



Meeting: Northwest Straits Commission
Location: Zoom Conference Call
Date: February 26, 2020
Time: 10:00 AM-12:00 PM

To join the Zoom meeting, [click here](#). Meeting ID: 857 0759 0222 Passcode: 527115
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10:00 – 10:05	Welcome and introductions Approval of January minutes	Alan Clark, Chair
10:05 – 10:20	Meeting Welcome	Chairman Tom Wooten, Samish Indian Nation
10:20 – 10:45	Maritime Washington National Heritage Area	Alexandra Gradwohl, Washington Trust for Historic Preservation
10:45 – 10:55	Director's Report	
10:55 – 11:00	Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission/ Tribal update	Cecilia Gobin, Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission
11:00 – 11:05	Puget Sound Partnership update	Jennifer Grimm, Puget Sound Partnership
11: 05 – 11:10	NWS Foundation update	Don Hunger, NWS Foundation
11:10 – 11:30	Committee reports Executive Committee External Relations Committee Science Advisory Committee	
11:30 – 11:50	MRC Reports	MRC Representatives
11:50 – 11:55	Roundtable	All
11:55 – 12:00	Public comment	All

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



minutes

January 29, 2021 • 10:00 AM-12:00 PM

Zoom – Conference call

Northwest Straits Commission meeting

Attendees:

Commission Members: Alan Clark (Clallam-Chair), Elsa Schwartz (Island-Vice Chair), Paul Dinnell (Skagit-Alt), Jeff Taylor (Jefferson), Bob Cecile (Whatcom), Tim Ellis (Snohomish), Christina Koons (San Juan), Tom Cowan, Julia Parrish, Jenn Grimm (Puget Sound Partnership- Alt)

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

Others in Attendance: Caroline Gibson (NW Straits Foundation), Heidi Eisenhour (Jefferson County Board of Commissioners), Alisa Taylor (Clallam MRC), Monica Montgomery (Jefferson MRC), Cathy Lear (Clallam MRC)

Absent: Nan McKay, Chris Castner, Cecilia Gobin (Tribal)

Welcome and Introductions

Alan opened the meeting and facilitated introductions.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the December Northwest Straits Commission meeting were approved by consensus.

Welcome from Heidi Eisenhour

Jefferson County Commissioner Heidi Eisenhour thanked the NW Straits Commission for the continued focus on marine conservation and community science. Heidi was elected to the Jefferson County Board of Commissioners in November 2020 and has been appointed to committees focused on recreation, solid waste, and natural resources, in addition to being appointed to the Jefferson MRC.

Director's Report

- Lucas Hart introduced two new Commissioners: Julia Parrish, gubernatorial appointee and Tim Ellis, representative from Snohomish MRC.
- Lucas reported that MRC Request for Proposals for the 2021-2023 project period will be issued in mid-March.
- Commission staff is working with Cecilia Gobin on a tribal acknowledgement for the Northwest Straits Commission.

Business Items

Communications Plan

Katie Harris provided an update on the Northwest Straits Communication Plan. She explained the communications processes that the Commission is doing well, areas for improvement, and new procedural elements, including the Initiative elevator pitch and key messages, and a diagram explaining the relationships between the Commission, Foundation, and MRCs. Commission staff will hold the NWSI 101



presentation on a semi-annual to quarterly basis to help new members of the Initiative gain a better understanding of NWSI history, structure, and goals.

Kelp Season Recap

Dana Oster provided a summary of the 2020 bull kelp monitoring data. Dana provided a recap of the 2020 MRC Kelp Review held on January 21, which was attended by more than 50 MRC members, lead staff, and project volunteers. Dana offered to present the kelp monitoring data to individual MRCs.

NW Straits Commission Committee Reports

Executive Committee

Elsa reported that the committee is recommending postponing or rescheduling the annual NWSI Retreat. The Committee will meet with the Foundation's Executive Committee on February 24 for a joint session.

External Relations

Tom Cowan reported that the Commission's state funding was included in the Governor's budget for the 2021-2023 biennium.

Science Advisory Committee

Dana reported that the committee has integrated the Commission's feedback from the December meeting into the Actions to Impacts graphic. Julia Parrish is the new chair of the committee. Kathy Wolf will serve on the Committee for the next six months. Tessa Frances is rejoining the committee.

Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission (NWIFC) update

No update was provided.

Puget Sound Partnership Update

Jenn Grimm reported that Puget Sound Day on the Hill will be virtual in 2021. The events will begin in April. The Leadership Council is seeking nominations to the Puget Sound Partnership's Science Panel. Nominations are due by March 31, 2021. More information can be found [here](#).

Northwest Straits Foundation Update

Caroline Gibson reported that the Northwest Straits Foundation held a workshop titled "Working Together for the Salish Sea" on January 21. The workshop was with MRC lead staff members and MRC Chairs and addressed how the Foundation functions and what support they can provide to MRCs.

MRC Reports

Clallam – Alan Clark reported the following:

- The members approved the 2020-21 MRC workplan.



- Clallam MRC will be working with Tom Mumford on a Kelp 101 webinar on February 24.
- The climate change subcommittee plans to meet with Dept. of Community Development Director Winborn, Karen Affeld at North Olympic Development Council, and Rich Meier at Clallam County.

Island – Elsa Schwartz reported the following:

- The full report on the 2020 bull kelp monitoring season is available on the MRC website.
- The MRC partnered with Sound Water Stewards to host a training on the MyCoast app. A recording will be made available on the MRC website.
- The Cornet Bay subcommittee is working with NWSF and Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group to plan vegetation planting and maintenance at the Cornet Bay restoration area for this year.

Jefferson – Jeff Taylor reported the following:

- The MRC was asked by our County and Port Commissioners to advise on the SEPA review for the Navy's proposal to expand special operations training (in-water and on-land) in 28 State Parks, with training events more concentrated in Region 1, which includes Jefferson County. The MRC held an additional Special Meeting in January to discuss potential impacts to marine and nearshore resources and submitted a letter to our Commissioners.
- The MRC is continuing discussions on project planning for the 2021-2023 RFP.
- Jeff Taylor reported that Jefferson MRC is working with a robotics team for possible collaboration on derelict gear removal.

San Juan – Christina Koons reported the following:

- Through the Plastic Free Salish Sea campaigns, community members will be able to adopt a beach in the County soon.
- The MRC is organizing a symposium to share the recent research results of studies into the acoustic impacts of Navy jet aircraft.
- Christina Koons provided an update on San Juan MRC's continued work on the Be Whale Wise and Plastic Free Salish Sea campaigns. Commissioners discussed learning more about Plastic Free Salish Sea and how the campaign has been affected by COVID-19 restrictions.

Skagit – Paul Dinnel reported the following:

- Salish Sea Stewards Classes begin February 23 – June 1. The curriculum is close to being finalized. Deadline to register is February 16.
- The Kids on the Beach program is all ready to go virtual this spring! Four different schools have signed up to participate.

Snohomish – Tim Ellis reported the following:



minutes

- Susan Tarpley and Bob Hillmann have both completed nine years on the MRC and are terming out as members of the MRC. Sarah Brown has chosen not to renew her next term on the MRC and is leaving the MRC after six years of service. Tim Ellis will serve as representative to NWSC.
- The new interpretive signage for Howarth Park has been installed.
- The MRC has nominated three new members and are currently waiting formal appointment by the Snohomish County Council (expected in February 2021).
- The County has secured all \$15 million funds needed for the Meadowdale Restoration Project and is expected to go to bid within the month.

Whatcom – Bob Cecile reported the following:

- It is anticipated that four new members will be appointed to the MRC by the Whatcom County Council on January 26. Elizabeth Kilanowski, Pete Granger, and Ryan McLaughlin have all departed the MRC.

Open Discussion Breakout Groups

Meeting attendees met in small groups and discussed aspects of the Commission meeting they felt were most important for MRC representatives to bring back to their MRCs.

Meeting Recap

Commissioners reported what aspects of the Commission meeting they felt were most important for MRC representatives to bring back to their MRCs. Find the meeting highlights document [here](#).

Public comment

There was no public comment.

* The next regular Commission meeting will be on **Friday, February 26**.*



Commission staff highlights- [February 2021]

MRC Grants: Commission staff coordinated with the Science Advisory Committee for input on the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the 2021-23 MRC grant cycle as well as with Department of Ecology staff to develop the web-based application. The RFP will be issued in mid-March to all MRCs. Review and approval of quarterly reporting and invoices for the current grants was also completed in January.

Kelp Plan: Dana presented the Puget Sound Kelp Conservation and Recovery Plan to the Leadership Council on February 18 to discuss how to use the plan to integrate kelp into the Puget Sound recovery planning process.

Quality Assurance Project Plans (QAPP): Commission staff worked with MRCs and Department of Ecology staff to prepare and submit addendums to the 2020 QAPPs as required for projects using EPA National Estuary Program funds. The 2021 addendums are brief and simple, and the original QAPPs are valid for five years.

Project database: Commission staff continues to refine the project database developed last year, focusing on how we use queries and reports to export information for various uses and beginning to create a user/maintenance guide. The database has already been an efficient way to organize project information for recent needs. Commission staff has also established a simpler database to compile information about how MRCs are serving in an advisory role in their county.

Communications: Commission staff has scheduled the next Northwest Straits 101 presentation for April 15 from 12-1pm. New MRC members are encouraged to attend. Details and Zoom link available at <https://www.nwstraits.org/get-involved/events/>.

Staff turnover: Katie's last day with the Commission was February 19.

Meetings attended:

Dana attended: Jefferson MRC meeting 2/2, San Juan MRC meeting 2/4, Transboundary eelgrass protection meeting 2/9, Skagit MRC meeting 2/11, Science Advisory Committee meeting 2/11, presented at Leadership Council meeting 2/18, Clallam Kelp Forum 2/24; Whatcom MRC retreat 2/25

Sasha attended: Island MRC meeting 2/2; Whatcom MRC meeting 2/4, joint Executive Committee 2/24; Clallam MRC kelp webinar 2/24; Whatcom MRC retreat 2/25



Commission staff highlights- [February 2021]

Lucas attended: Legislative meetings on 2/3, 2/10, 2/15; Leadership Council 2/19; Science Advisory Committee 2/11; Executive Committee 2/16; Partnership legislative updates on 2/5, 2/12, 2/19; Salish Sea Stewards 2/23.

Katie attended: Transboundary eelgrass protection meeting 2/8, Executive Committee meeting 2/16

Allie attended: Jefferson MRC meeting 2/2; Transboundary eelgrass protection meeting 2/8; Science Advisory Committee 2/11; European Green Crab Stakeholder meeting 2/18; Clallam MRC Kelp Webinar 2/24

Northwest Straits Foundation 2021 Work Updates

February 2021

Programs: Nearshore

- Completed hiring process for hiring Haley Sherman as our first Marine Conservation Fellow for the Nearshore Restoration Monitoring program. Completed orientation and training for Haley and other staff on beach seining protocols and fish ID
- Planning and coordination for 2021 monitoring season including annual and quarterly reports, permitting, scheduling, and training.
- Conducted monthly forage fish surveys and resumed beach seining at Bowman Bay.

Shorefriendly

- Developed new Shore Friendly virtual workshop with Blue Coast Engineering. Workshops will be held February 24th for all MRC counties and an Island County specific workshop on March 17th.
- Continuing development of third video in the Shore Friendly Living series.
- Developing stormwater management brochure with Herrera Environmental for coastal bluff landowners
- Submitted preliminary budget requests for 2021-2023 through ESRP Shore Friendly program. Unspent funds from current grant will be rolled over to next biennium. Budget needs will be updated at end of February.
- Don and Lisa presented Shore Friendly program to Senator Rolfes with ESRP leads, Kitsap Shore Friendly program, and Washington Assoc. of Land Trusts.

Seahorse Siesta

- Construction on-going. Anticipate completion at end of February and NWSF will install vegetation in March.
- Article written on project: <https://www.heraldnet.com/news/small-fish-big-barriers-a-county-confronts-climate-change/>

Hoypus Point Design

- Blue Coast Engineering is forwarding conceptual design to 90% design for permitting. We are coordinating with WA State Parks on design ideas and archaeology. We have contracted with Caldera Archaeology for cultural resources assessment.
- Design on track for April completion.

Advancement

- Grant proposals submitted/pending for Shell Puget Sound Refinery (invited), for rain garden at Mt. Erie Elementary School, Bonnell Cove for citizen scientist/kayaker safety and orientation, and Robert Schumann Foundation, for Passport to Marine Adventure

- Reporting to private funders on 2020 grants
- Launch Passport to Marine Adventure, an exploration and educational travel game, prompting people to visit their shorelines, learn about marine habitat, and promote NWSI projects. There are three sites in each MRC county. Participants earn prizes by visiting sites and posting a photo on our Instagram account. Our audience is friends and family members. Launching in March. Creating, finalizing, and launching the Salish Sentinels Campaign
- Launched Story Map (GIS) on our website to illustrate and tell the story of our work. Viewers can click on maps, drill down through the years, review data, pictures and read about the Foundation's work. Website Changes/Overhaul to various pages, such as Shore Friendly and Salish Sentinel
- Completed our new CRM search, conducted interviews and are now learning the new CRM.
- Q1 Newsletter creation and sent out.
- Re-purposed old video content for 2021 branding and promotion (Salish SeaFresh, Shore Friendly, Salish Sea Strings, etc.)
- Judd and Black Meetings and Interviews for Nonprofit Feature (we could win \$1k or more if their client base vote on us at end of Q1 as their "Nonprofit Of The Quarter")

Governance

- Don met with Rep. Sharon Shewmake and Rep. Alicia Rule (both D-42nd Dist) virtually on February 8, in support of \$20M in Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program (ESRP) funding in the Capital Budget. Both are on the Capital Budget committee and supportive of ESRP funding for the Lummi Island quarry restoration project. Joining him were Rebecca Rettmer, ED, Lummi Island Heritage Trust; Gabe Epperson, ED, Whatcom Land Trust; Jed Holmes, Whatcom County Council Outreach Facilitator; and others.

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Island

Month/Year: February 2021

Submitted by: Anna Toledo

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

- **New members:** We are pleased to welcome three new members: Jill Lipoti, Ken Collins, and Alex Plumb!
- **Shore Friendly workshops:** We are partnering with the Northwest Straits Foundation on two Shore Friendly workshops. The first is on February 24th, open to shoreline homeowners within the Northwest Straits region. The second is on March 17th, and is geared towards shoreline homeowners in Island County.
- **Shoreline Master Program update:** Barb Bennett is representing the MRC on a technical advisory group for Island County's Shoreline Master Program update. The MRC will be discussing this topic at our March meeting.

Membership/Leadership changes (new/departing members, changes to chair/vice-chair, NWSC representative/alternate, staff): Jill Lipoti, Ken Collins, and Alex Plumb were appointed as new MRC members. We now have a full committee of 13 voting members.

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

Past Meetings/Events:

- February 2: MRC meeting. Topic: FEMA Door 2 presentation
- February 6: [Sound Waters University](#). MRC had virtual booth and also presented the 2021 Jan Holmes Island County Coastal Volunteer of the Year award to Karis Barnes, in collaboration with Sound Water Stewards and WSU Extension.

Upcoming Meetings/Events:

- February 24 (partnership with NWSF): Shore Friendly regional workshop
- March 2: MRC meeting. Topics: Coupeville Wharf, SMP update
- March 17 (partnership with NWSF): Shore Friendly workshop – Island County focus

Funding updates (newly-awarded grants, in-kind support or other funding commitments): Agreement signed between Island County and NWSF for \$5,000 from 12/15/20-2/28/22 for Anna's time to assist with Hoypus Point shoreline restoration project and to facilitate connection with MRC.

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

Monitoring – Forage Fish: Monitoring continues to be completed by staff due to COVID-19 precautions. Jason Morgan from NWSF is monitoring Hoypus Point and Cornet Bay, and Ann Prusha is monitoring Hidden Beach.

Outreach – Needs Assessment: The needs assessment subcommittee has completed a majority of the planned interviews with community partners as well as Island County staff. Barb and Andi will work on analysis of the interview results in March.

Restoration – Hoypus Point: Project partners (NWSF, MRC, and State Parks) met with Blue Coast Engineering for a project update. The Blue Coast team has completed a topographic survey and Ordinary High Water Mark delineation, as well as a utility locate to confirm the location of fiber optic cables. The project team discussed how to transition the paved trail to natural substrate within the restored area. The next team meeting is planned for early March.

Advisory – Shoreline Master Program (SMP) Update: Island County Planning has convened a Technical Advisory Group (TAG) to provide input for Island County's SMP update, which is expected to be completed this summer. Barb represents the MRC on the TAG. We will be discussing topics of importance for Barb to represent to this group at the March MRC meeting.

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.): Anna and MRC Chair, Kelly Zupich, presented an MRC update to the Board of Island County Commissioners on February 17. Anna and Kelly shared some recent highlights of the MRC's work and plans for upcoming projects. The Board thanked the MRC for their great work, and encouraged the MRC to utilize its seat on the SMP TAG to serve in an advisory role.

Photos (photos of recent projects or members—include project, photo credit and additional info): None.

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Jefferson

Month/Year: February 2021

Submitted by: Monica Montgomery

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

- Conducted interviews with applicants for the District 1 Rep/Alt and District 3 Alt positions. New members will join in March.
- Developing a pilot ROV derelict gear removal project.
- No-Anchor Zones subcommittee is moving forward with developing a dive manual and safety standards, to ensure our experienced volunteers can continue to dive and safely.

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

The MRC interviewed 2 applicants for the District 1 Rep/Alt and 1 applicant for the District 3 Alt positions.

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

Past Events/Meetings

- Jan 29 – NWSC meeting
- Feb 2 – MRC monthly meeting
- Feb 3 – Oly oyster subcommittee meeting, to set plans for the season
- Feb 4 – Chumsortium
- Feb 9 – Executive Committee meeting
- Feb 9 – Salish Sea No-Anchor Zones meeting
- Feb 10 – Education & outreach subcommittee meeting, to discuss plans for the year
- Feb 12 – Shoreline landowner outreach meeting with Lisa/NWSF
- Feb 16 – Forage fish sampling at Fort Townsend
- Feb 17 – Forage fish sampling at Dabob
- Feb 18 – Forage fish sampling at Adelma

Upcoming Events/Meetings

- Feb 23 – Rain garden subcommittee meeting, to discuss plans for the year
- Feb 25 – Oly oyster meeting with WDFW partners
- Feb 26 – Strait ERN LIO quarterly meeting
- Feb 26 – NWSC meeting
- Mar – No anchors subcommittee meeting, to discuss edits to the dive safety manual
- Mar 2 – MRC monthly meeting
- Mar 9 – Salish Sea No-Anchor Zones meeting
- Mar 23 – Executive Committee meeting
- Mar 26 – NWSC meeting

- Mar – Forage fish sampling at Dabob, Fort Townsend & Adelma

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:

- Forage fish - Fort Townsend:** The MRC Coordinator and 5 volunteers monitored on February 16th. We interacted with 4 beach walkers, informing them of the MRC, nearshore restoration and forage fish monitoring project.
- Forage fish - Adelma Beach (Index):** One MRC member and his wife monitored on February 18th.
- Forage fish - Dabob Bay (Index):** The MRC Coordinator and 4 volunteers (including 1 new non-MRC member) monitored on February 17th.
- Kelp:** Emily Bishop recorded training videos for setting up and maintaining the YSI instrument, for MRC members to learn how to use it for kelp monitoring (and oyster monitoring).

2. Rain Gardens:

- Bob Simmons had interpretive signs installed at the two most recent rain gardens at Cape George and Clay/Benton Streets (Uptown Port Townsend).
- The rain garden to be installed at Quilcene School is still on hold till in-person learning resumes.
- For this year's Port Townsend rain garden installation, the Maritime Schools reached out about a collaboration in front of the Maritime Center and the City of Port Townsend has a list of potential sites for the MRC to consider.
- The subcommittee will be meeting on February 23 to discuss plans and make some decisions for rain garden installations this year.

3. Education & Outreach:

- The subcommittee met on February 10 to discuss more concrete plans for its previously determined top 3 priorities (climate change education, raising awareness of the MRC, and reaching more rural areas of the county). Lots of new ideas were shared and subcommittee members were tasked to do more research on specific ideas shared, for further discussion at a follow up meeting.

4. Olympia Oysters:

- The Discovery Bay QAPP was fully executed and uploaded to EAGL.
- The subcommittee met on February 3 to set plans for this year as well as the following two years with consideration of the upcoming RFP.
- The MRC Coordinator submitted the WDFW shellfish transfer permit for 2021 and will look into amending the current ACOE permit (vs submitting a new one) to increase the amount of shell spread over the next two years (2022-2023).
- The MRC Coordinator reached out to DNR to determine feasibility of monitoring south of the Powerlines restoration site at Discovery Bay. The tidelands are no

longer being leased therefore the MRC can submit an application for a Right of Entry to access this area. This will be important for assessing the success of the restoration project, since previously spread cultch with settled Olympia oysters continue to drift south with the currents and wave action here.

- e. The MRC Coordinator and project leads will meet with WDFW partners on February 25 to discuss the future of the Discovery Bay restoration sites and potential new sites around Jefferson County.

5. Voluntary No-Anchor Zones:

- a. The MRC Coordinator and one MRC member attended the monthly Salish Sea No-Anchor Zones meeting on February 9.
- b. After several back-and-forth edits between the MRC Coordinator and one MRC member, the subcommittee is now reviewing a drafted dive safety manual for the MRC. The subcommittee will meet during the first week of March to discuss edits to the manual and other safety considerations. The manual will then be shared with L&I/DOSH contacts, then through the County (the WSU Extension Director, County Attorney and BoCC) for final approval.

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 Review: Ongoing.

City of Port Townsend SMP Review: Ongoing.

Shoreline Landowner Outreach (NWSF project): The MRC is helping to promote the virtual workshop scheduled for February 24, discussing follow-up Jefferson-focused workshops and working to identify shoreline restoration projects and education needs around the county.

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

February 16 forage fish monitoring at Fort Townsend State Park, volunteers with individually packaged home-baked cookies delivered from the previous MRC Coordinator ☺ – photo by Monica Montgomery



MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: San Juan County

Month/Year: February 2021

Submitted by: Frances Robertson

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

- The Adopt a Beach database is due to be launched at the end of the month
- The MRC is co-hosting a science symposium with the Salish Sea institute on Navy jet noise in March.

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

No Changes to membership or leadership.

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

February events

- The MRC met on February 4th via Zoom for their monthly meeting. Jason Morgan from the NWSF presented on the Foundations derelict gear and Catch More Crab program.
- The MRC participated in the San Juan County LIO quarterly meeting on February 4th. The results of the Vessel Drift and ERTV Response Analysis was presented.
- The MRC participated in the monthly San Juan County Stewardship Council meeting

Upcoming events

- The MRC's March meeting will be held on Thursday March 4th and will host a presentation from the WA Surfriders Association on the concerns related to sea bed mining.
- The MRC, in partnership with Western Washington University's Salish Sea Institute are planning a science symposium on the subject of Navy jet noise on marine and terrestrial habitats and species. This symposium is planned for mid-March 2021.

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

There are no updates relating to funding.

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

Plastic Free Salish Sea: Members of the PFSS subcommittee met Tuesday 2nd February. Progress continues on the creation of the Adopt a Beach feature of the PFSS website. MRC members have been helping to provide images of public beaches throughout the county and assist with compiling the data required for the Adopt a Beach database. This is due to be launched at the end of the month. Other outreach opportunities such as short videos were also discussed.

Southern Resident Killer Whales: Grade 5 science teachers in the County's three school districts are now being contacted to set up times for the MRC and Killer Whale Tales to engage with students on the subject of environmental science and the Southern Resident killer whales. While this program will be taught entirely virtually this year the MRC team, led by MRC member Kailey Genther, and Killer Whale Tales will be able to adapt their programming to fit the schedules of the classes.

Marine Stewardship Area Plan update: Progress continues to be made on updating the biodiversity targets and planning for the next stages of the update. The Subcommittee is due to meet again in February/early March.

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.):

San Juan County Marine Program is partnering with the MRC to host a series of work sessions dedicated to eelgrass protection and restoration efforts in the County. The work is being funded by Pew Charitable Trusts and the funds are being made available with the help of the Northwest Straits Foundation. The MRC will take the lead on monitoring efforts for vessel usage in areas with protection buoys installed or identified as locations of need and will start pilot monitoring efforts this spring and summer.

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

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Skagit

Month/Year: Feb/2021

Submitted by: Tracy/Pete

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

- 41 registrants for the Salish Sea Stewards training! Classes start next Tuesday, February 23.
- A new infographic for WDNR's Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve's 2020 forage fish data was created by Rondi Nordal, AmeriCorps with RE-Sources

Membership/Leadership changes (new/departing members, changes to chair/vice-chair, NWSC representative/alternate, staff): Betsy Stevenson will continue to serve as MRC-Chair for a second term and Jay Lind will continue to serve as MRC Vice-Chair for the interim. Pete Haase will continue to serve as NWSC Representative. Paul Dinnel and Diane Hennebert will fill in as NWSC Alternates. Kathy Thornburgh resigned from her seat on the MRC as the representative of the Skagit Land Trust. Kari Odden, Kathy's Alternate, will serve in her place until her seat is filled with a new representative.

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

- MRC Monthly Meeting- **February 11**. Dana Oster presented 2020 kelp data. Jason Morgan introduced Haley Sherman, the Foundation's new hire for the Marine Conservation Fellowship position. Haley will be assisting with the Bowman Bay field work.
- Salish Sea Stewards Advisory Committee Meeting- **February 17**, 10am-noon (via Zoom)
- Salish Sea Stewards Classes begin- **February 23 – June 1**, 1pm-3:30pm (via Zoom, Tuesdays)
- Next MRC Monthly Meeting- **March 11**, 9am-11:00am (via 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:** The SSS Advisory Committee met on February 17th to finalize planning for the 2021 Salish Sea Stewards training which will commence on **Feb 23 – June 1, 2021**. Classes will be held virtually via ZOOM on Tuesdays from 1pm to 3:30pm with two speakers and 2 optional field sessions from 1pm -5pm. Virtual sessions will be recorded. The 2021 curriculum has been finalized and posted on the MRC website. The registration deadline was February 16, 2021. To date there are **41 registrants!** The majority of registrants are from Skagit County, but there are also a few from Snohomish, Seattle & Bainbridge Island. The Master SSS Member List has been updated. There are currently 272 trained SSS volunteers. MRC members and past SSS have been invited to attend the upcoming 2021 training sessions. The SSS Advisory Committee continues to communicate volunteer opportunities through the electronic news bulletin, "The Wave" and SSS Facebook. Since 2014 the SSS have contributed over 35,000 hours of volunteer service to Salish Sea projects.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** The 2021 event date is tentatively set for Saturday, August 28 (11am-3pm). The Fidalgo Bay Resort facility has been reserved. A FBD Planning Committee meeting will

likely be scheduled sometime in the next couple of months to discuss the different possible scenarios, options, and alternatives depending on COVID-19 safety restrictions for public events.

- Bowman Bay Restoration: Two lead stewards will start maintaining the plants at the site again in May or June 2021 under the guidance of the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group's Restoration Technician.
- Kayak Kelp Surveys: Surveys will likely start up again at the three different kelp beds in June 2021. The kelp beds include: Shannon Point, Biz Point, and Coffin Rock. So far these kelp beds appear to be remaining healthy and stable.
- Forage Fish Surveys: All forage fish survey sites continue to be surveyed once or twice a month with small groups and all COVID-19 safety precautions. Pete shared an infographic of the 2020 forage fish data collected for WDNR's Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve that was put together by Rondi Nordal, AmeriCorps with RE-Sources.
- Kids on the Beach: The Kids on the Beach program will be virtual this spring with over 200 6th through 8th - graders participating from four different schools. The curriculum will focus on forage fish. The virtual field trips will consist of beach seining and forage fish spawning surveys and eggs under microscopes. The students will analyze and compile the data into reports to present at a virtual symposium.
- Pinto Abalone Recovery: Hatchery work continues to raise juvenile abalone for outplanting. Field work, including monitoring and outplanting of 2,000 juvenile abalone, will begin later this month or early March, when there is minimal algae cover at the site. Field work will also include scouting for potential new restoration sites, collecting wild adult abalone for broodstock in the hatchery, and deploying underwater cameras to study predation.
- Olympia Oyster Restoration: Not much happening right now. Routine field work will start up again in May with a reduced amount of monitoring this year at three different sites in Fidalgo Bay. Paul Dinnel will be giving a presentation on the native oyster restoration work for the Salish Sea Stewards class on April 13.

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):

FIDALGO BAY AQUATIC RESERVE

2020 Forage Fish Survey Results

SURVEYS

- 38 surveys
- 25 volunteers
- ~400 volunteer hours!



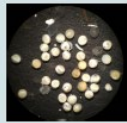
SAMPLES

- 142 samples collected
- 55 from Fidalgo Bay East
- 87 from Fidalgo Bay West

EGGS

Samples with eggs

- 100% of May, June, July, and Sept samples
- 35% of March and April samples
- 80% of overall samples



CONDITIONS

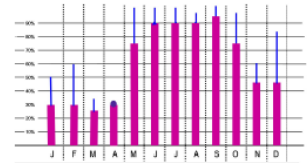
- Wind, smoke, snow, and covid all impacted this year's work!!!

THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR WONDERFUL VOLUNTEERS! WE GOT THINGS DONE BECAUSE OF YOU ALL!

DATA

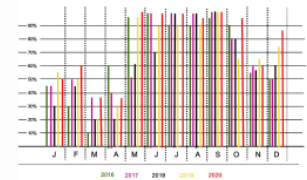
Here are graphs of data collected over the years!

Fidalgo Bay Surf Smelt Spawning
SAMPLES WITH EGGS: BY MONTH (2013-2020 avg.)
(15-20 samples per month)



This graph shows the percent of samples each month that had eggs. Each month represents 15-20 samples per year. The pink bars show the average percent from 2013-2020, while the blue bars show the percent of samples just from 2020 that had eggs. 2020 was a good year for finding eggs!

Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve-Surf Smelt Spawning
Percent of Samples with Eggs: by Month and Year
(15-20 samples per month)



This graph is a lot like the one above, but it has a bar for each year from 2016 to 2020 (red). The months where we see the most samples with eggs are between May and October, with December also being a good month.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROJECT, CHECK OUT THE REPORTS AVAILABLE ONLINE:
[HTTPS://WWW.AQUATICRESERVES.ORG/RESOURCES/](https://www.aquaticreserves.org/resources/)

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Snohomish

Month/Year: February 2021

Submitted by: Elisa Dawson and Alex Pittman

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

- The MRC has nominated three new members to Snohomish County Council who will be approved by Snohomish County Council on February 24.
- The MRC Outreach Subcommittee is starting a kickoff campaign for Plastic Free Salish Sea in Snohomish County in 2021. The current idea is to have a beach cleanup campaign during Earth Week (April 19-25) and is modeled after the Great Island Clean Up done in San Juan County.
- There is a Virtual Beach Walk Event February 22 at 6:30PM with Snohomish County Beach Watchers and the Snohomish MRC

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

The MRC three nominated new members (below) will be approved by Consent Agenda by Snohomish County Council on February 24.

1. Brienne Townsend
2. Andrew Gobin
3. Michael Kundu

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

Elisa Dawson, Alex Pittman, and Anna Toledo met with UW Evan's School Student Consulting lab on January 28 to discuss possibilities to work with students on the Port Susan 2021-2022 project.

Mike Ehlebracht, Alex Pittman, Elisa Dawson, Mike Sadler, Brienne Townsend, and Jonathan Robinson (WSU Beach Watchers) met via conference call on February 3 to discuss kick off ideas for the Plastic Free Salish Sea outreach campaign.

Elisa Dawson and Alex Pittman met with Snohomish County Communications staff on February 4 to discuss the MRC 2020 Annual Report. A draft of the annual report will be reviewed at the March MRC meeting.

Elisa Dawson met with the Audubon Washington chapter on February 8 to discuss opportunities to partner on shorebirds in Port Susan. The Audubon will be included as a stakeholder for the Port Susan 2021-2022 grant work.

The Snohomish County Council reviewed the new MRC Member recommendations at the February 16 Public Works Committee meeting. The recommendations have been moved to consent agenda and will be approved at the County Council meeting on February 24.

Elisa Dawson, Alex Pittman, and Mike Ehlebracht met with San Juan County MRC Staff Frankie Robertson on February 17 to discuss the Plastic Free Salish Sea campaign.

Elisa Dawson and Alex Pittman met with Jonathan Robinson (WSU Beach Watchers) and Susan Tarpley on February 17 to discuss the agenda and plan for the upcoming virtual beach walk event. The event is scheduled for February 22 at 6:30.

Forage Fish sampling occurred on February 17 at Howarth Park and is scheduled for February 25 at Meadowdale and Picnic Point.

The MRC had their monthly meeting on February 17. There was a presentation by Department of Natural Resources Scientist Bart Christiaen on the Snohomish Estuary marine vegetation survey that was conducted in 2020.

Elisa Dawson and Alex Pittman met with Snohomish County Communications staff to discuss updating the MRC list serve to GovDelivery service on February 18th. This service will make it easier for people to sign up or unsubscribe from the MRC mailing list.

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 has hired ESA consultants to assist with this project. The focus areas for Phase 2 have been finalized and the consultant has created a draft fact sheet template for review by the MRC. The final fact sheets on the five priority areas will be complete in early March.

Derelict Vessels (NWSF funds): Snohomish County and the NWSF are in the process of finalizing a contract for funding Snohomish County for \$45,000 towards derelict vessel removal. The funds come from a private donor from Everett, who donated to the NWSF specifically for this project. The funds will be used to remove vessels in late summer 2021.

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

Port Susan Marine Stewardship Area: The next Port Susan joint MRC Subcommittee meeting has been scheduled for March 16 at 9AM. The team hopes to put together their scope of work and deliverables plan for the MRC 2021-2022 grant application.

Forage Fish: forage fish samples continue to be taken once per month.

Meadowdale: Meadowdale project was chosen for the Coastal Watershed Grants program and recently awarded \$250,000. This program supports projects to address urgent and challenging issues threatening our coast. Thanks to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Restore America's Estuaries for this grant.

Marine Vegetation: Snohomish County funded a marine vegetation survey of the Snohomish Estuary completed by DNR in 2020 and the report was just finalized. DNR presented on the 2020 marine vegetation survey at the February 17 MRC meeting. Snohomish County will fund a second round of marine vegetation monitoring along the Mukilteo – Edmonds waterfront in 2021. The goal is to complete the entire Snohomish County shoreline in 2022, then compare the dataset from 2019-2022 with a previous eelgrass survey done from 1999-2006 to better understand eelgrass changes over time in Snohomish County.

MRC Outreach Subcommittee: Mike Ehlebracht, Alex Pittman, Elisa Dawson, Mike Sadler, Brienne Townsend, and Jonathan Robinson (WSU Beach Watchers) met via conference call on February 3rd to discuss kick off ideas for the Plastic Free Salish Sea outreach campaign. The team is coordinating a week-long beach clean up event during Earth Week (April 19-25) modeled after the Great Island Clean Up done in San Juan County.

No current updates for

- Oil Spill
- Mussel Watch
- Crabber Education
- Nearshore Beach Restoration at Howarth Park and Everett Nearshore Project

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

Effective January 30, Snohomish County Surface Water Management officially moved into the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources from Public Works, joining the Parks, Recreation and Tourism department, Energy and Sustainability, and Agriculture offices. There are no changes in budget or staffing to the MRC.

Upcoming Events:

- Car Tires and Salmon Health Webinar Feb 19 at noon
- Beach Watchers Virtual Beach Walk Event February 22 at 6:30PM
- Snohomish LIO Meeting February 25
- Forage Fish sampling February 25, March 15, and 16
- Port Susan joint MRC Subcommittee Meeting March 16 at 9AM
- MRC Meeting March 17 at 6:30PM

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

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Whatcom

Month/Year: February 2021

Submitted by: Austin Rose

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

- Kristin Murray (MRC Vice Chair) resigned from the MRC to pursue a career with the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group. Due to this resignation, the MRC has one vacancy for a Citizen-at-Large position.

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

- Kristin Murray resigned from the MRC to pursue a career with the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group. Due to this resignation, the MRC has one vacancy for a Citizen-at-Large position. The MRC Executive Subcommittee is reviewing applications on file and reaching out to potential candidates to assess their interest and availability to join the MRC.

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

- The MRC Retreat Planning Committee met with VEDA Environmental to finalize the agenda for the upcoming two-day virtual retreat. MRC members are being asked to give input on 7 operational questions prior to the retreat, including:
 - *How can we increase MRC capacity?*
 - *How can we improve our project identification/selection process?*
 - *How can we improve/increase member engagement?*
 - *Clarify expectations of MRC staff and members regarding time commitments, project leadership needs, etc.*
 - *How can the MRC increase involvement with schools/students?*
 - *How can we diversify?*
 - *How do we best explain who we are? (e.g., elevator pitch)*
- The MRC held their general monthly meeting on February 4. MRC staff presented MRC highlights and successes from 2020. Port of Bellingham staff provided an update on the Bellingham Bay cleanup activities. The MRC provided a letter of support to the Garden of the Salish Sea Curriculum's (GSSC) grant proposal to the NOAA B-WET funding to enhance the GSSC work with the Sound Toxin's Network monitoring harmful algae blooms (HAB's) in Drayton Harbor. MRC members showed interest in participating in an upcoming training on HAB's identification and could potentially collaborate with the GSSC on monitoring.
- An Olympia oyster project planning meeting occurred with Whatcom MRC staff, interest Whatcom MRC members, Dr. Paul Dinnel, and Brady Blake, WDFW, to discuss the future of the pilot Olympia oyster restoration project in N. Chuckanut Bay. Brady mentioned that WDFW and the Puget Sound Restoration Fund are aiming to do a large scale Olympia oyster restoration

in Samish Bay and the Chuckanut data is complementary to that work. It is possible that the Samish Bay colonization will expand to N. Chuckanut Bay within 3-5 years.

- MRC Staff presented the Whatcom MRC 2020 Annual Report to the Whatcom County Council Surface Water Work Group on February 16.
- MRC Staff participated in the European Green Crab Stakeholder meeting on February 18 to gain insight on the management structure of green crab within Washington state, the 2020 green crab status update, information on how to get involved as there is a move towards greater capacity development, and management coordination for 2021. The Whatcom MRC's interest is specific to Drayton Harbor.
- MRC Staff and interested MRC members held a meeting with staff from City of Bellingham and a member of the Jefferson County MRC to discuss a Whatcom MRC rain garden proposal. Potential sites for a rain garden were discussed. Another meeting will be held with Port of Bellingham staff to identify areas near the marine shoreline with drainage problems.

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):

- 73 people applied to the North Sound Stewards Program. Applicants were asked to complete a project interest form. Results have not yet been finalized.
- Maya Garber-Yonts (MRC Forage Fish Intern) is taking a strong lead on the monthly forage fish spawning surveys. Maya has been doing these surveys on her own or with one other person. Whatcom County is now in Phase II so MRC projects will open to volunteer opportunities – limiting to 5 people.
- Water quality in N. Chuckanut Bay continues to have very low fecal coliform counts. Sampling is currently being done by Whatcom County Staff and MRC Staff.
- The Public Speakers Series Committee (MRC/WWIN) sent out a questionnaire to partner organizations to gauge topics of interest. MRC members that completed the poll indicated interest in:
 - *South Forth Nooksack Chinook Recovery*
 - *Orca Fecundity and toxics*
 - *Forest Practices and Buffers*
 - *Marine food web for salmon*
 - *Tribal fishing culture*
 - *Seaweed aquaculture*
 - *Shoreline Management Plan Update*
 - *Coho salmon mortality and tire dust*

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):



Photo by: Eleanor Hines, Carter Pt. at Sunrise



Photo by: Eleanor Hines, taken with MRC GoPro, kelp crab