



Meeting: Northwest Straits Commission
Location: Zoom Conference Call
Date: January 28, 2022
Time: 10:00 AM-12:00 PM

To join the Zoom meeting, [CLICK HERE](#) Meeting ID: 816 4927 8922 Passcode: 539388
 For audio conference, dial:

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 Approval of December 2021 meeting minutes	Elsa Schwartz, Chair
10:10 – 10:25	Committee reports Executive Committee Science Advisory Committee External Relations Committee	Tom Cowan Julia Parrish Chris Castner
10:25 – 10:40	Business items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kelp plan update (Jeff) • Climate Change Symposium Series: session 4, February 17, 2022 3:30pm (Allie) • Eelgrass no-anchor zones (Allie) • Tentative: 2022 MRC Conference – revised dates November 18-19 (Sasha) • Should meeting highlights be provided to the full Commission (Sasha) 	Staff
10:40 – 10:45	Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission/Tribal update	Cecilia Gobin, Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission
10:45 – 10:50	Puget Sound Partnership update	Jennifer Grimm, Puget Sound Partnership



agenda

10:50 – 10:55	NWS Foundation update	Don Hunger, NWS Foundation
10:55 – 11:25	MRC Reports	MRC Representatives
11:25 – 11:35	Meeting highlights and action items Identify key points and action items from this meeting for MRC reps to report back to their MRCs	All
11:35 – 11:40	Round table	All
11:40 – 11:45	Public comment	All
11:45	Adjourn	

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



Minutes - DRAFT

December 10, 2021 • 10:00 AM-12:00 PM
Zoom – Conference call
Northwest Straits Commission meeting

Attendees:

Commission Members: Tom Cowan (Vice Chair), Barbara Bennett (Island alternate), Tim Ellis (Snohomish), Jenn Grimm (Puget Sound Partnership alternate), Pete Haase (Skagit), Jeff Taylor (Jefferson), Bob Cecile (Whatcom), Nan McKay, Christina Koons (San Juan), Alan Clark (Clallam), Julia Parrish

Commission Staff: Lucas Hart, Sasha Horst, Allie Simpson, Leah Robison, Jeff Whitty

Others in Attendance: Jackie Lindsey (COASST), Jude Apple (Padilla Bay Reserve) Jessica Espy (WSU Skagit Shore Stewards), Austin Rose (Whatcom staff), Troy McKelvey (Jefferson alternate), Diane Hennebert (Skagit alternate), Don Hunger (NW Straits Foundation), Phil Salditt (NW Straits Foundation board)

Absent: Elsa Schwartz (Island-Chair), Laura Blackmore (Puget Sound Partnership), Cecilia Gobin (Tribal), Chris Castner

Welcome and Introductions

Vice Chair Tom Cowan opened the meeting with introductions of attendees and the tribal acknowledgment. The Commission approved the minutes from the August 27 and October 29 meetings as written by consensus.

Committee Reports

Executive Committee: Tom Cowan provided an update on the topics covered at the Executive Committee meeting, including a discussion about the opportunity for federal Congressionally Directed Spending. The fiscal year 2022 federal budget is now operating under a Continuing Resolution that will extend into mid-February, which means a delay in receiving any funding from a new FY22 budget. The letter to Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife in support of their partnership on forage fish spawning surveys was finalized and sent to contacts at the agency and key legislators.

Science Advisory Committee: Julia reported that the Committee has provided some support to Commission staff in the climate symposium planning. She will facilitate the January 20 event. The Committee is considering a follow on workshop after the series wraps up to brainstorm next steps. The Committee is also finalizing a list of local scientists who can provide a science spot at upcoming NW Straits Commission meetings to link MRCs to science. The next step is to organize the list and prioritize invitations. A planned future action for the Committee is to document the structure and purpose of the Science Advisory Committee to ensure it is useful to the MRCs and the NW Straits Commission.

External Relations Committee: Lucas reported that Senator Murray's office is working on draft reauthorization bill language. The text is being reviewed by senate council. The Committee expects to see an updated draft soon.

Business items

In addition to the written update, staff provided the following business items:

- **Climate change symposium:** The second symposium in the series will be Thursday, December 16 from 3:30-5pm. This session will focus on coastal resilience, with presentations from Ian Miller from Washington Sea Grant, and Lisa Kaufman from the NW Straits Foundation. A recording of the event will be available for those who are unable to attend.



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- **Staff updates:** Leslie Perkins' last day was on November 12. Lucas will work with the Department of Ecology to reclassify the position and update the position description before reposting. Jeff Whitty, Project Coordinator, started on December 1 to support the European green crab and kelp projects.
- **Forage fish:** Leah reported that she held a forage fish spawn monitoring training with WDFW at Padilla Bay on December 9th. The training was well attended and another training will be planned for summer 2022.

Presentation - COASST: Jackie Lindsey, Science Coordinator for COASST (<https://coasst.org/>), presented on their Marine Debris program. She described how COASST started as a beach/seabird program in the 1990s, and they now focus a lot on marine debris with their citizen science programs. Her presentation included a description of how and where they do their work, a brief summary of results, and how COASST fits into the Salish Sea community. Following the presentation was a question and answer period. Staff shared a copy of the presentation with NW Straits Commission members, and it is available on request.

Partner updates:

Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission: No update at this time.

Puget Sound Partnership: Jenn reported that the Partnership expects the Governor to roll out a salmon recovery package this month in a budget to be issued December 16. Plans are underway for the 2022 Puget Sound Day on the Hill. Organizers are still trying to determine whether the event will be virtual or hybrid. The Leadership Council reviewed 2022 legislative priorities. The group did not have any decisions yet, but scheduled a special meeting for further discussion. Draft Action Agenda components will be available for review in January, followed by a public draft of the Action Agenda for review in March.

Northwest Straits Foundation: Don introduced Phil Salditt as a new board member and reported that there are three new members: Phil Salditt, Adam Laurio, and Clay Walton-House. The Foundation is ramping up end-of-year fundraising. The Caroline Gibson Scholarship Fund has continued to grow and they are building out that program in order to roll out scholarships for students this year. He noted that the recent heavy rain has impacted timelines for some shoreline restoration work. The Foundation and partners celebrated the last post-restoration monitoring event at Bowman Bay. A recording of the Foundation's recent vegetation management workshop for shoreline homeowners is now [available online](#).

MRC Updates

MRCs provided full written reports that are available in the pre-meeting materials. Highlights are included below:

Clallam – Alan Clark

- The Clallam County Board of Commissioners signed the NW Straits agreement on October 26.
- Continued forage fish sampling on Cline Spit, Ediz Hook and Elwha River beach. Alan noted that they are still seeing eggs at Cline Spit.
- The MRC will present to the Board of County Commissioners in February.

Island – Barbara Bennett

- Outreach – Port Susan Marine Stewardship Area: The MRC was matched with a student team at the Evans School of Public Policy and Governance to assist with the review of new and emerging scientific and policy



Minutes - **DRAFT**

information to inform the joint Island-Snohomish MRC project to update the Port Susan MSA Conservation Action Plan report card.

- Advisory – Pinto Abalone: Jill Lipoti drafted a comment letter on the Pinto Abalone Recovery Plan, which the MRC approved to bring to the Board of County Commissioners for their consideration.
- Staff Change: After 7 years with the MRC, Anna Toledo has accepted a position with WA DNR, and is stepping down from her role as MRC Coordinator.

Jefferson – Jeff Taylor

- The Jefferson MRC is co-hosting a second speaker event with the Port Townsend Marine Science Center. The virtual presentation is scheduled for 6-7pm on December 3, featuring Bridget Trosin (WA Sea Grant) and Dave Wilkinson who will be presenting on king tides, projected sea level rise for Port Townsend, and local monitoring efforts. Following the presentation, participants will be encouraged to use MyCoast for submitting observations throughout the king tide season. Registration is at <https://tinyurl.com/kingtidesandslr>.
- The MRC is prepping for work in 2022: a contract for sidescan sonar surveys for detecting lost crab pots in Discovery Bay, a survey protocol for locating lost crab pots using a submersible ROV, a QAPP and contract for eelgrass surveys near Port Townsend, and permits to expand the Olympia oyster habitat enhancement site in Discovery Bay. The MRC is in communications with WDFW about acquiring a permit/approval for removing lost crab pots detected using side scan sonar and/or ROV.
- The MRC elected Brenda Johnson to serve as chair and Troy McKelvey to serve as vice chair in 2022.

San Juan – Christina Koons

- The MRC held a successful and productive retreat in early December, their first in-person event.

Skagit – Pete Haase

- 2022 Salish Sea Stewards Training- 2022 Salish Sea Stewards training program starts March 1 - May 24, 2022. Classes will be held in person Tuesdays from 1pm to 5pm at Padilla Bay. Registration deadline is February 22, 2022.
- Bowman Bay Monitoring/Volunteer Appreciation- On December 3, after 7 years of monitoring at Bowman Bay, volunteers conducted the final beach seining session. To help celebrate, the Northwest Straits Foundation hosted a Volunteer Appreciation BBQ. Twenty-three people attended. Pete expressed appreciation for Jason Morgan's efforts to make it successful.

Snohomish – Tim Ellis

- The Island County MRC application a [Student Consulting Lab](#) team from the Evan's School was approved and they have been matched with students for the Port Susan work! The Snohomish MRC has hired ESA consultants to assist their part of the scope of work.
- Snohomish County Surface Water Management has secured funds and is supporting a scope of work to lead the post-restoration monitoring effort at Meadowdale. Elisa Dawson is the project manager for SWM for this work.
- Snohomish MRC in partnership with Tulalip Tribes and the Stillaguamish Tribe deployed seven mussel watch cages in Snohomish County on November 5 in partnership with WDFW.

Whatcom – Bob Cecile



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- All overwater structures have been removed from the Aiston Preserve shoreline (formally Lummi Island Quarry).
- Two members have been in contact with Lummi Nation regarding two sunken trawlers in the Sandy Point marina. The group discussed funding that could be made available for their removal.
- The Drayton Harbor Shellfish Advisory Committee is concerned about the increasing pressure of recreational boats anchoring or mooring inside Drayton Harbor, outside of the two marinas. There is potential for the MRC to partner with the Drayton Harbor Shellfish Advisory Committee to establish voluntary no-anchor zones.

Presentation – European green crab

Allie Simpson shared a presentation on the highlights of the 2021 European green crab trapping season in Drayton Harbor. The team caught 146 green crabs this season, which was lower than the 2020 catch rate. Trapping locations included core sites, as well as an intensive grid survey trapping effort. In addition to the trapping efforts, the team worked with Whatcom MRC to conduct outreach to the local community both during the grid survey and through an educational mailer. Allie also shared information on plans for the 2022 season, which include expanding trapping efforts into Skagit County, starting a volunteer program, and working with a WCC crew. More information on how to report a green crab is available here: <https://wsg.washington.edu/crabteam/greencrab/report/>

Meeting highlights and action steps for MRCs

The Commission identified the following key highlights, which staff sent as a separate document to MRC staff and representatives to share with their MRCs:

- Upcoming climate change symposium series for MRCs, held virtually on December 16, January 20, and February 17 from 3:30pm-5:00pm.
- COASST information and opportunities (www.coasst.org).
- Shoreline Master Program workgroup for MRCs, led by Barbara Bennett. Reach out to Barbara to stay informed or join the group (bennbluw@gmail.com)
- Jefferson MRC's planned storm surge project, evaluating impacts of storm surge using boat launch sites as proxy locations.
- Update on new NW Straits Foundation board members.
- Congressionally directed spending – update on Continuing Resolution through mid-February.
- 2021 European green crab update, including the area of concern at Lummi Sea Pond ([related article](#)).

Public comment

There was no public comment.

*The next Commission meeting will be on Friday, January 28, 2022, via Zoom.



Executive Committee Meeting
December 20, 2021 • 11:00am-12:00pm
Zoom/conference call

Committee Members: Tom Cowan, Elsa Schwartz, Jude Apple, Chris Castner

Commission Staff/Support: Sasha Horst, Lucas Hart

Absent: Julia Parrish

2022 Committee meeting dates: The next scheduled meeting date lands on a holiday. The committee agreed to shift the meeting date to Tuesday, January 18, 11am.

Northwest Straits Initiative retreat: The group discussed the possibility of a retreat in spring 2022, which is when we would usually schedule the event in a typical year. The committee recommended postponing a retreat until there's a clear need and purpose, given staffing shortages and COVID restrictions. Jude suggested the book [The Art of Gathering](#) as a good read about the intentionality of coming together.

Conference 2022: Lucas described the funding and logistical challenges of planning a 2022 in-person conference, which includes covid uncertainty and a smaller conference budget. Staff inquired about availability at Fort Worden, which suits our needs, and while it is available, a deposit is required to hold the dates. Elsa noted that Fort Worden may not be ideal due to shared lodging. Other potential funding sources could include a registration fee or use of Congressionally Directed funds (CDS) if available. Staff will inquire with Everett location to see if they'll do a tentative hold without a deposit.

Derelict Vessel Removal: Lucas shared information learned from a meeting with Washington Department of Natural Resources on administering the derelict vessel removal program (DVR). Several MRCs have expressed interest in engaging on derelict vessel removal. Lucas and Don Hunger have been discussing whether the NWS Initiative can create a regionalized DVR program. Chris asked if the Foundation had any staff identified as lead in the event that a regional Northwest Straits Initiative program kicked off. Lucas explained that staffing is not currently available and more discussions DNR and the Foundation are required to assess program feasibility.

Pass through funding discussion: The committee discussed several example projects from the lists provided by MRCs for the Congressionally Directed Funding. The committee applied the Northwest Straits Commission funding policy criteria to each project. In particular, the committee discussed what constitutes "pass through funding." Two key attributes (among others) to avoid pass through funding are to identify project outcomes the MRC can take sole credit for, and for the MRC to maintain a lead position, such as contractor oversight. The committee also discussed the importance of tracking outcomes and benefits of projects in order to explain the value of our work to funders. Commission staff will meet with MRC staff in the next month to discuss their project lists and their process for prioritization.

Congressionally directed spending: Lucas updated the group on the current status of these funds, which are delayed through mid-February due to the federal budget postponement through a continuing resolution.

Staffing Changes: Lucas reported that Jeff Whitty started Dec 1. He is reaching out to partners and defining his role on the green crab and kelp projects. Dana is returning in February. Lucas is also working on reallocating Leslie's position towards administrative tasks in order to ensure that we're attracting the right pool of applicants for the position.



Executive Committee Meeting
January 18, 2022 • 11:00am-12:00pm
Conference Call

Committee members: Tom Cowan, Elsa Schwartz, Chris Castner, Julia Parrish, Jeff Taylor

Commission Staff/Support: Lucas Hart, Sasha Horst

Absent: Jude Apple

Reauthorization update: The draft reauthorization bill is expected from Senator Murray's office soon. It will be reviewed by staff and External Relations Committee members. Further discussion about the bill is expected between Sen. Murray's office, NOAA, and others before it is finalized.

Legislative update: Lucas mentioned four bills he is watching in the state legislative session:

- HB1661: A bill to fund kelp research at DNR
- SB5590: A bill to extend the Marine Resources Advisory Council, which was due to expire in 2022
- HB1700/SB5598: A bill to fund derelict vessel removal through DNR
- SB5727/HB1838: Lorraine Loomis Act to protect riparian salmon habitat

Conference 2022: NW Straits Commission staff are securing a space for the 2022 conference in La Conner. The space can be cancelled if COVID continues to threaten public health. If we proceed, the conference will be held November 18-19 and will be smaller than past events.

Letters of support: NW Straits Commission staff will be drafting procedures that guide the NW Straits Commission on the steps that should be taken when providing partners with a letter of support for grant proposals. The procedures will be reviewed and adopted by the NW Straits Commission after they've been drafted.

Funding policy: A minor amendment will be added to the NW Straits Commission funding policy to include further guidance for MRCs. The NW Straits Commission will review and adopt the policy at a later date.

Congressional directed funding: The NW Straits Commission's Congressionally Directed Funding is awaiting passage of the FY22 federal budget. MRCs are continuing to discuss and prioritize the projects they would like to fund after the federal budget is passed.



Commission staff highlights - [January 2022]

MRC Support

MRC Grants: MRC grants are underway and the first quarterly reporting due date was in mid-January. Thanks to MRC staff and project leads for preparing and submitting reports and other deliverables. The associated county payment requests have been submitted or are pending. NW Straits Commission staff is now completing review of materials and coordinating with Ecology staff to process payment requests.

Quality Assurance Project Plans (QAPP): NW Straits Commission staff is working with MRCs on the annual review of the QAPPs associated with all projects that collect environmental data. Any changes are submitted for review and approval by the Dept of Ecology's QA Officer.

NW Straits 101: NW Straits Commission and Foundation staff will host another NW Straits 101 event on March 17, 3:30-5:00pm via Zoom. This is a great primer on the Initiative, and new MRC members are especially encouraged to join.

Regional Projects

Eelgrass: NW Straits Commission staff is working with NW Straits Foundation staff on beginning the permitting process for establishing multiple No-Anchor Zones across the Northwest Straits region.

Kelp: NW Straits Commission hosted the MRC Kelp Monitoring Update on 1/26. Presenters covered multiple projects that MRCs were involved with during 2021, including the Kelp Expedition and Aerial drone surveys of kayak monitoring sites. Additionally, Julia Ledbetter from Department of Natural Resources presented on how MRC kayak kelp monitoring data will be used for the new floating kelp canopy vital sign.

Green Crab: NW Straits Commission staff continue to plan for the upcoming field season. Trapping efforts will be expanded to include multiple sites within Whatcom and Skagit Counties. Staff are currently creating a volunteer program for field help and are drafting a Veteran's Conservation Corps position posting. NW Straits Commission staff in coordination with Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve submitted an ESA permit for accidental take of salmonids during trapping efforts, which is currently under review. Abstracts covering green crab trapping efforts that NW Straits Commission staff submitted to the Whatcom Marine Research Symposium and Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference were both accepted.

Forage fish: The NW Straits Commission staff completed an addendum for the Forage Fish QAPP and will be sending it out for final signatures.

Operations

Staffing update: Lucas is working with the Dept of Ecology HR department to reclassify the position vacated by Leslie Perkins in November. Once the reclassification is complete, the recruitment process can be initiated.

COVID-19 update: Staff continue to follow masking and social distancing recommendations. NW Straits Commission staff continue to work fully remotely, though vaccinated staff may work without a mask when working alone in an office or masked when others are present.

Funding update: December 2021 marked the end of the previous two-year EPA/Puget Sound Partnership agreement. The new 2021-23 agreement went into effect as of October, so the Commission will now operate under that award, as well as several other project-specific funding sources, such as the state funds for green crab, the kelp conservation and recovery plan, and a US Fish and Wildlife Service award for voluntary no-anchor zones.

Meetings attended:

Lucas attended: Skagit MRC retreat planning 12/22; Project OLGA Legislative meeting 1/3; MRC Budget discussions 1/4, 1/6, 1/25, 1/27; Leadership Council 1/5; External Relations 1/5; Jefferson MRC meeting 1/4; Clayton Beach Project Meeting 1/21; Kelp Policy Advisor Group 1/25; Kelp Workshop 1/26

Allie attended: Skagit MRC retreat planning 12/22; MRC Kelp Data meeting 1/4, 1/18; Jefferson MRC meeting 1/4; Whatcom MRC meeting 1/6; Island MRC Understory Kelp Discussion 1/7; Green Crab North Sound Planning meeting 1/7; Science Advisory Committee 1/10; Skagit MRC project prioritization planning 1/12; Kelp Research Workgroup 1/12; Skagit MRC meeting 1/13; UN Ocean Decade Discussion 1/21; MRC Kelp Workshop 1/26; Green Crab North Sound Planning meeting 1/27

Sasha attended: Clallam MRC meeting 12/20; MRC Budget discussions 1/4, 1/6, 1/25, 1/27; External Relations 1/5; Science Advisory Committee 1/10; Puget Sound Partnership legislative update 1/7, 1/14; Skagit MRC project prioritization planning 1/12; Executive Committee 1/18; MRC Kelp Workshop 1/26;

Leah attended: San Juan MRC meeting 1/6; Whatcom MRC meeting 1/6; Green Crab North Sound Planning meeting 1/7; Kelp Research Workgroup 1/12; Climate Symposium Series 1/20; MRC Kelp Workshop 1/26; Green Crab North Sound Planning meeting 1/27

Jeff attended: Clallam MRC meeting 12/20; Island MRC meeting 1/4; Whatcom MRC meeting 1/6; Green Crab North Sound Planning meeting 1/7; Kelp Research Workgroup 1/12; Skagit MRC meeting 1/13; Floating Kelp Canopy Indicator meeting 1/13; Snohomish MRC meeting 1/19; Climate Symposium Series 1/20; UN Ocean Decade Discussion 1/21; Kelp Policy Advisor Group 1/25; MRC Kelp Workshop 1/26; Green Crab North Sound Planning meeting 1/27

Northwest Straits Foundation 2021 Work Updates – December 2021

Shore Friendly:

- Foundation Director of Programs Lisa Kaufman joined Dr. Ian Miller, Washington Sea Grant's coastal hazards Specialist, to present on sea level rise and climate resilience in the NWSI Climate Change Symposium Series on December 16. If you weren't able to attend, the event was recorded and you can access it [at this link](#).

Restoration Projects:

- Clark's Point Breakwater Removal: NWSF partnered with shoreline landowners Patrice Clark and Bill Wright to help them remove the large breakwater at Clark's Point in Bellingham. We started working with Patrice and Bill in 2015 when they approached us looking for solutions to restore the tidal flow within the small embayment on the north end of Chuckanut Bay. The project site sits within an approximately 71-acre conservation easement. The Clark family has been stewarding these lands for decades and have actively reforested the area and managed the site by removing derelict structures and invasive vegetation.

The breakwater was created in the late 1950s and expanded in the 1960s to create a boat basin for private boat moorage. The boat basin breakwater was constructed of large sandstone boulders, which were reportedly blasted from the adjacent cliff that comprises the western edge of the boat basin, and also by blasting a gap into the narrow sandstone peninsula that formed the eastern side of the basin.

American Construction removed 1,950 tons of rock from the site in November along with the remaining remnants of a small dock. Engineering and design was provided by Coastal Geologic Services.

We will continue to watch the site as it changes over the next few years, looking at the small patches of eelgrass that provide refuge and foraging for salmonids as well as crabs, shrimp, marine birds and other critters. Photos by Bob Morton.



Clark's Point Before



Clark's Point After

- Clayton Beach Restoration Proposal: NWSF held site visits in November at Clayton Beach to identify potential restoration parameters for removing the old trolley pilings and breakwater. We were joined by Skagit and Whatcom MRC members, and staff representing the US Fish and Wildlife Service and WA State Parks Department. We're in the initial phase of identifying partners and funding.

Monitoring:

- Friday December 3rd was our final seining at Bowman Bay, Deception State Park, having completed one year of pre-construction and five years of post-construction surveys. We plan to return for years nine and ten. After seining, we hosted a celebration party for the 16 volunteers present, some of whom had been volunteering with us for the project's entirety. With the data collection complete, Jason Morgan, Marine Projects Manager, and Haley Sherman, Foundation Marine Fellow, can finalize the database, which includes data from March 2015-December 2021. After finalized they will analyze the total fish counts for each year and plot their differences. This will allow us to better understand how our restoration efforts effect fish use within the nearshore including salmon and forage fish species.
- Jason Morgan had an initial meeting with the coordinator for Pacific Northwest Crab Research Group. The purpose of the meeting was introductions and to learn more about each group's work. There are a lot of shared interests and potential for collaboration. Jason will present at the PNCR winter meeting in January.

Welcoming New Board Members:

- We would love to introduce our three new members to the Northwest Straits Foundation Board: Adam Lorio, Clay Walton-House, and Phil Salditt. Check out our Monthly newsletter to learn more about them! [Subscribe Here](#)



Adam Lorio



Clay Walton-House



Phil Salditt

- As always, the Foundation is wrapping up the year with an end of the year campaign. Our goal for this campaign is \$30,000. We are halfway there and hope to make our goal by December 31st. Please consider making a donation [by clicking here.](#)

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Clallam

Month/Year: December 2021

Submitted by: Rebecca Paradis

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

- We added 3 new members one being the Lower Elwha Tribal Representative.
- Several MRC members and Coordinator attended Oiled Wildlife Volunteer Training with Dept. of Ecology.
- Marine Critter Outreach/Education cards are being distributed to local venues.
- Continued forage fish sampling on Cline Spit and Ediz Hook.

Membership/Leadership changes (new/departing members, changes to chair/vice-chair, NWSC representative/alternate, staff): Our three new applications for CMRC membership were finalized by BOCC resolution December 7th.

Events/Meetings (events/meetings from past month with any noteworthy highlights and information on upcoming events): Nothing to report.

Monthly MRC Meeting: will be on December 20th.

Funding updates (newly-awarded grants, in-kind support or other funding commitments):
1500 Education/Outreach cards were bought with in-kind support from Larry Barrett Kid's Fishing Fund.

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. Due to time of tide (in the dark) East Elwha Beach site was skipped this month. The samples are being stored at the County until WDFW is ready to accept them.

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: Clallam

Month/Year: January 2022

Submitted by: Rebecca Paradis

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

- Marine Critter Outreach/Education cards are continuing to be distributed to local venues.
- Continued forage fish sampling on Cline Spit and Ediz Hook.
- January 27th Mussel cages are being collected and sent to the lab for Biotoxin analysis.

Membership/Leadership changes (new/departing members, changes to chair/vice-chair, NWSC representative/alternate, staff): None to report.

Events/Meetings (events/meetings from past month with any noteworthy highlights and information on upcoming events): Nothing to report.

Monthly MRC Meeting: will be on January 24th.

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):

Forage Fish sampling is going well. Clallam MRC continued to collect the monthly samples at Cline Spit and Ediz Hook. Due to time of tide (in the dark) East Elwha Beach site was skipped this month. The samples are being stored at the County until WDFW is ready to accept them.

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: Island

Month/Year: January 2022

Submitted by: Jenn Johnson

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

- **Forage Fish:** Continued forage fish sampling at Hoypus Point, Cornet Bay, Sunlight Shores, Maple Grove, Hidden Beach, and Glendale. Monitoring resumed at Seahorse Siesta in November.
- **Advisory – Pinto Abalone:** Jill Lipoti drafted a comment letter on the Pinto Abalone Recovery Plan, which the MRC and the Board of County Commissioners approved. It was submitted at the end of the year
- **Staff Change:** Island MRC has a new Coordinator – Kelly Zupich!

Membership/Leadership changes (new/departing members, changes to chair/vice-chair, NWSC representative/alternate, staff): Anna Toledo is leaving Island County employment. Her last day was December 7. We have recently hired a new Island MRC Coordinator – Kelly Zupich – who has been greatly involved with the group as the past chair and executive committee member of the Island MRC.

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

Past Meetings/Events:

- December 7 and January 4: MRC meetings. Topic: Retreat planning and MRC Transitions

Upcoming Meetings/Events:

- February 1: MRC meeting. Topic: Retreat and strategic planning

Funding updates (newly-awarded grants, in-kind support or other funding commitments): None.

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

Monitoring – Forage Fish: Teams are continuing to monitor monthly at Hoypus Point, Cornet Bay, Sunlight Shores, Maple Grove, Hidden Beach, and Glendale. Monitoring resumed at Seahorse Siesta in November. The 2021 forage fish report can be found [here](#). There was a marvelous class in December, hosted by the WA DFW, on the forage fish sampling process which covered life history, sampling process and tips, lots of hands on in the field, and using the microscope to identify fish eggs. It was well attended by Island MRC volunteers (see picture).

Monitoring – Bull Kelp: Allie Simpson helped connect the bull kelp team with Hilary Hayford from the Puget Sound Restoration Fund and Dan Abbott from Reef Check about potential opportunities for collaboration on projects focused on understory kelp. The team met to discuss current projects and future collaborations in January. Discussions will continue moving forward.

Outreach – Port Susan MSA: The project “Integrating science and local knowledge to update the Port Susan Marine Stewardship Area Conservation Action Plan” groups (Island MRC, Snohomish MRC, and the student team at the Evans School of Public Policy and Governance) met in mid-January to discuss the project scope and plan. This work will update the Port Susan Marine Stewardship Area Conservation

Action Plan report card with Island County MRC's role focusing on working with the student group to identify new and emerging scientific and policy information.

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.):

- Retreat: The MRC is working on a strategic planning retreat for March.

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



Island MRC volunteers attending the Forage Fish training hosted by WA DFW.

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Jefferson

Month/Year: December 2021 & January 2022

Submitted by: Monica Montgomery

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

- In January, the rain garden subcommittee will be conducting site visits at all MRC co-sponsored rain gardens to assess maintenance needs.
- The MRC adopted a new project focused on storm surge and total water level monitoring.
- The MRC voted in new officers: Chair – Brenda Johnson (Dist 2), Vice Chair – Troy McKelvey (Recreation), NWSC Rep – Jeff Taylor (Dist 2), NWSC Alt – Sarah Fisken (Dist 3)

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

At the Dec 7 monthly meeting, new Executive Committee officers were appointed:

Chair – Brenda Johnson, Dist 2

Vice Chair – Troy McKelvey, Recreation

NWSC Rep – Jeff Taylor, Dist 2

NWSC Alt – Sarah Fisken, Dist 3

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

Past Events/Meetings

Dec 1 – Forage fish survey at Adelma

Dec 3 – Education & Outreach speaker event: king tides & sea level rise

Dec 7 – MRC monthly meeting

Dec 10 – Strait ERN LIO quarterly meeting

Dec 14 – Executive Committee meeting

Dec 14 – Mapping lost crab pots meeting with WDFW staff: approval for removal

Dec 16 – NW Straits Symposium Part 2

Dec 17 – No-Anchor Zones meeting: discuss goals for eelgrass survey and other project needs

Dec 21 – Education & Outreach meeting: debrief speaker event with partners

Jan 4 – MRC Coordinator met with NWSC staff: CDS project list

Jan 4 – MRC monthly meeting

Jan 14 – Storm surge monitoring meeting: project planning with partners

Jan 17 – Rain garden site visits to assess maintenance needs

Jan 18 – Executive Committee meeting

Jan 20 – NW Straits Symposium Part 3

Jan – Forage fish survey at Adelma & Dabob

Upcoming Events/Meetings

Jan 24 – Fort Townsend forage fish survey

Jan 26 – NWSC kelp kayak update meeting

Jan 29 – Rain garden site visits to assess maintenance needs

Feb 1 – MRC monthly meeting

Feb 15 – Executive Committee meeting

Feb 17 – NW Straits Symposium Part 4

Feb 21 – Fort Townsend forage fish survey

Feb – Forage fish survey at Adelma & Dabob

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:** No surveys were conducted in December due to high daytime tides. Surveys will resume on Jan 24.
- a. **Forage fish - Adelma Beach (Index):** The project lead (Jeff) surveyed on Dec 1.
- b. **Forage fish - Dabob Bay (Index):** No surveys were conducted in December due to high daytime tides. Surveys will resume in January.
- c. **Kelp:** Subcommittee members plan to participate in the NWSC kelp kayak update meeting on Jan 26.

2. Rain Gardens:

- a. The subcommittee is planning two site visit days in January (17 & 29) to assess maintenance needs of all MRC co-sponsored rain gardens (16 total).

3. Education & Outreach:

- a. The 2022 Outreach Plan was submitted.
- b. The MRC co-hosted a second speaker event with the Port Townsend Marine Science Center on Dec 3rd, featuring Bridget Trosin (WA Sea Grant) and Dave Wilkinson who presented on king tides, projected sea level rise for Port Townsend, and local monitoring efforts of total water levels. There were 162 registrants, 103 attendees, and 105 views of the recording (as of Jan 12). Video recording here: <https://youtu.be/hcw84Q6Hg4o>. Following a demonstration on how to use MyCoast, participants were encouraged to use the website/app for submitting observations throughout the king tide season. At the time of polling (after Q&A), there were just 65 people still on, of which 57 responded to poll questions. Except for one neither agree/disagree, all responses to "I have a better understanding of king tides" were agree/strongly agree. The MRC and PTMSC partners are planning the next speaker event for June, to feature the Pacific NW Crab Research Group's work coupled with an in-person light trap activity.

- c. The subcommittee will be planning events for spring, to offer a hybrid Digging for Dinner event and Searching for Seaweed event, with virtual presentations and in-person outdoor activities.
- 4. Olympia Oysters:
 - a. Permit applications for expanding the Powerlines Site in South Discovery Bay have been submitted to DNR, County, and WDFW. Once the WDFW HPA modifications have been approved, the MRC Coordinator will submit a shellfish transfer permit. The MRC Coordinator will be submitting materials to Ecology and was advised to submit permit application materials to USACE after Feb 25, once the 2022 NWP's go into effect.
- 5. Voluntary No-Anchor Zones:
 - a. Subcommittee members (Troy, Gordon, Bryan, Sarah, Brenda, Liz) met on Dec 17 to discuss goals for contracting an eelgrass survey along the Port Townsend waterfront. Staff with the DNR Nearshore Habitat program recommended amending previous survey methods by slowing down vessel speed (for higher quality video footage) and extending established transects to -15m relative to MLLW for assessment of additional marine vegetation, such as understory kelp. The subcommittee is interested in moving forward with this recommendation if additional costs can be covered. The MRC Coordinator is working on a contract agreement with the preferred contractor and developing an eelgrass QAPP.
 - b. MRC divers are working out dates with favorable weather conditions and boat access for swapping the Port Townsend summer buoys with winter floats (delayed due to individual scheduling issues), as well as for addressing much needed underwater maintenance before the growing season.
 - c. A previous MRC member, Dale Moses, reported on Jan 9 that 3 no-anchor zone buoys and 2 state park boundary buoys are missing from Mystery Bay, with only 1 no-anchor zone buoy intact and 1 partially submerged.
- 6. Mapping Lost Crab Pots:
 - a. *Side Scan Sonar:* The MRC Coordinator is working through editing a new contract form the county recently adopted for work funded by state/federal grants. Once approved, the MRC hopes to sign a contract with the preferred contractor to conduct side scan sonar surveys in Discovery Bay in the spring.
 - b. *ROV:* The MRC Coordinator and Project Lead, Jeff, met with WDFW staff on Dec 14 to discuss project goals and requirements for approval to remove lost crab pots. The MRC Coordinator is working on a removal plan and scientific collection permit application. An MRC member, Nam, met with one of the SeaDragons (operating the ROV) on Dec 30 to discuss needs for an underwater ROV survey protocol for locating lost crab pots.

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 adopted a new project focused on storm surge and total water level monitoring, with Jeff appointed as Project Lead.

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

Dec 7 – Zoom Group Photo



MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: San Juan County

Month/Year: December 2021 and January 2022

Submitted by: Frances Robertson

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

- The MRC held their annual retreat on December 2nd.
- The MRC and County's Southern Resident killer whale efforts and Plastic Free Salish Sea initiative will be included in the 2022 Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference.
- The MRC continues to make progress on the MSA Plan update

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

Active recruitment to fill the two empty seats on the committee is underway. The MRC held interviews in mid-January and has made recommendations to County Council for new appointments in early February.

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

December

- The MRC held their annual retreat in person on December 2nd.
- The MRC participated in the monthly San Juan County Stewardship Council meeting.
- MRC members attended the NWSC Climate Change symposium December session.

January

- The MRC held their first meeting of 2022 on Thursday 6th January.

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):

The MRCs work plan for 2022 has been scoped out and was approved by the committee at their January meeting. The following actions are also due to occur in January and early February that will see the kick-off to MRC project efforts for the 2022 year:

- Kailey Genter coordination with Killer Whale Tales and San Juan County elementary schools to bring the KWTs program to Grade 5 students.
- Plastic Free Salish kick off meeting to re-vamp the beach steward program, complete the road steward program, update the website, and plan the Sea Bin project for the summer boating season.
- Contracting for Anchor Out Zone buoy maintenance.
- Completing the new Derelict Vessel Prevention Program database and assisting the County's DVRP with identifying vessels for the MRC's review and prioritization for removal.

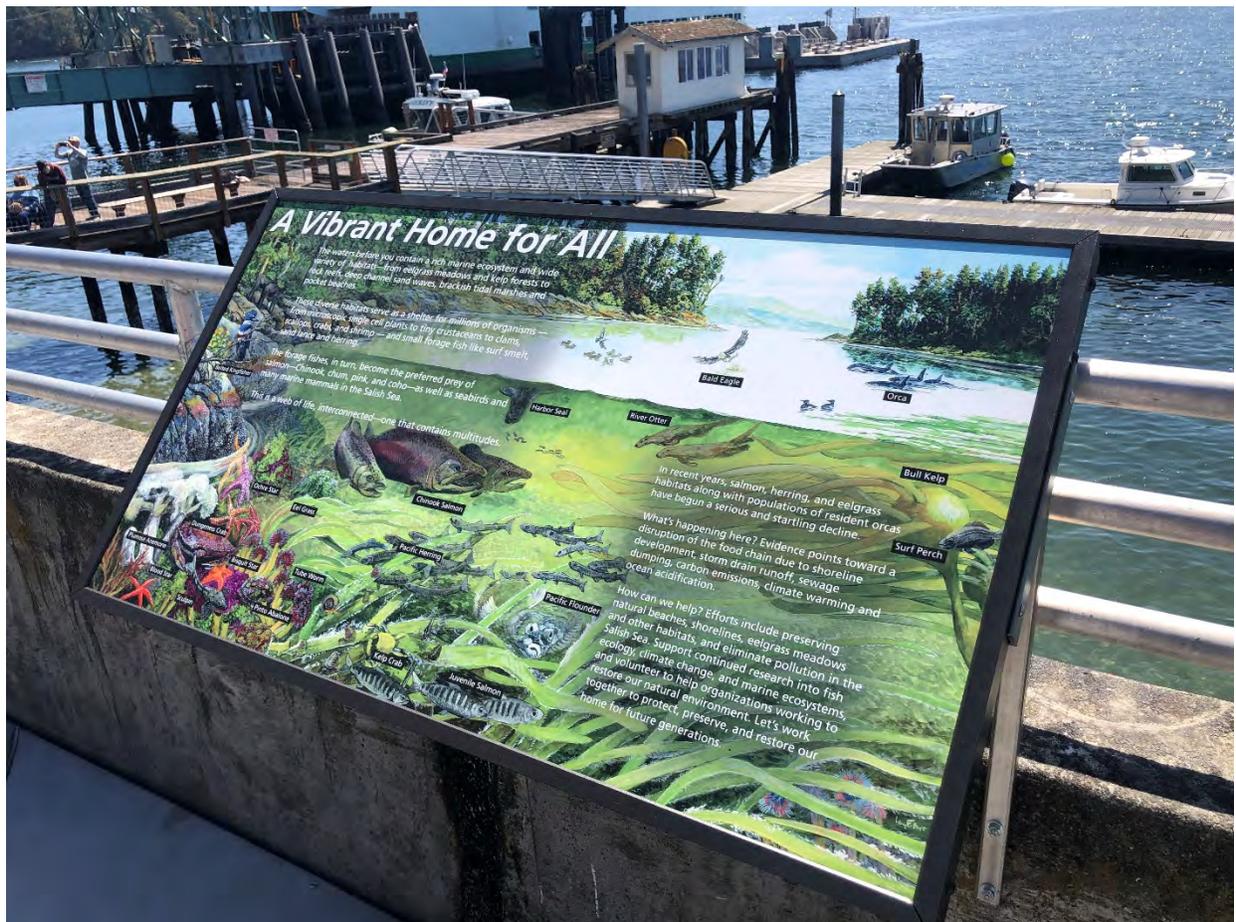
- Completing the QAPP for the False Bay monitoring project that is planned for summer 2022.

The core effort of the MRC lead staff and MRC will be continuing to progress on the MSA Plan update. The MSA Plan subcommittee met in mid-January to review the chapters to date. They will meet again in February to review the threats chapter that is currently in production. The MRC as a whole will continue to review strategies that address core threats identified at the retreat. The identification of strategies to address shipping and boating impacts took place at the January meeting, the discussion around strategies to address climate change impacts will take place in February, and impacts from invasions and other biotic interactions will be the subject of the March MRC meeting.

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

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

No photos from this month but here is a selection from 2021.



Signage created by the MRC for the Orcas Landing Marine Interpretive Area finally installed. May 2021. France Roberts.



Marine bulletin board created by MRC member Carl Davis and Orcas Island Yacht club members Mark and Beth Gasser. Photo: Frances Robertson



MRC lead Staff, Frances Robertson with MRC tribal liaison, Patti Gobin beside the signage they helped create for the Orcas Landing Marine Interpretive Area.



Sea lions hauled out at Whale Rocks, San Juan Channel.



Anchor Out Zone installed at Odlin County Park.



Celebrating all the outstanding women on the San Juan County MRC.



MRC member Jeff Dyer with the new boater information kiosk installed by the MRC at Odlin County Park



MRC Vice- Chair Karin Roemers-Kleven with intrepid husband Bob, and MRC Lead Staff Frances Robertson deploying mussel cages for WDFW on a late November night.



MRC members and County Environmental Stewardship Staff meeting in person for the MRC's annual retreat in December 2021.

My Pledge To The Salish Sea



I pledge to help and protect the orcas and
ocean by keeping the kelp beds healthy for
the orcas and other sea creatures. And to not
pollute the ocean or eat a lot of salmon.
(I don't exactly like salmon.)
I will also protect the orcas and other
sea creatures habitats.



Directions: Please draw a picture and write a statement explaining how you will protect the ecosystem of the Salish Sea. Return to your teacher when finished.

San Juan Elementary School students' pledge to the Salish Sea.

"I pledge to help and protect the orcas and ocean by keeping the kelp beds healthy..."

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Skagit

Month/Year: December/2021

Submitted by: Tracy/ Pete

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

- Kayak Kelp Survey Data: Skagit MRC's kelp survey data has been selected as one of the areas to be included in an additional multi-year trend analysis to inform the Puget Sound Kelp Canopy Vital Signs.
- MRC Project Planning Retreat: The MRC is in the process of planning a retreat to evaluate and prioritize the list of projects for federal appropriation funding.

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):

- Bowman Bay Monitoring/Volunteer Appreciation **December 3**- Volunteers conducted the final beach seining session at Bowman Bay on December 3. The Northwest Straits Foundation hosted a Volunteer Appreciation BBQ. 23 people attended. Beach seining will resume every two to three years as funding allows. Forage fish surveys will continue at the site. Over 2,000 volunteer hours have been contributed to beach seining at Bowman Bay since 2014.
- MRC Monthly Meeting- **December 10** (via Microsoft Teams)- Jonn Lunsford with the City of Anacortes presented an update on the Tommy Thompson Trestle Replacement. The Committee continued to discuss, update, and refine the wish list of MRC projects. A Project Planning Retreat will be held in a few months to evaluate, prioritize, and finalize the list of MRC projects for federal appropriations funding.
- NWSI Symposium Series #2 "Climate Change Impacts in the Salish Sea" - **December 16** (via Zoom)
- MRC Retreat Planning Meeting- **December 22** (via Zoom)
- Next MRC Monthly Meeting – **January 13**, 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 2022 Salish Sea Stewards Training Program will start March 1 – May 24, 2022. The 2022 SSS training is currently slated to include in-person lectures and a field component. Classes will be held Tuesdays from 1pm to 5pm at Padilla Bay. Registration deadline is February 22, 2022. Governor Inslee's mandate for vaccinations extends to volunteers. SSS training participants will be required to wear masks and show proof of vaccination. The Advisory Committee is working with Padilla Bay NERR on the speaker schedule for the 2022 SSS classes. The training curriculum has been drafted. Sara Brostrom will start contacting presenters after the holidays to confirm the training schedule. The presenters will be given the option of presenting virtually if they cannot attend in person. Promotional materials have been created and posted on the MRC website along with the Registration Form. The goal of the training program is to help foster stewardship by building

and maintaining a strong base of community scientists which support the Skagit MRC and partner projects.

- Fidalgo Bay Day: Planning for the 2022 Fidalgo Bay Day event will likely start in February. The Fidalgo Bay Resort is not currently taking reservations for events.
- Bowman Bay Restoration: Recent storms at Bowman Bay caused lots of erosion along the shoreline and a pile of large logs washed up along the beach. Creosote pilings from the failing pier have also washed ashore and have been reported on the MyCoast App. We are working with the Northwest Straits Foundation, Coastal Geologic Services, and State Parks to decide what the best approach might be for protecting the shoreline plantings from future storm surge damage and where we should be planting new plants and trees, etc. The fence, benches, and interpretive signs might also need to be moved back. Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group plans to apply for grant funding for the Bowman Bay Pocket Estuary Restoration Feasibility Study, Preliminary Design, and Hydrologic Modeling.
- Kayak Kelp Surveys: Field work is done for the year. Surveys will start again in June 2022. The NWSC is conducting an additional multi-year trend analysis to inform the Puget Sound Kelp Canopy Vital Signs. They have selected Skagit as one of the areas to do a 'deep dive' into our kelp survey data. They will be meeting next week to discuss the details.
- Forage Fish Surveys: Forage fish surveys continue. Forage fish surveys might be reduced next year with fewer sites to survey. The NWSC provided a Letter of Support for funding the Department of Fish and Wildlife's (WDFW) Washington Conservation Corp program to continue collecting and analyzing forage fish survey data. The letter was prepared by several of the MRC forage fish captains, NWSC staff, and WDFW forage fish folks and sent to Senator Rolfes, Rep. Ormsby, their staff, and Senate and House fiscal analysts Jed Herman, and Dan Jones. A copy of the letter was also sent to WDFW.
- MRC Salish Sea School Intern- Pete Haase: Amy Eberling, the Director the Salish Sea School, selected an intern for the program and is currently working on the program plan. Pete and Amy are working out the project details. Pete will have more information to share in January.
- Kids on the Beach: Field trips and onsite visitors are currently prohibited at the schools this fall so the Kids on the Beach program has been entirely shifted to the spring of 2022. The spring program will be a combination of field opportunities and in-class visits as schools allow.
- Pinto Abalone Recovery: Hatchery work continues. Field work won't begin until January/February 2022. Paul reviewed the Draft Pinto Abalone Recovery Plan and provided only a few minor comments.
- Olympia Oyster Restoration: Work is done for the season. Field work will start up again in the spring/summer 2022. 50 bags of oyster shell with native juvenile oysters will be distributed in southern Padilla Bay in 2022. It is anticipated that Padilla Bay NERR will receive additional funding that can be used to hire an AmeriCorps to help get the oyster shell out to more sites.
- Sharpes Corner Stormwater Sampling- Diane Hennebert: This project requires a 56-page detailed Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) which won't be finalized until January or February 2022. Because of the lengthy QAPP process, sampling has been put on hold until after the first flush in the fall of 2022.

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: January/2022

Submitted by: Tracy/ Diane

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

- MRC-Salish Sea School Intern: An intern has been selected for this pilot program to work on a forage fish monitoring project at March's Point. Field work will occur Feb-October. The intern will present results to the MRC in January 2022. This MRC Intern project is part of a pilot program and is just one several other intern projects under the Salish Sea School STaRS program (Students Training as Research Scientists), including stormwater monitoring, beach debris, orcas, and marine birds.
- MRC Project Evaluation: MRC member, Lynne Wenberg-Davidson, developed a new, easy to follow, three-pronged approach for MRC members to evaluate and prioritize MRC projects. A retreat will be held in April, to finalize the list of projects.

Membership/Leadership changes (new/departing members, changes to chair/vice-chair, NWSC representative/alternate, staff): MRC Chair and Vice-Chair elections were postponed until February due to the lack of any new nominees.

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

- MRC Monthly Meeting- **January 13** (via Microsoft Teams)- MRC member Lynne Wenberg-Davidson presented a new, easy to follow, three-pronged approach that she developed to evaluate and prioritize MRC projects. A Project Planning Retreat will be held in April to evaluate to finalize the list of MRC projects for federal appropriations funding.
- Salish Sea Stewards Advisory Committee Meeting- **Jan 19** (via Zoom)
- NWSI Symposium Series #3 "Climate Change Impacts in the Salish Sea"- **Jan 20** (via Zoom)
- Skagit MRC CDS Follow-up Meeting- **Jan 25** (via Zoom)
- Annual MRC Kelp Kayak Survey Update- **January 26, 3:30pm-5:00pm** (via Zoom)
- Next MRC Monthly Meeting – **February 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 2022 Salish Sea Stewards Training Program will start March 1 – May 24, 2022. The 2022 SSS training is currently slated to include in-person lectures and a field component. Classes will be held Tuesdays from 1pm to 5pm at Padilla Bay. Registration deadline is February 22, 2022. The training program continues to be widely promoted. Governor Inslee's mandate for vaccinations extends to volunteers. SSS training participants will be required to wear masks and show proof of vaccination. The presenters will be given the option of presenting virtually if they cannot attend in person. 70-80% of the speaker schedule has been booked. 5 people have registered so far to take the training. The SSS Advisory Committee meeting was held January 19th. The Advisory Committee is working on a job description for a future part-time Volunteer Coordinator position to keep the 342 volunteers informed and active.
- Fidalgo Bay Day: Planning for the 2022 Fidalgo Bay Day event will likely start in February/March. The Fidalgo Bay Resort is not currently taking reservations for events.

- Kayak Kelp Surveys: Surveys won't start again until June 2022. The NWSC will be hosting the annual MRC Kelp Kayak Survey data update on **January 26th**, 3:30pm -5pm (via Zoom).
- Bowman Bay Restoration: Skagit MRC staff and the MRC Project Lead met with reps from the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group, NWS Foundation, and State Parks, at the Bowman Bay Restoration site on January 13 to look at the storm damage and talk about the next steps with additional planting and plant maintenance at the site, and to discuss potential new projects. This year we will plant trees and shrubs along the fence line to help protect the rest of the vegetation and provide some shade. We will also likely integrate additional dune grass up to the fence line and in between the logs that washed up along the shoreline. State Parks received funding to remove the dilapidated pier and creosote pilings and replace it with more environmentally friendly materials. They hope to reduce the amount of hard shore armoring required to support the new pier. The shoreline next to the pier is extremely eroded and we are about to lose one of our interpretive signs if it erodes any further. As part of the pier removal/replacement, the Parks dept will be looking into different options for moving the sign to a better location. Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group is seeking funding for a feasibility study/design to restore the pocket estuary and replace the Pass Lake culvert to improve flushing.
- Forage Fish Surveys: The weather and extreme high tides were not very conducive for conducting forage fish surveys in December. Surveys continued at all our sites in January. Most of our survey sites don't get much surf smelt spawning during this time of year, except for Fidalgo Bay. However, it is a good time of year for sand lance spawning, but we have yet to find any sand lance eggs at any of our sites. During one of the surveys at the Similk Bay Index Site, a huge chunk from a commercial dock had washed up onto the beach during one of the storm events. The forage fish survey crew notified various agencies about the dock.
- MRC Salish Sea School Intern: An intern has been selected to work on a forage fish monitoring project at March's Point. MRC Project Lead Pete Haase, is working closely with the Salish Sea School Director to finalize a more detailed Project Plan later this month. Field work will occur Feb-October. Data analysis and report prep Nov-Dec. The intern will present results to the MRC in January 2022. This MRC Intern project is part of a pilot program and is just one of 5 other intern projects under the Salish Sea School STaRS program (Students Training as Research Scientists), including stormwater monitoring, beach debris, orcas, marine birds, and marine mammals. There is an amazing team of experts that are mentoring the interns and providing guidance for their projects.
- Kids on the Beach: The spring KOTB program will be a combination of field opportunities and in-class visits and virtual. So far, we have 200 students lined up to participate in the spring KOTB program. Conway and Concrete middle schools will be participating, but it will be mostly virtual. 90 Sedro-Wooley Middle School students will be participating in a beach seining activity over a three-day period in late March (March 29-31st) with the help of volunteers. The Anacortes School District has expressed interest in participating in the KOTB program to some degree if they can make it work with their schedules. We are also working in collaboration with the Swinomish Tribal Community's Between Two Worlds program to implement the KOTB into their curriculum. It is unlikely that we will be able facilitate an in-person Science Symposium with all the students at the end of the 2022 spring KOTB program due to COVID. The teachers also do not feel comfortable with a virtual symposium format. However, we are encouraging teachers to record and share student Prezi presentations if they are able.
- Pinto Abalone Recovery: Hatchery work continues with 15,000 abalone in cultivation. Field work won't begin until February 2022. The QAPP Addendum has been drafted and is currently under review. The goal is to outplant 10,000 small abalone to as many as 10 sites in Skagit County by April this year.

- Olympia Oyster Restoration: Field work will start up again in April 2022 with abbreviated monitoring again this year. More intensive monitoring is planned in 2023 depending on funding. Paul has been asked to present on native oyster restoration as part of the 2022 Salish Sea Stewards training program in late March.
- Sharpes Corner Stormwater Sampling: The QAPP won't likely be drafted until March 2022. Sampling will take place after the first flush in the fall of 2022.

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: December 2021

Submitted by: Elisa Dawson and Alex Pittman

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

- Snohomish County's contractor has completed the removal of four vessels from the Snohomish Estuary area. The total cost of the removals was nearly \$115,000, which will be reimbursed at 90% by DNR. Additional information about the four vessels removed can be found at www.snocomrc.org/projects/derelict-vessel-removal.
- The MRC conducted interviews for new MRC members on December 13 and 20. The MRC will be looking to fill up to 2 vacancies, in addition to a change in the Stillaguamish Tribal Representative. Franchesca Perez will re-join the MRC in 2022 to serve as the tribal representative upon the departure of Kip Killebrew, who is retiring at the end of 2021.

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

The MRC is holding interviews for new members to join the MRC in 2022 on December 13 and 20.

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

Elisa Dawson attended a meeting with staff from DNR to discuss a proposal for a WRIA 7 Kelp and Eelgrass Protection Zone on November 22.

Elisa Dawson and Alex Pittman attended the second Meadowdale Monitoring Team Meeting on November 29.

Elisa Dawson met with Snohomish County staff to discuss opportunities to produce a video in support of Meadowdale restoration and monitoring work on November 29.

Elisa Dawson and Alex Pittman attended a kick-off meeting with project consultant ESA to discuss the Port Susan MSA Conservation Action Plan Update Project on November 30.

Elisa Dawson attended a webinar on the NOAA Marine Debris Grant on December 6.

Elisa Dawson and Alex Pittman met with Kathleen Herrmann, Snohomish-Stillaguamish LIO Coordinator, and Kit Crump, Stillaguamish Lead Entity Coordinator, to discuss the Port Susan MSA Conservation Action Plan Update Project on December 7.

Elisa Dawson, Alex Pittman, Tim Ellis, and Susan Tarpley attended a meeting with WSU Beach Watchers Staff Jonathan Robinson to discuss the 2022 Starlight Beach Walk on December 8.

Alex Pittman and David Bain attended Forage Fish Monitoring Training for MRCs with WDFW staff on December 9.

The MRC conducted interviews for new MRC members on December 13 and 20. Elisa Dawson, Alex Pittman, Tom Doerge, and Andrew Gobin were on the interview panel.

Elisa Dawson gave a presentation to the Rotary Club of Edmonds on MRC Marine Vegetation work on December 14.

The MRC conducted Forage Fish Monitoring on December 15 at Howarth Park and December 16 at Picnic Point and Meadowdale.

MRC staff and members attended the MRC Virtual Symposium #2 on December 16.

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): Snohomish MRC staff held a kick-off meeting with project consultant ESA on November 30 to begin drafting questions for the Port Susan Marine Stewardship Area Conservation Action Plan (CAP) Assessment. Snohomish MRC staff also met internally with County staff who had been involved in the development of the CAP on December 7. Snohomish MRC and Island MRC staff met on December 14 to discuss project coordination with the departure of Anna Toledo from Island County.

Derelict Vessels (NWSF funds): Snohomish County's contractor completed the removal of 4 vessels from the Snohomish Estuary area in mid-November. The total cost of the 2021 removals was nearly \$115,000, which is eligible for 90% reimbursement from DNR.

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, and sampling at Meadowdale resumed in November with the park open to the public again. Sampling occurred on December 15 (Howarth Park) and December 16 (Picnic Point + Meadowdale). The next sampling dates are scheduled for January 19 and 20.

Nearshore Restoration: Snohomish County surface Water Management hired ESA as a consultant to assist with the scope of work for the Meadowdale post-restoration monitoring effort. The Monitoring Team held a meeting on November 29.

MRC Outreach Subcommittee: MRC staff and members met with WSU Beach Watchers on December 8 to plan for the 2022 Starlight Beach Walk. The event is planned for January 28, 2022.

No updates for:

- Crabber Education
- Snohomish Estuary Pilings
- Mussel Watch
- Oil Spills
- Marine Vegetation Monitoring

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:

- Next MRC Meeting January 19
- Forage Fish Monitoring January 19 and 20
- MRC Virtual Symposium #3 January 20
- Mussel Watch Retrieval January 27 or 31

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: January 2022

Submitted by: Elisa Dawson and Alex Pittman

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

- The MRC has nominated three new members – Franchesca Perez (Stillaguamish Tribe Representative), Bob Margulis, and Allan Hicks – to Snohomish County Council. We are currently waiting formal appointment by the council.
- The MRC contracted with DNR to complete marine vegetation monitoring from Everett to Edmonds this summer. DNR found eelgrass was present at 21 out of 22 sites sampled, and at 192 of 224 transects sampled. A draft report is being reviewed by the subcommittee, with a final report due by January 31.
- The MRC finalized the Port Susan Stakeholder List in December. The MRC has also coordinated a draft of the Stakeholder Survey with project consultant ESA, staff from Snohomish County, and the Joint Island-Snohomish Port Susan Team. The next Joint Island-Snohomish Port Susan Team Meeting is scheduled for January 25.

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

The MRC has nominated three new members to Snohomish County Council. We are currently waiting formal appointment by the council. The recommended members are:

1. **Franchesca Perez**, Stillaguamish Tribal Representative
Marine Biologist for the Stillaguamish Tribe
2. **Bob Margulis**
Retired, former Executive Director of the Wild Steelhead Coalition
3. **Allan Hicks**
Quantitative Scientist, International Pacific Halibut Commission

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

Elisa Dawson visited the Meadowdale Estuary Restoration Site with Paul Schlenger from ESA consultants and Todd Zackey from the Tulalip Tribes on December 21.

Elisa Dawson met with Snohomish County staff to discuss the development of a press release to announce that four derelict vessels were removed by Snohomish County and two derelict vessels were removed by the City of Everett on December 28 and January 6.

Elisa Dawson attended a webinar titled *Ian Miller on Sea Level Rise: Around the World and Here at Home* on January 11.

Elisa Dawson, Alex Pittman, and Susan Tarpley attended a meeting with WSU Beach Watchers Staff Jonathan Robinson to discuss the 2022 Starlight Beach Walk on January 12.

Elisa Dawson attended a webinar titled *Local Climate Response – Building Resiliency and Adapting to Impacts* on January 12.

Alex Pittman attended the Puget Sound Kelp Research and Monitoring Meeting on January 12.

Elisa Dawson and Alex Pittman attended the Kelp Vital Sign Indicator Development Workshop on January 13.

Elisa Dawson met with project consultant ESA to discuss the Meadowdale Monitoring Plan on January 13.

Elisa Dawson, Alex Pittman, and Sara Maxwell attended a meeting with the UW Evans School Student Consulting Lab team to discuss scoping for their assistance with the Port Susan Conservation Action Plan Update Project on January 13.

Elisa Dawson, Alex Pittman, Tom Doerge, Brie Townsend, Tim Ellis, and Julie Schlenger met to discuss coordinating review comments on DNR's draft Marine Vegetation Monitoring Report for 2021 Monitoring in Snohomish County on January 18.

Elisa Dawson and Alex Pittman met with Snohomish County staff to discuss the development of the 2021 MRC Annual Report on January 19.

The MRC had their monthly meeting on January 19. The MRC voted on 2021 Leadership and elected Mike Ehlebracht as Chair, and Natasha Coumou and Tom Doerge as Co-Vice Chairs. Tim Ellis will continue to serve as LIO and NWSC representative. At the meeting the MRC also discussed membership in Subcommittees and continues to discuss options for a Tribal Land Acknowledgement.

The MRC conducted Forage Fish Monitoring on January 19 Picnic Point and Meadowdale and January 20 at Howarth Park.

MRC staff and members attended the MRC Virtual Symposium #3 on January 20.

Elisa Dawson attended the Washington Department of Natural Resources launch of the Snohomish Watershed Resilience Action Plan (WRAP) at the Port of Everett on January 21.

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 (MRC grant project for 2021-2022): Snohomish MRC finalized the Port Susan Stakeholder List in December. The MRC has also coordinated a draft of the Stakeholder Survey through December and January with project consultant ESA, staff from Snohomish County, and the Joint Island-Snohomish Port Susan Team. Snohomish and Island MRCs met with the UW Evans School Student Consulting Lab team on January 13 to finalize the scope of work for their assistance with the scientific review for the project. The next Joint Island-Snohomish Port Susan Team Meeting is scheduled for January 25.

Derelict Vessels (NWSF funds): MRC staff are in the process of submitting documents to DNR for reimbursement for 2021 vessel removal costs. MRC staff are also working to develop a joint press release with the City of Everett about 2021 vessel removals.

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, Meadowdale, and Howarth. Sampling occurred on January 19 (Picnic Point & Meadowdale) and January 20 (Howarth Park). The next sampling dates are scheduled for February 16 and 17.

Nearshore Restoration: MRC staff have continued to work with project consultant ESA to develop the Meadowdale Monitoring Plan. The next Meadowdale Monitoring Team Meeting is scheduled for January 27.

The Nearshore Restoration subcommittee is also working to develop a one-pager on the beneficial re-use of dredged material from the Snohomish River to help facilitate discussions about this prospective opportunity for nearshore projects.

MRC Outreach Subcommittee: MRC staff and members met with WSU Beach Watchers on January 12 to plan for the 2022 Starlight Beach Walk. The event is planned for January 28.

Marine Vegetation Monitoring: DNR completed marine vegetation monitoring from Everett to Edmonds this summer. Eelgrass was present at 21 out of 22 sites sampled, and at 192 of 224

transects sampled. A draft reported is being reviewed by the subcommittee, with a final report due by January 31. DNR will be presenting on this work at our next meeting in February.

Stormwater (formerly Mussel Watch): The MRC is planning to retrieve cages for the Mussel Watch program on January 31. At least one mussel cage (Kayak Point) was lost during heavy storms shortly after deployment in November.

No updates for:

- Crabber Education
- Snohomish Estuary Pilings
- Oil Spills

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 is currently coordinating the submittal of a comment for the visioning process for the County's 2024 Comp Plan Update.

Upcoming Events:

- Starlight Beach Walk with WSU Beach Watchers January 28
- Mussel Watch Retrieval January 31
- Next MRC Meeting February 16
- Forage Fish Monitoring February 16 and 17
- MRC Virtual Symposium #4 February 17

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

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Whatcom

Month/Year: JANUARY 2022

Submitted by: Austin Rose

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

- The MRC has a vacancy for an Economic interest position and a Conservation/Environmental interest position. These vacancies are advertised on the MRC homepage <https://www.whatcomcountymrc.org/meetings-events/2022-mrc-vacancies/>
- Whatcom County was awarded \$100,000 from the Department of Ecology to support the use of CoSMoS (modelling developed by USGS) to inform incorporation of sea level rise (SLR) in the Shoreline Management Program. MRC staff will be joining a workgroup to develop a vulnerability and risk assessment for Whatcom County's marine and riverine shorelines. The MRC will be informed of the process and be able to provide input.

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

- Bob Seaman completed his first term on the MRC in a Conservation/Environmental position, and is not applying for a second term. The MRC is thankful for his contribution to the committee and wishes him the best at enjoying more free time with his retirement.
- The MRC has a vacancy for an Economic interest position and a Conservation/Environmental interest position. These vacancies are advertised on the MRC homepage <https://www.whatcomcountymrc.org/meetings-events/2022-mrc-vacancies/>

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

- The MRC held their January meeting on January 6. Meeting topics included:
 - Allie Simpson (NWSC) shared the status of European Green Crab (EGC) in Whatcom County, why EGC is an issue, and how to identify the species. Highlights included:
 - o The issue was caught early in Whatcom County, where EGC have been found in Drayton Harbor, Birch Bay, Squalicum Harbor, and Lummi Bay.
 - o Commission staff, WDFW, and WA Sea Grant focused trapping efforts (main goal = removal trapping) in Drayton Harbor, and the numbers of EGC trapped have decreased from 2020.
 - o To ensure no "hot spots" were missing from trapping efforts, a grid survey conducted across the entirety of Drayton Harbor. During the grid survey, education and outreach was provided to the community.
 - o Lummi Natural Resources leads a large collaborative effort with WDFW, WA Sea Grant, and, the NWSC to address the large number of EGC that have been captured in Lummi Sea Ponds.
 - The Committee discussed the frequency of holding hybrid meetings versus zoom meetings. The MRC Executive Subcommittee, which meets monthly prior to the general MRC meeting, will determine the meeting format, with the intent to host a hybrid/in person meeting every quarter. The committee will not consider a hybrid/in person option until virus cases in the community are

reduced.

- The committee further developed a list of shovel ready projects that could benefit from additional funding through a Congressional Directed Spending (CDS). Projects will be prioritized at the February MRC meeting.

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 Whatcom Marine Research Symposium will be held virtually on February 23. The symposium will feature current research and recovery of Whatcom County marine waters and shorelines including: climate change, aquatic species, restoration, and research at Cherry Point.
- MRC staff, one MRC member, and the MRC forage fish intern attended the North Sound Stewards 2022 kick-off event to share information about the MRC and the MRC projects that are listed as volunteer opportunities for participants. Approximately 75 people have signed up for the program. There have already been volunteer inquiries to help with kelp monitoring and water quality monitoring in N. Chuckanut Bay.

Monitoring

- Water quality monitoring in N. Chuckanut Bay has primarily been conducted by Whatcom County Public Works staff. One MRC members joined the monitoring in December and the group paddled to Clark's Point to view the recent shoreline restoration. The shoreline landowners partnered with the Northwest Straits Foundation to remove a large breakwater. Large woody debris can already be seen collecting on the shoreline.

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.):

- Whatcom County was awarded \$100,000 from the Department of Ecology to support the use of CoSMoS to inform incorporation of sea level rise (SLR) in the Shoreline Management Program. MRC staff will be joining a workgroup to develop a Vulnerability & Risk Assessment (VRA) for Whatcom County's marine and lower Nooksack riverine shorelines using Combined Flood Models that use SLR, tide, wave, storm surge, and stream discharge data obtained through CoSMoS (developed by the USGS) to assess vulnerability and risks to public infrastructure, private development, and ecosystem functions and values exacerbated by climate change. The VRA is planned to be completed across multiple jurisdictional boundaries (cities, port, tribes, USGS, WA SeaGrant, Ecology) - hopefully building a foundation for shoreline and riverine collaboration in the future. Input from the MRC will be invaluable to this work.
- MRC staff and other interested members met with Lummi Councilwomen, Lisa Wilson to discuss derelict vessels that have been a point of concern in the Sandy Point marina. In addition, the group discussed ways that the MRC could support the priorities of the Lummi Nation, the possibility of occasional Lummi speakers at MRC monthly meetings, and the invitation for Lummi

to bring forward their concerns to the MRC via e-mail updates or time slots of the MRC meeting agendas. MRC member, Mike MacKay discussed the Beach Seine with Schools project and discussed the possibility of Lummi participation to do the seining using tribal technicians.

Photos:



Photo credit: Austin Rose. MRC member, Bob Cecile and WCPW Staff viewing the Clark's Pt. restoration.