



Meeting: Northwest Straits Commission
Location: Zoom Conference Call
Date: October 29, 2021
Time: 10:00 AM-12:00 PM

To join the Zoom meeting, [CLICK HERE](#) Meeting ID: **836 7222 4871** Passcode: **246901**
 For audio conference, dial: **253 215 8782**

We acknowledge the lands we're on today are the ancestral and current homelands of Indigenous Nations who have stewarded them since time immemorial. We respect their sovereignty, support their Treaty rights, their right to self-determination, and we honor their sacred spiritual connection with the land and water. These Indigenous Nations include the Jamestown S'Klallam, Lower Elwha Klallam, Lummi, Makah, Nooksack, Port Gamble S'Klallam, Samish, Stillaguamish, Swinomish, and Tulalip Tribes.

10:00 – 10:10	Welcome and introductions Tribal acknowledgement (August 2021 minutes will be included for approval at the December meeting)	Elsa Schwartz, Chair
10:10 – 10:35	Committee reports Executive Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NW Straits Commission 2022 meeting calendar Science Advisory Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update on generating list of scientists to present at future meetings External Relations Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update on reauthorization and congressionally directed spending request 	Tom Cowan Sasha Horst (in Julia Parrish's absence) Chris Castner
10:35 – 10:45	Business Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retreat wrap up NW Straits Initiative Symposium Series on Climate Change: first session November 18 Meetings with MRCs on utilizing the congressional directed spending funds Update on support letter for WA Dept of Fish and Wildlife and WA Conservation Corps forage fish crew work Staffing updates 	Lucas Hart, Director



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10:45 – 10:50	Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission/Tribal update	Cecilia Gobin, Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission
10:50 – 10:55	Puget Sound Partnership update	Jennifer Grimm, Puget Sound Partnership
10:55 – 11:00	NWS Foundation update	Don Hunger, NWS Foundation
11:00 – 11:25	MRC Reports	MRC Representatives
11:25 – 11:45	Presentation: Quiet Sound	Rachel Aronson, Director
11:45 – 11:55	MRC Updates and Action Items Identify key points and action items to report back to MRCs	All
11:55 – 12:00	Public comment	All
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30 minute post-meeting open discussion – join if you'd like.



Executive Committee Meeting Notes
October 18, 2021 • 11:00am-12:00pm
Zoom

Committee Members present: Jude Apple, Chris Castner, Tom Cowan, Julia Parrish, Jeff Taylor

Committee Members absent: Elsa Schwartz

Commission Staff/Support: Lucas Hart, Sasha Horst, Leslie Perkins

Reauthorization

Chris and Lucas updated the committee on the October 7 call with Hart Clements, Senior Policy Advisor for Senator Patty Murray. Chris reported the draft reauthorization bill is almost ready and will be sent to NWSI for review. Chris suggested we identify a few commissioners to review the draft. Hart requested information on NWSI's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion programs. Lucas and Sasha provided this to Senator Murray's office.

NOAA has informed Lucas their staff is briefing administrators on the NOAA-NWSI relationship. Hart Clements will be talking with key parties about reauthorization. These may include NOAA, the Governor's Office, Dept. of Ecology, WDFW, NW Indian Fisheries, and regional tribes as key parties affected by the reauthorization.

The congressional spending request is part of the Commerce, Justice and Science appropriation package. No Senate action has been taken yet. Chris noted there is indication the NWSI could have a 24 month window to spend the funding if passed.

Lucas and Sasha have met with all of the MRCs on how they could utilize the funding on projects and programs. More guidance is needed on potential capital projects restrictions. Chris requested if staff can seek an expert resource to help clarify the nuances with capital project funding, which Lucas will follow up on.

Outgoing funds process

Sasha explained the internal and external policies that govern how the NWSC can use federal funds. The Code of Federal Regulations applies to federal funding received by NWSC and the process will be very similar to what is in place currently.

In 2016, at a joint meeting of the NWSC and NWSF Executive Committees, it was decided that funds should not pass from the Commission to the Foundation through MRCs. At the present meeting, the committee discussed the 2016 policy and whether the NWSC should directly pass funds to the NWSF for collaborative project and program development. Lucas referenced the Foundation's "collaborative project planning" document that could be a basis for further defining roles, responsibilities and funding guidelines on collaborative programs. The committee agreed this may be an acceptable option as long as roles are clearly defined and money does not pass through MRCs to the Foundation. An internal policy needs to be developed to outline how money will pass from the NWSC to the NWSF. That policy will be developed as the NWSC evaluates projects proposed for congressional directed spending.

Retreat debrief

The committee shared their impressions and feedback from the 2021 virtual retreat held in September. Lucas noted the idea it generated for a joint staff person between the Foundation and the Commission will be interesting to track. Members viewed it as an opportunity to refresh and overview what work is being done, helped reconnect people and meet new staff. The first day felt too briefing heavy but day two was more interactive and all hoped the retreat will be able to be held in person next year.



Other items

Lucas is reviewing applications for the NWSC project Coordinator position. Interviews will be held soon.

Next meeting: 10:00am on Monday, November 15, 2021

Northwest Straits Commission

DRAFT 2022 meeting dates

10:00am-12:00pm for virtual meetings, 10:00am-3:00pm in person (2022 in person dates to be determined)

January 28

February 25

March 25

April 22* (April 25-29 is Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference)

May 27

June 24

July 29

August 26

September 30

November 4-5* (in person conference?)

December 9*

*All dates are last Friday of the month with these exceptions.

NWSI-2021 (Virtual) Retreat

Sept. 23-24, 2021

FINAL Summary Notes

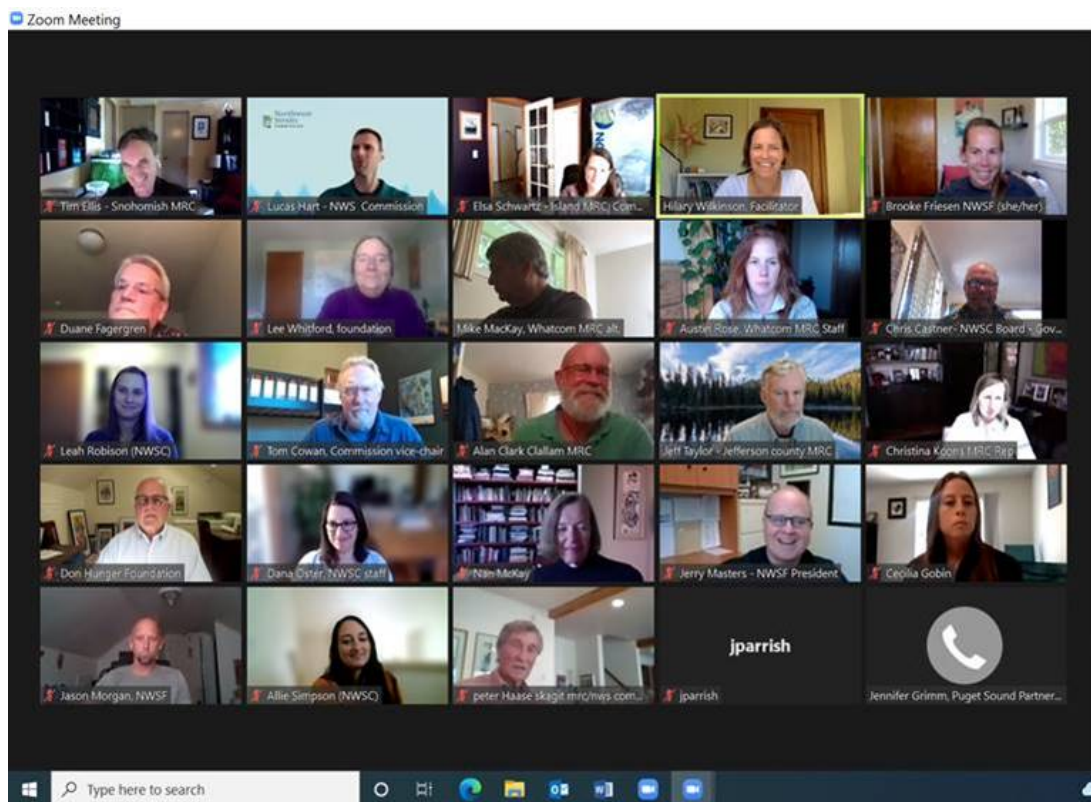
Attendees

Day 1 - 29 attendees

Elsa Schwartz, Chris Castner, Alan Clark, Tom Cowan, Tim Ellis, Cecilia Gobin, Jennifer Grimm, Pete Haase, Christine Koons, Julia Parrish, Jeff Taylor, Mike McKay, Nan McKay, Lucas Hart, Dana Oster, Sasha Horst, Leslie Perkins, Leah Robison, Allie Simpson, Lee Whitford, Duane Fagergren, Betsy Lyons, Jerry Masters, Jason Morgan, Brooke Friesen, Don Hunger, Hilary Wilkinson, Austin Rose, Jude Apple

Day 2 - 26 attendees

Chris Castner, Alan Clark, Tom Cowan, Tim Ellis, Duane Fagergren, Brooke Friesen, Cecilia Gobin, Jennifer Grimm, Pete Haase, Lucas Hart, Sasha Horst, Don Hunger, Christina Koons, Betsy Lyons, Dana Oster, Nan McKay, Mike McKay, Jason Morgan, Leslie Perkins, Leah Robison, Austin Rose, Elsa Schwartz, Allie Simpson, Jeff Taylor, Lee Whitford, Hilary Wilkinson



Retreat Vision

Reenergize connections and collaborations among Commission/Foundation/MRCs to inspire progress and action on current and future NWSI programs and priorities.

Desired Outcomes/Objectives

Connections, Collaborations, and Team Building

1. Honor Caroline's legacy.
2. Celebrate NWSI accomplishments since the last retreat.
3. Reenergize connections and collaborations.

Programs, Projects and Priorities

4. Inspire progress and action on current and future NWSI programs and projects.
5. Revisit and revise (if needed) current priorities and areas of focus for upcoming year.

Next Steps and Misc.

6. Identify and agree to specific post-retreat next steps, including implementation strategy and assignments.

Current Projects and Programs

NWSI staff reported on the status, priorities, and current collaborations for seven projects and programs. A summary of their reports is captured in Table 1, which also includes a list of discussion items, including questions, generated by the presentation.

Table 1: Status, Priorities and Collaborations of NWSI Projects and Programs

Project/Program	Status	Priorities	Collaborations	Comments/ Questions
Eelgrass Protection Zone (Dana)	Becoming an aspirational & regional program; Jefferson, Whatcom, Skagit, Island, San Juan counties all involved; NWSI got USFWS funding; Workgroup started in 2021	For 2022: Shallow Bay; Aiston Preserve; N Chuckanut Bay; Seafarers; Cornet Bay; trying to find funding; coordinating transboundary collaboration	Originated by MRCs (who piloted it); other MRCs wanted to get involved; provided site selection, local knowledge, etc.	Education is important: is this planned? YES: social marketing campaign; want someone to help develop messages and strategies. Shout-out to Cecilia who coordinated a presentation to NWIFC habitat policy

Project/Program	Status	Priorities	Collaborations	Comments/ Questions
				committee – very well received. Q’n re: overlap w shellfish growers in N Chuckanut Bay?
Kelp Recovery (Dana)	<p><u>Kelp monitoring</u> 6 MRCs involved in bull kelp monitoring; credit to Caroline; have had ongoing participation from many MRCs; lots of press coverage; received state funding to do more in-depth work with DNR to create story maps and reporting materials to look at the trends; there’s a new data indicator for kelp.</p> <p><u>Kelp Plan:</u> state funding for kelp plan coordination; Pew funding.</p>	<p><u>Kelp Monitoring:</u> Maintain program support for the kelp monitoring work; integrate MRC data into regional indicator; data analysis and reporting.</p> <p><u>Kelp Plan:</u> Implement! Keep partners engaged and using the plan</p>	<p><u>Kelp Monitoring:</u> MRCs lead monitoring and volunteer management; foundation leads volunteer liability and safety training; commission leads protocol tracking, data processing, partner and MRC collaboration.</p> <p><u>Kelp Plan:</u> Commission leading projects; Foundation acts as fiscal agent to Pew; MRCs engaged as local voices.</p>	<p>A kelp story map would be great to both visualize data and have content that can be shared on respective websites and for engagement and funding.</p> <p>Q’n: Is PS Restoration Fund part of this?</p>
Forage Fish (Dana)	Six MRCs regularly involved; the 7 th (SJ) is managed through FOSJ. WDFW processes samples and provides volunteer training; 2-4 updates for	MRC data used in regional FF database; data feedback loop to volunteers; support MRC communications goals.	Great collaboration across various partners: MRCs lead monitoring and volunteer recruitment; Foundation leads monitoring and	Where is the focus? Upper intertidal.

Project/Program	Status	Priorities	Collaborations	Comments/ Questions
	volunteers/year; there is an ad hoc communications committee.		planning at restoration sites; Commission leads coordination w WDFW (samples, supplies and training) and coordinates index site monitoring and volunteer communications.	
Green Crab (Allie)	One of the worst invasive species; devastates eelgrass. Focusing in Drayton Harbor because one of the worst infestations in the Salish Sea. Have caught 123 green crabs this year.	Keep current relationships; build new relationships; are funded by WDFW to expand to Whatcom and Skagit; will prioritize Drayton Harbor, but will likely add Samish Bay as a targeted trapping area. Have a WA CC crew to help next year.	Works mostly with Whatcom MRC; did a collaborative presentation with WDFW and WA Sea Grant to Whatcom MRC speaker series.	What is 153 relative to overall population? Response: This is an improvement from last year...so have shifted areas to trap and types of traps. Duane: suggested contacting Bill Dewey with Chuckanut Shellfish. They've been catching a lot of green crab.
Monitoring (Jason)	28 sites; 13 partners; over 1200 volunteer hours (for Covid year, this is especially good); next week expect rough draft of a manuscript from UW. Next year			
Derelict Gear (Jason)	Crab pots are the focus. The main focus is on educating crabbers to not lose pots.	2022: new removal project. Have a unique opportunity to work with		

Project/Program	Status	Priorities	Collaborations	Comments/ Questions
	Over 669,000 views of video. Also succeeded in getting advertising out via ferry system. Big increase in rack card distribution because of ferry collaboration. Wrapping up a 3-year project with Jefferson/Clallam MRC in Pt Townsend and Clallam.	commercial fleet, especially the Swinomish. Also moving forward with working with WDFW to change regulations to require all crab pots to have escape cords.		
Nearshore Restoration / Shore Friendly <i>(Jason covering for Lisa)</i>	Purpose: educate landowners to reduce and remove shoreline armoring. It's a Puget Sound-wide program that NWSI is a leader in. Host workshops, etc. Have videos featuring Hugh Shipman. Have 3 restoration projects starting in the next month. 1. Similk Bay. 2. Clark's Pt. SW Chuckanut Bay. 3. Lummi Island project. Also..Clayton Beach.	10 site visits scheduled through Sept. Something new they're doing: vegetation workshops. One is scheduled for 10/21 in Island Co.	Every MRC has been involved over the years; Jefferson MRC has stepped up in the past year.	Question for Lisa: are there other sites this program should focus on? Q'n: Will there be coordination with the railroad? Response: Yes, first need to meet with State Parks.

Participants self-selected into topical breakout groups to share thoughts on how they could contribute to advancing each of these project/programs.

Breakout Group #1: Eelgrass: Austin, Christina, Don, Sasha

- Discussed elements of boater education and outreach; started talking re: anchoring spot. “Anchor Smart” concept was discussed.

Breakout Group #2: Kelp: Alan, Brooke, Chris, Dana, Jenn

- Focused on a few elements of the kelp program – want to expand on community engagement and youth education to glean more kelp enthusiasts in the next generation; integration of kelp in regional recovery processes.

Breakout Group #3: Forage Fish/Green crab: Allie, Duane, Leah, Peter

- Discussed the various levels of publicity and effectiveness for different subjects such as green crab or forage fish.
- Very important to get this information in front of legislators; publicity is critical.
- Need to think about new ways to monitor forage fish; maybe think about connecting to dog training groups to train labs and other species to smell forage fish eggs. Would make it more efficient.

Breakout Group #4: Derelict Gear: Jason, Jeff, Lee, Leslie, Lucas, Tom

- Discussed crabber education; more specifically, expanding the workshops, how to make it an NWSI-wide workshop; talked about how to do it, Lee offered background in environmental education.
- It is hard to get public funding; maybe a topic between the three legs of NWSI to put together a funding strategy for this. Maybe the Foundation could help fill that gap?

Breakout Group #5: Nearshore: Betsy, Elsa, Mike, Nan, Tim

- Tim is interested in figuring out an alternative for a sediment being dredged in the Everett area; Betsy noted work she’s involved with the City of Seattle looking upstream into the watersheds to better manage silt so it doesn’t come downstream and need to be dredged. Opportunity for a connection between MRCs and watershed organizations.
- All are interested in more videos; more shore friendly projects to get the word out to more people.
- Interest in figuring out when projects don’t go right to have follow-up; figure out how many permits are being issued for bulkheads and why it is going on.
- Mike wants to offer his experience working with Lummi on smelt beach; his interest in whether Lummi is following through on beach nourishment part of that activity. He can offer knowledge and contacts for Lummi Nation concerning a large nearshore project to encourage beach nourishment.

Emerging projects and programs

- Internship program-a main purpose is to develop the next generation of professionals.

- This is in partnership with AmeriCorps.
- They are doing regional recruiting: interns will serve 3-12 months.
- Collective goal is to do effective outreach so young people of all backgrounds have an opportunity to come and work and apply interests/skills to develop a career and contribute to the process.
- Have 3 interns currently (Shore friendly, Monitoring, and Community Projects)

Discussion Highlights

- Nan: Support idea of interns increasing administrative capacity for MRCs.
- Chris: should chart some of the vocational pathways that the internship program could support. Need pathways clear.
- Betsy: other areas for intern support: tech support; technological support, social media, more stuff to do with data.
 - Re: vocational training: maybe offering a mentorship program that says we need support, will help you learn NP management or business administration.
- Alan: have been using an intern at Clallam Co; sees room for improvement; specific vocational skills and pathways would be huge; would attract people with a multitude of skills. Have used interns to help with technology as well as for when did not have a coordinator.
- Allie: noted that internships were the only way for someone like her to get into this; appreciates the work. Have used the Veterans Conservation Corps for field work with green crab. Has been immensely helpful for them to be out there. Interested in helping with this program.
- Elsa: what would help the MRCs is some communication template; need a start and end date. Also, recommends for interns; great brain trust, lots of people with incredibly diverse experience. Maybe set up some educational interviews with a few folks within the Initiative.

Next Steps and Misc.

Status of Reauthorization (Chris Castner)

- A reauthorization is a piece of legislation that establishes or continues one or more federal agencies or programs. An authorization bill that becomes law creates an agency or program and then allows it to be funded by taxpayer money.
- Brief history of how this came about: Lucas was asked by Senator Murray's staff about interest in pursuing reauthorization. Lucas talked with the NOAA and EPA Regional Administrators.
- In last 12 months, expanded reach-out to tribes, PSP, EPA, as well as continuing with NOAA. This was to ensure they had a chance for input.

- In April 2021, the reauthorization workgroup was formed. It includes members of the Commission and the Foundation.
- Have word that Senator Murray is supportive of reauthorization and will take the lead on it in Congress.
- On Sept 7; Murray visited Padilla Bay reserve, met with Lucas, Jude and Chris; had a great informal visit. Jude and Lucas did a great job communicating some of the opportunities for growth that would come with continued funding. Senator Murray was definitely interested; very interested in communities benefiting from the group. They brought up the support. She noted, “Now it’s time for me to do my job.”
- During July, Aug and Sept; Hart (Murray staff) has been drafting bill language for reauthorization; trying to be in communication with Larsen, Kilmer etc. They expect to look at draft bill language in Oct. 2021.
- What happens next?
 - Senator Murray’s office is lead sponsor; will seek a signoff by Senate and House members; will go into markup on Senate and House side.
 - Hoping to see movement in this winter and next fall.
 - Senator Murray has requested \$3M for continued ops of NWSI. If/when there is access to FY22 funding is still in question
- Opportunity provided by reauthorization:
 - Expanded and consistent support for MRCs; better funding for multi-year work.
 - Sustain and build even stronger partnerships with local county governments, Tribes, state agencies and federal partners.
- Challenges
 - Increased visibility and standing – more reporting and accountability
 - Will have to establish and negotiate enhanced working relationships with federal, state and tribal partners. (more scrutiny being in federal budget)
 - Stay true to unique way of working.

Messaging Refresher (Sasha and Leslie)

Sasha and Leslie provided an overview of the communications plan and shared a fact sheet with messaging that all NWSI members should review regularly and be able to speak to. This also included a briefing on the survey results.

The idea of a shared communications position between the Commission and Foundation was floated and received support by participants. It was noted that this position would also have to straddle the MRC “leg” and ensure that MRCs also benefit from and have access to this individual.

See PPT for more information.

Next Steps

- Schedule a meeting to further discuss the idea of a shared Communications position between the Foundation and Commission (Tom volunteered to participate).
- Lisa to respond to question posed during nearshore restoration portion.

Resources

Link to Shoreline Monitoring Case Study:

<https://nwstraitsfoundation.org/download/restoration-effectiveness-in-puget-sound-shoreline-monitoring-case-study-report/>



Northwest Straits Foundation Monthly Updates

September, 2021

Programs

Shore Friendly:

- **Site Visits:** We completed 4 site visits in August and scheduled an additional 10 for September including a community beach walk in Port Ludlow. Representatives from the Jefferson County MRC have been actively encouraging landowners in their community to sign up for site visits. They have also joined us on the visits, providing valuable local context and connections to those interested in managing their shorelines in more balanced ways that help habitat and species while protecting their investments.
- **Vegetation Management for Shoreline Landowners – A Virtual Workshop:** The Shore Friendly programs of the Northwest Straits Foundation, Island County, and Swinomish Tribe are hosting a virtual workshop for shoreline landowners to learn about use of native vegetation for slope stability and habitat. **Thursday, October 21st; 6:00-8:00pm**

Join Ben Alexander, co-owner of Sound Native plants, for a virtual workshop to learn about use of native vegetation for slope stability and improvement of wildlife habitat. Workshop topics include:

- Bluff and beach processes
- Puget Sound nearshore wildlife and habitat
- Soils and the importance of drainage management
- Root strength and the role of native vegetation on a marine slope/shoreline
- Examples and recommendations for native vegetation on your property

Registration information is forthcoming and will be posted on the Foundation website at:

www.nwstraitsfoundation.org

Contact Lisa Kaufman, Northwest Straits Foundation Nearshore Program Manager for more information: kaufman@nwstraitsfoundation.org

Upcoming Restoration Projects:

- ***Lummi Island Quarry Restoration:*** Construction is set to begin the week of September 20th to remove the overwater structures at Aiston Preserve. NWSF and Lummi Island Heritage Trust have been partners on this project for six years beginning with efforts by LIHT to acquire the site. This is the first phase of restoration. Armor removal and other restoration elements are on track for 2022.
- ***Similk Bay Shoreline Armor Removal:*** This project which grew from earlier Shore Friendly efforts will remove 200 linear feet of armor and bulkhead from two adjacent private properties. PNW Civil of Bellingham will begin construction during the week of October 25th. Following construction, NWSF staff will assist the landowners in creating a marine riparian zone to connect nearshore and backshore habitats beneficial for nutrient exchange for forage fish and salmon. Funding for the project comes from USFWS Puget Sound Coastal Program, WDFW's Estuary & Salmon Restoration Program, and the two landowners.
- ***Clark's Point Breakwater Removal:*** The Clark's Point project was also identified during the early years of the Shore Friendly program. American Construction will remove a large sandstone breakwater installed in the 1960's to create a private boat basin within Chuckanut Bay. The project will improve tidal exchange within the small embayment that is habitat for juvenile salmonids, crabs, invertebrates, and marine birds. Construction is scheduled to begin the week of October 25th.



Clark's Point

Derelict Gear:

- A \$166,000 grant from NOAA has been officially awarded to support a two-year derelict crab pot and outreach project in Skagit County. WDFW will provide \$182,045 to support the remainder of the project's costs.
- WDFW has an additional \$140,955 available in their derelict crab pot funding for this biennium. I am working on a list of potential projects for them and will meet to discuss in October.
- We extended Haley's Fellowship through February so we can include all of 2021's Bowman Bay seining data (Jan – Dec) in the report she is developing. The report is scheduled to be completed in January then presented to stakeholder groups in February.

Advancement/Other

- **Passport To Marine Adventure:** We have featured the Passport To Marine Adventure on our website again. We are also going to be sending out another Email and Social Media Marketing Campaign to get more individuals involved in the Passport's last two months for 2021. The 2021 Passport will cease in September. So far, we have had just over 80 sign-ups. We are hoping this second blast of marketing will get us over the 100-participant mark. In addition, we are creating a targeted fundraising campaign for the individuals who have played the travel game.
- **Dead Boats Society Campaign:** The Dead Boats Society Campaign continues to come together. In August, we have been working on both web design, donor page design and concepts for this campaign. We are on track to have the web page, donor page, one-pager and original online marketing materials released in September.
- **Caroline Gibson Scholarship in Marine Studies:** The Caroline Gibson Scholarship Fund now has its own web page on our website! The Scholarship supports the next generation of marine conservationists through applied academic scholarships in science, policy and management for sustaining the Salish Sea. The first scholarships will be awarded during the 2021-22 academic year. You can find the link on our homepage.
- **Board Recruitment:** We are recruiting board members for a three-year term starting January 2022. We recruit board members from diverse disciplines, backgrounds, and skills with a passion for advancing marine conservation. In addition to the standard roles and responsibilities of a board member, our board actively advocates and acts as ambassadors for the organization. Our board is fully engaged in securing the financial resources and partnerships necessary for the Northwest Straits Foundation to advance its mission. From the nearshore to the deep waters, you can see the impact of our work. Please consider joining our board.



Northwest Straits Foundation 2021 Work Updates - October 2021

Shore Friendly:

- ***Vegetation Management for Shoreline Landowners – A Virtual Workshop:*** The Shore Friendly programs of the Northwest Straits Foundation, Island County, and Swinomish Tribe are hosting a virtual workshop for shoreline landowners to learn about use of native vegetation for slope stability and habitat. This will be on **Thursday, October 21st at 6:00-8:00pm**

Join Ben Alexander, co-owner of Sound Native plants, for a virtual workshop to learn about use of native vegetation for slope stability and improvement of wildlife habitat. Workshop topics include:

- Bluff and beach processes
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- Examples and recommendations for native vegetation on your property

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Contact Lisa Kaufman, Northwest Straits Foundation Nearshore Program Manager for more information: kaufman@nwstraitsfoundation.org

Restoration Projects:

- ***Lummi Island Quarry Restoration:*** Restoration of the shoreline at the Aiston Preserve (formerly the Lummi Island Quarry) began on September 21st. Quigg Bros Inc. removed over 30 tons of debris including the large ramp, pier, and most of the steel pilings. Quigg Bros. will return later this month to remove the remaining creosote treated pilings. Permitting continues for the next phases of restoration that will include armor removal and setback, creation of an expanded pocket beach, and riparian vegetation.



Removal of large ramp at Aiston Preserve

- ***Polnell Point Explosives Safety Survey:*** Jason worked with the Navy to develop a plan to address potential unexploded ordinances within the Polnell Point Restoration Project area. We are developing a detailed work plan to send to the Navy so they may perform an Explosives Safety Survey to determine how and where the project may proceed.
- ***Clayton Beach Breakwater Removal:*** We have an upcoming site visit to Clayton Beach to discuss the details of the upcoming armor removal project in order to create a monitoring plan. The visit will provide insight as to what changes we may see post-restoration and what types of surveys will best capture these changes. Construction for this project is scheduled to begin the week of October 25th.

Derelict Gear:

- ***NOAA and WDFW Funding Announced:*** The Northwest Straits Foundation has been awarded a \$166,000 grant from the NOAA Marine Debris Program for a two-year derelict crab pot and outreach project in Skagit County. Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife will provide an additional \$182,000 to support the remainder of the project's costs. This project will include partnering with the tribal and state commercial crabbing fleets to remove derelict crab pots in an area where a high rate of commercial crab pot loss occurs, and to better understand the causes and solutions for commercial crab pot loss. Results from this study will inform development of an outreach strategy to include commercial crabbing in the Foundation's regional Catch More Crab outreach campaign (catchmorecrab.org).
- ***Fellow, Haley Sherman is Going Above and Beyond:*** Haley Sherman, our fellow, has been organizing and manipulating the seining data collected by our volunteers over the last seven years at Bowman Bay. She has attended courses on how to utilize some of the newer coding which she will use to create the figures for our final report on nearshore fish use in Bowman Bay. The new coding packages help sort through the extensive seining data that has been collected at Bowman Bay since 2015. They will include figures, tables, and data summaries that help us better understand how restoration has affected the intertidal species and habitat of Bowman Bay.

Advancement/Other

- ***NWSF/Atwood Ales Beer Collab Released:*** Be on the lookout for Atwood Ales' new beer, *A Kelping Hand*. The Ale is made with local Bull Kelp harvested with NWSF staff and proceeds benefit Northwest Straits Foundation. The beer can be found at Drayton Harbor Oyster Co. in Blaine, Elizabeth Station in Bellingham, and the downtown Community Co-op in Bellingham. It will also be a part of a paired dinner at the Vault Wine Bar and Bistro in Blaine on Sunday October 24th.

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Clallam

Month/Year: October 2021

Submitted by: Rebecca Paradis

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

- MRC Coordinator, Rebecca Paradis and Clallam Habitat Biologist, Cathy Lear presented the NWS Shorelands agreement to the Clallam County Board of Commissioners on Oct. 18th. It was approved and scheduled for signatures on Oct. 26th.
- Continued forage fish sampling on Cline Spit, Ediz Hook and Elwha River beach

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): Nothing to report.

Monthly MRC Meeting: was on October 18th.

Funding updates (newly-awarded grants, in-kind support or other funding commitments):
See above bullet points above.

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

Forage Fish sampling is going well. Clallam MRC continued to collect the monthly samples at Cline Spit and Ediz Hook and East Elwha Beach. The samples are being stored at the County until WDFW is ready to accept them. The last two months the samples from Cline Spit have contained lots of eggs. No formal documentation of eggs on Ediz Hook or Elwha beach.

Pigeon Guillemot surveys have concluded and data was uploaded into the database.

The Olympia oyster data is compiled and analyzed by Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe. The goal of the restoration effort in Sequim was to restore 2 acres of Olympia oysters by 2020. Based on the 2020 and 2021 surveys the goal was not met within the two restoration sites with Olympia oyster populations on approximately 1.60 acres of tidelands.

Kelp surveys have been completed and data is compiled and uploaded to kelp database.

Shellfish Biotoxin sampling has concluded and due to elevated PSP levels Pillar Point was closed to shellfish harvest before Labor Day.

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

Photos (photos of recent projects or members—include project, photo credit and additional info): Photo of East Elwha Beach looking west. CMRC chair Tim Cochnauer and Fellow Alisa Taylor getting ready to sample for forage fish. Photo: Rebecca Paradis



MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Clallam

Month/Year: September 2021

Submitted by: Rebecca Paradis

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

- MRC Coordinator, Chair and Fellow assisted WDFW with their Purple Sea Urchin sampling in Port Angeles.
- Several MRC members virtually attended Marine mammal oil spill response workshop September 8th.
- Continued forage fish sampling on Cline Spit, Ediz Hook and Elwha River beach

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: is scheduled for September 20th.

Funding updates (newly-awarded grants, in-kind support or other funding commitments):
CMRC proposal was funded through 2023.

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

Forage Fish sampling is going well. Clallam MRC continued to collect the monthly samples at Cline Spit and Ediz Hook and East Elwha Beach. The samples are being stored at the County until WDFW is ready to accept them. The last two months the samples from Cline Spit have contained lots of eggs. No eggs have been documented from Ediz Hook or Elwha beach.

Pigeon Guillemot surveys have concluded and data is being compiled into the database.

Coordinator Rebecca Paradis completed a 16hour Northwest Oil Spill Control Course and also received 8 hours training in Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response (HAZOPER).

The Olympia oyster project has conducted several successful population and heat map surveys. The data is being compiled and analyzed by Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe.

Kelp surveys have been completed and data is being compiled. Motorized surveys have been tabled until next 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.): The Clallam MRC was asked by the WDFW Purple Sea Urchin team to help them with the processing of the Urchins. Tim, Rebecca and Alisa weighed whole urchin, measured shell size and then scooped out the gonad to weigh each one. The Purple Sea Urchin sampling was initiated by WDFW and WDNR in response to the kelp barrens in Northern California. This monitoring effort is planned to continue through 2022.

Photos (photos of recent projects or members—include project, photo credit and additional info): Purple Sea Urchin sampling. Photo by Rebecca Paradis





MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Island

Month/Year: October 2021

Submitted by: Ann Prusha

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

- **Restoration – Cornet Bay Stewardship:** The MRC, in partnership with WICD, hosted a volunteer event to perform vegetation maintenance on October 8th. 12 volunteers and staff removed milk thistle from the newest restoration area.
- **Outreach – Needs Assessment:** The MRC has been having ongoing discussions about the key takeaways from the Needs Assessment, and this will inform strategic planning for the next 3-5 years.

Membership/Leadership changes (new/departing members, changes to chair/vice-chair, NWSC representative/alternate, staff): Anna Toledo is back from family leave on a reduced schedule.

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

Past Meetings/Events:

- October 5: MRC meeting. Topic: Whidbey Island Conservation District

Upcoming Meetings/Events:

- November 2: MRC meeting. Topic: Whidbey Camano Land Trust

Funding updates (newly-awarded grants, in-kind support or other funding commitments): NWSC is asking MRCs to deliver a project list for potential incoming funding.

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

Monitoring – Forage Fish: Teams are continuing to monitor monthly at Hoypus Point, Cornet Bay, Sunlight Shores, Maple Grove, Hidden Beach, and Glendale. Monitoring at Seahorse Siesta is scheduled to pick back up in November.

Outreach – Needs Assessment: The MRC has been having ongoing discussions about the key takeaways from the Needs Assessment, and this will inform strategic planning for the next 3-5 years.

Outreach – Port Susan MSA: Snohomish and Island County MRCs are working together to update the Port Susan Marine Stewardship Area Conservation Action Plan report card.

Restoration – Cornet Bay Stewardship: The MRC, in partnership with WICD, hosted a volunteer event to perform vegetation maintenance on October 8th. 12 volunteers and staff removed milk thistle from the newest restoration area.

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):



Volunteers perform vegetation maintenance at the Cornet Bay restoration site on October 8, 2021.
Photos by Ann Prusha.

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Island

Month/Year: September 2021

Submitted by: Ann Prusha

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

- **Outreach – Needs Assessment:** The Needs Assessment Overview document has been completed. It was presented to Island County Commissioners at their work session, and then distributed to interviewees. This document represents many hours of work conducting stakeholder interviews and analyzing take-a-ways, and will help drive future MRC decisions.
- **Restoration – Cornet Bay Stewardship:** Gwendolyn Hannam and Ann Prusha are watering and weeding bi-weekly throughout the summer months. They are planning to host a volunteer maintenance event on October 8th.

Membership/Leadership changes (new/departing members, changes to chair/vice-chair, NWSC representative/alternate, staff): Anna Toledo is on maternity leave. Ann Prusha is the temporary point of contact, and will be taking on several of Anna's duties until she comes back.

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

Past Meetings/Events:

- September 7: MRC meeting. Topic: Snohomish Conservation District

Upcoming Meetings/Events:

- October 5: MRC meeting. Topic: Whidbey Island Conservation District

Funding updates (newly-awarded grants, in-kind support or other funding commitments): NWSC is able to provide an additional \$8,000 to MRCs this upcoming grant year. The MRC has decided to put this funding towards staff time for vegetation maintenance at the Cornet Bay restoration site.

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

Monitoring – Forage Fish: Teams are continuing to monitor monthly at Hoypus Point, Cornet Bay, Sunlight Shores, Maple Grove, Hidden Beach, and Glendale. Monitoring at Seahorse Siesta is scheduled to pick back up in November.

Monitoring – Kelp: Monitoring has wrapped up for the season. Thank you to all of the volunteers who monitored!

Outreach – Needs Assessment: The Needs Assessment Overview document has been completed. It was presented to Island County Commissioners at their work session, and then distributed to interviewees. This document represents many hours of work conducting stakeholder interviews and analyzing take-a-ways, and will help drive future MRC decisions.

Outreach – Port Susan MSA: Snohomish and Island County MRCs are working together to update the Port Susan Marine Stewardship Area Conservation Action Plan report card.

Restoration – Cornet Bay Stewardship: Gwendolyn Hannam and Ann Prusha are watering and weeding bi-weekly throughout the summer months. They are planning to host a volunteer maintenance event on October 8th.

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):



Photos: Ann Prusha (left) and Gwendolyn Hannam (right) perform vegetation management at the Cornet Bay restoration site. Credit: Left photo taken by Gwendolyn, right photo taken by Ann

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Jefferson

Month/Year: September & October 2021

Submitted by: Monica Montgomery

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

- The Jefferson County MRC Dive Safety Manual was reviewed by the County attorney and approved by the BoCC on Sep 13, which will allow MRC volunteer divers to resume maintenance work for the no-anchor zone buoy fields.
- Taylor Shellfish and one MRC member spread 3 cubic yards of oyster shell at the Powerlines Site in Discovery Bay on Oct 1.
- The MRC launched a new series coupling speaker presentations with hands-on, in-the-field activities in partnership with the Port Townsend Marine Science Center. The first coupled events were a presentation on marine debris and microplastics on Sep 15 and a beach cleanup on Sep 18.

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

Aug 24 – Forage fish: WCC presentation

Aug 24 – Education & Outreach meeting re: PT Marine Science Center (PTMSC) speaker series collaboration

Aug 27 – NWSC meeting

Sep 7 – MRC meeting: Tori Cantelow presented on Fort Townsend forage fish survey results

Sep 10, 17, 24 & 28 – MRC Coordinator participated in Nancy Lee's Social Marketing Training focused on environmental behavior change

Sep 13 – JCMRC Dive Safety Manual approved by BoCC

Sep 14 – No-Anchors: Salish Sea No-Anchor Zones meeting

Sep 15 – Education & Outreach: PTMSC collab speaker event

Sep 18 – Education & Outreach: PTMSC collab beach clean-up event

Sep 21 – Executive Committee meeting

Sep 21 – Forage fish survey at Dabob Bay

Sep 24 – NWSC meeting

Oct 1 – Olympia oysters: Taylor Shellfish and 1 MRC member spread 3 cu. yds of shell at the Powerlines site

Oct 4 – Forage fish survey at Adelma Beach

Oct 5 – MRC monthly meeting

Oct 6 – Forage fish survey at Fort Townsend

Oct 11 – Shoreline landowner outreach meeting re: funding opportunities

Oct 12 – No-Anchor Zones meeting re: dive & maintenance plans

Oct 13 – Education & Outreach meeting with PTMSC partners re: speaker series
Oct 15 – Kelp meeting to debrief after monitoring season
Oct 19 – Forage fish survey at Dabob Bay
Oct 20 – Executive Committee meeting
Oct 21 – Shoreline landowner vegetation workshop w/ NWSF Shore Friendly

Upcoming Events/Meetings

Oct 29 – NWSC meeting
Oct 29 – Education & Outreach subcommittee meeting re: 2022 outreach plan
Nov 2 – Forage fish survey at Fort Townsend
Nov 2 – MRC monthly meeting
Nov 18 – NW Straits Conference
Nov 23 – Executive Committee meeting
Nov – Forage fish survey at Dabob Bay & 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:

- a. **Forage fish - Fort Townsend:** Project partner, Tori Cantelow with the Point No Point Treaty Council (PNPTC), presented summary results from monitoring forage fish spawning at the Fort Townsend SP nearshore restoration site, at the September 7 MRC monthly meeting. They have been seeing more Pacific sand lance and surf smelt eggs since the restoration project in 2016, specifically at sample sites 2 and 3, which seem to be more of the hot spots than the other sites. On October 6, 4 MRC members (Sarah, Troy, Frank, Janette) and the MRC Coordinator conducted the first survey of the season and delivered samples to PNPTC. The next survey will be November 2.
- a. **Forage fish - Adelma Beach (Index):** The project lead (Jeff) monitored on September 7 and October 4 with one community volunteer.
- b. **Forage fish - Dabob Bay (Index):** The project lead (Sarah), MRC Coordinator and one community volunteer monitored on September 21 and the project lead with two MRC members (Janette, Troy) and one community volunteer monitored on October 19.
- c. **Kelp:** Three MRC members (Brenda, Betsy, Solenne) and the MRC Coordinator met on October 15 to debrief following the summer season and to discuss plans for the next year.

2. Rain Gardens:

- a. The MRC purchased a batch of new plants to conduct maintenance at the previously installed Jefferson County Courthouse rain garden. The subcommittee has a new project lead, Janette. The Cape George community installed the rain garden interpretive sign.

3. Education & Outreach:

- a. *Wooden Boat Festival:* The festival scheduled to take place the weekend of September 10-12 was canceled.
- b. *Speaker series:* The MRC co-hosted its first speaker event featuring Andrew Mason, the NOAA Marine Debris Program's Pacific NW Region Coordinator, presenting on marine debris and microplastics. In addition to the 6 MRC and Port Townsend Marine Science Center (PTMSC)

organizers (including 2 MRC members, Brenda and Betsy), the event was attended by 27 participants, including 3 MRC members (Frank, Joanie, Troy). This talk preceded a beach clean-up event on September 18th in partnership with PTMSC and WA CoastSavers. The MRC Coordinator and 3 MRC members (Frank, Troy, Janette) along with PTMSC staff and volunteers tabled the event, greeted volunteers, handed out educational materials and helped weigh the marine debris collected. Another MRC member (Brenda) participated in the cleanup itself. A total of 38 volunteers participated in the cleanup event, collectively removing 174 pounds of marine debris. The MRC Coordinator and two MRC members (Brenda, Betsy) met with two PTMSC staff on October 13 to discuss lessons learned, ways to improve the series, and plans for the next coupled event.

c. The subcommittee plans to meet soon to discuss the Outreach Plan.

4. Olympia Oysters:

a. One Taylor Shellfish staff and one MRC member (Gordon) distributed 3 cubic yards of shell at the Powerlines site on October 1. The MRC Coordinator continues to work on permit applications for expanding the Powerlines Site and increasing the amount of cultch added.

5. Voluntary No-Anchor Zones:

a. The MRC dive safety manual was reviewed and approved by the county attorney on September 1 and approved by the BoCC on September 13. The MRC can resume dive operations. Four subcommittee members (Gordon, Troy, Bryan, Brenda) and the MRC Coordinator met on October 12 to discuss plans for swapping PT buoys with floats and addressing missing buoys, checking underwater hardware at Port Hadlock, and cleaning and replacing missing buoys at Mystery Bay.

6. Mapping Lost Crab Pots:

- a. *Side Scan Sonar:* The MRC Coordinator and 1 MRC member (Jeff) met with a potential partner with Coastal Sensing & Survey on October 1 to discuss project needs and cost estimates. The MRC Coordinator is working on researching estimates from other companies and putting together a contract for County signatures.
- b. *ROV:* The MRC Coordinator and 1 MRC member (Jeff) met with Jason Morgan (NWSF) to discuss project scope, survey protocol development and permitting steps forward. The MRC Coordinator is working on researching protocols for surveys with submersible ROVs.

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.):

Nothing to report.

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

Sep 18 Beach clean-up event – Photos by Monica Montgomery





Oct 1 Shell spread at Powerlines Site – Photos by Gordon King







Oct 11 Cape George rain garden interpretive sign installed – Photo by Stephen McDevitt (who sourced the driftwood framing and installed it)



MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: San Juan County

Month/Year: October 2021

Submitted by: Frances Robertson

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

- The core activity for October has been the quarterly reporting and starting planning for the annual retreat.
- The MRC have begun to organize around their new projects including the finalization of the MSA Plan and starting the Derelict Vessel Prevention Program.

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

The Lead staff Frances Robertson is back from maternity leave. Two positions on the MRC remain unfilled.

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

October events

- The MRC met on October 7th via Zoom for their monthly meeting.
- The MRC participated in the monthly San Juan County Stewardship Council meeting
- An MRC executive meeting, retreat planning meeting and MSA Subcommittee meeting were held.

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

No new funding updates.

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

Most MRC projects are just starting up with initial planning meetings taking place in the coming month to help scope out the MRCs work plan. The project with the core progress to report is the MSA Plan update. The MRC lead staff has now drafted 5 of the 8 chapters in the plan. These revised and new chapters are currently being reviewed by the MSA Plan subcommittee and members of the County's Department of Environmental Stewardship. The reviewed drafts will be distributed to the full MRC before their November meeting. The November meeting will provide a review of progress to date on the plan so that the full MRC can be prepared for their annual retreat, scheduled for December 2nd.

The MRC's retreat will focus on finalizing the core threats, including new and emerging threats to the plans biodiversity targets and begin the process of establishing the key management strategies and actions that will be required to address these threats.

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 MRC provided guidance to the county on the feedback to the Department on Ecology on their Scope of Work for their Emergency Response Towing Vessel modeling effort.

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

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: San Juan County

Month/Year: September 2021

Submitted by: Sam Whitridge

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

- MRC members will be participating the fall Great Islands Cleanup, which will be held on September 25th.
- The MRC is preparing for the final stages of the MSA Plan update, which will involve identifying threats and stressors and determining management actions needed to address those threats and stressors over the next decade.
- The SeaBin has been removed from the Deer Harbor Marina and is ready to be moved to another Marina, likely Friday Harbor or Roche Harbor.

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

- Frances Robertson is returning from maternity leave the week of September 27th and will take over MRC Coordinator responsibilities from Sam Whitridge who filled in on an interim basis.
- The MRC currently has two open positions. A small subcommittee has been formed to identify and recruit potential candidates.

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

September events and meetings

- The MRC met on September 2nd via Zoom for their monthly meeting. In addition to MRC business, this meeting featured a presentation from Breck Tyler (Friday Harbor Labs) about marine birds of the San Juan Islands. Marine birds are one of the key areas of interest in the Marine Stewardship Area Plan, which is currently being updated. The presentation focused on marine birds in the county, patterns of occurrence over the last several years and what kind of threats they face.

Upcoming events

- The next monthly MRC meeting will be held on October 7th. This meeting will not feature a presenter and instead we will spend the meeting reviewing last year's MRC efforts and preparing for the work planned in the next year. We will also plan for the final stages of the MSA Plan update.
- The MRC will hold its annual retreat on November 4th. Planning for the retreat will begin in the coming weeks.

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

Nothing to report this month.

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

MRC members attended the SeaDoc Society's "Heart of the Salish Sea" workshop on August 31st to discuss how the MRC can support San Juan County 5th grade students in their research and/or conservation projects this school year.

The SeaBin project has been completed at the Deer Harbor Marina. The Seabin will eventually be moved to either the Friday Harbor Marina or the Roche Harbor Marina. Dedicated volunteers for regular weekly maintenance will be needed to help manage the project once the SeaBin is set up at a new marina. Educational signage has been created to be installed with the SeaBin.

Marine Stewardship Area Plan update: Drafts of several new chapters of the MSA plan should be completed by the end of September and ready for review. We plan to spend the MRC retreat focusing on the final stages of the MSA plan update, which is to identify core threats and stressors and determine a list of management actions needed to address those threats and stressors over the next decade. The MRC will also be working to identify sources of funding to support those actions.

The MRC will be participating the fall Great Islands Cleanup, which will be held on September 25th.

Following our Growler Jet Noise Symposium earlier this year, the MRC was invited to visit the Naval Air Station on Whidbey Island to meet with their scientists. This visit will happen at a later time once the Covid-19 situation improves.

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 MRC discussed whether to recommend that the San Juan County Council review and comment on the scope of work for an analysis of tank vessel tug escorts. ESHB 1578 directs the Board of Pilotage Commissioners (BPC) to conduct this analysis using an oil spill risk model developed by the Department of Ecology (Ecology). The MRC oil spill subcommittee will meet to discuss next steps.

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

See picture of SeaBin educational signage below.

CLEANING OUR WATERS

We're using innovative ocean-cleaning technology to collect trash and filter pollution, gather data, and raise public awareness.



MEET THE SEABIN!

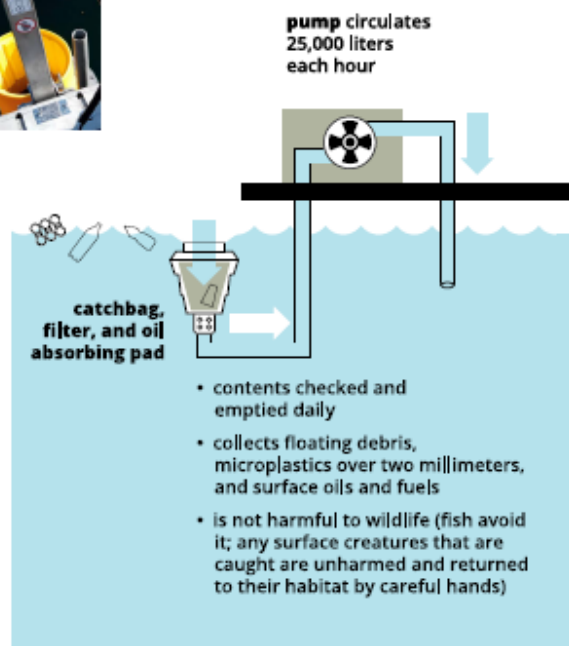
The Seabin is like a marine vacuum cleaner that moves up and down with the tide, collecting floating debris, microplastics, and oil.

SEABIN PILOT PROJECT

Sponsored by San Juan County's Department of Environmental Stewardship, the Marine Resources Committee, and engaged community members, the Seabin captures marine debris and allows us to actively study the results and update findings as they come in. The goal of this study is to determine what types of pollutants are most common in the Salish Sea, understand how to operate and scale trash-trapping technologies to intercept microplastics while they are in transit to shorelines, and facilitate the removal of debris and oil to better protect marine ecosystems.

HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

Reducing your waste, particularly by eliminating single-use plastics, can help a lot. You can also help by picking up litter and disposing of it properly when you see it. Visit PlasticFreeSalishSea.org for easy ways to reduce your use of plastic.



PLASTIC FREE
SALISH SEA



MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Skagit

Month/Year: October/2021

Submitted by: Tracy/ Pete

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

- MRC Grant Reports: Final Project Reports for Pinto Abalone Restoration, Salish Sea Stewards, and Kids on the Beach have been completed and are now available on the Skagit MRC website.
- Salish Sea Stewards Virtual Social/Presentation- October 20: 22 Salish Sea Stewards attended the virtual social on October 20th. Dr. Jesse Humbert of Walla Walla University gave a 90-minute presentation on the Pacific Red Octopus.

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- **October 14** (via Microsoft Teams)- Kristin Murray with Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group (SFEG) shared the conceptual design for the Bowman Bay pocket estuary restoration project. Diane Hennebert provided an update on the Mt. Erie Elementary School Rain Garden, a project funded by the NWSF grant from Shell Refinery in partnership with the MRC. Catey Ritchie provided an update on the Swinomish Shore Friendly program.
- Salish Sea Stewards Advisory Committee Meeting- **October 20** (via Zoom)
- Next MRC Monthly Meeting **TBD- November 4 or November 10**, 9am-11:00am via Microsoft Teams

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 Annual Report was finalized in September. The Stewards Advisory Committee meeting was held via Zoom on October 20th to continue planning for the 2022 Salish Sea Stewards Training Program. The draft training schedule starts on March 1st and ends on May 24th, every Tuesday from 1pm to 5pm. We are planning for participants to join in-person at the Padilla Bay training room. However, we will be prepared for a hybrid format, just in case. The presenters will be given the option to join in-person or online. Each participant will need to be fully vaccinated by March 1, 2022. Before each session participants will need to complete an online COVID-19 health screening and during each session everyone will need to wear a mask. We can only host 30 people in the training room at a time including the Volunteer Coordinator and the presenters. Padilla Bay staff hosted a virtual social for the Salish Sea Stewards on October 20th which included a 90-minute presentation on the Red Octopus presented Dr. Jesse Humbert of Walla Walla University. There are currently 304 Trained Salish Sea Stewards on our Master List. The Committee is mindful of keeping the Trained SSS volunteers informed & active.
- Fidalgo Bay Day: Planning for the 2022 Fidalgo Bay Day event will start soon.
- Bowman Bay Restoration: The 2021 Bowman Bay Restoration Annual Report was finalized in September. A total of four volunteer work parties were held in 2021 and 40 volunteers contributed an average of two hours of labor, totaling 82 hours of maintenance and planting. Under the new MRC Grant, we will plant 120 native trees and shrubs in restoration area, apply compost mulch,

plant eight additional conifers in lawn area east of restoration site, provide supplemental watering through summer season, and apply educational materials including How-to guide and Native plant guide for volunteer training.

- Kayak Kelp Surveys: Kelp surveys were finished up for the season in September. Preliminary survey data indicated the kelp beds at Shannon Point were relatively smaller than they have been during the same growing period in previous years.
- Forage Fish Surveys: Forage fish surveys continue. It's been a better than average year for surf smelt spawning at our survey sites. Surf smelt spawning season has started to wind down at most of our survey locations. The forage fish crew provided education and outreach to the Salish Sea School students in conducting forage fish surveys at Fidalgo Bay Day as part of Orca Recovery Day.
- Kids on the Beach: The 2021 Kids on the Beach Annual Report was finalized in September. We've been working with the schools to set them up for the Kids on the Beach program for the 2021-2022 school year. Field trips and onsite visitors are currently prohibited at the schools this fall so the Kids on the Beach program will be shifted entirely to the spring of 2022. The participating schools for the spring program include Concrete, Sedro-Woolley, and Conway with around 150 students. And for the first time, Anacortes Elementary and Middle Schools have also expressed a lot of interest in participating in the program. We will need to closely monitor limited staffing capacity with adding more schools and students to the program. The spring program will focus on forage fish surveys and beach seining. We now have all the tools and materials we need to transition from an in-person program to a hybrid or virtual learning format if needed.
- Pinto Abalone Recovery: The 2021 Pinto Abalone Annual Report was finalized in September. An additional 4300 juvenile pinto abalone were outplanted in Skagit County waters this year for a total of 18,000 outplanted since 2009. 7 out of the 8 sites in Skagit County have a density greater than 0.15 abalone per square meter which is the level deemed necessary for successful reproduction to take place. 2 of the sites had about 10 times that density of pinto abalone!
- Olympia Oyster Restoration: Work is done for the season. Preliminary data indicates the oyster population increased by 15%. Unfortunately, there was also about a 15% mortality due to the heat dome. But the good news is there is still a healthy population of native oysters in Fidalgo Bay. The tile sampling also indicated heavy oyster spawning this year.
- Mt. Erie Elementary School Rain Garden: This project was funded with a NW Straits Foundation grant from Shell Puget Sound Refinery in partnership with the MRC and the City of Anacortes. The plan is to do construction in the spring of 2022. Shell employees will take part in the construction part of it. A curriculum focused on stormwater and the rain garden is currently being developed for the students.

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: Skagit

Month/Year: September/2021

Submitted by: Tracy/ Pete

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

- Salish Sea Stewards Field Training- Sept 8 and 18: Several newly graduated Salish Sea Stewards from the class of 2021 attended a field training session on forage fish spawning surveys at the Fidalgo Bay RV Park.
- Bowman Bay Plant Maintenance/ Final Walk-Through Event – September 8 and 24: Planted and watered 500 dune grasses and applied additional mulch/ compost with the help of AmeriCorps, Shell Puget Sound Refinery staff, and MRC members.

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- September 9 (via Microsoft Teams)- The MRC voted by consensus to allocate the majority of the additional \$8,000 MRC Grant funding towards the Bowman Bay Restoration project for planting trees and shrubs, plant maintenance, and increased watering.
- Salish Sea Stewards Advisory Committee Meeting- September 28 (via Zoom)
- Next MRC Monthly Meeting- October 14, 9am-11:00am via Microsoft Teams

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 Stewards Advisory Committee meeting was held via Zoom on September 28th to start planning for the 2022 Salish Sea Stewards Training Program. Training will likely be a hybrid format. The Committee is working on a General SSS Planning Timetable template as well as a detailed 2022 Program Planning Timetable. There are currently 304 Trained Salish Sea Stewards on our Master List. The Committee is mindful of keeping the Trained SSS volunteers informed & active.
- Fidalgo Bay Day: The Fidalgo Bay Day grant funding was used to design and purchase a new MRC display and activity for future events.
- Bowman Bay Restoration: The last two plant maintenance parties of the season were held September 8th and 24th. On September 8th, the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group's AmeriCorps crew and the MRC Project Lead planted 500 dune grasses in just one and a half hours! The County water truck was used to water the plants. The final walk through and last plant maintenance event was held September 24 with two Shell Puget Sound Refinery staff and two MRC members.
- Kayak Kelp Surveys: There are three kelp bed locations that are currently being surveyed by MRC volunteers including: Shannon Point (2 kelp beds east and west), Biz Point, and Coffin Rocks. All surveys wrapped up for the season in September. The Biz Point survey crew surveyed observed several sea stars on the rocks during their survey. All kelp beds at all three locations surveyed appear to be very dense and healthy. Lots of new growth this year. The recent article in the Skagit Valley Herald sparked some interest from folks wanting to get involved in kelp surveys. One individual, an experienced kayaker with a data analytics background, even offered to help analyze

the kelp data. Dana and Allie's presentation to the Hole in the Wall Kayak Club on September 8th was well received.

- Forage Fish Surveys: Forage fish surveys continue with good spawning results. Several newly graduated Salish Sea Stewards from the class of 2021 attended forage fish spawning survey training at the Fidalgo Bay RV Park in small groups on September 8 and 18.
- Kids on the Beach: We now have all the tools and materials we need to transition from an in-person program to a hybrid or virtual learning format as needed. School just started, so we are still waiting on a confirmation from the teachers. Ideally, we would like to provide a program that focuses on forage fish in the fall when the forage fish eggs are more plentiful, and kids are more likely to find them. However, the Kids on the Beach program will likely have to be postponed until spring when more schools will hopefully be able to participate, and there will be a better chance of providing in-person learning and field trips. There are several ideas that are currently being considered for the spring program including: Batellaria, eelgrass, beach seining, etc.
- Pinto Abalone Recovery: The 2021 Pinto Abalone Annual Report was finalized in September.
- Olympia Oyster Restoration: Work is done for the season. No updates.

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: October 2021

Submitted by: Elisa Dawson and Alex Pittman

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

- Snohomish MRC in partnership with Tulalip Tribes and the Stillaguamish Tribe will be deploying 7 mussel watch cages in Snohomish County on November 5 in partnership with WDFW.
- Snohomish County MRC has secured funds to work with WSU Snohomish County Beach Watchers on regular shoreline cleanup events for 2022. The funds are provided by Snohomish County Surface Water Management and will fund an agreement for WSU Beach Watchers to coordinate and hold at least one shoreline cleanup event per quarter throughout 2022.
- The joint Island County – Snohomish County Port Susan project team gave presentations to both the Stillaguamish Watershed Council and the Island County Salmon Recovery Technical and Citizen Committee last month on the upcoming work on the Port Susan Conservation Action Plan. The goal of these presentations was to help get the word out to many of our stakeholders on the upcoming work.

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

Kip Killebrew will be retiring next month and leaving his seat as the Stillaguamish Tribal representative on the Snohomish MRC. We are currently working with the Stillaguamish Tribe to get a new representative for the Stillaguamish Tribe.

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

MRC project lead Sara Maxwell gave a presentation to Stillaguamish Watershed Council on the upcoming Port Susan work on September 22. Alex Pittman and Elisa Dawson also attended.

Elisa Dawson and David Bain attended the SMP learning group meeting on September 23.

MRC Staff Elisa Dawson and Alex Pittman met with WDFW Mussel Watch Staff on September 28 to discuss plans for the 7 Snohomish County Mussel Watch deployment sites.

The MRC conducted Port Susan consultant interviews on September 29. Elisa Dawson, Alex Pittman, Sara Maxwell and Island County MRC representative Scott Chase were on the interview panel.

Elisa Dawson gave a presentation about the Snohomish MRC to the North Sound Sea Kayaking Association on October 5.

The MRC conducted Forage Fish Monitoring on October 14 at Picnic Point and Howarth Park.

Elisa Dawson and David Bain attended the SMP learning group meeting on October 19.

Elisa Dawson gave a presentation to the Island County Salmon Recovery Technical and Citizen Committee on the Snohomish County – Island County MRC Port Susan work on October 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):

Port Susan Marine Stewardship Area (proposed grant project for 2021-2022): The Island County MRC has turned in the University of Washington Evans School application, and our team has been matched with a professor. The next step is to be matched with students. We will hear back on if we get a student team in mid-November. The Snohomish MRC interviewed consultants on September 29 for the Snohomish County MRC facilitation scope of work. The interview team chose a consultant and staff are currently in the contracting process. The project team has given presentations to both the Stillaguamish Watershed Council and the Island County Salmon Recovery Technical and Citizen Committee on the upcoming work on the Port Susan Conservation Action Plan.

Derelict Vessels (NWSF funds): Snohomish County continues to work with their contractor to remove the 4 vessels from the Snohomish Estuary area. The consultant expects to complete the work by late October.

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

Forage Fish Monitoring: Forage fish samples continue to be taken once per month at Picnic Point and Howarth Park. The next sample date is November 16.

Meadowdale: There was a monitoring team meeting for Meadowdale on September 30. Snohomish County Surface Water Management is currently putting together plans for post-restoration monitoring plan to address the need for post-construction monitoring for restoration effectiveness.

Marine Vegetation Monitoring: DNR has completed monitoring marine vegetation in Snohomish County from the south County line to south Everett. Draft data was submitted on 10/1/21, with the final report due in January 2022. Kelp Monitoring for 2022 is complete, and draft kelp maps made by Snohomish County GIS were reviewed at the October MRC meeting. Data is being uploaded to the NWSC portal.

MRC Outreach Subcommittee: The MRC has secured funds to work with WSU Snohomish County Beach Watchers on regular shoreline cleanup events for 2022. The funds are provided by Snohomish County Surface Water Management and will fund an agreement for WSU Beach Watchers to coordinate and hold at least one shoreline cleanup event per quarter throughout 2022. Additionally, one of the shoreline cleanup events will utilize the Escaped Trash Assessment Protocol (ETAP) developed by the Environmental Protection Agency, the same protocol that was just used by the MRC during the International Coastal Cleanup Day beach cleanup. This data will be entered into a regional database that is working to better understand how trash is impacting Puget Sound.

Mussel Watch: Snohomish MRC in partnership with Tulalip Tribes and the Stillaguamish Tribe will be deploying 7 mussel watch cages in Snohomish County on November 5 in partnership with WDFW.

No updates for:

- Crabber Education
- Snohomish Estuary Pilings
- Oil Spill
- Nearshore Beach Restoration

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:

- Nearshore Restoration Subcommittee Meeting October 25
- Presentation to NW Boaters Association on MRC Derelict Vessel work November 3
- Snohomish LIO Implementation Committee Meeting November 4
- Snohomish County Mussel Watch Deployment November 5
- Forage Fish Monitoring November 16
- MRC Retreat November 17

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: September 2021

Submitted by: Elisa Dawson and Alex Pittman

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

- Snohomish County has taken possession of 4 derelict vessels as of September 18. A contractor has been hired for removal which is expected to occur in early October.
- The MRC hosted a beach cleanup event on September 18, 2021 from 9AM-12PM at Kayak Point County Park for International Coastal Cleanup Day. This event was in coordination with the WSU Beach Watchers, WSU Waste Warriors, and Zero Waste Washington, and utilized the Escaped Trash Assessment Protocol developed by the EPA. Snohomish County Council Member Nate Nehring and Snohomish County Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Director Tom Teigen attended the event. In total, nearly 40 volunteers carefully scanned 68,000 square feet at Kayak Point Beach for marine debris and primarily found and picked up small plastic fragments, cigarette butts, bottles and containers, charcoal from firepits, and fishing gear. 1,338 marine debris objects totaling over 56 pounds of trash were collected and precisely documented.

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):

MRC Staff Elisa Dawson and Alex Pittman attended a meeting with a Washington State Archeologist from the Department of Archaeology and Historical Preservation to discuss the historical significance of pilings in the Snohomish Estuary and options for gathering information on them on August 23.

MRC Members and Staff attended the Washington Conservation Corps presentation on their forage fish work on August 24.

There was a Nearshore Subcommittee group meeting on August 24.

MRC Staff Elisa Dawson met with consultant ESA to discuss final documents for the Pilings work on August 25.

The MRC conducted forage fish monitoring on August 25.

MRC Staff Elisa Dawson met with Everett Herald reporters on August 27 for an interview on derelict vessels.

MRC Staff Elisa Dawson presented to the Snohomish County Snohomish Basin Team Meeting on the pilings phase 2 work on August 31.

MRC Staff Elisa Dawson and Alex Pittman met with Snohomish County Financial Staff Darcey Hughes to discuss applying for the NOAA Marine Debris 2022 grant on September 2.

MRC Staff Elisa Dawson participated in a WRIA 7 Eelgrass Protection Zone Discussion with DNR on September 2.

MRC Members and Staff attended the Marine Mammal Management in Oil Spill Response Workshop on September 8.

The MRC had its regular monthly meeting on September 15. The meeting included a presentation by WDFW Staff Mariko Langness on the Mussel Watch Program and Alex Pittman presented on the Snohomish MRC's forage fish work.

MRC Staff Elisa Dawson attended the Snohomish Conservation District Annual Breakfast on September 17.

The MRC held a Kayak Point Beach Cleanup for International Coastal Cleanup Day, in partnership with WSU Beach Watchers, WSU Waste Warriors, and Zero Waste Washington on September 18.

The MRC conducted forage fish monitoring on September 21.

MRC Member Sara Maxwell gave a presentation to Stillaguamish Watershed Council on Port Susan September 22.

MRC Staff and Members met with the Northwest Strait Commission's SMP learning group on September 23.

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: Project consultants provided the final products of the Pilings Phase 2 grant on August 31. Final documents are posted online on the MRC website, along with a webmap of the pilings in the Snohomish Estuary [Creosote Pilings | Snohomish MRC \(snohomishmrc.org\)](https://www.snohomishmrc.org/creosote-pilings). The MRC is finalizing a press release on the project, and all final deliverables will be turned in by September 30th.

Port Susan Marine Stewardship Area (proposed grant project for 2021-2022): The Island County MRC has turned in the Evans School Application, and we expect to hear back about our status in October. The Snohomish MRC has put out a request for interviews for a consultant for the Snohomish scope of work, and interviews will be conducted September 29.

Derelict Vessels (NWSF funds): Snohomish County took possession of 4 derelict vessels on September 18. A contractor has been hired for removal which is expected to occur in early October. Additionally, SWM has submitted a letter of intent to apply for a NOAA marine debris grant. The focus will be on removing the Western Marine Construction vessel, which is approximated to cost \$300K for removal. \$150K would come from the grant, \$150K from SWM/DNR. The letters of intent will be reviewed this fall, and if we are invited to apply for the grant the application will be due January 14, 2022.

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

Forage Fish Monitoring: Forage fish samples continue to be taken once per month at Picnic Point and Howarth Park. The next sample date is October 19.

Meadowdale: Construction of the Meadowdale beach and estuary restoration project continues. While there was some hope the bridge may be able to be installed this fall, BNSF has had to move some machinery to California in response to wildfire damage. Therefore, the bridge will be installed in 2022 as originally planned. Snohomish County Parks is currently assessing if construction will pause for the winter, and, if so, the beach may be opened to the public until construction resumes in early spring 2022.

Marine Vegetation Monitoring: DNR has completed monitoring marine vegetation in Snohomish County from the south County line to south Everett. Early draft data is expected this fall, with the final report due in January 2022. Kelp Monitoring for 2022 is complete, and draft kelp maps made by Snohomish County GIS will be reviewed at the October MRC meeting. Data is being uploaded to the NWSC portal.

MRC Outreach Subcommittee: The MRC hosted a beach cleanup event on September 18, 2021 from 9AM-12PM at Kayak Point County Park for International Coastal Cleanup Day. This event

was put on collaboratively by the Snohomish MRC with WSU Beach Watchers, WSU Waste Warriors, and Zero Waste Washington, and utilized the Escaped Trash Assessment Protocol developed by the EPA for cleaning up and assessing the impact of trash on the beach. Snohomish County Council Member Nate Nehring and Snohomish County Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Director Tom Teigen attended the event. In total, nearly 40 volunteers carefully scanned 68,000 square feet at Kayak Point Beach for marine debris and primarily found and picked up small plastic fragments, cigarette butts, bottles and containers, charcoal from firepits, and fishing gear. 1,338 marine debris objects totaling over 56 pounds were collected and documented. Using the protocol, the site was given a “C” and determined to be littered, meaning that trash was evenly distributed throughout the site and small accumulations of trash were visible. The citizen science data collected will be used for a region-wide effort to better understand trash loading and how trash is impacting the Puget Sound.

Crabber Education: Crabbing summer season ended September 6.

Mussel Watch: Mariko Langness with WDFW presented at the September MRC meeting on recent findings of the program and in preparation for deployment in November. The MRC is recruiting volunteers for mussel deployment and finalizing the sites within Snohomish County.

Oil Spill: The oil spill subcommittee has been attending webinars on the Oil Spill Risk Model this summer and attended the Marine Mammal Management in Oil Spill Response Workshop on September 8.

Nearshore Beach Restoration: The Nearshore Subcommittee group met on August 24 to brainstorm ideas about potential projects for the group to work on. The group is researching past plans and project lists that have been developed and is considering ideas for future projects. The group will meet again on October 25 to discuss the brainstormed list of ideas.

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:

- MRC Presentation to Stillaguamish Watershed Council on Port Susan September 22.
- SMP Learning Group September 23
- Port Susan Consultant Interviews September 29
- Penn Cove Mussel Preparation October 18-20
- Forage Fish Monitoring October 19
- MRC Presentation to the Island County Salmon Recovery Technical and Citizen Committee on Port Susan on October 20
- Next MRC meeting October 20

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



Volunteers pick up marine debris at Kayak Point Park for International Coastal Cleanup Day.
Picture by Elisa Dawson.

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Whatcom

Month/Year: SEPTEMBER and OCTOBER 2021

Submitted by: Austin Rose

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

- The MRC has a vacancy for a Economic seat. This vacancy is advertised on the MRC homepage <https://www.whatcomcountymrc.org/meetings-events/2021-mrc-vacancies/>
- Elizabeth Lorence was officially appointed to the MRC in September to fill a Conservation/Environmental seat.

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

Jackie Bourgault resigned from the MRC in September 2021 due to family circumstances. Jackie held an Economic interest position on the MRC, as a representative from BP. The Economic vacancy is being advertised on the MRC website in addition to the Whatcom County Executive's site.

Elizabeth Lorence was appointed to the MRC in September 2021 to fill a Conservation/Environmental position.

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

- The MRC held their September meeting on September 2. Meeting topics included:
 - Eric Grossman, USGS, shared information about the Puget Sound Coastal Storm Modelling System (CoSMoS) project to help inform how the MRC may use the model to inform future monitoring projects. Highlights included:
 - o definition of "coastal squeeze" and how CoSMoS is used to address it
 - o What is CoSMoS?
 - o How has CoSMoS been used in California (the only location where the model has been fully implemented by jurisdictions)?
 - o What are the initial uses of CoSMoS in Whatcom County?
 - o incorporating compound river modelling (ex: Nooksack)

Ian Miller, WA SeaGrant, shared information from a project that follows sea level rise projections published in 2018 – data used by the CoSMoS modelling - focusing not only on which areas will be exposed to coastal flooding, but their vulnerability to sea level rise, at the scale of individual parcels across Puget Sound.

The recorded presentations can be found [HERE](#).

- The Committee discussed concern about potential impacts to the eelgrass meadow at Larrabee State Park as vehicles are often observed driving over the eelgrass when using the boat ramp at lower tides. Photos taken by a Beach Steward were shared. The MRC will explore opportunities (Beach Stewards, kiosk, interpretive sign, or brochures) to provide education/outreach to boaters about the importance of eelgrass and ways to avoid damaging the bed.

- The MRC held their October meeting on October 7.
 - MRC staff reviewed the status of current and ongoing MRC projects – specifically forage fish surveys and Chuckanut PIC. New projects including rain garden development and remote beach cleanups were also discussed.
 - MRC staff reminded the committee about the Northwest Straits Foundation’s Shoreline Landowner Program and encouraged members help promote that program locally and/or be more involved at their capacity.
 - Photos from a site visit to Clayton Beach were shared.

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 to plan for the Marine Research Symposium – tentatively planned for February 23 (likely virtual). The event will focus on the marine waters and nearshore environments in the Whatcom area. The goals for the symposium are to inform participants about current conditions, to identify data gaps, inform future research needs, and to support resource management of Whatcom County marine waters and shorelines. The planning team is recruiting experts who can serve on an advisory committee to help identify appropriate presenters and topics.
- Whatcom Water Week occurred September 12-19. The MRC partnered with ReSources, the Ocean Conservancy, Surfrider, and the Port of Bellingham to host beach cleanups at four locations: Cliffside, Locust Beach, I&J Waterway, and Marine Park – the MRC and Port of Bellingham hosted the cleanup at Locust. The cleanups occurred on September 18 in celebration of the International Coastal Cleanup. 300-400lbs of trash was removed from Locust Beach, with the help of 28 volunteers.
- The MRC will be at Bellingham SeaFeast on October 30th. Whatcom County Public Works will have a booth sharing information about their programs supporting the marine ecosystem/water quality.

Monitoring

- Ceramic tiles that were placed in Chuckanut Bay were assessed for Olympia oyster larvae settlement. No evidence of larvae was found.
- The MRC announced an internship opportunity (part time temporary position with Whatcom County) to lead the Forage Fish surveys. The announcement closed on September 13 and the MRC received 29 applications. The finalist, Brittani Isenhour, is a 2nd year student from BTC Fisheries and Aquaculture and will begin her position on October 1.
- North Chuckanut Bay water quality continues to show a decrease in bacteria levels. Sampling will be conducted once a month October – March.

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

- Eleanor Hines and Austin Rose participated in Nancy Lee's Social Marketing Training in late September. The impact to the Larrabee State Park eelgrass meadow was used as an example problem. It is anticipated that the techniques learned in the training will be implemented if the MRC conducts EandO and Larrabee.
- Eleanor Hines presented to WAKE (Whatcom Association of Kayak Enthusiasts). Eleanor shared a link to gather emails from those interested in volunteering. 17 people in attended. Eleanor provided information about several community science by kayak projects and included kelp and PIC in regards to MRC projects.
- Austin and Eleanor are attending the SMP Learning group meetings organized by Barbara Bennett, Island Co MRC. Austin provided a detailed timeline of how the MRC has participated in the SMP and Comp plan update process since 2014.

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



Photo credit: Eleanor Hines, *Mumford GoPro frame on kayak deploying at Pt Whitehorn for kelp survey.*



Photo credit: Unknown, *Whatcom Water Week mascot Wayne Drop standing near trash removed from Marine Park at September 18 International Coastal Cleanup.*

You are invited to a
virtual symposium series:

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS IN THE SALISH SEA

NOVEMBER 18, 2021

3:30pm to 5:00pm

SESSION #1 RECREATION

This first session will look at how recreation may be changing as a result of climate change and how various entities are responding.

Join with fellow MRC members to discuss what impacts might mean for local recreation and opportunities in your community.

Zoom link will be emailed to all MRC members prior to the event.
No RSVP required.

Featuring a panel of informative speakers
with interactive discussion opportunities!



**Northwest
Straits**
INITIATIVE

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COLLEGE OF THE ENVIRONMENT
UNIVERSITY *of* WASHINGTON

SAVE THE DATES FOR THE UPCOMING SERIES!

- December 16, 2021 3:30pm to 5:00pm
- January 20, 2022 3:30pm to 5:00pm
- February 17, 2022 3:30pm to 5:00pm

Questions? Contact Leslie Perkins at perkins@nwstraits.org