



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
 For audio conference, dial: +1 253 215 8782

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



minutes

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.



minutes

- 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.