



## agenda

**Meeting:** Northwest Straits Commission  
**Location:** Video Conference Call  
**Date:** March 26, 2021  
**Time:** 10:00 AM-12:00 PM

To join the Zoom meeting, [click here](#)  
Meeting ID: 821 4031 6063  
Passcode: 408138  
For audio conference: 253-215-8782

10:00 – 10:05	<b>Welcome and introductions</b> Approval of February minutes	Alan Clark, Chair
10:05 – 10:20	<b>Welcome from Island County Commissioner</b>	
10:20 – 10:35	<b>Committee reports</b> Executive Committee Science Advisory Committee External Relations	Elsa Schwartz Julia Parrish Tom Cowan
10:35 – 10:50	<b>Tribal Acknowledgement</b>	Allie Simpson
10:50 – 11:00	<b>Business Items</b> Veterans Conservation Corps (Lucas) Staffing update (Lucas) Survive the Sound (Dana) MRC presentations to Commission: May/June (Sasha) Virtual “conference” (Sasha) Updated 2021 meeting schedule (Sasha)	
11:00 – 11:05	<b>Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission/ Tribal update</b>	Cecilia Gobin, NW Indian Fisheries Commission
11:05 – 11:10	<b>Puget Sound Partnership update</b>	Jennifer Grimm, Puget Sound Partnership
11:10 – 11:15	<b>NWS Foundation update</b>	Don Hunger, NWS Foundation



## agenda

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11:15 – 11:35	<b>MRC Reports</b>	MRC Representatives
11:35 – 11:45	<b>Meeting highlights and action steps for MRCs</b>	All
11:45 – 11:50	<b>Roundtable</b>	All
11:50 – 12:00	<b>Public comment</b>	All

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



# minutes

**February 26, 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), Pete Haase (Skagit), Jeff Taylor (Jefferson), Bob Cecile (Whatcom), Tim Ellis (Snohomish), Christina Koons (San Juan), Tom Cowan, Chris Castner, Nan McKay, Cecilia Gobin (Tribal), Jennifer Grimm (Puget Sound Partnership-Alt), Julia Parrish

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

**Others in Attendance:** Caroline Gibson (NW Straits Foundation), Austin Rose (Whatcom MRC), Diane Hennebert (Skagit MRC), Tom Wooten (Chairman, Samish Indian Nation), Todd Woodard (Samish Indian Nation), Alex Gradwohl (Washington Trust for Historic Preservation), Alisa Taylor (Clallam MRC), Sarah Fiskén (Jefferson MRC)

**Absent:** Laura Blackmore

## **Welcome and Introductions**

Alan opened the meeting and facilitated introductions.

## **Approval of Minutes**

The Commission approved the minutes from the January Northwest Straits Commission by consensus.

## **Welcome from Tom Wooten**

Samish Indian Nation Chairman Tom Wooten thanked the NW Straits Commission for the continued focus on marine conservation and community science. He sang a traditional Samish song to help open the meeting.

## **Maritime National Heritage Area**

Alex Gradwohl presented on the creation of a Maritime National Heritage Area in Washington. Their aim is to use a locally based approach to identify needs and to maintain cultural resources along 3,000 miles of shoreline. Marine heritage resources will be broadly defined including docks, fisheries, and salmon. Opportunities for MRCs to be involved include [taking a survey](#), participating in regional workshops, and commenting on the draft management plan.

## **NW Straits Commission Committee Reports**

### **Executive Committee**

Elsa reported that Julia Parrish joined the Executive Committee. The committee is focusing on the graphics aspect of the communications plan to make the connections between the Commission, Foundation and MRCs more clear. The Commission Executive Committee held a joint meeting with the Foundation Executive Committee. They discussed how to move forward with the Northwest Straits



## minutes

Initiative retreat and conference in the world of COVID and how to pursue joint communications on kelp.

### **Directors Report**

Lucas reported that Katie Harris accepted a new job. Her last day was February 19. The Commission will be filling her position in the next few months. The Commission is working on securing funding for green crab and kelp projects and will be recruiting an intern through Veteran's Conservation Corps for project support. Allie and Dana are drafting a proposal to US Fish and Wildlife Service to support eelgrass voluntary no-anchor zone expansion.

### **External Relations Committee**

Tom Cowan reported that the full \$910,000 of state funding to MRCs has been included in the governor's budget. Final status of this funding should be known late March.

### **Science Advisory Committee**

Julia reported that the committee is examining the Northwest Straits Commission Request for Proposals and how it's tied to the initiative strategic plan. She presented the idea of "fail fast, fail forward". This idea is a catalyst for a cultural change within the Initiative to talk more about lessons learned and how failing is viewed as a positive aspect. The Committee is also evaluating new ways of connecting MRC work to regional impacts.

### **Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission (NWIFC) update**

Cecilia reported that she is working with Lucas and Allie to create a tribal acknowledgement for NW Straits Commission. She is working with Lucas and Dana to present the Eelgrass Voluntary No-Anchor Zone project at the Environmental Policy Project Meeting as tribes are concerned about the recreational impacts on usual and accustomed tribal areas. They are keeping close tabs on the Net Ecological Gain Bill ([HB 1117](#)) in order to assure mitigation and key language regarding climate are appropriately represented. Also keeping updated on bills surrounding riparian areas and pinnipeds.

### **Puget Sound Partnership Update**

Jenn Grimm reported that 2021 virtual Puget Sound Day on the Hill will be held every Friday starting April 23 to May 21. The [PUGET SOS](#) bill was reintroduced in Congress. The leadership council approved the desired outcomes for the action agenda update. The next step is to identify strategies to achieve the outcomes.

### **Northwest Straits Foundation Update**

Caroline reported that Pew awarded an eelgrass project grant to San Juan County. The new Marine Conservation Fellow has started and is already working with Jason out in the field. The Seahorse Siesta restoration project is completed. Over 200 people participated in the virtual Shore Friendly workshop. The Foundation received the Paycheck Protection Program loan they had applied for.

## minutes

### MRC Reports

#### **Whatcom** – Bob Cecile

- Kristin Murray, their vice chair, had to resign to pursue a new career opportunity. The MRC is looking for a new vice chair.
- They are currently holding retreat sessions to plan for upcoming projects. Some projects they are looking into are Olympia oyster restoration and creating a rain garden in Blaine.

#### **Snohomish** – Tim Ellis

- New members recently joined: Brienne Townsend, Andrew Gobin and Michael Kundu.
- They are looking to establish the Plastic Free Salish Sea project, following San Juan MRCs lead.
- The MRC co-hosted a Virtual Beach Walk Event February 22 with Snohomish County Beach Watchers and the Snohomish MRC, which was very well attended.

#### **Skagit** – Pete Haase

- The 2021 Salish Sea Stewards program began with 41 people registered.
- The 2021 Fidalgo Bay Day event date is tentatively set for Saturday, August 28.
- A new infographic for WA Dept of Natural Resources Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve's 2020 forage fish data was created by Rondi Nordal, AmeriCorps with RE-Sources.

#### **San Juan** – Christina Koons

- They are hosting a [science symposium](#) with the Salish Sea Institute about Navy jet noise impacts.
- The [Adopt a Beach](#) database is due to be launched at the end of the month.

#### **Jefferson** – Jeff Taylor reported the following:

- The MRC is continuing work on the robotics project to remove derelict gear.
- 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.

#### **Island** – Elsa reported the following:

- Three new members recently joined: Jill Lipoti, Ken Collins and Alex Plumb.
- They held a shoreline symposium with the NW Straits Foundation.
- They are involved in the Shoreline Master Program update with Barbara Bennett serving as liaison.

#### **Clallam** – Alan Clark reported the following:

- They held a kelp webinar with Tom Mumford, with over 50 people attending. The recording is available on [YouTube](#).
- They are working on creating a committee for oil spill preparedness.
- They are preparing to start the internship program for this year.



# minutes

## **Round table**

There was no round table for this meeting.

## **Public comment**

There was no public comment.

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

DRAFT



**Executive Committee Meeting**  
**March 15, 2021 • 11:00am-12:00pm**  
**Conference Call**

**Committee Members:** Elsa Schwartz, Tom Cowan, Alan Clark, Julia Parrish

**Commission Staff/Support:** Sasha Horst, Lucas Hart

**Absent:** Jude Apple

**Communications project guidance:** Commission staff shared the visual that differentiates MRC communications projects from operations. Julia suggested considering a logic model structure for the RFP, and adding a field to the graphic indicating whether any metrics or measurement is required. With that addition, the Committee supported sending it out with the RFP.

- **Next steps:** Commission staff will make suggested edits and share with MRCs.

**MRC funding policy:** Lucas sent the revised draft policy in the pre-meeting materials. Tom and Julia suggested adding examples for what would and wouldn't qualify to help clarify for MRCs. Julia stressed the importance of connecting MRC work to larger/regional projects. Lucas agreed to ensure project examples include larger efforts with regional impacts. Elsa suggested sharing it with MRC staff to identify any areas of potential confusion before finalizing the policy with the Commission.

- **Next steps:** Commission staff will prepare examples to include with the policy and will share a draft for input at the MRC lead staff meeting on April 2.

**Tribal acknowledgement:** Lucas shared the draft language that is in progress, and the remaining steps before it can be finalized. Elsa asked whether there is a risk of leaving a tribe out when they are listed. Lucas noted that Cecilia recommended listing tribes and that we should consider it a working list where other tribes are welcome to be included if interested. Alan suggested finding a way to allow tribes to reach out and allow for that two-way conversation. Tom noted that some tribes not listed don't reside in the Northwest Straits but do have treaty rights in the region. Julia asked a question about the phrase "land and water" and why that didn't specifically call out natural resources.

- **Next step:** Lucas will talk to Cecilia to follow up on questions posed by the committee.

**Joint Executive Committee meeting debrief:** Lucas shared next steps on conference planning that resulted from the joint executive committee discussion, noting that a planning group will convene later in the year to work on a virtual conference replacement for 2021, with an in-person event planned for 2022. Planning will also commence later in the year for a virtual or in-person retreat.

**NWS Initiative Leadership Team:** The committee discussed the concept of rebranding the joint executive committee group as a Northwest Straits Initiative leadership team. The group would be tasked with discussing high level strategies for events, projects etc. that involve the entire Initiative. The group would not be making decisions, but they would provide recommendations that would come back to the Commission.

- **Next steps:** Lucas will confirm buy in from the Executive Committee and bring to the Commission for further discussion.

**NWSC staffing:** Lucas reported that he is working through the process of filling the position vacated by Katie Harris. The process is significantly slower due to the state hiring freeze that's currently in effect.



**Joint Commission Foundation event:** Lucas mentioned an upcoming speaker event that the Commission will co-host with the Northwest Straits Foundation in May. More details to follow.

**Next meeting:** Monday, April 19, 2021, 11:00am-12pm

## **Draft Northwest Straits Commission Tribal Acknowledgement**

### **Background**

Northwest Straits Commission staff are working with Commissioner Cecilia Gobin to draft a Tribal Acknowledgement for the Northwest Straits Commission. The acknowledgement is being drafted as a statement that can be read at all Northwest Straits Commission meetings. We will continue to work with tribal representatives to assure the statement accurately reflects how individual tribes wish to be acknowledged. The current draft is provided below. In April, we will hold a second call with tribal representatives, Cecilia will present the Acknowledgement to the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission for input, and we plan to ask the Northwest Straits Commission to adopt the statement on April 30<sup>th</sup>.

### **Draft Tribal Acknowledgement**

We acknowledge the land we're on today is the ancestral homeland of Coast Salish and Makah people and has been since time immemorial. We respect their sovereignty, support their Treaty rights and access to resources, their right to self-determination, and we honor their sacred spiritual connection with the land and water. These nations include the Lummi, Nooksack, Samish, Swinomish, Tulalip, Stillaguamish, Port Gamble S'Klallam, Jamestown S'Klallam, Lower Elwha Klallam, and Makah Nations.



## Commission staff highlights- [February 2021]

**MRC Grants:** Commission staff sent the 2021-23 Request for Proposals to MRC chairs and lead staff on March 15. Commission staff are available to discuss and answer questions. MRCs are scheduled to present on one of their proposed projects at the May or June meeting of the Commission.

**Eelgrass:** The Commission continues to host a monthly workgroup call for Salish Sea Eelgrass protection zones. This group convenes partners in WA and BC who are working to expand the voluntary no-anchor zone network. The workgroup meets to share knowledge and lessons learned on permitting, buoy design and spacing, monitoring, and to discuss a shared social marketing and branding strategy. Dana and Lucas also were invited to present on the voluntary no-anchor zone project expansion to the NW Indian Fisheries Commission Environmental Policy committee March 15.

**Forage Fish:** 34 participants joined a call March 12 to check in on the status of regional MRC forage fish monitoring. WA Dept of Fish and Wildlife presented on the status of the 2020 data and results. During the pandemic MRC volunteers were still able to get out on the beach and sample while many agency staff were not. This led to the MRCs providing valuable data and filling gaps, making up 69% of all the forage fish samples collected in Puget Sound in 2020.

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

**Staffing update:** Lucas is working through Ecology's hiring freeze process to get clearance to hire an administrative position (Katie Harris' vacated position) and a projects assistant position. Lucas is working with WA Dept. of Veterans Affairs and NOAA to fill a Veterans Conservation Corps internship position. Commission staff will interview three candidates in March and aim to start the internship April 1. This position will focus on green crab trapping and removal.

### Meetings attended:

Dana attended: Island MRC meeting 3/2; Whatcom MRC retreat 3/4; Kelp Expedition Advisory Committee 3/5; Salish Sea No-Anchor Zones Work Group 3/9; Nearshore Summit 3/10; Skagit MRC 3/11; MRC Forage Fish Update 3/12; presented at NWIFC Environmental Policy Committee meeting 3/15; Salish Sea Science Symposium 3/16; Snohomish MRC meeting 3/17; San Juan eelgrass protection initiative consortium 3/24

Sasha attended: Whatcom retreat 3/4; Science Advisory Committee meeting 3/10; Skagit MRC 3/11; MRC Forage Fish Update 3/12; Clallam MRC 3/15; Salish Sea Science Symposium 3/16.



## Commission staff highlights- [February 2021]

Lucas attended: Tribal Acknowledgment meeting 3/3; Science Advisory Committee meeting 3/10; presented at NWIFC Environmental Policy Committee meeting 3/15; NWSI Conference planning meeting 3/9

Allie attended: Jefferson MRC meeting 3/2; Tribal Acknowledgment meeting 3/3; Salish Sea No-Anchor Zones Work Group 3/9; Science Advisory Committee meeting 3/10; EGC Drayton Harbor work group meeting 3/10; MRC Forage Fish Update 3/12; Clallam MRC meeting 3/15; Nearshore Summit 3/17; Olympia Oyster Core Group 3/24

# 2021 Meeting Schedule

<b>JANUARY</b>	<b>FEBRUARY</b>	<b>MARCH</b>	<b>APRIL</b>
<b>29</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>MAY</b>	<b>JUNE</b>	<b>JULY</b>	<b>AUGUST</b>
<b>28</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>SEPTEMBER</b>	<b>OCTOBER</b>	<b>NOVEMBER</b>	<b>DECEMBER</b>
<b>24</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>10</b>

## **Northwest Straits Foundation 2021 Work Updates**

March 2021

### **Programs: Nearshore**

- Staff have been participating in beach seining and forage fish surveys during the month. Haley and Jason have been working hard monitoring data management, analysis and reporting.
- Jason had a meeting with Vulcan on derelict gear in Puget Sound as they explore potential for involvement in derelict gear.

### **Shorefriendly**

- In an effort to provide on-going training for shoreline landowners despite the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, we transitioned to virtual workshops. The first Shore Friendly Living workshop on coastal processes, impacts of bulkheads, and solutions to maintain healthy habitat while reducing erosion impacts was held on February 24<sup>th</sup>. Blue Coast Engineering provided the content. Over 175 people participated. A second workshop with some specific details for Island County residents was held on March 17<sup>th</sup>. Over 140 people registered. We look forward to providing further assistance through site visits and funding support to help landowners reach their goals while protecting and improving the nearshore.

### **Seahorse Siesta**

- Almost 7 years after a community member attended a shoreline landowner workshop, the removal of the barge and bulkhead at the Seahorse Siesta community association north of Langley on Whidbey Island has been completed! This project uncovers over 12,000 square feet of forage fish spawning and nearshore habitat, restoring feeder bluff processes to this reach of Saratoga Passage. The project culminated with adding 650 willows, red cedars, native rose, snowberry, and dune grasses to the site. Funding support for the project was provided by the Washington Recreation and Conservation Office (WRIA6 Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration fund, WDFW's Estuary Salmon Restoration Program), US Fish & Wildlife Service Puget Sound Coastal Program, and Vincent J Coates Foundation. Design and engineering was completed by Coastal Geologic Services and construction was completed by Quilceda Excavation Inc. Forage fish spawning surveys during construction were provided by Matt Kukuk, Saratoga Environmental. Matt is a past member of the Island County MRC. Volunteers from Island MRC and staff from WDFW have completed several years of pre-restoration monitoring for forage fish spawning, beach composition and profiles, large woody debris and beach wrack accumulation. Post-construction monitoring will begin in April.
- Northwest Foundation staff completed the final phase of the Seahorse Siesta barge removal project by planting native trees and ground cover on May 15, on Whidbey

Island. Plants included 50 Western Red Cedar, 200 American Dunegrass, 200 Nutka Rose, 50 Beaked Hazelnut and 50 Snowberry. After a long day in the dirt, staff agreed it was the best staff meeting ever - especially after a year of not seeing each other in person.

### **Advancement**

- Passport for Marine Adventure: The Foundation is launching its public adventure game connecting people throughout the NW Straits region with fun coastal sites to learn and explore. The Passport highlights three sites in each county where family and friends can connect with our magnificent marine environment. The goal of the Passport is two-fold: to encourage people to get outdoors to our shorelines and waters; and to learn about the role and work of the Northwest Straits Initiative.
- Brooke and Kenny have been attending workshops, 1v1 lessons, and formatting data to get ready for our transition to a new CRM and emailing program, Salsa CRM and Salsa Engage.
- We have started to send mailers and stickers for our Salish Sentinels Campaign. These were sent to our donors from July 1, 2020 to now.
- We are being featured as a Judd & Black Community Spotlight. They are featuring 4 nonprofits over 4 months and then the community will vote on which nonprofit will receive \$1,000.

### **Governance**

- The Foundation is serving as fiscal agent administering grants for three projects. We are supporting: the Eelgrass Protection Initiative Consortium (EPIC) project lead by San Juan MRC and funded by Pew; the Commission's Puget Sound Kelp Conservation Plan and Recovery workshops for scientists and policy experts funded by Pew; and, a derelict vessel removal project lead by the Snohomish MRC and County funded by a private donor. All of these projects are being conducted in calendar year 2021.

## MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

**County:** Clallam

**Month/Year:** March 2021

**Submitted by:** Alisa Taylor

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

- Summer Internships are being advertised & the hiring process is ready to begin. The internships are with the Tumwater Smolt Trap project, and Green Crab Removal Project with the Makah Tribe.
- The Committee has received 50 applications for, and is ready to begin the hiring process for the MRC Coordinator/Dungeness Floodplane Restoration Coordinator position.
- The Clallam MRC Kelp Webinar was successful, with good turnout and positive audience feedback. The next webinar is in the process of being planned, and will focus more on the current status of local/regional kelp beds, environmental threats to kelp, and actions which can be taken by locals to help improve and maintain nearshore ecosystem health.

**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):

Monthly MRC Meeting, 15 March 21

Oil spill preparedness meeting, 18 March 21

- Members discussed the current state of preparedness for potential oil spills in the Straits of Juan De Fuca, including what natural resources we do and do not know the locations of, how to gather more up to date information on that front, as well as future possible plans to host HAZWOPR beach cleanup and oiled wildlife trainings, to strengthen the volunteer base which will be necessary in the event of a spill. Before seeking to set up a training, members agreed to put together a set of questions for the community, to gauge public interest in participation in preparedness trainings.

**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):

The Climate Change Subcommittee is discussing plans to recruit a new member(s), specifically someone from the business community. They plan to reach out to Colleen at the Port of Port Angeles, to ask if she might know of anyone who might be interested, and who has experience with the port or EDC. It was

agreed that, before reaching out, the subcommittee will develop an outline of what exactly we're asking of a potential new member. The subcommittee will also be collectively drafting a letter to the commissioners, asking to give an update about the MRC at the out of work session.

The Pigeon Guillemot project, in partnership with Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society and Clallam County Parks Department, is funding and facilitating the placement of signage at Port Williams. The signage will explain to the public about the birds, their presence on the beaches during the breeding season, and guidelines for how to avoid disturbing them while enjoying the beach.

Forage Fish sampling is going well, while currently sampling at two sites (Ediz Hook and Cline Spit), and considering the possibility of adding another site, Dawley Beach in Sequim Bay. This is pending further email communication.

Some tentative dates have been chosen for the Olympia Oyster surveys at Jamestown: 5/13 and 24-28 are identified as possibilities, with ideal tides.

**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.):

Plans were made to reach out to Feiro Marine Life Center, to ask about putting the Clallam MRC video in the rotation with the other videos they are playing at the center during the day.

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

## MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

**County:** Island

**Month/Year:** March 2021

**Submitted by:** Anna Toledo

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

- **Forage fish:** Volunteer monitoring has been allowed to resume. Ann will be working with volunteers to get them trained in the iForms app for data collection.
- **Restoration – Seahorse Siesta** (partnership with NWSF): The barge and bulkhead have been removed at Seahorse Siesta! The NWSF led a planting event with community members.
- **Restoration/Advisory – Hoypus Point** (partnership with NWSF): Newly elected Commissioner Bacon will be visiting Hoypus Point on April 19 to learn about the restoration site and the work of the MRC.

**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:

- 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

#### Upcoming Meetings/Events:

- April 6: MRC meeting. Topics: Sea star research, eelgrass storymap
- April 15, 11am-12:30pm: Island County Natural Resources Symposium: Participants are invited to learn about IC DNR programs and committees, including the MRC. Registration link to come.

**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):

Monitoring – Forage Fish: Volunteer monitoring has been allowed to resume. Ann will be working with volunteers to get them trained in the iForms app for data collection.

Monitoring – Kelp: Kelp team leads will be meeting in April to discuss plans for the upcoming monitoring season. Linda Rhodes will be stepping back from the primary coordination role, but will continue to volunteer on the water.

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 have started reviewing interview notes to begin analyzing results, and will provide a draft report to the MRC at the May meeting.

Restoration – Seahorse Siesta (partnership with NWSF): The barge and bulkhead have been removed at Seahorse Siesta! The NWSF led a planting event with community members. In a separate effort, Anna will be working with the community and WA DNR to remove some tires and debris that have washed ashore slightly west of the restoration site.

Advisory – Shoreline Master Program (SMP) Update: Barbara Bennett has been participating in the Technical Review Committee (TRC) to provide input for Island County’s Shoreline Master Program (SMP). Barb shared her recommendations with the MRC for discussion at the March meeting. Highlights included: building resilience to sea level rise, minimizing human impacts to the shoreline, and protecting and restoring shoreline habitats.

**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.): Commissioner Melanie Bacon, newly elected Commissioner for District 1, has requested a visit to Hoypus Point to understand the restoration project and the work of the MRC. Anna, Lori, and Gwendolyn will be accompanying Commissioner Bacon on a site visit to Hoypus Point on April 19.

**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:** March 2021

**Submitted by:** Monica Montgomery

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

- We had some membership changes in March: welcomed 3 new MRC members, 2 members resigned, and 1 member changed positions (see below).
- We began rain garden work with high school students in front of the Maritime Center this week.
- Every subcommittee is meeting, planning and prepping for the busy spring and summer seasons.

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

Resigned members: Emily Bishop (District 1 Rep), Ray RaLonde (District 1 Rep)

New members: Janette Mestre (District 1 Rep), Liz Hoenig Kanieski (District 1 Alt), Joanie Hendricks (District 3 Alt)

Changed position: Solenne Walker (District 1 Rep, from District 1 Alt)

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

### Past Events/Meetings

- Feb 23 – Rain garden subcommittee meeting, to discuss plans for the year
- Feb 24 – Virtual NWSF shoreline landowner workshop
- Feb 25 – Oly oyster meeting with WDFW partners
- Feb 26 – Strait ERN LIO quarterly meeting
- Feb 26 – NWSC meeting
- Mar 2 – MRC monthly meeting
- Mar 3 – ROV meeting w/ STEM program partners
- Mar 4 – Education & outreach subcommittee meeting, to discuss e&o efforts
- Mar 8 & 10 – Orientation for new MRC members
- Mar 9 – Salish Sea No-Anchor Zones meeting
- Mar 11 – No anchors subcommittee meeting, to discuss edits to the dive safety manual
- Mar 11 – Shoreline landowner subcommittee meeting, to discuss mini workshop planning & site visits
- Mar 16 – Forage fish sampling at Fort Townsend
- Mar 18 – Forage fish sampling at Dabob

- Mar 18 – Rain garden work with high school students at Maritime Center
- Mar 23 – Executive Committee meeting
- Mar 26 – NWSC meeting

#### Upcoming Events/Meetings

- Apr 1 – Chumsortium
- Apr 2 – MRC lead staff meeting
- Apr 6 – MRC monthly meeting
- Apr 6 – Salish Sea No-Anchor Zones meeting
- Apr 15 – NWSI 101
- Apr 20 – Executive Committee meeting
- Apr 30 – NWSC meeting
- Apr – Forage fish sampling at Dabob & 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 4 volunteers, including 1 new MRC member, monitored on March 16<sup>th</sup>. We interacted with 6 beach walkers, informing them of the MRC, Fort Townsend nearshore restoration project and forage fish monitoring efforts. This is the last survey of the season, marking the end of the 5th year of monitoring post-restoration and 6 years total. We hope to have our partner at the Point No Point Treaty Council who processes our samples to share results, possibly in May.
- Forage fish - Adelma Beach (Index):** The MRC Coordinator delivered new supplies (containers, sample bags & data tags) on March 16<sup>th</sup>.
- Forage fish - Dabob Bay (Index):** The MRC Coordinator delivered new supplies (containers, sample bags & data tags) and monitored with 2 volunteers on March 18<sup>th</sup>.
- Kelp:** Nothing to report.

##### 2. Rain Gardens:

- The subcommittee met on February 23<sup>rd</sup> to discuss plans and make some decisions for rain garden installations this year. We are going ahead with the rain garden work at Quilcene School and the Maritime Center, engaging students in water quality education and the hands-on installations. We are also planning another Port Townsend installation later in the summer, at Franklin & Adams Streets, which MRC volunteers will be able to help with.

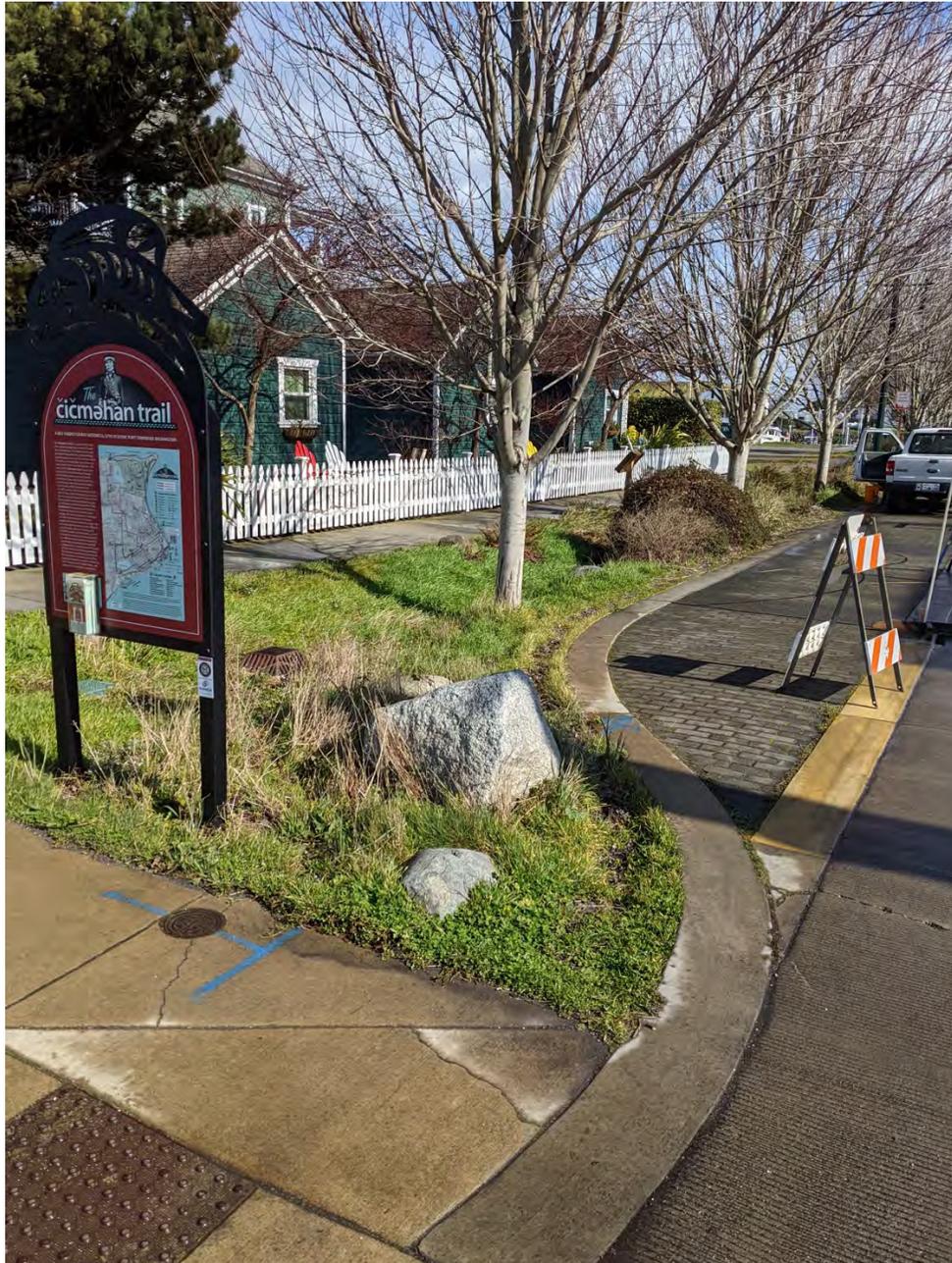
- b. On March 18<sup>th</sup>, Bob Simmons led a group of 6 high school students and 2 teachers to initiate the rain garden project in front of the Maritime Center. They interacted with 5 passersby, informing them of the MRC, water quality issues and rain garden functions. Bob will continue to meet with the students every other Thursday to finish the project, which includes weeding/removing sod, replanting, and mulching.
- 3. Education & Outreach:
  - a. The subcommittee met on March 4<sup>th</sup> to discuss project ideas (including Olympia oyster hands-on learning sites for engaging K-12 students and educational audiobook tours for kayakers to learn about kelp, etc.) shared in previous meetings. Members proposing ideas followed up on logistics to determine feasibility. The subcommittee will be meeting again to further discuss.
  - b. Several MRC members have signed up to present for the Jefferson WSU Beach Naturalists training this year to share about MRC outreach related topics and projects – Nam will be presenting on kelp and eelgrass (with a possible virtual beach exploration), Bob will be presenting on water quality issues and rain gardens, Neil will be presenting on Olympia oysters and our restoration work at Discovery Bay.
- 4. Olympia Oysters:
  - a. The MRC Coordinator and 2 subcommittee members met with WDFW staff on February 25<sup>th</sup> to share updates on the Discovery Bay restoration sites and discuss potential restoration sites around Jefferson County. We have a list of new sites for reconnaissance this year and we'll be working on permitting needs and determining how to deliver clean cultch to the Lagoon Site this spring.
- 5. Voluntary No-Anchor Zones:
  - a. One MRC member attended the monthly Salish Sea No-Anchor Zones meeting on March 9<sup>th</sup>.
  - b. The subcommittee met on March 11<sup>th</sup> to discuss edits to the dive safety manual and other safety considerations. Due to limited time, we'll be meeting once more before sending the manual through the county for approval. Once we have approval to resume diving, we'll be addressing buoy maintenance needs in Port Hadlock and Mystery 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.):

**Shoreline Landowner Outreach (NWSF project):** The subcommittee met on March 11<sup>th</sup> to discuss efforts this year, including topics for a Jefferson-focused mini workshop and potential communities/stretches of shoreline to target for site visits.

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

March 18<sup>th</sup> A “before” photo of the rain garden site in front of the Maritime Center – photo by Bob Simmons



March 18<sup>th</sup> Socially distanced students at the rain garden site – photo by Bob Simmons



## MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

**County:** San Juan County

**Month/Year:** March 2021

**Submitted by:** Frances Robertson

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

- The MRC co-hosted a successful science symposium on the subject of Navy jet noise with the Salish Sea Institute. Over 230 people attended from across 14 states, Canada and Mexico.
- Adopting a Beach in San Juan County is now available to all!

**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):

#### *March events*

- The MRC met on March 4<sup>th</sup> via Zoom for their monthly meeting. Lee First from Twin Harbors Waterkeeper and Liz Schotman from Surfrider Foundation presented on the issues surrounding seabed mining. The same day the WA State Senate voted unanimously to ban seabed mining in Washington State.
- The MRC participated in the monthly San Juan County Stewardship Council meeting
- The MRC co-hosted a science symposium with the WA Salish Sea Institute on March 16<sup>th</sup> on the subject of Navy Jet Noise and potential impacts to the marine and terrestrial habitats of the Salish Sea and Olympic Peninsula including impacts on endangered species such as the Southern Resident killer whale and the marble murrelet. The symposium had over 400 register and 230 in attendance spanning 14 US states, Canada and Mexico. The symposium was moderated by the Director of the Salish Sea institute, Ginny Broadhurst and saw presentations from scientists Lauren Kuehne, from Omnifishent Consulting and Dr. Rob Williams from Oceans Initiative and a panel discussion that also included Dr. Todd Hass from the Puget Sound Partnership, Michael Jasny of the NRDC, and Dr. Edmund Seto of the University of Washington. The event widely advertised through social media and traditional media, for example please see the San Juan Journal for their press release of the event: <https://www.sanjuanjournal.com/life/salish-sea-science-symposium-implications-of-noise-from-navy-aircraft-for-the-salish-sea-and-olympic-region/>

#### *Upcoming events*

- The MRC's April meeting will be held on Thursday April 1st and will host a presentation from the Tony Parkin, the new director of the Islands Oil Spill Association.
- San Juan County Marine Program is hosting the first of four work sessions dedicated to eelgrass protection, restoration and recovery in the San Juan Islands on March 24<sup>th</sup>. The MRC will be

piloting vessel monitoring at three anchor-out sites (either installed or planned) over the summer.

**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: Plastic Free Salish Sea launched the Adopt a Beach feature of their website. Beach stewards have slowly begun to sign up with more expected as the feature is advertised in the local media and through social media platforms and newsletters by PFSS partners. Vice-Chair Karin Roemers-Kleven has been contacted by several organizations to join workshops to speak about the initiative and community members from Brainbridge Island have expressed interest in starting a sister chapter. The word is getting out! Locally, the MRC is participating in the planning of the spring Great Islands Clean Up event, scheduled for April 24<sup>th</sup>.

Southern Resident Killer Whales: MRC member Kailey Genther continues to liaise with the Orcas, Lopez and San Juan Elementary school grade 5 teachers and with Jeff Hogan of Killer Whale Tales to schedule virtual sessions in the classrooms. Some of these sessions are expected to occur in early June which will also coincide with Orca Action Month.

Marine Stewardship Area Plan update: Progress continues to be made on updating the biodiversity targets and planning for the next stages of the update.

**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):



**SAVE THE DATE**

**NAVY JET NOISE SCIENCE SYMPOSIUM:**  
Implications of noise from Navy aircraft for the Salish Sea and Olympic region

**Tuesday, March 16**

**4 pm - 6 pm**

**SALISH SEA INSTITUTE**  
WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

The Save the Date invitation that was created for the Navy Jet Symposium.

## 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:

- Skagit MRC and the Skagit Board of County Commissioners submitted letters of support for continued state funding of the European green crab monitoring, trapping and removal effort.
- We are working on finalizing our grant proposals for the 2021-2023 MRC Grant.

**Membership/Leadership changes** (new/departing members, changes to chair/vice-chair, NWSC representative/alternate, staff): No Changes

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

- MRC Monthly Meeting- **March 11**. The Skagit MRC Coordinator walked through the MRC project planning and prioritization process with the MRC members since several are new to the process. 2021 – 2023 MRC Grant project proposal discussions continued.
- Salish Sea Stewards Advisory Committee Meeting- **February 17**, 10am-noon (via Zoom)
- Salish Sea Stewards Classes Held Tuesdays- **February 23 – June 1**, 1pm-3:30pm (via Zoom)
- Next MRC Monthly Meeting- **April 8**, 9am-11:00am (via GoToMeeting)
- The 2020 MRC Annual Report will be presented to the Board of County Commissioners on **April 20** at 8:30am.

**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 2021 Salish Sea Stewards Training commenced on Feb 23, 2021. We have 41 registered trainees (normally classes average 25 trainees), representing a 64% increase. This is likely due to offering an all-online program & doubling our advertising. Additionally, we are averaging 9 previously trained Salish Sea Stewards attending the lectures for a total of 50 people a week benefiting from the lectures. The Salish Sea Stewards Advisory Committee recently held a meeting on March 19<sup>th</sup>.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** The 2021 event date is tentatively set for Saturday, August 28 (11am-3pm) at the Fidalgo Bay Resort. We will not be offering free samples of seafood at the event this year. A survey will be sent to past participants and volunteers to see if there is any interest to host activities in person at this event this year.
- **Bowman Bay Restoration:** Plant maintenance will likely start up again in May or June 2021.
- **Kayak Kelp Surveys:** Surveys will likely start up again in June 2021. A local resident shared concerns over possible illegal harvesting of bull kelp at Yokeko Point. The Committee discussed different options for addressing this issue. It was determined that the best approach for now is through education and outreach.
- **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. Two additional hoses were purchased to help with this effort.

- Kids on the Beach: The Kids on the Beach program will be virtual this spring with over 200 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> - 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: Field work resumed this month.
- Olympia Oyster Restoration: Routine field work will start up again in May with a reduced amount of monitoring this year at three different sites in Fidalgo Bay for the third year. The monitoring effort will increase again in 2020. 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):

## MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Snohomish

Month/Year: March 2021

Submitted by: Elisa Dawson and Alex Pittman

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

- The MRC Outreach Subcommittee is planning for an Earth Day cleanup of Snohomish County shorelines related to the “Plastic Free Salish Sea” campaign. This event will include an opportunity for participants to drop off their trash to be “sorted” and weighed so that the MRC can better understand how trash is impacting local waterways.
- Five one-pagers have been completed on the MRC’s priority areas for creosote piling removal in the Snohomish estuary. The MRC will be hosting stakeholder meetings this spring to discuss opportunities for future removal.
- The MRC is preparing their scope of work for 2021-2022 MRC grant which will focus on updating information from the Port Susan Marine Stewardship Area plan. This work is in partnership with Island County MRC.

**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):

The MRC was invited to attend a webinar on Car Tires and Salmon Health on Feb 19.

There was a Beach Watchers Virtual Beach Walk Event February 22 at 6:30PM. MRC Member Tim Ellis and Ex-Officio Member Susan Tarpley presented at the event along with WSU staff.

Tim Ellis and Elisa Dawson attended the Snohomish LIO Meeting February 25.

Alex Pittman and MRC volunteers took the Meadowdale and Picnic Point forage fish samples on February 25.

Elisa Dawson and Alex Pittman conducted derelict vessel reconnaissance on March 1 in the Snohomish Estuary.

Elisa Dawson hosted a series of one-on-one conference calls for the three new members for their virtual orientation on March 2, March 4, and March 8.

There was an Earth Day planning team meeting on March 4.

Elisa Dawson and Alex Pittman met with the MRC's consultant, ESA, on March 8 to discuss the next steps for stakeholder outreach for the MRC grant project, focused on creosote piling removal in the Snohomish estuary.

The MRC was invited to attend the Nearshore Summit, which focused on Beaches March 10 and 11. Staff Elisa Dawson and Alex Pittman also attended.

MRC staff Elisa Dawson and Alex Pittman and MRC member Julie Schlenger attended the NWSC-MRC forage fish project check in on March 12.

Forage Fish monitoring occurred on March 15 and 16.

The Port Susan Island County and Snohomish County met on March 16 to discuss the scope of work for the 2021-2022 grant.

The MRC had their monthly meeting on March 17. The MRC reviewed the 2020 annual report, discussed Earth Day plans, and had a presentation on green crab happening both around the state and locally.

The MRC was invited to attend the Nearshore Summit, which focused on Deltas March 17 and 18. Staff Elisa Dawson and Alex Pittman also attended.

Elisa Dawson, Alex Pittman, ESA staff, and DNR staff had a conference call on March 18 to discuss creosote piling removal ideas and prep for stakeholder meetings which will occur this spring as part of the MRC grant deliverables.

**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 one-pagers have been created and the team is in the process of setting up stakeholder meetings to happen virtually this spring.

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. A press release will be going out about the donation in April.

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 manager Logan Daniels is getting consultants and on board for construction. The team still hopes to go to construction in 2021.

Marine Vegetation: Staff are preparing to write a contract for monitoring in south Snohomish County with DNR in 2021.

MRC Outreach Subcommittee: The MRC had a collaborative planning call on Earth Day planning on March 4. The plan for Earth Day inspired by the Great Island Cleanup hosted by San Juan County and will be using the “Plastic Free Salish Sea” campaign. The MRC will be hosting a shoreline focused cleanup for Earth Day. People can clean up anytime, there are no specific “event” times for cleanup in order to avoid crowding. We will have a list of suggested locations for folks to go to and encourage social distance/masks as part of COVID safety. We are interested in understanding the impact trash is having on our waterways, so we are asking people to bring the trash they collect to Earth Day drop off locations where their trash will be sorted and weighed by volunteers from MRC, WSU Beach Watchers, and WSU Community Sustainable Stewards. Sorting will be available on Earth Day, April 22, from 2-6PM at 5 locations around the 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.):

**Upcoming Events:**

- MRC Meeting April 21 at 6:30PM
- Forage Fish monitoring April 14 and 15
- Earth Day event April 22

**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:** March 2021

**Submitted by:** Austin Rose

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

- The MRC recommended the appointment of Kathy Ketteridge to fill the Citizen-at-Large vacancy. Kathy's appointment will officially be approved by the County Council on March 23.
- The MRC held their virtual retreat on February 25 and March 4. The committee refined their annual process and timeline for prioritizing and selecting projects. After generating and reviewing a comprehensive list of current proposed projects, the MRC agreed to a final list of projects to include in the 2021-2023 grant proposal.

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

- The MRC recommended the appointment of Kathy Ketteridge to fill the Citizen-at-Large vacancy. Kathy has been working as a coastal engineer for 20+ years and her technical background will be invaluable to the committee. Kathy's appointment will officially be approved by the County Council on March 23.

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

- The MRC held their virtual retreat on February 25 and March 4. The committee refined their annual process and timeline for prioritizing and selecting projects. After generating and reviewing a comprehensive list of current proposed projects, the MRC agreed to a final list of projects to include in the 2021-2023 grant proposal.
- MRC Staff and interested MRC members met with the Port of Bellingham to discuss potential rain garden development at Marine Park, Bellingham. MRC staff are continuing to talk with local engineers about what it may take to develop a rain garden at that particular location. An MRC member has had discussion with Blaine City Council about opportunities for rain garden development in N. County.
- The MRC Forage Fish Survey intern, Maya, MRC member Bob Seaman, and MRC staff attended the forage fish update meeting on 03/12. Summary information was shared with the full committee.
- MRC Staff attended week 1: 'Beaches' sessions of the ESRP Nearshore Restoration Summit and plans to attend Week 3: 'Embayments' sessions, particularly to learn about nearshore restoration projects/work that incorporate social science principles.

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

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

- The North Sound Stewards Speaker Series hosted two speakers in March: 1) Heather Trim, Zero Waste Washington presented information on the plastic waste crisis and the recycling crisis in Washington and the voluntary actions and policy changes they are currently working to move through the legislature; 2) Pam Borso, North Cascades Audubon Society provided a training focused on marine bird monitoring.
- A North Sound Stewards Advisory meeting was held to discuss the specific MRC contribution to the program that will be proposed in the 2021-2023 RFP. There continues to be a misunderstanding (both internally within the Initiative and externally within the community) that the North Sound Stewards is a program administered by both the MRC and Re Sources. The group discussed various ways to elevate the role and expectations of the MRC intern in addition to increasing awareness of the MRC.
- The results from the late February water quality sampling in North Chuckanut Bay came back with low freshwater results and significantly high marine results. There was also high variability observed for the marine results across the bay. Public Works staff will review data and scheduled as meeting with Whatcom County Health. A follow up meeting with Washington Department of Health will also be scheduled. Results can be viewed [HERE](#).
- The Public Speakers Series Committee (MRC/WWIN) held a planning meeting on March 17 and discussed the list of 2021 speakers topics which include adjudication and water settlement topics and history of Tribal Treaty rights (Lummi Nation and Nooksack Tribe).
- Whatcom Water Week planning meeting began in March. Whatcom Water Week is tentatively scheduled to occur September 12<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup>.
- The MRC has been conducting forage fish surveys at Little Squalicum Estuary (Bellingham) since 2017. This area is set undergo restoration this summer and the MRC has planned to stop sampling at the location once construction begins due to safety and because the City of Bellingham will be implementing permit-required forage fish sampling for construction, and also plan to complete post-construction forage fish monitoring to meet City goals and funding requirements. The MRC is considering moving their survey location further south along Squalicum Beach and is in communication with Lisa Hillier about whether long term monitoring at this site would be beneficial to their regional data set.

**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.):

- Heather Spore is volunteering her time to serve as the Whatcom MRC's representative on the 2021 WRIA 1 Combined Review Team, as a technical member for the 2021 Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) grant round. The WRIA 1 Combined Review Team is a local team of community and technical members that review and rank local salmon recovery projects proposed for funding by the Washington State Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB). The work of reviewing the local applications, evaluating how well they fit the local habitat recovery strategy, and producing a

recommended ranking to the Board falls to the Combined Review Team. The WRIA 1 Combined Review Team is a team of technical and citizen stakeholders knowledgeable on salmon recovery efforts in WRIA 1 and able to interpret technical information, understand community issues and concerns, is willing to commit the time required to perform the necessary review and background reading, and most importantly, is able to remain objective in their review so that local recovery priorities are addressed and the strongest project list possible is forwarded to compete for salmon recovery funding.

- The MRC has several years worth of clam sampling data from around the Whatcom area that they would like to be able to share with the public in an eye-catching and informative way - perhaps via Story Maps or online web apps. The data consist mainly of points and transect lines attributed with clam species information and habitat conditions (from 2004, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2014 and 2016). The main questions the maps could try to answer are where certain clam species are present and their overall distribution, and if there are any trends over time. Or it could be more of a narrative on the state of citizen science and the work of the MRC, and why tracking clam species is important to gauge nearshore health. MRC Staff connected with Dr. Aqulia Flower, WWU, GIS Program Lead, who share the opportunity to work with the MRC's clam data with her students. The data has been passed along, and it is hoped that a final product could be ready to present by June.

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

