



**Meeting:** Northwest Straits Commission  
**Location:** Zoom Conference Call  
**Date:** May 28, 2021  
**Time:** 10:00 AM-12:00 PM

To join the Zoom meeting, [click here](#). Meeting ID: 896 0185 9147 Passcode: 119163  
 For audio conference, dial: 253-215-8782

10:00 – 10:05	<b>Welcome and introductions</b> Approval of April minutes	Elsa Schwartz, Chair
10:05 – 10:50	<b>MRC Presentations</b> Island MRC Snohomish MRC <i>Port Susan Marine Stewardship Area Report Card Update</i> San Juan – <i>Eelgrass protection &amp; derelict vessel prevention</i>	Scott Chase – Island MRC Sara Maxwell – Snohomish MRC  Frances Robertson – San Juan MRC
10:50 – 11:00	<b>Business Items</b> Staffing update (Lucas) Kelp update (Dana) Green Crab update (Allie)	
11:00 – 11:15	<b>Committee reports</b> Executive Committee External Relations Committee Science Advisory Committee	
11:15 – 11:20	<b>Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission/ Tribal update</b>	Cecilia Gobin, Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission
11:20 – 11:25	<b>Puget Sound Partnership update</b>	Jennifer Grimm, Puget Sound Partnership
11:25 – 11:30	<b>NWS Foundation update</b>	Don Hunger, NWS Foundation
11:30 – 11:45	<b>MRC Reports</b>	
11:45 – 11:55	<b>MRC Updates and Action Items</b> Identify key points and action items to report back to MRCs.	All
11:55 – 12:00	<b>Public comment</b>	All

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



# Minutes

April 30, 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), Jeff Taylor (Jefferson), Bob Cecile (Whatcom), Tim Ellis (Snohomish), Christina Koons (San Juan), Nan McKay, Chris Castner, Jenn Grimm (Puget Sound Partnership-alternate)

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

**Others in Attendance:** Jay Lind (Skagit MRC), Austin Rose (Whatcom MRC), Frances Robertson (San Juan MRC)

**Absent:** Laura Blackmore, Cecilia Gobin (Tribal), Pete Haase (Skagit), Tom Cowan, Julia Parrish

## Welcome and Introductions

Alan opened the meeting and facilitated introductions.

## Approval of Minutes

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

## Director's Report

Budget update – Lucas reported that efforts to secure state funding for MRCs, kelp and green crab were successful for the state 2021-23 biennium. Commission staff is also focused on two pending awards from Pew Charitable Trusts and US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Staffing update – Lucas noted that one currently open Commission staff position is closing May 3, and a second field support (green crab) opening will be posted by the Department of Ecology soon.

Tribal acknowledgement – Lucas reported that we're waiting to bring the draft tribal acknowledgement back to the full Commission until another tribe has an opportunity to review it.

## NW Straits Commission Committee Reports

**Executive Committee** – Elsa noted that some of the updates in the director's report were on the Executive Committee agenda, and noted that they are hoping to be able to schedule an in-person retreat in the fall.

**Science Advisory Committee** – Dana provided an update, noting that the committee is meeting monthly. Current tasks include reviewing the role of the Committee, including how to provide support for MRC project development, and how the committee will provide input on MRC Requests for Proposals to help elevate science across the initiative, embrace failure, and share lessons learned.

**External Relations Committee** – Lucas shared information about committee members' activity related to reauthorization of the Northwest Straits Initiative.



# Minutes

## **Business items**

European green crab trapping and removal – Allie updated the Commission on current activities, including removal operations in Drayton Harbor. The timing is about two months earlier than last year, which will help get a better idea of the seasonality and how the green crabs move. Allie also shared information about how they determine how significant the crab infestation is, through the Catch Per Unit Effort, and other details about the problem of green crab in the Salish Sea.

Pew Charitable Trusts kelp funding – Commission staff and partners are starting a year-long project to lead two workshops and improve kelp protections through existing rules and policies. Improve ability to carry out those protections through better guidance and documentation. Any opportunity to promote through media.

US Fish and Wildlife Service – Dana described a project proposal for expansion of the voluntary no-anchor eelgrass protection zones. US Fish and Wildlife Service has agreed to fund a piece of this project. We are seeking additional funding sources. The project will be carried out in partnership with MRCs and the NW Straits Foundation, and will start with the sites that are most ready.

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

There was no update this meeting.

## **Puget Sound Partnership Update**

Jenn Grimm reported that the Puget Sound Days on the Hill are off to a good start, and she encouraged Northwest Straits Commission members to join future events. Per request by members of the Commission, Jenn will share a summary document outlining the state funding outcomes related to Puget Sound from the 2021 legislative session.

## **Northwest Straits Foundation Update**

NW Straits Foundation staff did not attend, but Lucas passed on a message that they are working on their FY22 budget. Dana added that the Foundation has secured a small grant to create safety training videos for kelp kayak volunteers.

## **Election of Officers**

Nan McKay thanked Alan for his role as chair for the last two years, noting that he is very engaged in many aspects of the NW Straits Commission's work. Nan nominated Elsa Schwartz to serve as chair for 2021-22, and nominated Tom Cowan to serve as vice chair. Tom was not in attendance but Nan explained that he is willing to serve as vice chair, but does not plan to serve as chair.



# Minutes

The Commission moved and approved by consensus the election of Elsa Schwartz as chair and Tom Cowan as vice chair.

## **MRC Reports**

MRCs provided full written reports that are available in the [pre-meeting materials](#). Highlights are included below:

### **Clallam – Alan Clark**

- The MRC selected an intern to work on the European Green Crab project. The internship is based in Neah Bay and is conducted in partnership with the Makah Tribe.
- Kelp Webinar II— Planning continues for a second kelp webinar.
- Video outreach to local college students has been effective in raising interest in internships.

### **Island – Elsa Schwartz**

- **Restoration – Tire Cleanup by Seahorse Siesta:** The MRC worked with the Seahorse Siesta community to organize a cleanup of 70 tires and other marine debris along the shoreline west of the Seahorse Siesta restoration site.
- **Restoration – Hoypus Point (partnership with NWSF):** County Commissioner Melanie Bacon visited Hoypus Point with Anna Toledo, Gwendolyn Hannam, and Lori Clark to learn about the restoration project.
- **Interest in Microplastics:** The MRC is interested in learning more about microplastics and ways we might be able to engage, particularly in understanding what questions we should be asking/answering, what work is already underway, and areas where the MRC could fit in. We welcome any suggestions for organizations or individuals to contact!

### **Jefferson – Jeff Taylor**

- Olympia oysters team spread 80 cultch bags (2 cubic yards) of Pacific oyster shell at the Discovery Bay Lagoon site on April 16th with the help of 12 MRC members, staff and community volunteers – see photos below.
- Rain gardens work continues with students at Quilcene School (a second installation here) and in front of the Maritime Center in Port Townsend (a rehabilitation effort).

### **San Juan – Christina Koons**

- MRC members and Plastic Free Salish Sea beach stewards participated in the Spring Great Islands Clean-up.
- April saw a focus on reporting, grant amendments and grant preparation.

### **Skagit – Jay Lind**

- Lots of pinto abalone were recently discovered at two abalone restoration sites in Skagit County waters that were previously thought to have low survival rates.
- Fidalgo Bay Day is canceled this year. The Committee is considering other alternatives.



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### **Snohomish – Tim Ellis**

- The MRC hosted an Earth Day cleanup of Snohomish County shorelines in partnership with the “Plastic Free Salish Sea” campaign and WSU Snohomish County. 554 pounds of trash were picked up and dropped off to be sorted by volunteers. This was a great inaugural event and we hope to do it again!
- MRC staff Elisa Dawson hosted a stakeholder meeting with DNR, Department of Ecology, Snohomish County, Tulalip Tribal Police, Snohomish County Sheriff, Everett Police Department, City of Marysville, and the Port of Everett on derelict vessels. The group discussed the scope of work for 2021 removals and continued collaborative efforts to address the backlog of derelict vessels in the Snohomish estuary.

### **Whatcom – Bob Cecile**

- Kathy Ketteridge was appointed to the MRC on March 23 to fill a Citizen-at-Large position. She was welcomed by the MRC at the April meeting.
- The MRC provided comment to the Whatcom County SMP amendments supporting the inclusion of the Marine Resource Lands policy section, as developed by the MRC.

### **Meeting highlights and action steps for MRCs**

The Commission generated a list of key highlights that staff will compile to send to MRC representatives to share with their MRCs. Highlights are compiled on a separate document and sent directly to MRC staff and representatives. Highlights included:

- Budget update – Efforts to secure state and other funding sources (described above).
- Elections – Elsa Schwartz, Island MRC representative was elected chair. Tom Cowan was elected to serve as vice chair. Thank you to Alan Clark of the Clallam MRC for his two terms as chair.
- Staffing needs – Commission upcoming position opening.
- Green crab – Update and status (described above).
- Salish Sea Stewards – Skagit MRC had great success with their virtual training this year, with 39 people completing the program.
- Kelp – Next steps include a project to explore ways to improve kelp protections through existing rules and policies.
- Microplastics – Island MRC is interested in work around microplastics. Next steps include coordinating with other interested MRCs on this topic and investigating partner projects in microplastics such as COASST, NOAA or others, with linkage to PFSS.
- [Northwest Straits Foundation’s Passport to Adventure](#)

### **Round table**

Lucas suggested a future presentation to the Commission by COASST.



## Minutes

Nan McKay recommended a recent Seattle Times [article](#) from Lynda Mapes.

Lucas mentioned that he had recently helped on a post-restoration seining at a site in Jefferson, sharing as a local success story.

Tim Ellis requested and received a [Passport to Adventure](#) from the NW Straits Foundation and he is excited about it, but noted the ferry to Jetty Island (one of the sites featured) is not running due to COVID safety concerns.

Jeff Taylor started to create a new video series on climate change, with his first interviews next week.

### **Public comment**

There was no public comment.

\* The next regular Commission meeting will be on Friday, May 28 via Zoom.\*



## Commission staff highlights- [May 2021]

### MRC Support

**MRC Grants:** The 2021-23 grant opportunity for MRCs is now open in the Ecology Administration of Grants and Loans (EAGL) system. The application will be open until 5pm on Tuesday, June 8. Commission staff is in touch with MRC staff regularly to provide support as those proposals are developed.

Quarterly reporting and invoicing for current MRC awards was submitted by MRCs and reviewed/processed for payment. MRCs have the April-June period to make use of any remaining Washington State 2019-21 biennium funds in their grants before they expire on June 30.

### Regional Projects

**Eelgrass:** The monthly transboundary workgroup led by the Commission for voluntary no-anchor zones held a joint meeting in partnership with the San Juan County Marine Program to strategize on monitoring needs for eelgrass both for planning for conservation practices and monitoring efficacy of voluntary-no anchor zones. This led to a new partnership with Washington State Parks at Shallow Bay as a site to monitor the efficacy of voluntary no-anchor zones.

**Kelp:** Over 50 people attended the 2021 MRC bull kelp monitoring kick off meeting May 6. Volunteers, staff, and project partners joined the meeting to discuss on the water safety, logistics, and share new innovations for monitoring bull kelp in the NW Straits region. This meeting rings in the new season of bull kelp monitoring that will begin in late June.

**Green Crab:** With a recent article published in the local Blaine newspaper, The Northern Light, multiple landowners in Drayton Harbor have reached out to allow trapping for green crabs on their property. These expanded trapping efforts have led to green crabs being found in areas we were previously unable to access. The field crew has now captured and removed over 20 green crabs since April.

### Operations

**Staffing update:** Commission staff reviewed initial application packages for the Communications and Outreach Specialist position. Over 40 applied. We hope to be holding interviews in early June. We will be hiring a project assistant this summer. The position should be posted soon. We are also evaluating the need to hire another project coordinator to assist with green crab trapping and removal.

**COVID-19 update:** The Department of Ecology and Padilla Bay are in the process of preparing a re-entry plan that will outline how and when any in-person operations might return.

**Meetings attended:**

Lucas attended: External Relations weekly; Day on the Hill 5/7, 5/14, 5/21; Ecosystem Coordination Board 5/12; Salish Sea Institute Advisory board 5/13; COVID re-entry planning 5/24, 5/28

Dana attended: Island MRC meeting 5/4; Whatcom MRC meeting 5/6; Kelp Expedition Advisory meeting 5/7; Puget Sound Kelp Research and Monitoring Work Group 5/12; Joint San Juan County Eelgrass Protection Consortium and Salish Sea Eelgrass Protection Zone workgroup 5/14; Snohomish MRC meeting 5/19; Joint Forage Fish and Marine Waters PSEMP 5/19; and Puget Sound Day on the Hill 5/21; State of the Salish Sea Symposium #1 5/26

Allie attended: Puget Sound Kelp Research and Monitoring Work Group 5/12;

Sasha attended: Kelp Team meeting 5/6; virtual Puget Sound Day on the Hill, 5/14 and 5/21; Clallam MRC meeting 5/17; Reporting on Ecotopia webinar 5/21.

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

May 2021

### **Programs: Nearshore**

ESRP grants to be awarded! We are anticipating receiving grant funds for Hoypus Point and Polnell Point construction as well as continued Shore Friendly funding. Also making the cut from the budget process is the next phase of restoration actions at the Lummi Island Quarry site which will include armor and fill removal, creation of a new pocket beach, and development of an eelgrass protection zone.

- Hoypus Point - We are working with a “multi-agency review team” (MART) which consists of representatives from all regulatory agencies to test a new process for coordinated permitting of armor removal and nearshore restoration projects. This will be one of the first projects to go through the process. Permit applications are being accelerated to meet a June 15 deadline before the US Fish & Wildlife Service ESA programmatic permit expires. If we don’t meet this deadline, it could delay our permits for up to a year as we would be forced to apply for an individual permit.
- Polnell Point Restoration Project - Drayton Archaeology hired for cultural resources survey. Blue Coast Engineering hired through a competitive process including an RFQ for submittals and interviews with three firms. Blue Coast will complete the feasibility study and design services for this project.
- Lummi Island Quarry Restoration - All permits have been received for the first phase of the project that will remove the overwater structures and pilings. Bids for construction are due in mid-June and we are anticipating construction to begin in early fall.

### **Shorefriendly**

- Shoreline landowner site visits are underway with over 25 visits conducted already in April and May with more still to come. Additional site visits are also underway through our partners at Island County, Swinomish Tribe, and Friends of the San Juan’s.

### **Monitoring**

- Volunteers are back! Also presented to Salish Sea Stewards and scheduled out the 2021 summer field season.

### **Derelict Gear**

- Derelict crab pot surveys were completed in Port Townsend Bay and Dungeness Bay. Removals completed in Dungeness Bay with Port Townsend removals happening later this month.
- We are now promoting our Catch More Crab campaign on the ferry system. We put together a 30 second video using content created for the CMC video series which is being displayed on the screens in the terminals and on the ferries. Our CMC rack card will also be on display in the brochure holders at the terminal and on the ferries. They have ordered 25,000 rack cards from us.

## **Advancement**

- Passport To Marine Adventure is finally out in the world. Mobile website and desktop website have been created, email chains have been sent out, social media has been broadcast, and to date we have mailed out just over 50 passports. People are engaging with the program and the response has been very positive.
- A new Shorefriendly video has been released and so far, the reception has been great. We are going to get an email out to our list promoting the video and put an ad campaign behind it on Facebook. In addition, the video can be found on our YouTube, website, Facebook and Twitter pages.
- We are creating our initial outreach materials for the Derelict Vessel campaign with the Island County MRC and the Initiative.

## MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

**County:** Clallam

**Month/Year:** May 2021

**Submitted by:** Alisa Taylor

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

- The newly hired MRC Coordinator, Rebecca Paradis, will begin working on June 1.
- 2021 Interns have been selected for the three positions. Vita Olson will work on the Tumwater smolt trap project; McKenzie Ginther will work on the education/outreach project, and a third [name pending] will work on the green crab removal project.

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

Elections for the leadership positions were held. Our new chair is Tim Cochnauer, our new vice chair is Alan Clark, and continuing on as the NWSC rep as well, is Alan Clark.

Thanks so much to Alan and Tim for all their dedication and hard work, and thank you to our former Chair Bob Vreeland, and Vice Chair, Robert Knapp, for all their excellent work and support of the MRC!

It was recently confirmed that the new MRC Coordinator, Rebecca Paradis, will begin working as of June 1<sup>st</sup>.

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

The monthly MRC meeting was held on May 17<sup>th</sup>.

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

None to report.

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

Lance Vail (alternate) has volunteered to distribute materials for the crabber education/outreach effort.

Olympia Oyster surveys, (population, and heat-map) took place on May 13. Additional surveys will be on May 25-28.

The forage fish survey has revealed a first egg for this season, at Cline Spit. A microscope has been purchased, to be used for viewing & identifying forage fish eggs, as well as for any other MRC related projects (such as kelp survey, plankton sampling, education/outreach).

The Pigeon Guillemot project will begin monitoring on June 1. The sign which is to be posted at Port Williams was ready, but was misprinted, and had to be re-printed. It is planned to be installed by June 7<sup>th</sup> at the latest.

Discussion continues about oil spill preparedness, and a desire to assess/cultivate public interest in the issue, as well as community education trainings such as HAZWOPR and oiled wildlife training. This may be a prospect for next year, rather than this year.

**Other** (anything not covered above, including local issues of interest to the regional group, advisory actions the MRC is taking, questions to the Commission, etc.): none

## MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

**County:** Island

**Month/Year:** May 2021

**Submitted by:** Anna Toledo

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

- **Eelgrass Storymap:** The MRC has published a [Storymap on the eelgrass monitoring project](#)! This Storymap covers what eelgrass is and its role in our ecosystem, the research of community science volunteers, the IC MRC, and ways that viewers can help protect this critical habitat.
- **Forage fish presentation:** Ann and Anna provided a presentation on the forage fish monitoring program to the 2021 class of 47 Sound Water Stewards. The participants were engaged and interested in the project and asked great questions.
- **Departing member:** Randy Berthold is stepping down from the MRC to tend to other life obligations. Randy has served on the MRC since 2019, and during that time has assisted with the bull kelp monitoring project, outreach work, and has served on the Executive Committee. He has always provided a calm, steady voice on the committee, helping us stay focused and grounded in scientific rigor. We thank Randy for his service and contributions to the MRC!!

**Membership/Leadership changes** (new/departing members, changes to chair/vice-chair, NWSC representative/alternate, staff): Randy Berthold stepped down as MRC member.

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

#### Past Meetings/Events:

- May 4: MRC meeting. Topics: Noxious weeds, needs assessment
- May 13: Forage fish training to 2021 class of Sound Water Stewards

#### Upcoming Meetings/Events:

- June 1: MRC meeting. Topics: Microplastics, voluntary no-anchor zones, needs assessment

**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: Sampling has started at Sunlight Shores. Ann has been checking in with all volunteer teams to provide support, assistance, and training on the iForms app for data collection. Ken is quickly getting up to speed as the new MRC Champion for the forage fish project. Ann and Anna provided a presentation on the forage fish monitoring program to the 2021 class of 47 Sound Water Stewards. Topics included: forage fish biology, the MRC, an overview of the monitoring program, and its relationship to shoreline protection and restoration. The participants were engaged and interested in the project and asked great questions.

Monitoring – Kelp: The kelp team is planning for the upcoming monitoring season. Several volunteers attended the kelp season kick-off on May 6<sup>th</sup> hosted by the NWSC. Linda and Vern recorded videos and provided an overview of their camera rig system to share with meeting participants. The team is also coordinating with Dana about including a survey site, possibly Possession Point, in the Puget Sound Restoration Fund's Kelp Highway Expedition planned for July.

**Outreach – Eelgrass Storymap:** The MRC has published a [Storymap on the eelgrass monitoring project](#)! This Storymap covers what eelgrass is and its role in our ecosystem, the research that a community science team conducted, the Island County Marine Resources Committee, and ways that viewers can help protect this critical habitat. It features stunning photography and relatable science in an immersive platform. The Storymap was developed by Ann Prusha, with input from the eelgrass monitoring team and the MRC.

After interacting with the Storymap, viewers are encouraged to fill out [this learning assessment](#) for a chance to win a copy of Sound Water Steward’s newest edition of *Getting to the Water’s Edge on Whidbey & Camano Islands*. The assessment will close on June 4th, and the drawing will be held shortly after.

**Outreach – Needs Assessment:** Barb and Andi have started analyzing the results of the needs assessment interviews. They presented initial results at the May MRC meeting, and will be developing a report in June.

**Restoration – Hoypus Point (partnership with NWSF):** The 90% design has been completed. The project team met with the Multi-Agency Review Team (MART) – a group of representatives from regulatory agencies – to discuss the permitting needs of this project, with the goal to facilitate the permitting process as a restoration project.

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

- The three Island County Commissioners each provided letters of support for the federal funding request to Senator Murray, organized by Lucas.
- Anna will be taking maternity leave from mid-June through mid-October. Ann will be the primary MRC staff contact during this time.

**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:** May 2021

**Submitted by:** Monica Montgomery

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

- Rain garden work completed (or near completion) at Chetzamoka Park (maintenance), Maritime Center (rehabilitation), and Quilcene School (new installation). A Maritime Center partner will be presenting about this collaboration at the next MRC monthly meeting.
- The No-Anchor Zones team will be swapping out the PT floats with buoys on May 23.

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

Nothing to report.

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

#### Past Events/Meetings

April 29 – Rain garden plant delivery and work at Quilcene School, Chetzamoka Park & Maritime Center  
April 30 – NWSC meeting  
May 1 – Forage fish sampling at Adelma  
May 4 – MRC monthly meeting  
May 4 – ROV meeting w/ partners  
May 6 – NWSI kelp season prep  
May 6 – Executive Committee meeting to review BoCC presentation  
May 7 – Strait ERN LIO spring quarterly meeting  
May 10 – No-Anchor Zones meeting to finalize plans and budget  
May 10 – Olympia oysters meeting to finalize plans and budget  
May 11 – Salish Sea No-Anchor Zones meeting (EPIC)  
May 13 – Shore Friendly shoreline landowner site visit near Dabob  
May 19 – Executive Committee meeting

#### Upcoming Events/Meetings

May 25 – Forage fish sampling at Dabob  
May 28 – NWSC meeting  
June 1 – MRC monthly meeting  
June 8 – Salish Sea No-Anchor Zones meeting  
June 14 – MRC annual report presentation to the BoCC  
June 25 – NWSC meeting, MRC presentation to the Commission

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

Nothing to report.

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

1. Monitoring:

- a. **Forage fish - Fort Townsend:** Nothing to report.
- b. **Forage fish - Adelma Beach (Index):** The MRC monitored on May 1<sup>st</sup>.
- c. **Forage fish - Dabob Bay (Index):** The MRC Coordinator, one MRC member (Sarah Fiskien), and two community volunteers will monitor on May 25<sup>th</sup>.
- d. **Kelp:** Six MRC members (Betsy, Brenda, Bryan, Heather, Liz, Solenne) and one MRC community volunteer (Judy) attended the May 6<sup>th</sup> season prep workshop. The subcommittee is planning their first survey in June.

2. Rain Gardens:

- a. Erica Guttman (Native Plant Salvage Foundation) delivered plants on April 29<sup>th</sup> to Quilcene School, Chetzamoka Park, and the Maritime Center.
- b. The MRC Coordinator worked with one MRC member (Troy) and two community volunteers to weed and plant new natives at the Chetzamoka Park rain garden.
- c. Bob (WSU partner) and Erica (contracted help) worked with 3 Maritime Center and school staff and 7 students to finish planting and mulching the Maritime Center rain garden. Chrissy McLean, Associate Program Manager with the NW Maritime Center, will be presenting about this collaboration to the MRC at the June meeting.
- d. Erica delivered plants for the new rain garden at Quilcene School. As of May 14<sup>th</sup> they were near finished with planting and waiting to get a pipe installed.

3. Education & Outreach:

- a. We printed a batch of rain garden rack cards; placed orders for eelgrass protection ads targeting boaters in NW Yachting and 48 Degrees North, and for water quality ads through the local theatre's weekly newsletter; one MRC member is working on creating a water quality ad with messaging around plastics; and we hired a graphics designer to rebuild a design for an MRC roll-up poster for tabling events. We also submitted an application to participate in the Wooden Boat Festival in September.
- b. We are gearing up for crabbing season and will be purchasing some outreach materials (escape cord, crab gauges, etc.) to include with informational rack cards and workshop promotion flyers for distributing around the county.
- c. Looking forward, the subcommittee is in talks with the PT Marine Science Center to partner on a speaker series and we're hoping to hire an intern to help create a rain garden StoryMap for East Jefferson County and/or a rain garden tour activity guide.

4. Olympia Oysters:

- a. The MRC Coordinator met with two MRC members (Gordon and Neil) on May 10<sup>th</sup> to finalize plans for expanding the Powerlines site south and budgeting

needs for upcoming years. We are considering placing an additional 2-3 cubic yards of shell at the Powerlines site this year prior to monitoring, depending on tides/scheduling and materials available from Taylor Shellfish.

b. The MRC Coordinator is working on updating permits.

5. Voluntary No-Anchor Zones:

a. The MRC Coordinator and one MRC member (Troy) attended the monthly Salish Sea No-Anchor Zones meeting on May 11<sup>th</sup>.

b. We will be borrowing the Port of PT skipper and swapping the PT floats with buoys on May 23. This does not require diving. We'd like to check the lines here and do some much-needed maintenance at the Mystery Bay buoy field later this year, depending on adoption of the dive safety manual.

c. The MRC Coordinator met with two members (Troy and Gordon) on May 10<sup>th</sup> to finalize plans and budgeting needs for upcoming years. Looking forward we would like to have an eelgrass survey conducted near Port Townsend to compare to previous surveys (2014 & 2015).

**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):** Lisa from the Foundation organize a site visit for shoreline homeowners near Dabob on May 13<sup>th</sup>. Two subcommittee members (Solenne and Sarah) attended. The subcommittee will be meeting on May 24<sup>th</sup> to confirm additional sites/interested homeowners.

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

April 29 – Rain garden plant delivery (Erica Guttman and Bob Simmons), photo by Monica Montgomery



April 29 – Maintenance at the Chetzamoka Park rain garden, photo by Monica Montgomery



April 29 – Erica instructing students at the Maritime Center rain garden, photo by Bob Simmons



## BRAVO TEAM RESTORES A RAIN GARDEN

By Chriss McLean, NWMC Associate Program Manager

"What are you all doing?" a curious bystander asked.

A student replied, "We're fixing the rain garden. It's really important to capture the pollution before it goes into the bay. Especially right here where people park their cars."

"Cool," the bystander responded, "I've never thought of that. That's a great idea."

It was a sunny but blustery day on March 18th as students from our Bravo Team class began to break up the thick sod that had overgrown the rain garden in front of the Northwest Maritime Center. Even under their masks, big smiles were visible as they sank shovels into dirt and chatted about friends.

Each year, in addition to learning maritime expeditioning skills, Bravo Team, which consists of middle and high school students from Port Townsend School District's OCEAN alternative learning program, initiates an environmental service project to address the health of our Salish Sea. We began the process this fall through a series of lessons and investigations during our online classes.

Next we began generating a list of questions we had about the Salish Sea, like "How do we know if the Salish Sea is healthy?", "How is climate change affecting the Salish Sea?", and "Do humans have positive effects on the Salish Sea?"

From there, we chose to focus on climate change and positive human impacts. As spring approached and hybrid learning became a possibility, we began to look for a hands-on service project we could participate in safely. In partnership with our local Washington State University (WSU) extension, we identified a rain garden next to our NWMC campus that was not functioning well. We decided to take on this project as a group, identifying that rain gardens are an effective way to filter and trap pollutants before they enter the Salish Sea, and that they provide a carbon sink in the form of plants and healthy soil communities.

We have been working with our WSU partner to learn more about how rain gardens work, their effectiveness, and how they are planned and constructed. Students are studying plants and then creating a planting plan for our rain garden. After we remove the sod and weeds from the garden, we will spread new bioretention soil—a special mixture of sand and compost that filters the water and retains pollutants. Finally, we will transplant the new plants into the rain garden.

The Bravo Team students are excited and proud to work on this project. In the words of one student, "It feels good to be working on something that helps the environment and will be visible in our community."

The participation of many partners make this project possible: Washington State University Extension, Jefferson County Marine Resources Committee, City of Port Townsend, Port Townsend Main Street Program, North Olympic Salmon Coalition, Port Townsend School District and Northwest Maritime Center.

Stop by the Maritime Center to see the progress!  
Read the Bravo Team blog at [nwmaritime.org/bravo-team](http://nwmaritime.org/bravo-team)



## MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

**County:** San Juan County

**Month/Year:** May 2021

**Submitted by:** Frances Robertson

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

- San Juan County held an official opening for the Orcas Landing Marine Interpretive Outlook, the MRC were instrumental in the process and production of interpretive material.
- The County and MRC hosted stakeholder engagement sessions regarding efforts to identify protection efforts for Southern Resident killer whales off the westside of San Juan Island.

**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):

#### *May events*

- The MRC met on May 6th via Zoom for their monthly meeting.
- MRC members participated in the third County led eelgrass coordination effort for the protection, restoration and recovery of eelgrass in the San Juans on May 13<sup>th</sup>.
- Orcas Landing Marine Interpretive Overlook opening, and Coast Salish Mural unveiling occurred on May 21<sup>st</sup>. The MRC was represented by Laura Jo Severson and Phil Green. MRC Staff Frances Robertson Presented MRC Tribal representative Patti Gobin with a ceramic bowl in thanks for all her efforts to guide the MRC and the County, particularly in the production of appropriate interpretive material.
- MRC members participated in the County led user group engagement effort to present the results of the marine spatial planning effort with user group representatives and discuss viable protection strategies for the whale's foraging areas. These workshops took place on the 13, 19 and 20 May.

#### *Upcoming events*

- The MRC's June meeting will be held on Thursday June 3rd – this meeting will be see a presentation on the status of the Islands Oil Spill Association and a confirmation of members who wish to renew their terms.

**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: Stewards continue to sign up as beach stewards through Plastic Free Salish Sea. The MRC continues efforts to purchase a SeaBin to trial this summer.

Southern Resident Killer Whales: MRC member Kailey Genther has led efforts to schedule virtual classroom sessions with Jeff Hogan of Killer Whale Tales, these sessions will take place for the San Juan Elementary School grade 5 classes on June 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>. The MRC continues to work with County Parks to achieve boater safety and whale wise signage at Odlin State Park. Unfortunately, due to a lack of response from the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation regarding the requirements for putting the kiosk posts in the ground a full kiosk is unlikely to be possible this year.

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 hosted a grand opening of the Orcas Landing Marine Interpretive Outlook on Friday May 21<sup>st</sup>. This included the unveiling of a mural created by a team of young Coast Salish Artists from the Samish, Port Gamble, and Cowlitz Tribes. The event was attended by representatives of 4 tribes including the Samish, Tulalip and Lummi, while the Chairmen of the Swinomish, Stillaguamish, and Suquamish sent their support. Representative Debra Lekanoff also attended and led portions of the event in partnership with San Juan County Chairperson Jamie Stephens. MRC lead Staff Frances presented Patti Gobin with a ceramic goal as an acknowledgement of her continued guidance, teachings, and patience helping both the MRC and the County to tell the right stories of the first peoples of the islands.

<https://theorcasonian.com/theres-a-new-experience-awaiting-you-at-the-ferry-landing/>

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



Orcas Landing Marine Interpretive Outlook. Tom DiChiara



A Connection With Nature interpretive panel created by the MRC. Frances Robertson



A Vibrant Home For All interpretive panel created by the MRC. Frances Robertson



Samish Tribal members, including Krista Davis, Sam Barr, Rosie Cayou, Bill Bailey, Jan flagg, and Cheryl Chatt. Tom DiChiara



Samish Elder Rosie Cayou providing the blessing with the Samish tribal members and the mural artists behind. Tom DiChiara



Coast Salish mural at the Orcas Landing. Artists included Sarah Folden of the Cowlitz Tribe, Brain Perry of the Port Gamble Tribe, Sam Barr of the Samish Tribe and Erin Licata. Frances Robertson



Close up of the mural showing two of the silhouetted canoes bearing the names of an original village on Orcas. The canoes were painted in silhouette because we did not want to tie them to one era, artist Sarah Folden explained. They represent the past, present and future inhabitants of the islands. Tom DiChiara



Tulalip Tribes Representative and MRC member Patti Gobin. Tom DiChiara



MRC Lead Staff, Frances Robertson presenting Patti Gobin. Christine Minney



Lummi Chairman Lawrence Solomon, Lummi Councilwoman Lisa Wilson, and Antony Hillaire provided the final song of the ceremony. Tom DiChiara



Marine Interpretive bulletin board created by MRC member Carl Davis and Mark and Beth Gasser. Tom DiChiara



Ribbon Cutting of the overlook site by San Juan County Councilors Jamie Stephens and Christine Minney.  
Frances Robertson

## MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

**County:** Skagit

**Month/Year:** May/2021

**Submitted by:** Tracy

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

- 39 new volunteers are expected to complete the Salish Sea Stewards training program on June 1.
- 196 students from three different schools, 6<sup>th</sup>- 8<sup>th</sup> grades, participated in the hybrid Kids on the Beach Program this spring.
- Skagit MRC member Paul Dinnel, is working with Padilla Bay NERR research staff to expand native oyster restoration to the channels in the southern end of Padilla Bay.

**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- **May 13**. Betsy Stevenson gave a presentation on Skagit County's Shoreline Master Program Update.
- Salish Sea Stewards Advisory Committee Meeting- **May 12** (via Zoom)
- Salish Sea Stewards Classes Held Tuesdays- **February 23 – June 1**, 1pm-3:30pm (via Zoom)
- Next MRC Monthly Meeting- **June 10** 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:** Just two more weeks of the 2021 Salish Sea Stewards classes to go! For one of the remaining classes, MRC member Pete Haase put together a panel session of unique individuals who have successfully implemented new marine programs to help inspire the new volunteers. We had a really low dropout rate of just one person this year! 39 out of 40 registered participants are expected to complete the program on June 1. The graduation celebration will include a virtual tour of the PBNERR Aquarium. The program graduates will be given a certificate as well as a t-shirt and name tag with funding from private donations received through the Padilla Bay Foundation and Friends of Skagit Beaches. The Salish Sea Stewards Advisory Committee will recruit new Salish Sea Stewards to join their team and help match volunteers with other partner organization's volunteer opportunities.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** The 2021 event date was originally set for Saturday, August 28 (11am-3pm) at the Fidalgo Bay Resort. However, the MRC decided not to host the Fidalgo Bay Day event this year due to so many unknowns with the pandemic. In addition, the Fidalgo Bay Resort is no longer accepting reservations for large events. As an alternative, the Committee is considering doing a very small scale outreach event at a different location. The Fidalgo Bay Day grant funding will most likely be used to upgrade the MRC booth for future outreach events.
- **Bowman Bay Restoration:** Lynne Wenberg-Davidson will be taking over as the new MRC Project Lead. Lynne and Tracy met with Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group staff at the site on May 24<sup>th</sup> to do a walk through and discuss the maintenance plan for this year.
- **Kayak Kelp Surveys:** Surveys will start up again in June 2021. We will continue to monitor in small groups following COVID-19 safety precautions. The volunteer group monitoring Biz Point in June is already full! The kelp beds include: Shannon Point, Biz Point, and Coffin Rock. The NWSC virtual

2021 Kelp Monitoring Kickoff Meeting was held May 6<sup>th</sup> with representatives from each MRC including several new Salish Sea Stewards.

- Forage Fish Surveys: Forage fish surveys continue at our MRC restoration sites (Marchs Point- 2/month, Bowman Bay- 1/month, and Kukatali Reserve -2/month) and at our Forage Fish Index sites (Similk Bay, Samish Island, and Ship Harbor). We haven't seen much spawning at any of our sites yet, but that will likely start picking up again in May. Several new Salish Sea Stewards have expressed interest in helping out with the surveys, but we plan to continue to monitor in small groups for now. Phil Dionne with WDFW recently gave a talk on forage fish as part of the Salish Sea Stewards training. The forage fish survey field trip that was planned for the Salish Sea Stewards was postponed due to COVID-19.
- Kids on the Beach: Three schools, Sedro-Woolley 6<sup>th</sup> grade and Conway 8<sup>th</sup> grade, and Concrete 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> grade have completed the spring Kids on the Beach program with over 196 students participating. The classes were all hybrid with some students in the classroom and some students attending virtually. Annie, the Kids on the Beach program coordinator, was able to implement the program in person in the classrooms. The curriculum focused on forage fish spawning and nearshore fish use. The schools were unable to do any field trips, so the forage fish surveys and beach seining were all done virtually. Students in the classroom got to look at eggs under microscopes and live specimens were brought in from the beach seine. The students analyzed and compiled all of the data into reports and presentations. Unfortunately, the schools were unable to do the research symposium this year due to COVID-19. La Conner's Swinomish 'Between Two Worlds' 9<sup>th</sup> grade (30 students) is scheduled to complete the program in June.
- Pinto Abalone Recovery: The Puget Sound Restoration Fund (PSRF) and WDFW divers have been out doing field work since March. They've outplanted 10,000 juvenile abalone at 10 different restoration sites in the San Juan Archipelago, including 4,000 abalone at sites in Skagit County waters. That is twice the number of abalone they had planned on outplanting. PSRF now has around 50,000 time-lapse images that they will be analyzing for predation. They will also be looking at the oceanographic data collected from the sensor arrays that were deployed at six abalone restoration sites. The data collected includes temperature, salinity, pH, dissolved oxygen, light intensity, and sedimentation.
- Olympia Oyster Restoration: Paul Dinnel gave a presentation on the native oyster restoration work for the Salish Sea Stewards class on April 13. Paul and his son will start up routine field work again the end of May with a reduced amount of monitoring this year in Fidalgo Bay. The monitoring effort will increase again in 2022. Paul recently went out with Roger Fuller and Sylvia Yang to explore the southern channels of Padilla Bay Reserve in search of suitable restoration sites to outplant native seed oysters. Paul will also be assisting Whatcom MRC with their oyster restoration efforts in northern Chuckanut Bay in May.

**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: May 2021**

**Submitted by: Elisa Dawson and Alex Pittman**

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

- The MRC is finalizing their MRC Grant for 2021-2022. The project work focuses on working with Island County MRC to update the Port Susan Report Card.
- Snohomish County plans to remove 3 derelict vessels in 2021 for an approximate cost of \$90,000. Posting the vessels will happen this summer, with targeting removal by a contractor in early September. This work will be reimbursed 90% by DNR.
- Mike Sadler has resigned from the MRC because he has been accepted into a Ph.D program at the University of Washington.

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

Mike Sadler has resigned from the MRC because he has been accepted into a Ph.D program at the University of Washington.

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

MRC Staff Elisa Dawson and Alex Pittman attended the Salmon Recovery Conference April 28-30.

Tom Doerge, Alex Pittman, and Elisa Dawson attended the Kelp Kick off meeting hosted by the NWSC on May 6.

Elisa Dawson attended a Puget Sound Partnership meeting on May 12 which presented the draft list of strategies for the 2022-2026 Action Agenda.

The MRC Crabber Subcommittee met on May 13 to discuss crabber outreach for summer 2021.

MRC Staff Elisa Dawson and Alex Pittman met with MRC consultant ESA on May 14 to discuss preparation for the Pilings Stakeholder meeting later this month.

Elisa Dawson and Alex Pittman met with NWSF Staff Kenny Clarkson on May 15 to discuss crabber outreach plans for 2021.

The MRC conducted Forage Fish monitoring on May 18 at Picnic Point and Meadowdale and May 19 at Howarth Park.

The MRC had their monthly meeting on May 19. The MRC finalized their 2021-2022 MRC grant scope of work, discussed Earth Day and plans for the Plastic Free Salish Sea campaign.

The volunteers from the MRC's Earth Day shoreline cleanup activities met on May 20<sup>th</sup> to discuss lessons learned from their event and ideas for moving forward with future shoreline cleanups.

Tim Ellis and Elisa Dawson attended the Snohomish LIO Implementation Committee Meeting on May 20.

**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 will host a collaborative stakeholder meeting on May 26 with the City of Everett, City of Marysville, Port of Everett, Tulalip Tribes, Snohomish County, Department of Natural Resources, and the Army Corps of Engineers. The goal is to discuss the pilings and possibilities for removal.

Port Susan Marine Stewardship Area (proposed grant project for 2021-2022): A draft scope of work for the 2021-2022 Port Susan MRC grant was discussed at the April MRC meeting and additional edits have been made. The Snohomish MRC and Island MRC continue to coordinate their individual scopes of work for the joint project. The next joint MRC Port Susan meeting is scheduled for June 9.

Derelict Vessels (NWSF funds): Snohomish County is preparing to remove three vessels in late summer 2021 for approximately \$90,000. Target date for removal is early September.

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

Forage Fish: forage fish samples continue to be taken once per month at Meadowdale, Picnic Point, and Howarth Park.

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. Monitoring of marine vegetation is expected to occur in late summer.

MRC Outreach Subcommittee: The MRC hosted an Earth Day cleanup of Snohomish County shorelines in partnership with the “Plastic Free Salish Sea” campaign and WSU Snohomish County. This event will included an opportunity for participants to drop off their trash to be “sorted” and weighed so that the MRC can better understand how trash in impacting local waterways.

Results of the Earth Day clean-up are:

900 pounds of total trash picked up

53 People dropped of items at drop off locations

350+ additional pounds from Washington State Department of Natural Resources WCC crew, and Mike E. and 3 other individuals who emailed Elisa.

554 to drop off stations. Drop off breakdown:

Type	McCollum	Campus	Monroe	Arlington	Edmonds	Total
Plastics	12	9	5	6	30	62
Metals	5	3	59	12	34	113
Glass	12	9	7	24	14	66
Organics	11	0	13	4	7	35
Dog Poop Bags 48 dog bags	2	3	9	2	7	23
Other	14	29	14	186	12	255
Total	56	53	107	234	105	554

Crabber Education: The MRC crabber subcommittee met on May 13<sup>th</sup> to discuss plans for crabber outreach for summer 2021. Elisa and Alex met with NWSF staff on May 17<sup>th</sup> to coordinate plans for outreach with the media and hard copy materials.

No current updates for

- Oil Spill
- Mussel Watch
- 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.):  
None.

#### **Upcoming Events:**

- Snohomish LIO meeting May 20
- Snohomish MRC presentation of 2020 Annual Report to Snohomish County Council May 25
- Snohomish Estuary Pilings collaborative meeting May 26
- Snohomish MRC presentation to the NWSC May 28

- Joint Island-Snohomish Port Susan Meeting June 9
- Forage Fish monitoring June 15 and 16
- June MRC Meeting: June 16<sup>th</sup> at 6:30

**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:** MAY 2021

**Submitted by:** Austin Rose

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

- The MRC will soon have a vacancy for a Conservation-Environmental seat as Rachel Arnold will be resigning due to new employment out of state.
- It is anticipated that the MRC will provide input on the development of Whatcom County Climate Action Plan, which is currently being drafted by the Whatcom County Climate Impact Advisory Committee. In addition, the MRC will be providing a letter to the City of Bellingham concerning proposed development near the North Chuckanut Bay tidelands.
- Eleanor Hines and MRC Staff (Austin) were interviewed by Annika Fain on her podcast NW Fish Passage. The interview is now LIVE on Spotify and Apple podcasts  
<https://www.nwfishpassage.com/2021/05/12/episode-13-austin-rose-and-eleanor-hines-whatcom-county-marine-resources-committee/>

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

- MRC Vice Chair nominee, Rachel Arnold has accepted new employment with USFS in Wisconsin and will be resigning from the MRC this summer. A nomination for a new Vice-Chair will occur at the June MRC meeting. Rachel Arnold is currently the project champion for the forage fish surveys. A new project champion will be identified for the next grant round.

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

- The MRC general meeting was held on May 6. Meeting highlights include:
  - City of Bellingham (COB) provided an overview of a proposed property development extending from the shoreline of the North Chuckanut Bay tidelands – approx. 37 acres of property with 44-45 lots being proposed. The project is still in pre-application. The MRC expressed concerns over the potential impact to the biodiversity area and plans to develop an adhoc committee to draft a letter to the COB concerning the development, in order to do all they can to protect and improve the environmental quality of the bay. Though, the MRC will be informed when a formal application is submitted.
  - Northwest Straits Commission staff (Dana) discussed the Northwest Straits Kelp Monitoring Project and Eleanor Hines shared detailed survey results from the MRC's five survey sites in Whatcom.
  - The Port of Bellingham is helping to coordinate a presentation to the MRC from USGS on the Puget Sound Coastal Storm Modeling System (PS-CoSMoS). The Port will be reviewing the data from the modelling as they are incorporating coastal resilience into future projects including a newly funding habitat a beach improvement project at Little Squalicum. It is anticipated the MRC will be asked to provide a letter of support for additional funding to support improved public beach access at Little Squalicum as well as back beach plantings.

- The MRC is reviewing the Land Use and Water Resources chapters of the Whatcom County Climate Action Plan, which was developed by the Whatcom County Climate Impact Advisory Committee. Members will hold a discussion at their June MRC meeting.
- A letter of support was provided to the Northwest Straits Commission to pursue ongoing federal funding to support the Northwest Straits Initiative.
- The North Sound Stewards (NSS) hosted two virtual trainings (May 6 and May 10) to launch their *Beach Stewards* program. This program is meant to get NSS volunteers trained up to be out on beaches during low tide as beach interpreters who also can talk to beach users about beach etiquette and water quality to keep our beaches healthy. Both Larrabee State Park and Birch Bay State Park have requested these services for years, and are excited to see the program revamped especially given the low tides and increased beach use this summer. A similar program ran successfully for several years through NWS Surfrider at Larrabee. 12 people joined the online trainings and the in person beach trips to apply what they learned. Volunteers are using signup.com to indicate their availability to be on the beach at low tides May 28 – July 24.
- MRC Staff and Eleanor Hines attended the MRC Kelp Season Kickoff on May 6. Members will be working to build a GoPro mount and different methods for using the water temp logger.

**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):

#### Education and Outreach

- The Public Speakers Series Committee (MRC/WWIN) is continuing work to host an updated State of the Bay Research Symposium in early 2022. The group is reaching out to previous panelists to see if they have interest in sharing their latest research related to the health of Bellingham Bay.
- MRC/Whatcom Watershed Information Network (WWIN) scheduled a speaker series event (May 25) featuring members of Lummi Nation and the Nooksack Indian Tribe discussing the importance of fishing, the First Salmon Ceremony, and their mission to preserve a fishing life for future generations. Due to a tragic event, and out of respect to the Lummi Community, the event has been postponed. 80 people had registered.
- WWIN will be hosting a virtual general membership meeting on June 25 focusing on allowing members to share COVID-19 silver linings with regards to virtual outreach and education. The MRC will present on their most recent successful beach cleanups.
- Whatcom Water Week is scheduled to occur (mostly) virtual September 11<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup>. The planning team is contacting previous event hosts about their interest in hosting events in 2021. It is anticipated that previous hosts will connect at the WWIN general membership meeting and will exchange ideas about what events worked well or didn't work during COVID and how to adapt.

- Mary Kristina-Waite (MRC NSS Intern) accepted a full time position with the North Cascades Institute and will no longer be a temporary part time employee with Whatcom County supporting the MRC and the NSS program.

### Monitoring

- The Olympia oyster monitoring/population survey will occur May 25-27. Students and staff from Bellingham Technical College (BTC) will be joining MRC staff for the survey. Due to COVID, students will join in groups of 5-7 over the course of three days. Dr. Paul Dinnel will join with MRC members on May 27 to transfer bags of seasoned shell to 6 of the 7 test plots – to assess for larvae settlement in 2022, and will show the MRC the tile method to assess for larvae settlement.
- MRC Staff, Whatcom County Public Works Pollution Identification and Correction (PIC) staff, and Whatcom County Health staff met with Department of Health (DOH) regarding the recommended next steps for the MRC's water quality work in North Chuckanut Bay. DOH will be taking the time to review the MRC water quality data and it may be possible it may be possible to remove the pollution closure as shown on the DOH shellfish safety map. The beach would remain unclassified. WDFW would need to make a formal change to their rules before recreational harvest would be legal in north Chuckanut Bay. The MRC plan to continue monitoring as they have been and work with local partners development a management plan if a formal recreational harvest season is considered. Impacts that needs to be assessed include:
  - Chuckanut Village residents from increased traffic
  - Private tideland owners in north Chuckanut Bay
  - Tribal members interested in subsistence and commercial harvest
  - Olympia oyster restoration effort
  - Resources to assure continued water quality monitoring and biotoxin monitoring/signage
  - Bellingham Parks and Recreation – responsible for access maintenance

**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.):

- Eleanor Hines and MRC Staff (Austin) were interviewed by Annika Fain on her podcast NW Fish Passage. The interview is now LIVE on Spotify and Apple podcasts  
<https://www.nwfishpassage.com/2021/05/12/episode-13-austin-rose-and-eleanor-hines-whatcom-county-marine-resources-committee/>
- MRC Staff is working with Allie Simpson and staff from Washington SeaGrant and WDFW to develop a mailer to the Drayton Harbor community regarding the increased trapping of European Green Crab this summer.

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



Photo credit: Austin Rose. Left: group photo of NSS Beach Stewards volunteer at on site training at Larrabee State Park. Right: Eleanor Hines getting her hands wet teaching volunteers about tidepool critters