



## agenda

**Meeting:** Northwest Straits Commission  
**Location:** Zoom Virtual Meeting  
**Date:** May 27, 2022  
**Time:** 10:00 AM-12:00 PM

To join the Zoom meeting, [CLICK HERE](#) Meeting ID: 873 3389 3733 Passcode: 98273  
For audio conference, dial: 253-215-8782 or [click here](#) to find your local number.

*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	<b>Welcome and introductions</b> Tribal acknowledgement Approval of April 2022 meeting minutes	Elsa Schwartz, Chair
10:10 – 10:25	<b>Committee reports</b> Executive Committee Science Advisory Committee External Relations Committee	Tom Cowan Julia Parrish Chris Castner
10:25 – 10:35	<b>Business items</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Staffing updates (Lucas)</li><li>• Congressional funding (Lucas)</li><li>• Conference updates (Lucas)</li><li>• Derelict vessel project opportunities (Lucas)</li><li>• Pew - Linking Kelp Science and Policy (Dana)</li><li>• Voluntary No-Anchor Zones (Dana)</li></ul>	Staff
10:35 – 11:05	<b>COASSTers among us</b>	Jackie Lindsay, COASST



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11:05 – 11:10	<b>Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission/Tribal update</b>	Cecilia Gobin, NW Indian Fisheries Commission
11:10 – 11:15	<b>Puget Sound Partnership update</b>	Jennifer Grimm, Puget Sound Partnership
11:15 – 11:20	<b>NWS Foundation update</b>	Don Hunger, NW Straits Foundation
SD11:20 – 11:45	<b>MRC Reports</b>	MRC Representatives
11:45 – 11:55	<b>Meeting highlights and action items</b> Identify key points and action items from this meeting for MRC reps to report back to their MRCs	All
11:55 – 12:00	<b>Public comment</b>	All

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



# Minutes

April 22, 2022 • 10:00 AM-12:00 PM  
Zoom – Conference call  
Northwest Straits Commission meeting

## Attendees:

**Commission Members:** Elsa Schwartz (Island-Chair), Tom Cowan (Vice Chair), Jenn Grimm (Puget Sound Partnership alternate), Diane Hennebert (Skagit), Jeff Taylor (Jefferson), Bob Cecile (Whatcom), Julia Parrish, Nan McKay, Tim Ellis (Snohomish), Christina Koons (San Juan), Cecilia Gobin (Tribal), Chris Castner

**Commission Staff:** Lucas Hart, Dana Oster, Allie Simpson, Leah Robison, Jeff Whitty

**Others in Attendance:** Don Hunger (NW Straits Foundation), Hannah Liss (Puget Sound Partnership), P. Sean McDonald (UW), Sarah Fiskens (Jefferson), Lee Whitford (NW Straits Foundation), Mary Margaret Stoll

**Absent:** Laura Blackmore (Puget Sound Partnership), Alan Clark (Clallam)

## Welcome and Introductions

Chair Elsa Schwartz opened the meeting with introductions of attendees and the tribal acknowledgment. The Commission approved the minutes from the March 25 meeting as written by consensus.

## Committee Reports

**Executive Committee:** Tom Cowan noted the importance of the fiscal year 2022 Congressionally Directed Spending and that a draft budget is in progress. Tom also noted that the committee reviewed a proposed signage project for Skagit and concluded that it doesn't meet the Northwest Straits Commission's funding policy. The Committee has also been engaged in discussions about a county-proposed restructuring of the San Juan MRC.

The Committee also recommended that the Commission move forward with the regional voluntary no-anchor zone project, including contracting for a social marketing campaign and site monitoring surveys. The Commission moved and approved by consensus to move forward with the voluntary no-anchor zone project.

**Science Advisory Committee:** Julia Parrish noted that the Committee met and discussed the next round of "speed dating with a scientist", such as the green crab presentation at the meeting today. They are now lining up the next round of speakers. The Committee also discussed the terms of reference for the group, and have more to discuss on that at future meetings. She encouraged members of the Commission to reach out with thoughts on what the Committee should or should not do.

**External Relations Committee:** Chris Castner provided an update on the draft Northwest Straits reauthorization bill. We are currently waiting for the next steps, which include feedback from NOAA and the Department of Commerce on the draft bill. Regarding the FY22 Congressionally Directed Spending, there is a letter in the works to thank Senator Murray for her efforts to secure funds and her ongoing work on reauthorization.

## Business items

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

- NW Straits Commission Chair and Vice-Chair Nominations – Nan McKay nominated Elsa Schwartz to serve as chair, Tom Cowan to serve as vice-chair. The Commission moved and approved by consensus to elect the slate of officers as presented.



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- Kelp monitoring season kickoff – Allie Simpson shared that the Commission hosted a kelp monitoring season kickoff this month, with a focused agenda on the protocol. Julia Ledbetter from WA Dept of Natural Resources shared detailed information about use of the protocols for collecting useful data.
- WCC Green Crab training – Jeff Whitty shared some slides from the recent training with the Washington Conservation Corps crew, in partnership with Padilla Bay Reserve. The crew training includes classroom and field work where they caught their first crab of the season.
- Forage fish training update – Forage fish volunteers are invited to join a Zoom training event on July 13. Leah Robison will send out the link and details.
- Staffing update – Lucas shared that the Program Coordinator position is now being recruited, and is open until filled.
- MRC Project Planning update - Lucas shared that NWS staff are working with MRCs to gather information on projects they would like to fund with FY22 federal funds. This information is being used to draft a preliminary budget. NWS staff are waiting for further guidance from NOAA.
- MRC State General Fund amendments – Sasha Horst shared an update on changes to the MRC funding in the state budget, which now requires that the first half be spent by June 30, 2022. She will work with each MRC to identify any potential shortfalls and execute the required amendments.

### Presenting Scientist – Sean McDonald

P. Sean McDonald representing Crab Team presented on their work on European green crab. Crab Team is mainly made up of WA Sea Grant staff, and they provide early detection and scientific advisory services to the department. He noted that green crabs are not a threat individually, but collectively they can impact habitat, shellfish beds, and crab populations. He invited attendees to reach out to him at [psean@uw.edu](mailto:psean@uw.edu).

### Q & A:

- Are there areas not being monitored? There are 55 monitoring sites, and they are not covering everything yet for a variety of reasons including capacity constraints. They are focused on having good coverage in top tier habitats, and use eDNA methods to streamline prioritization of habitat.
- What's going on in the rest of the Salish Sea? Colleagues are engaged in transboundary management plan, with nine governmental entities and First Nations participating. A SSEC session on this.
- Is there continued introduction from elsewhere? They are native to Europe and came to the East coast first. He doesn't believe that there is currently additional input, which would bring the input of new genetic material and potential for a much more rapid spread.
- Is eradication possible? They generally don't discuss this, since it is not possible to eliminate larvae.
- How do you prioritize sites? Look for the type of habitat they prefer, such as areas that retain water and isolated areas. Other considerations are whether the area is safe for volunteers, do we have volunteers, and is there access to the site.

### Partner updates:

**Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission:** Cecilia Gobin noted that the NWIFC provided a letter of support for the NW Straits Initiative's FY23 Congressionally Directed Spending application and support for reauthorization. She has been working with Dana and Lisa Kaufman to engage tribes in the voluntary no-



# Minutes

anchor zone project, with some recent discussion about setting up a meeting to provide a briefing on the project.

**Puget Sound Partnership:** Jennifer Grimm shared that registration is open for Puget Sound Day on the Hill on May 11, 2-3pm. [Click here to register](#). The comment period for the Action Agenda has closed, and Partnership staff is now reviewing the comments.

**Northwest Straits Foundation:** Don Hunger noted that the Foundation is continuing to plan for AmeriCorps program, Salish Sea Conservation Corps to develop the next generation of marine conservationists. The program planning phase wraps up in July. A board member has contributed funding to develop an app for the Passport for Marine Adventure. MRCs will have an opportunity to share projects to include. Don introduced Mary Margaret Stoll, one of the recipients of the Caroline Gibson Scholarship, who is studying ocean acidification in the Salish Sea.

## MRC Updates

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

### **Clallam** –

- Continued Forage Fish sampling on three beaches.
- Preparing for Port Angeles Earth Day Celebration (4/23) on the City Pier.

### **Island** – Elsa Schwartz

- Strategic Planning: Our members participated in a strategic planning retreat. The committee will continue to work out the details to finalize a plan at monthly meetings and subcommittee meetings.
- April Fool's Planting Event: The NW Straits Foundation, WA State Parks, and Sound Water Stewards partnered to add 20 yards of mulch and soil to the areas disturbed by the construction of a new dock. Additionally, over 200 shoreline plants were planted to work towards restoring the area to a more natural state.

### **Jefferson** – Jeff Taylor

- The rain garden subcommittee organized a work party in Port Townsend on March 18th and addressed maintenance needs of three rain gardens (see photos below), and will be organizing another work party on April 29th.
- The MRC presented its annual update to the Board of Jefferson County Commissioners on March 28.
- The MRC executed a contract for side scan sonar surveys of lost crab pots in Discovery Bay (Adelma Beach and Cape George areas), to be scheduled sometime mid-May.

### **San Juan** – Christina Koons

- Plans are ramping for summer projects; a summer intern has been found.
- Quarterly reporting was completed, and presentations created for the Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference.
- The MRC approved the Annual Report.

### **Skagit** – Diane Hennebert



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- MRC Project Planning Retreat: The MRC Project Planning Retreat was held virtually on April 13 and was facilitated by Lucas and Allie. MRC members evaluated and ranked the proposals prior to the retreat. The comments and questions raised by MRC members from the evaluations were addressed which led to some really great discussions about the projects.
- Fidalgo Bay Day: Fidalgo Bay Day will be held in person this year! The event date has been set for Saturday, August 20, 2022, 11am-3:00pm at the Fidalgo Bay Resort in Anacortes. We are still working out the details, but it will be similar to past events with beach seining, a touch tank, bird watching, forage fish beach walks, interactive educational booths, games, face painting, kids crafts, and a no host salmon BBQ.

## **Snohomish – Tim Ellis**

- Snohomish MRC wrapped up the Stakeholder Survey and follow up Stakeholder Interviews in March for the Port Susan Conservation Action Plan (CAP) Update Project. Overall, the results demonstrate strong commitment to the responsible management of the Port Susan Marine Stewardship Area. Key takeaways include:
  - Many partners are not regularly utilizing the Port Susan MSA CAP.
  - Partners broadly supported shifting the focus towards implementation.
  - Some objectives and strategies would benefit from additional context and framing, particularly as they relate to climate change, wellbeing, and new considerations.
  - Most respondents chose options to cross walk the plan with PSP's Action Agenda and host biannual implementation meetings to make the plan more useful.
- Three new MRC members (Franchesca Perez, Allan Hicks, and Bob Margulis) recommended for appointment to the MRC were formally appointed by Snohomish County Council on March 30.
- MRC staff posted 4 vessels for removal from the Snohomish Estuary on March 28. Contractor bids are expected in late April, with the hope to start removing vessels in late May.

## **Whatcom – Bob Cecile**

- 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>
- Whatcom County Council and the Whatcom County Planning Commission will be discussing ways to increase public beach access in Whatcom County. Councilman Donavon has docketed the topic for future council agendas and has requested support from the Whatcom MRC.
- The Bellingham Community Boating Center (CBC) is offering more citizen science program and youth internship opportunities. There is interest in involving CBC participants in MRC field work.

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

The Commission identified the following key highlights, which staff will share as a separate document to MRC staff and the Commission:

- The NW Straits Commission approved Commission staff to move forward with contracting necessary for eelgrass protection zone expansion. This includes social marketing and site monitoring. Commission staff are working with MRCs to identify sites.
- Securing \$3 million in Congressionally Directed Spending is significant. MRCs should reach out to Lucas or Sasha if they anticipate needing more than \$200,000 for project work using these funds. It will be possible to provide funding in excess of this amount.



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- The Commission elected Elsa Schwartz and Tom Cowan for another term as Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively.
- Forage Fish training will be held July 13 in Port Townsend. Contact Leah Robison with questions [Robison@nwstraits.org](mailto:Robison@nwstraits.org)
- The NW Straits Commission Program Coordinator position is currently open for applicants. Information and application at <https://bit.ly/3lz1tXk>.
- Changes to the account that MRC State funds come from now require that half of the funds be spent by June 30, 2022, requiring MRC grant amendments. Sasha has reached out to MRC staff to initiate the process.
- P. Sean McDonald presented on green crab at the Commission meeting. E-DNA methods for crab detection are being developed. Information and resources at [www.wsq.washington.edu/crabteam](http://www.wsq.washington.edu/crabteam).
- Registration for virtual Puget Sound Day on the Hill on May 11 is open. [Click here to register.](#)
- The NW Straits Foundation is scoping development of a Salish Sea Conservation Corps program. They will be reaching out to MRCs on needs.
- The NW Straits Foundation is creating an app for their Passport to Marine Adventure project. The app will include georeferenced NW Straits Initiative projects and encourage people to visit. The Foundation will reach out to MRCs to gather information on projects they would like to highlight.

### **Public comment**

There was no public comment.

\*The next Commission meeting will be on Friday May 27, 2022, via Zoom.



**Executive Committee Meeting**  
**May 16, 2022 • 11:00am-12:00pm**  
**Agenda**  
**Notes**

**San Juan MRC Restructuring recap:** Lucas summarized the outcome of conversations between San Juan County, the Puget Sound Partnership, and the NWSC Executive Committee related to combining the San Juan LIO and MRC. The MRC and LIO will remain separate. Instead, MRC members will be invited to attend LIO meetings and staffing will be reorganized to build cross-committee support.

**Conference:** NWSC staff did a one question survey with MRCs to assess willingness to attend an in-person conference in November. Results indicated that around 30% of respondents are comfortable attending. If vaccination is mandated, the number increases to 57%. If masks and vaccination are required, about 83% would attend. Due to concerns about low attendance and lack of NWSC staff authority to mandate and confirm vaccination status that would increase attendance to reasonable numbers, the Executive Committee recommended holding an outdoor gathering in August or September in lieu of the conference. The gathering could be followed by a virtual gathering in the winter to allow time to focus on project discussions.

**Budgeting for congressional funds:** The Committee discussed several regional project opportunities:

- NWS Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) assessment. MRC staff have expressed an interest in getting guidance from the NWSC on steps they can take to implement DEI measures. One option may be to hire a DEI consultant to provide guidance. The Committee recommended that NWSC staff talk with MRC staff about specific objectives they would like to achieve. Pursuing a DEI assessment would need to be within the bounds of staff capacity to manage the project and implement resulting recommendations. Therefore, it is recommended we take a smaller scale approach specific to MRC needs, if warranted. NWSC staff will discuss this further with MRC staff.
- Derelict vessels: Several MRCs have expressed interest in removing derelict vessels. However, in some cases capacity is lacking at the local level to navigate the steps necessary to remove vessels. Lucas is talking with DNR to assess partnership opportunities for derelict vessel removal and/or the Derelict Vessel Turn in Program that could alleviate capacity limitations.
- Tribal projects: Lucas and Sasha are working with Cecilia Gobin to assess a partnership with the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission to support individual tribal projects.



## Commission staff highlights - [May 2022]

### MRC Support

**MRC Grants:** Commission staff is working with agency and MRC staff to execute amendments to the current MRC grants to change the state funding source per the state supplemental budget, which moved the MRC grant funding source from Model Toxics Control Operating Account to the State General Fund. These amendments will be complete in the next few weeks, and MRCs have until June 30 to spend fiscal year 2022 state funding.

**Quality Assurance Project Plans (QAPP):** San Juan MRC's Quality Assurance Project Plan for monitoring *Ulva spp.* in False Bay was approved and routed for signature.

### Regional Projects

**Eelgrass:** The NW Straits Commission and NW Straits Foundation staff drafted a letter for early engagement from tribes on the voluntary no-anchor zone project to seek input on the project overall and to ensure the buoys at specific proposed sites will not interfere with Usual and Accustomed Fishing Grounds and other potential tribal protected areas. The letter was reviewed and distributed by the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission and directly by NW Straits Commission staff.

**Kelp Plan:** The Pew-funded project to strengthen connections between science and information and policy to protect kelp held a workshop May 18. Over 55 participants tuned in including planning staff from local jurisdictions, state and federal agency staff, tribes, and more. The workshop convened a panel discussion around the existing rules and regulations that are in place to protect kelp, how they work in practice, and what information/resources are needed to inform decision-making. Commission staff also held the first Kelp Plan Coordination Advisory Committee meeting on April 29, focused on prioritizing coordination efforts.

**Kelp Monitoring:** Kelp kayak monitoring volunteers are gearing up for surveys starting in June with multiple MRCs having new kayak volunteers for this season. To account for the influx of kayak volunteers, some kelp kayak site leads have chosen to hold new volunteer training sessions in May.

**Green Crab:** NW Straits Commission European green crab trapping crews, which include the Washington Conservation Corps (WCC), have continued to trap predominately in Samish Bay and Drayton Harbor with some "success" in finding the green crabs. In May, we found nine green crabs in Samish Bay (including two molts) and 15 in Drayton Harbor. During May, the WCC has also been guest posting on the NW Straits social media platforms, highlighting facts about green crabs and their involvement in the project. Finally, NW Straits Commission staff presented and had a booth at a Terramar Brewstillery (Edison) Skagit Water Weeks event to educate Samish Bay locals about green crabs and recruit volunteers for future green crab work.

## Operations

**Staffing update:** Nathan Woods will be starting on June 6 as the NW Straits Commission Program Coordinator. This is the position previously held by Leslie Perkins.

**COVID-19 update:** Masks are no longer required and in-person meetings are now allowed by Ecology, with employees still required to wear a mask when meeting with visitors and a health screening is required to visit agency offices. We have received the Owl Pro that will allow for future hybrid meetings that we will be testing over the next few months to ensure any future hybrid meetings run smoothly.

**Modern Work Environment:** NW Straits Commission staff have completed new telework agreements. All staff are working a 90% telework schedule. If there is an interest in meeting with staff in person, please contact staff directly to schedule an appointment to ensure that they will be available to meet you when you come in.

**Funding update:** NWS Commission staff continue to work with MRCs to outline priority projects for FY 2022 Congressional funds. Commission staff are also talking with DNR to assess the feasibility of partnering on derelict vessel removals and/or holding a pilot derelict vessel turn in event. We are awaiting detailed guidance from NOAA on funding instructions.

### Meetings attended:

Lucas attended: Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference 4/26-4/28; Derelict Vessels meeting with DNR 5/4; Joint Foundation-Commission meeting 5/5; DEI project scoping meeting 5/11; ECB meeting 5/12; Kelp policy workshop 5/18; Seaweed Collaborative meeting 5/19; Derelict vessels meeting with DNR 5/20; NOAA meeting to discuss congressional funding 5/23

Allie attended: Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference 4/26-4/28, Island County Kelp team meeting 5/5, Joint Foundation-Commission meeting 5/5, Puget Sound Kelp Research and Monitoring Work Group 5/11, No Anchor Zone check in 5/11, MRC Kelp Story Map check in 5/12

Sasha attended: Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference 4/26-4/28; Island MRC meeting 5/3; Joint Foundation-Commission meeting 5/5; Whatcom MRC meeting 5/5; MyCoastapalooza 5/9; Skagit MRC meeting 5/12; Document Accessibility Team meeting 5/17; NOAA meeting to discuss congressional funding 5/23

Jeff attended: Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference 4/26-4/28, Kelp Plan Coordination Advisory meeting 4/29, Joint Foundation-Commission meeting 5/5, Facilitated Puget Sound Kelp Research and Monitoring Work Group 5/11, Linking Kelp Science and Policy workshop 5/18

Leah attended: Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference 4/26-4/28, Joint Foundation-Commission meeting 5/5, Puget Sound Kelp Research and Monitoring Work Group 5/11, Forage Fish check-in 5/25

Dana attended: Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference 4/26-4/28, Kelp Plan Coordination Advisory meeting 4/29, Jefferson MRC meeting 5/3, Port Susan Snohomish & Island MRC meeting 5/4, Joint Foundation-Commission meeting 5/5, Kelp Vital Sign Indicator Team meeting 5/6 & 5/20, Puget Sound Kelp Research and Monitoring

Work Group 5/11, Facilitated Linking Kelp Science and Policy workshop 5/18, Washington Seaweed Collaborative quarterly meeting 5/19, Forage Fish check-in 5/25, Salish Sea Marine Survival Project Cross PSEMP Workshop 5/25, Port Susan Introductory Stakeholder Meeting at the Stillaguamish Watershed Council 5/25

## Northwest Straits Foundation 2022 Program Updates – May 2022

**Mission Statement** - *To protect and restore the health of the marine ecosystem by promoting and implementing science-based restoration and stewardship, enhancing collaboration and attracting resources for the work of the Northwest Straits Initiative*

### Shorefriendly Workshops:

- **Vegetation Management for Shoreline Landowners: Beach Walk and Workshop**  
May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022 from 10am-2pm  
The Shore Friendly programs of the Northwest Straits Foundation, Swinomish Tribe, and Skagit Marine Resources Committee are hosting a beach walk and workshop for shoreline landowners to learn about use of native vegetation for slope stability and how to manage invasive vegetation. This workshop is intended for Skagit County Residents. Sign up at [nwstraitsfoundation.org](http://nwstraitsfoundation.org)
- **Coastal Processes and Erosion: A Shore Friendly Living Workshop for Waterfront Owners**  
May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022 from 10am to 1:30pm  
The Shore Friendly program of the Northwest Straits Foundation and the Jefferson County Marine Resources Committee are hosting a workshop and beach walk for shoreline landowners to learn about coastal processes that form our beaches and best practices for managing erosion through proper drainage and use of native vegetation. This workshop is intended for Jefferson County Residents and is currently at capacity. Join the waitlist at [nwstraitsfoundation.org](http://nwstraitsfoundation.org)



A variety of nearshore scenes

### Monitoring:

- Marine Projects Manager, Jason Morgan had a busy month presenting. He provided two presentations for the Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference on volunteer engagement and Catch More Crab campaign. He also presented the Foundation's Restoration Monitoring Program to the 2022 Salish Sea Stewards trainees.
- In partnership with the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community, we completed the sidescan sonar surveys for the Anacortes area derelict crab pot removal project. A total of 343 derelict crab pot targets were detected. Dive teams will investigate all targets and removed derelict crab pots in May and June.

**Monitoring, continued:**

- Simone Des Roches from the Wetland Ecosystem Team at University of Washington was gracious enough to put on a presentation for our region's restoration monitoring volunteers on May 11th. Simone presented about the importance of restoring armored shorelines so they can develop complex and biodiverse habitats using her own illustrations and examples. The presentation was extremely engaging for volunteers and sparked many questions that were answered by Simone and Jason at the end of the presentation.
- Jason Morgan and Environmental Technician, Haley Sherman gathered all the information needed to apply for the scientific research permit in order to conduct the monitoring we will be doing at Clayton Beach. This included researching new protocols for all of the new unique monitoring opportunities at this site as well as seeking input from local partners such as Emily Grason, the crab team program lead at Washington Sea Grant. The permit application was submitted to WA state parks on May 9th which means we should hear back in about 4-6 weeks and begin monitoring this summer.
- May 2<sup>nd</sup> was the first of many intertidal monitoring days at one of our newly acquired sites from WDFW. Jason Morgan, AmeriCorps Partnership Coordinator Jessie Page, and Haley Sherman conducted large woody debris, beach wrack, and beach profile surveys at a private property in Sequim and again at Fort Townsend State Park. Hannah Faulkner from WDFW and a few of her associates worked alongside us to train us on any differences in protocol between our organization and theirs.



Hannah Faulkner teaching Jessie Page how to use a laser level to measure beach profiles.

### **Salish Sea Conservation Corps:**

The AmeriCorps planning grant team have been further developing the AmeriCorps program by drafting documents that will guide recruitment, member selection, supervisor expectations, and member responsibilities. They are gathering evidence that enforces the need for a Corps program. They hope to place members on coastal restoration projects, rain garden installation projects, and marine education and outreach projects throughout the Northwest Straits region. Constructing a detailed Theory of Change has also helped them define the short-term and long-term outcomes of creating the Salish Sea Conservation Corps.

### **Advancement:**

- Foundation Director Don Hunger, Advancement Director Amy Wilcox, and Administrative Coordinator Brooke Friesen are updating the Passport to Marine Adventure program, promotional materials, and web site. The Passport to Marine Adventure is an exploration and educational travel game that invites people to visit their shorelines, learn about marine habitat, and promote NWSI projects. There are three sites in each MRC county.
- Thanks to our supporters and donors for GivingBIG! The Foundation participated in this statewide online giving campaign and raised almost \$6,000 that will help us conserve and restore the Salish Sea. If you didn't have a chance to give during the GiveBIG event, you can still [donate](#) to marine conservation. Every donation, no matter the amount, makes a difference. Thank you!
- Join us at Stone's Throw Brewery in historic Fairhaven for Good Neighbor Night on Tuesday, May 31. \$1 from each beer purchased that night will be donated to us! Foundation staff will be there to say hi and answer any questions you might have about our upcoming program season. You'll have the chance to win cool gear, and there may even be some trivia games! Come on down to celebrate community, stewardship and the Salish Sea!



## MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

**County:** Clallam

**Month/Year:** May 2022

**Submitted by:** Rebecca Mahan

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

- Summer interns are being sought.
- Tumwater Trap was installed 4/28.
- Continued Forage Fish sampling on three beaches.
- Clallam MRC participated in Port Angeles' Earth Day Celebration (4/23) on the City Pier.

**Membership/Leadership changes** (new/departing members, changes to chair/vice-chair, NWSC representative/alternate, staff): During the May meeting leadership elections were held and there were no changes.

**Events/Meetings** (events/meetings from past month with any noteworthy highlights and information on upcoming events): April 23<sup>rd</sup> is Earth Day Celebration on the City Pier. CMRC was there as part of Outreach to the community. Alan Clark gave a Kelp presentation to the Port Angeles chapter of Surfriders. Rebecca Mahan gave a presentation the Strait ERN LIO quarterly meeting about what the Clallam MRC is up to. Amy Wilcox of the NWSF gave a brief overview of what the NWSF does and how they would like to help with our Coaster Outreach.

Monthly MRC Meeting: May 16, 2022

**Funding updates** (newly-awarded grants, in-kind support or other funding commitments): none to report.

**Project Updates** (project activities and highlights from the past month, any new projects identified): Jesse Wakintz of the Port of Port Angeles, did some digging and updated the Clallam MRC that there are 3 derelict vessels in Clallam County and that they are out of the water and slated for demo this summer.

Forage Fish sampling is going well. Clallam MRC continued to collect the monthly samples at Cline Spit and Ediz Hook and Elwha beaches East and West.

Shellfish Biotoxin monitoring: CMRC member Bob Vreeland and Coleman Byrnes volunteer are sampling Freshwater Bay and Pillar Point

**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):



Tumwater Trap install with LEKT, WCC and MRC Chair Tim Cochnauer and volunteer Helle Anderson. Photo by Rebecca Mahan.

## MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

**County:** Island

**Month/Year:** May/ 2022

**Submitted by:** Kelly Zupich

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

- **Cornet Bay Stewardship – Weeding for Whales**
- **Earth Day at the Clyde Theater**
- **Low Tide Walk**

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

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

- May 3: MRC Meeting 3:00 – 5:00
- May 9: Camano Bull kelp Training - 11:00
- May 11: Cornet Bay Planting – 10:00

### Upcoming Meetings/Events:

- May 24: Cornet Bay Stewardship Event – 10:00-2:00
- June 7: MRC Meeting 3:00-5:00
- June 10: Cornet Bay Stewardship Event – 10:00-2:00

**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):

Over the last month, the Island County Marine Resources Committee and its volunteers have been busy planning for the next year of projects and continuing our regular monitoring activities.

Cornet Bay Stewardship: Our restoration at Cornet Bay received some care on the 11th. We hosted a weeding and composting event. The weeds this year are mighty, but we did our best with a few fantastic volunteers. Unfortunately, due to the tenacity of the weeds, we were unable to finish the weeding and composting. So, we will host another event on May 24 at 10 am to complete this work. Unfortunately, we have had a large bloom of Canada thistle and Spotted clover that we will need to spray. We are working with a the I.C. Noxious Weed Coordinator to get a weed plan in place to get those weeds under control. The next part of our plan is to add a thick layer of hogged fuel on top of the compost to help further suppress the weeds and hold in the moisture during our dry season. Volunteer Jill Lipoti also taught the rest the non-MRC volunteers how weeding here helps the whales!

Monitoring – Forage Fish: Our work monitoring for Forage fish eggs continues at most of our sites year-round. Teams continue to monitor monthly at Hoypus Point, Cornet Bay, Sunlight Shores, Maple Grove, Hidden Beach, Glendale. We checked out the Forage Fish sampling site at Maple Grove and met with

star volunteer Paul Williams. This site has some of the highest numbers for surf smelt eggs. This likely is due to regular spawn events that locals have reported along that stretch of beach.

Seining: The seining team is going strong and continuing monthly.

Outreach – Port Susan MSA: The final draft of the literature review has been reviewed, and comments have been sent to the students. We are currently working with Snohomish MRC to get our year 2 grant amendments finalized in for this project.

Outreach-Low Tide Walk: The Island MRC and Sound Water Stewards partnered to host a Low tide walk at one of Whidbey’s beautiful beaches. 10 members of the public joined our team of beach naturalists to see what could be found at low tide. The highlight of the day was finding healthy adult *Pisaster ochraceus* sea stars!

Outreach-Earth Day at the Clyde Theater: The Island MRC and Sound Water Stewards partnered to host a showing of four of Florian Graner’s amazing educational short films. Additionally, members of the MRC were able to host a Q&A session along with Florian to share about our program and how we have utilized Florian’s amazing videos for school age education in Island County. 35 members of the public attended this fun event.

**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.):

- Island MRC could use any help with how to incorporate D.E.I. into our activities and operations.
- We also are looking for any resources on how to measure the impact of our work.
- Resources on developing project budgets and proposals

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



Before Weeding and Composting at  
Cornet Bay Restoration

photo by Kelly Zupich



After Weeding and Composting at  
Cornet Bay Restoration

photo by Kelly Zupich



Volunteer Ron Beier, Leading the  
Camano Bull Kelp Training

photo by Kelly Zupich



Volunteer Maya, Weeding at Cornet  
Bay

photo by Kelly Zupich

## MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

**County:** Jefferson

**Month/Year:** May 2022

**Submitted by:** Monica Montgomery

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

- Side scan sonar surveys took place May 16 & 17 covering a part of Port Townsend Bay (near the waterfront), as well as the Adelma Beach and Cape George (between the marina and Beckett Point) areas in Discovery Bay.
- Olympia oyster subcommittee conducted an initial population survey at its new restoration site, south of the powerlines in South Discovery Bay, with the help of 7 volunteers.
- No-Anchor Zones team swapped the PT winter floats with summer spar buoys and did some maintenance work, bringing the number of functioning buoys up to 8 (of 13 permitted).

**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

Apr 20 – Executive Committee meeting

Apr 20 – Kelp subcommittee meeting

Apr 22 – NWSC monthly meeting

Apr 26-28 – Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference

Apr 29 – Rain garden work party in Port Townsend

Apr 29 – Forage fish survey at Adelma

Apr 29 – Forage fish survey at Dabob

May 2 – Olympia oyster subcommittee meeting

May 3 – MRC monthly meeting

May 6 – Strait ERN LIO spring quarterly meeting

May 9 – No-Anchor Zones: buoy cleaning

May 10 – Crabber outreach subcommittee meeting

May 14 – No-Anchor Zones: PT buoy swap

May 16 & 17 – Mapping lost crab pots: two-day side scan sonar survey in South Discovery Bay

May 19 – Olympia oyster monitoring at new, South Powerlines Site

#### Upcoming Events/Meetings

May 24 – Executive Committee meeting

May 25 – Kelp subcommittee meeting

May 26 – Olympia oyster meeting w/ partners: Kilisut Harbor plans

May – Forage fish survey at Dabob

May 27 – NWSC monthly meeting

May 28-29 – Education & Outreach: tabling Shrimpfest

May 31 – Crabber outreach subcommittee meeting  
May – Forage fish survey at Adelma  
June 7 – MRC monthly meeting  
June 9 & 10 (tentative) – ROV survey  
June 13 & 14 (tentative) – Olympia oyster population surveys at Kilisut Harbor  
June 17 – Olympia oyster shell spread at the Lagoon Site  
June 21 – Executive Committee meeting  
June 21 – Education & Outreach speaker event: PNW Crab Research Group  
June 22 – Education & Outreach coupled hands-on activity: light trap sampling  
June 23 – Crabber 101 workshop  
June 24 – First kelp survey  
June 25 – Education & Outreach: tabling Forever Streamfest  
June – 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:

- **Forage fish - Fort Townsend:** Nothing to report.
- **Forage fish - Adelma Beach (Index):** The Project Lead (Jeff) and MRC Coordinator surveyed on April 29.
- **Forage fish - Dabob Bay (Index):** The Project Lead (Sarah) and one community volunteer (Anne) surveyed on April 29.
- **Kelp:** The Project Lead (Solenne) organized a subcommittee meeting attended by the MRC Coordinator, one MRC member (Nam) and one community volunteer (Yewah) on April 20 to review the MRC's data and survey protocol. The subcommittee plans to meet again on May 25 to discuss kayak gear and safety.

2. Rain Gardens:

- The subcommittee hosted a second rain garden work party this year, on April 29 attended by the MRC Coordinator, Project Lead (Janette), two MRC Members (Troy, Frank), and four community volunteers (Rose, Steven, Anne, Ellen). Volunteers helped with maintenance of the rain gardens at Lincoln/Adams St. and Water/Monroe St. The subcommittee plans to organize more workdays.

3. Education & Outreach:

- The subcommittee will be tabling the Shrimpfest event on May 28-29, to connect with community members in Brinnon. The MRC Coordinator created a brochure on WA regulations for harvesting shrimp and MRC members will promote upcoming events as well as share education on crabbing sustainably, Olympia oyster restoration efforts, and the benefits of natural shorelines.
- The subcommittee is also planning another coupled presentation and in-person event in partnership with the Port Townsend Marine Science Center, focused on the PNW Crab Research Group's work with a live light trap sampling activity, scheduled for June 21 and 22.
- The Crabber Outreach subcommittee will be meeting on May 31 to stuff crabber packets and set a plan for distribution and outreach. The subcommittee is also planning an in-person workshop set for June 23, featuring MRC, NWSF, WDFW, and Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe speakers.

4. Olympia Oysters:

- The MRC Coordinator, Project Lead (Neil), MRC member Gordon, and 6 community volunteers (Heather, Kara, Anna, Rose, Steven, and Ella) conducted an initial population survey on May 19 at the South Powerlines Site, the new habitat enhancement site added this year.

5. Voluntary No-Anchor Zones:

- The MRC Coordinator and one MRC member (Sarah) cleaned two spar buoys for relabeling on May 9.
- Three MRC members (Gordon, Bryan, Troy) and former Port of Port Townsend Commissioner, Steve, went out on May 22 to swap the winter floats and installed 8 summer spar buoys (of the 13 permitted). The team is planning an additional maintenance day to install the rest of the spar buoys permitted here.

6. Mapping Lost Crab Pots:

- *Side Scan Sonar:* The MRC Coordinator, one MRC member (Jeff), and two members of the Sea Dragons team (Ella, Logan) went out on May 16 with Coastal Sensing & Surveys to survey derelict crab pots. A small craft advisory warning prevented the vessel from rounding Point Hudson to get to Discovery Bay from Port Townsend, so the team surveyed Port Townsend Bay. All except for Logan went out the next day on May 17 to survey Adelma Beach and Cape George (between the marina and Beckett Point) areas. Numerous lost crab pots were detected, though the data is still being processed to produce maps.
- *ROV:* As of May 16, the MRC has WDFW approval to remove derelict crab pots. The team is planning to survey Adelma Beach and Cape George areas in early-mid June, to pilot the ROV survey and pot removal capabilities.

**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.):

- All MRC members were registered for the Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference (either sponsored through the MRC or work), which took place April 26-28.
- The MRC Coordinator presented on the MRC's work to Strait ERN LIO partners at the spring quarterly meeting on May 6.
- Shoreline landowner outreach – the MRC Coordinator met with Lisa and featured speakers in preparation for the Shore Friendly workshop taking place May 23. Registration has reached full capacity.

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



April 29 Rain gardens: work party at Lawrence/Monroe Sts. in Port Townsend – Photos by Monica Montgomery





May 12 No-Anchor Zones: photo of Gordon loading up 11 spar buoys to swap – Photo by Monica Montgomery



May 16 & 17 Side Scan Sonar Surveys at Port Townsend Bay and Discovery Bay – Photos by Monica Montgomery





May 19 Olympia Oyster Population Survey at Discovery Bay – Photos by Monica Montgomery





## MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

**County:** San Juan County

**Month/Year:** May 2022

**Submitted by:** Frances Robertson

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

- Staff and MRC members presented at, and attended the Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference
- MRC members reviewed and attended site visits for this years Salmon Recovery project proposals.
- The MRC welcomed Ciera McQuaid as the summer intern.

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

There have been no changes to membership, however, the 2022 MRC intern Ciera McQuaid started in Mid-May.

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

- The MRC participated in the salmon recovery project proposal
- MRC members participated in the Great Islands Clean Up
- MRC members attended the virtual SSEC
- Lead staff attended the NWSC kelp policy workshop
- The MRC participated in the UW Friday Harbor Labs open Day
- Staff and MRC members attended IOSA HAZWAPOR training

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

No Additional funding, however the MRC staff continue to work through project proposals and plans for the 2022-23 MRC grant year and the Federal CD funds.

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

MRC staff are beginning to ramp up activities to ensure that field projects can start as planned at the end of May. Efforts this month have included:

- Completing and submitting the QAPP for False Bay
- Revising the False Bay visitor assessment and coordinating volunteers and dates for outreach efforts.
- Setting up the field protocols for the 2022 vessel monitoring efforts that are due to start Memorial Day weekend.
- Installation of the SeaBin at the Port of Friday Harbor

The core effort of MRC staff and subcommittee continues to be progressing the MSA Plan update. The MSA Plan subcommittee are working on a comprehensive spreadsheet outlining the strategic actions, how they overlap with the local Salmon Recovery Chapter Update and the Ecosystem Protection and Recovery Plan, the key objective criteria, key threats that the actions address, the key results expected, if and what the measures are for each action, and the general justification for each action. The group expects to have this ready for the MRC to review by the July MRC meeting at the latest.

**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.): Staff presented the SRKW westside study to the County Council, as well as the SSEC in May. They have now distributed the report to tribes as well as the federal and state agencies for formal review.

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



*MRC members, TAG members and State review board members join project proponents at a site on Orcas Island.*



*MRC members, TAG members and State review board members join project proponents at a proposed restoration site on Lopez Island.*



*MRC members, TAG members and State review board members join project proponents at a proposed restoration site on Lopez Island.*



*MRC members, TAG members and State review board members join project proponents and braved the rain at a site near Watmough Bay on Lopez Island.*





*Never too young to start helping out with the Great Islands' Clean Up! MRC Coordinator Frances Robertson's son Rowan helping out at his 3<sup>rd</sup> GICU event.*



*Rowan and friends helping to clean up Jackson Beach during this year's spring Great Islands' Clean Up.*

## MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

**County:** Skagit

**Month/Year:** May/2022

**Submitted by:** Tracy/ Diane

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

- Salish Sea Stewards Training ends May 24. 24 trainees are slated to graduate. A 'bring your own lunch' picnic is planned for July 16 at Padilla Bay where the newly graduated volunteers will get a chance to meet some of the veteran volunteers. The event will also include an educational component.
- Bowman Bay Plant Maintenance Work Party- **May 18:** Skagit MRC in partnership with the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group planted 10 Sitka spruce, 10 Douglas Fir and 20 Scouler's willow, plus dune grass at Bowman Bay. They also installed 12 watering bags to help the trees stay moist during the dry season. This event coincided with the forage fish surveys. Trained volunteers conducted a survival assessment the following day.

**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):

- Skagit MRC Monthly Meeting- **May 12**, 9am-11am. Attended by 10 MRC members, MRC staff, NWSC staff, and NWSF staff.
- Salish Sea Stewards Training Every Tuesday, 1-5pm at Padilla Bay **March 1 -May 24.**
- [Skagit Water Weeks- May 1 – May 31, 2022:](#) Skagit MRC is co-hosting several events and learning opportunities in partnership with the Northwest Straits Commission and Northwest Straits Foundation. For more information: [www.skagitmrc.org](http://www.skagitmrc.org).
- Fidalgo Bay Day Planning Committee Meeting- **May 13**, 2:30pm-3:30pm
- Bowman Bay Plant Maintenance Work Party- **May 18-** This event coincided with the forage fish surveys.

**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 occurred March 1 through May 24, 2022; Tuesdays, from 1:00-5:00 pm, in-person at Padilla Bay's Stevens Center room. The sessions have been a mixture of online and in person presentations. 24 trainees graduated this year. Geographically the registrants hail from Anacortes, Sedro Woolley, La Conner, Mount Vernon, Burlington, Bellingham and 2 from Snohomish and Seattle. The Advisory Committee presented certificates, letters of congrats, SSS t-shirts, and name pins to the new graduates after the last training session on May 24<sup>th</sup> at Padilla Bay. Planning is underway for the annual SSS picnic on Saturday, July 16<sup>th</sup> at PBNERR for all Stewards. This year it will be a "bring your own lunch" event (to cover Covid unpredictability) and there will be an educational component. The Advisory Committee works continually to keep volunteers informed of current volunteer opportunities available through the SSS electronic news bulletin, "The Wave" and Facebook. Since 2014 the 235+ Salish Sea Stewards have contributed over 40,000 hours of service to Salish Sea projects.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** Fidalgo Bay Day is Skagit MRC's signature educational event that has taken place each year since 2004. The purpose of this free event is to increase public awareness of the marine

environment and foster environmental stewardship. Hundreds of visitors, mostly local, attend this event each year. Planning meetings were held April 6, April 29, and May 13. The Committee consists of 4 Skagit MRC Members, 3 Veteran Volunteers and 4 current Salish Sea Trainees (total of 11). The Resort did not accept reservations until April, so we have been playing catchup on 5 months of planning. The event date has been set for **Saturday, August 20, 2022**, 11am-3pm. The Fidalgo Bay Resort facility has been reserved. The Shannon Point Marine Center confirmed the availability of their touch tank and volunteers for Fidalgo Bay Day. Rosie James and her Samish family will offer a no-host salmon BBQ. A Save the Date notice went out to past participating organizations to gauge interest in hosting a booth at this year's event. So far there seems to be a lot of interest in participating in FBD this year. Friends of Skagit Beaches will be running the Passport Program & Childrens' Art Contest. We will be working with Taylors Shellfish for oysters & clams/blue mussels to grill with our oyster guru Paul Dinnel and his special sauce and enticing several Anacortes Restaurants for chowder donations.

- **Kayak Kelp Surveys**: The NW Straits Commission held the Kelp Kickoff on April 14 for all MRC teams performing kelp surveys. At the session, Julie Ledbetter from DNR expressed her desire to go out with a team from each county, and as such, she requested all teams to submit their proposed survey dates for the season. A Kickoff Summary of this meeting was emailed to participants on April 21 providing requisite safety videos, liability waiver forms and KoboTool Box protocols for data collection as needed to begin the annual kelp survey season. The three Skagit MRC Kelp Teams, ie, Bowman Bay (Bob Weathers – Lead), Biz Point (John Freeto – Lead) and Shannon Point (Brad Smith – Lead) are gearing up to start surveys in June. Six potential new volunteers / experienced kayakers have offered to join the Skagit teams this year and will be vetted by team leaders prior to determining their assignments. Brad Smith is planning to hold a “shake down” cruise on May 27 in advance of the regular season for the Shannon Point team and will extend the offer to new volunteers for familiarization and to better understand capabilities. Unfortunately, we will be saying goodbye to Brad Smith and Dale Fournier soon as they are moving to Massachusetts later this summer. Brad will be training Lynne Wenberg-Davidson to become the new Shannon Point team lead for the remainder of the season until a permanent team lead is determined.
- **Bowman Bay Restoration**: The Bowman Bay Plant Maintenance project is focused on enhancing existing vegetation, interplanting with trees and shrubs, expanding ground cover and increasing structural diversity and reducing erosion in shoreline restoration area. Volunteers and trainees may include community volunteers, school groups and SFEG and MRC staff. SFEG is working with Skagit MRC to coordinate volunteer events with other MRC activities. For 2022, the project has been on hold this spring as Bowman Bay State Park has been closed to the public during the birth and development of Emerson, the Elephant Seal, born to Elsie Mae in February. Emerson has been seen laying in the grass and wandering the park, but experts observed he was not spending enough time in the water or feeding. A few weeks ago, it was determined that Emerson was becoming too socialized with humans, so he was relocated by boat to an undisclosed location. The next day he was observed swimming around exploring his sea environment and doing very well. Now that Bowman Bay beach is accessible again, Adam Airoidi from SFEG has scheduled four monthly work parties beginning on May 18. This effort will coincide with the Forage Fish Survey volunteer team who will be collecting and processing samples nearby. The SFEG Crew will include two WSC Americorps members, one volunteer intern to plant 10 Sitka spruce, 10 Douglas Fir and 20 Scouler's willow, plus dune grass if possible. They also plan to install 12 watering bags to help the trees stay moist during the dry season. Two additional volunteers will conduct a survival assessment the following day. The next work parties are scheduled for June 20, July 13 and August 8, 2022. The NW Straits Foundation's "Restoration Effectiveness in Puget Sound: Shoreline Monitoring Case Study Report", which includes the Bowman Bay Restoration site monitoring results, is now available [here](#).
- **Forage Fish Surveys**: Monthly forage fish surveys continue. It is a very low time for spawning but will begin picking up soon. Pete Haase gave a presentation to the Salish Sea Stewards class on May 17 and encouraged interested folks to come along on upcoming surveys and see if they want to

get more involved. The forage fish survey crew provided demos at the RV Park on May 21 as part of Skagit Water Weeks. The NWSC is hosting a forage fish training with WDFW on July 13 in Port Townsend. Contact Leah Robison for more information: [robison@nwsraits.org](mailto:robison@nwsraits.org)

- MRC Salish Sea School Intern: The intern project continues with monthly forage fish survey field work and periodic zoom data analysis practice. The young 7<sup>th</sup> grader doing her Forage Fish Student Training as Research Scientist (STaRS) program with the Salish Sea School and her mentor our Intern Trevor Derie are now “on their own” with a full set of gear and their monthly survey out around March Point. We are hoping to have them give an “in person/zoom” brief visit to the MRC meeting once school is over for the year. It has been a worthy and interesting and enthusiastic effort so far!
- Kids on the Beach: Four schools participated in the spring KOTB program this year with 360 students: Sedro-Wooley, Conway, Concrete, and Anacortes middle schools. The Anacortes middle school program was completely virtual. The other schools KOTB programs included two in-person classroom visits, or remote classroom visits, and two or three field days with hands on experience collecting and analyzing scientific data at the beach with the help of volunteers. Sedro Woolley field trips took place at Padilla Bay where they collected data on invasive snails and beach seining. Conway and Concrete Middle School field trips recently took place at Fidalgo Bay where they collected forage fish eggs and examined them under a microscope and collected beach seining data. At the end of the program the students will give presentations, but they will not be participating in a science symposium this year.
- Pinto Abalone Recovery: Puget Sound Restoration Fund (PSRF) with the help of WDFW and Shannon Point Marine Center divers finished doing juvenile abalone outplants (~7,500) at 8 sites last month and surveyed a variety of potential new seeding sites, several of those being in Skagit County waters. They also conducted new brood stock collections from sites throughout North Puget Sound. They like to rotate brood stock animals to keep them fresh. Time lapse cameras were also installed at about a half dozen sites to monitor predation patterns. The new Abalone Recovery Plan has now been reviewed and passed by the Fish & Wildlife Commission. And PSRF/WDFW are considering establishment of several new "Index Sites" to better monitor restoration progress. The data analysis and annual report will be finalized in September.
- Olympia Oyster Restoration: Field work starts next week. Volunteers will be collecting and deploying bags of oyster shell to monitor for new oyster recruitment in Fidalgo Bay. They will also be putting out shell strings prepared by Puget Sound Restoration Fund at the trestle and Weaverling Spit. The Padilla Bay Reserve crew will collect the 50 or so settlement bags set out in Fidalgo Bay last summer and relocate those seed bags into south Padilla Bay.
- Sharpes Corner Stormwater Sampling: Diane Hennebert started working on the QAPP. She was able to get ‘as built’ drawings from WSDOT for the Sharpes Corner drainage system to try to figure out the best locations to collect storm samples. A site visit will be conducted to make sure the sampling locations can be easily and safely accessed by the volunteers before finalizing the QAPP. The QAPP will likely be complete next month. Sampling will take place after the first flush in the fall of 2022 (late September-October).

**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.): NA

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

## MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

**County:** Snohomish

**Month/Year:** May 2022

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

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

- Snohomish MRC is currently planning for a series of three Stakeholder Meetings for the Port Susan Conservation Action Plan (CAP) Update Project. These meetings will focus directly on topics identified as high priorities by partners, including a meeting to focus on plan implementation and a meeting to discuss the Objectives & Strategic Actions of the CAP, with focus on areas identified by partners as in need of updating, such as climate change, invasive species, and human, social, and cultural wellbeing. An introductory meeting will be held on May 25 to present the project to the Snohomish-Stillaguamish LIO, Island LIO, and other interested partners.
- Snohomish County is currently working to finalize a contract for the removal of 4 vessels from the Snohomish Estuary, with the hope to start removing vessels in late May.

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

None.

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

The Nearshore Subcommittee met to discuss the draft one-pager on the beneficial re-use of dredged material from the Snohomish River on April 18.

Elisa Dawson and Alex Pittman met with staff from Snohomish County Surface Water Management to discuss the revised draft of the Meadowdale Monitoring Plan on April 18.

The MRC conducted Forage Fish Monitoring at Picnic Point and Howarth Park on April 19.

Elisa Dawson attended a NOAA Webinar titled *Science to support estuary restoration and recovery for Chinook salmon in the Snohomish delta* on April 20.

The MRC hosted their monthly meeting on April 20. Dr. Ian Miller presented to the MRC on Sea Level Rise in Puget Sound, the MRC reviewed interpretive signs planned for Meadowdale Park, and MRC Project Lead Sara Maxwell provided an updated on the Port Susan Project.

The Snohomish MRC partnered with WSU Snohomish County Beach Watchers to host an Earth Day Beach Cleanup at Picnic Point on April 23. Along with volunteers from WSU Beach

Watchers and Puget Sound Energy, MRC Members Tim Ellis, Mike Ehlebracht, Sara Maxwell, Allan Hicks, and Brie Townsend attended. Alex Pittman also attended.

Elisa Dawson hosted a contractor tour for prospective derelict vessel removal contractors on April 25.

MRC Chair Mike Ehlebracht presented the MRC's 2021 Annual Report at the Snohomish County Council Conservation, Sustainability and Recreation Committee Meeting on April 26.

Elisa Dawson and Alex Pittman attended the Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference from April 26 through April 28. Elisa presented at the conference about the MRC's Snohomish Estuary Pilings Project on April 28.

Elisa Dawson and Alex Pittman met with ESA consultants to discuss the Port Susan project on May 2.

There was a joint Island County and Snohomish County MRC Port Susan meeting on May 4.

Elisa Dawson presented about the MRC to the WSU Beach Watchers on May 5.

Elisa met with Washington State Department of Natural Resources staff member Max Showalter to discuss opportunities for partnership and collaboration with the MRC on May 6.

Elisa Dawson met with project consultant ESA to discuss the Meadowdale Monitoring Plan on May 6.

Elisa Dawson attended MyCoastapalooza 2022 on May 9.

**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):** The Snohomish MRC is currently planning for a series of three Stakeholder Meetings, following the completion of the Stakeholder Survey and follow up Stakeholder Interviews in March. These meetings will focus directly on topics identified as high priorities by partners in Port Susan. One meeting will focus on refinement of the Objectives & Strategic Actions of the CAP, with focus on areas identified by partners as in need of updating, such as climate change, invasive species, and human, social, and cultural wellbeing. Another meeting will focus on plan implementation, as a shift in focus toward implementation was broadly identified as a need by partners.

Ahead of these more focused meetings, an Introductory Meeting will be held at the May 25 Stillaguamish Watershed Council (SWC) Meeting, which serves as the LIO Implementation Committee for the Stillaguamish Watershed. In addition to the SWC membership, the Port Susan team has invited the Island County LIO to this meeting, as well as additional partners who have expressed an interest in continued engagement. Partners have broadly expressed an interest in connecting the Port Susan CAP with the strategic actions identified in the 2022-2026 Puget Sound Partnership Action Agenda. As such, greater connection with the LIO represents an opportunity to respond to partner feedback and re-energize efforts to protect and restore Port Susan. This introductory meeting will provide a project introduction, review early assessment results and how partner input informed the plan for these workshops, share draft agendas for the two workshops and solicit input, and begin to build an invitee list for the two focused workshops and encourage participation in one or both.

**Derelict Vessels (NWSF funds):** MRC staff hosted a contractor tour as part of the bidding process on April 25. Three bids were received in late April, and the County is currently in the process of finalizing a contract with the lowest responsive and responsible bidder. Snohomish County expects to issue a notice to proceed with removals to the contractor on May 18<sup>th</sup>.

**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. Sampling at Meadowdale is now on hold with beach access closed on for construction of the Meadowdale Beach & Estuary Restoration Project. May sampling at Picnic Point and Howarth Park is scheduled for May 19.

**Nearshore Restoration:** MRC staff have continued to work with project consultant ESA to develop the Meadowdale Monitoring Plan. A revised draft was reviewed by SWM staff in April, and project consultant ESA has provided an updated draft in response to these comments. The next Meadowdale Monitoring Team meeting is scheduled for June 1.

The Nearshore Restoration subcommittee also continues 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:** The Snohomish MRC partnered with WSU Snohomish County Beach Watchers to host an Earth Day Beach Cleanup at Picnic Point on April 23. MRC members joined volunteers from WSU Beach Watchers and Puget Sound Energy to collect over 370 pounds of trash from the beach. An additional cleanup is currently planned for International Coastal Cleanup Day in September.

**Marine Vegetation Monitoring:** MRC Project Lead Tom Doerge is currently working to coordinate potential kelp monitoring dates and team members for July and August at the Mukilteo, Meadowdale, Edmonds, and Hat Island monitoring sites.

**Crabber Education:** The Crabber Education subcommittee is planning to meet on June 6 to discuss outreach plans for 2022.

**Snohomish Estuary Pilings:** Elisa Dawson presented about the Snohomish Estuary Pilings Project at the Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference on April 28.

**No updates for:**

- Oil Spills
- Stormwater (formerly Mussel Watch)

**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:**

- Forage Fish Monitoring – May 19 & June 16
- Port Susan Stakeholder Meeting at the Stillaguamish Watershed Council – May 25
- Puget Sound Ecosystem Monitoring Program Salish Sea Marine Survival Project Workshop – May 25
- Crabber Subcommittee Meeting – June 6
- Kelp Vital Sign Indicator Development - Workshop #2 – June 7
- Next MRC Meeting – June 15

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



**Photo 1:** MRC Staff, Members, and their families at the Earth Day Beach Cleanup at Picnic Point on April 23.



**Photo 2:** In partnership with WSU Beach Watchers and volunteers from Puget Sound Energy, the MRC cleaned up over 370 pounds of trash from the beach at Picnic Point on April 23.

## MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

**County:** Whatcom

**Month/Year:** MAY 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/>

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

- 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/> in addition to the Whatcom County Executive's Boards and Commissions website.

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

- The MRC held their May meeting on May 5. In addition to project updates, meeting topics included:
  - Lisa Kaufman, Northwest Straits Foundation, provided a detailed overview of the planned Clayton Beach restoration and how the MRCs will be involved in the project.
  - The committee approved the suggested budget amendment to the 2021-2023 grant.
  - The committee will be providing a presentation to Whatcom County Council on June 14, highlighting their work in 2021 and new projects proposed for the CDS funding award.
  - The City of Bellingham requested a letter of support from the MRC for their effort to secure funding for the Boulevard Park Shoreline and Public Access Improvements from the State of Washington Recreation and Conservation Office Aquatic Land Enhancement Grant. The committee opposed a letter of support and requested more information about the sustainability of the project. Jim Johannesen with Coastal Geologic Services will provide details on the restoration design at the June MRC meeting.
  - A soon to be Marine Science graduate with Western Washington University, Stephen Hullin, will be interning (unpaid) with the MRC through the summer to gain field and work experience. Stephen will be assisting the MRC with the SW Lummi Island beach cleanup, the Olympia oyster survey, and potentially Whatcom Water Week.

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

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

Education and Outreach

- **Beach seine with schools:** The Beach Seine with Schools has been a huge success thus far.
  - April 26 Northern Heights Elementary (4<sup>th</sup> grade classroom): The class was joined by Tribal Elder Steven Soloman, Lummi Nation, who shared his story about the importance of salmon to his family. Lummi Natural Resources staff performed a beach seine, catching 333 salmon smolts (2 Chinook, 8 Pinks, and the remainder Chum)! The students were pretty focused on the Lummi crew setting out the net, counting, and measuring the salmon. They also filled out their field forms which looked a lot like those used by the Lummi field team. The students had many good questions for the field crew.
  - May 10 Silver Beach Elementary (4<sup>th</sup> grade classroom): Students were joined by Lummi Natural Resources staff, Paul Cline who discussed his family which includes many generations of fishermen. He talked about the reef net which Lummi developed, the gill net, and seine net and how these various nets allow some salmon to escape unharmed to spawn. He discussed the Cs" relating to the salmon life cycle: Cool / Clean Water; Connectivity / Complexity of salmon habitat. Within the seine, two hatchery chinook smolts and 52 native chum salmon were caught.

Prior to the field events, Alex prepared the students in the classroom on the seine and field sheet protocols and provided a familiar and guiding voice to lead them through the adventure.

#### Monitoring

- **Olympia oysters:** The annual Olympia oyster population survey in N. Chuckanut Bay occurred on May 17. Students from Bellingham Technical College (BTC) Fisheries and Aquaculture assisted the MRC. Taylor Shellfish donated 12 bags of seasoned Pacific oyster shell though they were not available at the time of survey. The bags will be placed within the plots at a later date, allowing a second BTC class to do another survey.

**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:**



Seine with Silver Beach elementary.  
Photo credit: Mike Mackay

Seine with Northern Height Elementary. Photo(s) credit: Austin Rose

