish sampling at Adelma
- Nov – Forage fish sampling at Dabob

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

Nothing to report.

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

1. Monitoring:

- a. **Forage fish - Fort Townsend:** The MRC was planning to monitor on October 15th, however, the main road into Fort Townsend State Park has been closed off due to a re-pavement project. We plan to resume monitoring in November for our fifth and possibly final season of post-restoration monitoring (totaling six years).
- b. **Forage fish - Adelma Beach (Index):** The property owner/MRC member sampled on October 15th, devising a a covid-friendly, solo set-up.
- c. **Forage fish - Dabob Bay (Index):** Jeff helped put together a new forage fish sampling kit for the Dabob site on October 19th. The property owner/MRC member will be sampling on October 26th with the help of a neighbor.
- d. **Kelp:** Nothing to report.

2. Rain Gardens:

- a. Five staff with the MRC, WSU Extension and the Native Plant Salvage Foundation (including one of their AmeriCorps volunteers) installed the MRC's second rain garden this year, located at the NW corner of Clay and Benton Streets, on September 23rd. About 20-30 cyclists, pedestrians, and drivers passing by expressed appreciation for the rain garden, some engaging in conversation and learning about the project. Two WSU Extension staff worked on final touch ups on October 2nd.

3. Education & Outreach:

- a. The subcommittee met on October 13th to discuss outreach efforts. The subcommittee (and perhaps the MRC as a whole) are growing more interested in engaging in climate change education and action, particularly sea level rise and ocean acidification. We're considering organizing a speaker series for the public (and for better educating ourselves). We're also assessing what other marine-related organizations/agencies in our county are doing in terms of outreach, where there might be gaps we can fill and opportunities for partnerships.

4. Olympia Oysters:

- a. Nothing to report.

5. Voluntary No-Anchor Zones:

- a. Three MRC members went out on Oct. 18th with the Port of Port Townsend's boat to swap out the summer buoys with winter buoys in PT Bay.

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: Nothing to report.

Jefferson County SMP Update: Ongoing. Two MRC members, Gordon King and Brent Vadopalas, have joined the Task Force.

City of Port Townsend SMP Update: Ongoing. Nothing to report.

Shoreline Landowner Outreach (NWSF): We are working with Lisa Kaufman and Melanie del Rosario on organizing a webinar, tentatively scheduled for early December, in place of our usual in-person workshops.

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

Solo set-up for forage fish sampling – photo by Jeff Taylor



Uptown Port Townsend (Clay and Benton Streets) rain garden installation – photos by Monica Montgomery







Completed rain garden - photo by Bob Simmons



MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: San Juan County

Month/Year: October 2020

Submitted by: Frances Robertson

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

- MRC members met with Congressman Larsen on October 23 on San Juan Island.
- Planning is underway for the Annual Retreat

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

No new membership changes to report.

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

The October MRC meeting (Oct 2nd) hosted Mark Bunzel from the Waggoners Cruising Guide who shared the experience of the recreational boaters use of the islands in 2020.

The MRC met with Congressman Larsen on October 23.

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

The County and MRC were successful in securing funding from PEW Charitable Trust to initiate a local eelgrass protection initiative consortium (EPIC) to increase the effectiveness of eelgrass protection and recovery through the collective impact of partners strategically coordinating their actions. This effort is being implemented in coordination with the NWSC and the NWSF.

Project Updates (project activities and highlights from the past month, any new projects identified):
October was dedicated to compiling final reporting for the MRC 2019-2020 year and thus no significant updates are available for reporting here.

The Boater Safety/Be Whale Wise kiosk at County Park was officially “opened” by MRC members and Park staff. This kiosk creates a great model for other County Parks around the islands.

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 published a second article in the local press highlighting the MRC’s recent participation in the Great Island’s Clean-Up.

https://www.islandssounder.com/life/letter-from-the-salish-sea/?fbclid=IwAR0C5c_5fBwp-wRwoup4_FyOq3EoxajqQbN5gMcl-rikehDNZxSHTASEnU

Planning for the annual retreat is also underway with a virtual retreat being planned for December.

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



MRC members and County Park Manager (and Kiosk creator) with the new boater safety/Be Whale Wise kiosk at San Juan County Park. Once it is safe to do so a life-vest lending station will be added to the kiosk.



MRC Members meet with Congressman Rick Larsen at Cattle Point Interpretive Center on San Juan Island.



MRC members and County staff discuss MRC projects and other marine issues facing the County with Congressman Rick Larsen.



Meeting with Congressman Rick Larsen and particularly blustery wet October day. Very Pacific Northwest!



State seeks additional public feedback on draft commercial whale watching rules

Date

Oct 21, 2020

Contact

Eryn Couch, 360-890-6604

This news release was updated Oct.23, 2020 to clarify information about the two proposed rule options. The description of the proposed rule in the original press release suggested Option A would allow motorized commercial whale-watching vessels to view SRKW daily from July-September; however, the proposed rule text as filed for Option A includes the same Friday-Monday viewing window as proposed in Option B. WDFW is interested in hearing public comments on Option A as filed and also in receiving comments on daily viewing.



Photo by Ken Rea

Public invited to submit comments online through Dec. 5, attend December virtual Fish and Wildlife Commission meeting

OLYMPIA - The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is looking for additional public feedback on draft commercial whale watching rules it released today to reduce vessel impacts on Southern Resident killer whales (SRKW).

Prompted by Senate Bill 5577 in 2019, WDFW is developing rules for how, when, and where commercial whale watching of SRKWs can occur. The new rules are intended to reduce impacts of vessel noise and disturbance on SRKWs so that they can effectively find food, rest and socialize.

"Public engagement has been critical to our work to develop these draft rules," said Julie Watson, WDFW killer whale policy lead. "We want to make sure we're continuing to bring forward the voices of everyone invested in recovering Southern Resident killer whales."

The public may submit written comments online through Dec. 5 (comments received by Nov. 13 will be analyzed for presentation to the Fish and Wildlife Commission). The Commission will also take public comment during a virtual hearing for the draft rules scheduled for Dec. 4-5.

The draft rules limit commercial viewing of SRKW to specific months of the year, days of the week, and times of day. The draft rules also create limits on the number of motorized commercial whale watching boats that can be near a group of SRKW at one time, and entirely closes an important foraging area on the west side of San Juan Island to motorized commercial whale watching boats.

Both options include details describing the licensing application process, reporting and training requirements, rules specifically for human-powered vessels like kayaks and rule violation penalties. Both options also propose that commercial whale watchers must operate an Automatic Identification System, which reports real-time vessel tracking data, starting in 2022.

Finally, both options propose formalizing the 'no-go' zone on the west side of San Juan Island, which is [currently voluntary](#), for motorized commercial whale watching vessels, while preserving a 100-yard corridor along the shore for kayaks. This geographic restriction would apply year-round regardless of SRKW presence.

The draft rules include two options for the SRKW-viewing season. Both options would restrict when whale watching boats can operate within one-half nautical mile (roughly the size of 10 football fields in each direction) bubble around SRKWs to two, two-hour periods per day within defined months and days; however, there are variations in the seasonal restrictions:

Option A includes:

- A three-month July-September season for motorized commercial whale watching of Southern Residents. In the final stages of drafting the proposed rule, text that would limit viewing to Friday-Monday was inadvertently included in Option A. WDFW is seeking comments on Option A as filed; the public is also welcome to comment on the possibility of daily viewing during those months.
- A limit of three motorized commercial whale watching vessels at a time with a group of Southern Residents.

Option B proposes:

- A three-month July-September season for motorized commercial whale watching of Southern Residents, with viewing restricted to Friday-Monday only during those months.
- A shoulder season with Saturday-Sunday viewing for two months on either side of the main season: May-June and October-November. During the shoulder season, there would be a limit of one motorized commercial whale watching vessel at a time with a group of Southern Residents.

The seasons described in Options A and B only apply to the viewing of SRKW by motorized commercial whale watching vessels and do not further restrict the viewing of Bigg's killer whales or other species of whales and marine mammals beyond regulations already in place.

To view the full draft rules and provide a comment, please visit WDFW's commercial whale-watching rulemaking webpage at wdfw.wa.gov/species-habitats/at-risk/species-recovery/orca/rule-making. An economic analysis of the impact of Options A and B on small businesses is also available on the rulemaking webpage.

Throughout 2020, WDFW staff received input from its Commercial Whale Watching Licensing Program Advisory Committee as well as an intergovernmental coordination group and an independent science panel. The rules are also being informed by a report summarizing the science, an environmental impact analysis of various options and an analysis of the economic impacts on the affected industry.

The public is also invited to continue participating in a concurrent public comment period, wrapping up this Friday, Oct. 23, on the environmental impacts being considered as part of this process. Comments can be submitted online at wdfw.wa.gov/licenses/environmental/sepa/open-comments or by mail to Lisa Wood, SEPA/NEPA Coordinator, WDFW Habitat Program, Protection Division, P.O. Box 43200, Olympia, WA 98504.

WDFW is the state agency tasked with preserving, protecting and perpetuating fish, wildlife and ecosystems, while providing sustainable fishing, hunting and other outdoor recreation opportunities.

Persons with disabilities who need to receive this information in an alternative format or who need reasonable accommodations to participate in WDFW-sponsored public meetings or other activities may contact Dolores Noyes by phone (360-902-2349), TTY (360-902-2207), or email (Title6@dfw.wa.gov). For more information, see <https://wdfw.wa.gov/accessibility/requests-accommodation>.

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Skagit

Month/Year: October/2020

Submitted by: Tracy/Pete

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

- MRC visit with Congressman Larsen on October 14th at Padilla Bay to highlight the Kids on the Beach and Salish Sea Stewards programs.
- The Salish Sea Stewards first virtual social was held on October 14th.
- New forage fish survey videos are being created for the Kids on the Beach virtual program to help keep the students engaged.

Membership/Leadership changes (new/departing members, changes to chair/vice-chair, NWSC representative/alternate, staff): Phyllis Bravinder recently resigned from her position on the MRC. Phyllis has been actively involved with the MRC since 2016. She was the MRC Project Lead for Kelp Surveys, served as our NWSC Alternate Rep, and served on several MRC subcommittees, and contributed countless volunteer hours helping with various projects and special events. She will be greatly missed!

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

- **MRC Monthly Meeting- October 8, 2020:** 13 people attended the Skagit MRC virtual meeting on October 8. Dana provided an update on the Voluntary No Anchor Zone proposal and the Committee discussed the NWSC/NWSF MOU. MRC grant reports are close to being finalized.
- **Visit with Congressman Larsen- October 14, 2020:** MRC member and Padilla Bay NERR Director, Jude Apple hosted a visit with Congressman Larsen at Padilla Bay. Jude, Susan Wood, Annie England, and Sasha Horst attended and shared information about our collaborative Kids on the Beach and Salish Sea Stewards programs.
- **Salish Sea Stewards Virtual Social- October 14, 2020:** Padilla Bay NERR education staff hosted the first virtual Salish Sea Stewards social on October 14th. 16 people attended. This event provided an opportunity to introduce the new class of 2020 Salish Sea Stewards to the veteran volunteers. They shared some of their experiences and stories and enjoyed a virtual tour of the Padilla Bay Aquarium room with their new touch pool exhibit. Padilla Bay received a lot of positive feedback from the attendees.
- **Next MRC Monthly Meeting- November 12, 9am-11:00am** (GoToMeeting)

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:** There aren't a whole lot of volunteer opportunities for the newly graduated Salish Sea Stewards due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of the new volunteers have recently gotten involved in the forage fish surveys, kelp monitoring surveys, and the Friends of Skagit Beaches stormwater outfall monitoring project. Four new Salish Sea Stewards volunteers joined the SSS Advisory Committee. The SSS Advisory Committee met on Sept 23rd to continue planning for 2021

Training starting mid Feb/early March. The training will be based on a hybrid model with virtual and in-person beach experiences. The Committee will be working on publicity flyers and forms for several months and will be updating social media sites and arranging for newspaper coverage of the upcoming training. Background checks will continue be paid by the trainees. Although there is a recognized need for volunteer coordination, it is outside the scope of work in Padilla Bay's contract. They do not currently have the staff capacity to take on that task. The Committee is exploring the possibility of recruiting a volunteer to fill that role to keep the larger group of Salish Sea Stewards informed, engaged, and connected. Padilla Bay hosted a virtual social for all of the Salish Sea Stewards on October 14th.

- Fidalgo Bay Day: The Fidalgo Bay Day 2020 Scavenger Hunt Final Report is now complete! 14 organizations that have participated in the past contributed to the scavenger hunt activity guide that can be downloaded from the event website: www.fidalgobayday.com. So far we've had over 286 unique visits to the website. We also distributed over 150 hard copies of the activity guide to various locations. We've been told that the Activity Guides have been very popular at the YMCA and the Burlington Library. The deadline to complete the activities to earn a certificate has been extended through October 31, 2020. So far only one family contacted us about completing the activities to earn a certificate. We created an online survey to try to get some feedback, but so far no surveys have been completed. The event website will continue to be up and running through next October 2021 to allow more time for folks to try the activities and to help promote next year's Fidalgo Bay Day.
- Bowman Bay Restoration: Plant maintenance at the Bowman Bay restoration site is done for the season. Skagit MRC is planning to recruit and train one or two lead volunteer stewards to maintain the site. Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group created a "Hand Book" for volunteers to use as a guide for maintaining the site. The [Hand Book](#) is available on the Skagit MRC website. Lots of small fir trees are becoming more visible at the site.
- Forage Fish Surveys: Forage fish surveys continue at all of our restoration sites and Index sites with a smaller number of volunteers and using safety protocols. Four new Salish Sea Stewards have been out a few times to help with the forage fish surveys this year. There has been lots of spawning with successful hatching at several at several different locations in Skagit County in the last couple of months. On October 17, the Salish Sea School students learned all about forage fish from the volunteers at the Fidalgo Bay resort. Craig Olsen brought his microscope with the giant screen for kids to get a close look at the surf smelt eggs.
- Kids on the Beach: The final report for the 2019/2020 Kids on the Beach program is now complete. Program materials are available on Padilla Bay's Facebook page for educators and the [Skagit MRC website](#). Planning is underway for the 2020/2021 Kids on the Beach program. According to feedback from teachers, the students are having a difficult time engaging in the virtual setting. Annie is working with teachers on more fun and engaging program materials with a little less hard science. She is developing a program with a mix of live virtual classroom instruction along with pre-recorded videos of beach seining and forage fish spawning surveys to help engage students in collecting data. Annie has also been working closely with coordinators of the Swinomish "Between Two Worlds" program on a bridged learning opportunity where Tribal youth will serve as mentors for LaConner middle school students during the late fall, winter, and spring forage fish KOTB investigations.
- Pinto Abalone Recovery: The final report is now complete and available on the [Skagit MRC website](#).
- Olympia Oyster Restoration: Field work is finished for the season. The data has been collected and processed. Overall, oyster settlement appears to be pretty average for the year. Paul Dinnel gave a virtual presentation on Native Olympia Oyster Restoration in Fidalgo Bay on October 7, 2020.

- Kayak Kelp Surveys: Kelp surveys are now finished for the season.

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):

Taking videos of forage fish surveys for upcoming virtual Kids on the Beach program



Salish Sea Stewards Conducting Forage Fish Surveys at Fidalgo Bay



Visit with Congressman Larsen at Padilla Bay – October 14, 2020



MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Snohomish

Month/Year: October 2020

Submitted by: Elisa Dawson

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

- MRC Piling Grant: The MRC has started Phase 2 and is currently working on hiring an on-call consultant to assist the MRC.
- MRC Oil Spill Subcommittee attended volunteer-training and recently submitted comments on the North Central Puget Sound Geographic Response Plan.
- The MRC completed removal of 4 derelict boats which are now being processed for disposal. Work is being done in partnership with DNR.

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

No changes at this time.

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

Elisa Dawson, Susan Tarpley, Mike Sadler, and Julie Schlenger attended a volunteer oil spill training on September 19 and 26. The training was hosted by WSU Snohomish County Beach Watchers.

Elisa Dawson and Laura Gurley met with Congressman Rick Larsen on September 28. They were joined by Snohomish County Surface Water Management Director Gregg Farris and Northwest Straits Staff Dana Oster. The group discussed the recently completed Snohomish Estuary Pilings Prioritization for Removal Project. You can see Rick Larsen's social media post on the visit here: <https://www.facebook.com/RepRickLarsen/posts/3321607691208413>

Tim Ellis and Elisa Dawson attended the LIO workshop on identifying priority outcomes for Puget Sound recovery on October 1.

Executive Team Members Mike Ehlebracht, Susan Tarpley and Bob Hillmann and staff Elisa Dawson had a conference call on October 7th to begin planning for the MRC November Retreat.

Elisa Dawson attended a shore friendly brainstorming session on October 9th to discuss ideas for a virtual workshop.

The Pilings Subcommittee met on October 12th to discuss the Phase 2 scope of work and begin the process for hiring an on-call consultant.

Forage fish sampling was completed on October 14 and 15. MRC Members Mike Sadler and Julie Schlenger assisted in the sampling efforts.

Elisa Dawson attended the MRC Lead Staff meeting on October 20.

The MRC had their monthly meeting on October 21. This month there were presentations by the Tulalip Tribes on the Martha Creek Restoration and the Pilchuck Dam Removal projects.

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: The MRC has started Phase 2 and is currently working on hiring an on-call consultant to assist the MRC. Interviews for on-call consultants is scheduled for October 26th.

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: Crabber Education ended in late August. No additional outreach is planned for this winter at this time.

MyCoast: Reports continue to come in.

Derelict Vessels: The MRC completed removal of 4 derelict boats which are now being processed for disposal. Work is being done in partnership with DNR.

The four vessels removed:

<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: The oil spill subcommittee attended a model oil spill group training on September 19 and 26, which was hosted by WSU Snohomish County. The subcommittee also recently submitted comments on the North Central Puget Sound Geographic Response Plan.

Meadowdale: Elisa Dawson is participating in a cross-agency effort to do pre-project monitoring at Meadowdale Beach in anticipation of the restoration work there. The MRC will monitor for forage fish and do grain size analysis.

Forage Fish: forage fish samples will be taken at Meadowdale, Picnic Point, and Howarth Park once per month. Samples were taken by staff and volunteers in October, and the next sample events are scheduled for November 12 and 13.

Kelp Project: Data collection for 2020 is complete.

Mussel Watch: No updates currently.

Port Susan Marine Stewardship Area: There was a Snohomish County-Island County Port Susan joint subcommittee meeting on Thursday September 24. The group discussed the scope of work for the MRC grant for 2021-2022, which will focus on Port Susan. The group was informed by the NWSC that the next MRC grant will likely be two years again, so the team is dividing tasks into two phases. The team will meet again in early December.

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:

- Snohomish Beach Nourishment Webinar November 9th at 4PM.
- Forage Fish sample November 12 and 13
- The MRC will have a virtual retreat on November 18
- MRC Symposium November 19

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



Congressman Rick Larsen's site visit. Taken by Rick Larsen's staff Lindsey Webb. Left to right: Congressman Rick Larsen, Snohomish MRC Staff Elisa Dawson, NWSC Staff Dana Oster, MRC Member Laura Gurley, Snohomish County Surface Water Management Director Gregg Farris.

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Whatcom

Month/Year: October 2020

Submitted by: Austin Rose

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

- Congressman Rick Larsen joined Whatcom County Executive Satal Sidhu, representative of the Lummi Island Heritage Trust, Whatcom MRC, and Northwest Straits Initiative for a tour of the Aiston Preserve restoration site on Lummi Island. Elizabeth Kilanowski, Whatcom MRC member and Lummi Island resident will be providing a full summary of the visit to the MRC at the November meeting.
- Two 2020-21 MRC interns were hired as part time temporary Whatcom County employees. Maya Garber-Yonts, is the Forage Fish Survey intern, and Mary Kirkpatrick-Waite is the new North Sound Stewards Volunteer Coordinator intern.

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

- Two 2020-21 MRC interns were hired as part time temporary Whatcom County employees. Maya Garber-Yonts, is the Forage Fish Survey intern, and Mary Kirkpatrick-Waite is the new North Sound Stewards Volunteer Coordinator intern. Their appointments began October 1.

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

- The MRC held their general meeting on October 1.
 - Dana Oster provided a brief on the grant opportunity to expand the No Anchor Zone project across four additional MRC counties, including Whatcom. Three proposed Whatcom County locations were discussed. A Whatcom MRC project champion still needs to be identified.
 - Eleanor Hines (MRC Chair) discussed ideas for MRC engagement including: setting up breakout rooms (zoom) for side conversations, and field trips (virtual or other) to MRC project sites.
- The North Sound Stewards advisory committee met to continue planning for the 2021 program season. Mary Kirkpatrick-Waite (MK) was introduced to the committee and assigned tasks to wrap up the 2020 program and kick-off the 2021 program.

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):

- Eleanor is working to put together a small video for the North Sound Stewards, highlighting the 2020 year.
- A tablet was purchased for the MRC to begin collecting field data electronically – particularly for forage fish surveys using iforms.

- Water quality in N. Chuckanut Bay continues to have very low fecal coliform counts. The MRC will continue sampling twice a month in the marine and fresh water and providing data to Washington Department of Health, to hopefully encourage their consideration of next steps to removing the pollution related closure of the area.
- The Public Speakers Series continues to need more MRC member support – particularly by way of subject ideas. Moving forward, the group would like to communicate marine related issues to a more diverse audience and thus expand the expertise of speakers (i.e. professors, artists, activists, historians, performers, journalists)
- MRC Forage Fish intern Maya Garber-Yonts met with Pete Haase to get training on how the MRC conducts their forage fish sediment grabs.

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.):

Congressman Rick Larsen joined Whatcom County Executive Satal Sidhu, representative of the Lummi Island Heritage Trust, Whatcom MRC, and Northwest Straits Initiative for a tour of the Aiston Preserve restoration site on Lummi Island. Elizabeth Kilanowski, Whatcom MRC member and Lummi Island resident will be providing a full summary of the visit to the MRC at the November meeting.

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

Photo below taken by Elizabeth Kilanowski, MRC Member, Lummi Island resident



Photos below taken by Jenn Rodgers, Community Liaison, Rep. Rick Larsen

