



# Minutes

**July 29, 2022 10:00 AM-12:00PM**  
**Zoom - Virtual meeting**  
**Northwest Straits Commission meeting**

## **Attendees:**

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

**Commission Staff:** Lucas Hart, Sasha Horst, Dana Oster, Jeff Whitty, Nathan Woods, Allie Simpson, Antonio Jones

**Others in Attendance:** Don Hunger (NW Straits Foundation), Austin Rose (Whatcom), Barbara Bennett (Island)

**Absent:** Alan Clark (Clallam), Dianne Hennebert (Skagit), Laura Blackmore

## **Welcome and Introductions**

Chair Elsa Schwartz opened the meeting with introductions of attendees and the tribal acknowledgment. The Commission approved the minutes from the June 24 meeting as written by consensus.

## **Remembering Terry Williams**

The Commission noted the passing of Terry Williams, one of the founding members of the NW Straits Initiative and a tribal leader. Terry was instrumental in establishing the Initiative's strong tribal partnerships, and he made significant contributions to conservation locally, nationally, and internationally. Read an article in the Everett Herald about Terry [here](#).

## **Committee Reports**

**Executive Committee:** Tom Cowan reported that there was no Executive Committee meeting this month and as a result, there is nothing to report.

**Science Advisory Committee:** Julia Parrish reported that the Science Advisory Committee has been working on creating terms of reference and long term guidelines for what the Science Advisory Committee is and what they do. Julia predicts better involvement in the future following the completion of the guidelines.

**External Relations Committee:** Chris Castner reported the External Relations Committee is scheduled to meet soon, after a several month hiatus. The committee plans to discuss the NW Straits Initiative reauthorization bill that Senator Murray's staff shared with the Governor's office and the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission. Chris also noted that the Northwest Straits request for Congressionally Directed



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Spending for fiscal year 2023 made it into the Senate appropriations bill. Senator Murray was invited to attend the Collaborative Conservation Workshop on September 16 but has not confirmed.

### Business items

- Forage fish training report out - Nathan reported on behalf of Leah that WA Department of Fish and Wildlife, with the support of their Washington Conservation Corps crew, provided training to over 20 volunteers on how to conduct the forage fish spawn beach surveys. Volunteers were able to get hands-on practice collecting samples on the beach at the NW Maritime Center.
- Green crab catch update – Jeff reported Commission staff prepared and submitted the interim report required for the WA Department of Fish and Wildlife green crab funding. Commission staff also met with staff from DNR, WA Department of Fish and Wildlife, WA Sea Grant, and Padilla Bay Reserve to discuss a collaborative effort to trap green crab in Fidalgo Bay. Commission staff are also planning collaborative trapping events with the Upper Skagit Tribe south of Larrabee State Park, and with the NW Straits Foundation at Larrabee State Park.
- Salish Sea eelgrass no-anchor zone meeting update – Allie reported that an eelgrass survey of North Chuckanut Bay is planned for this summer. Commission staff hosted a transboundary Salish Sea Eelgrass Protection Zone meeting with partners in WA and BC to coordinate on shared approaches and messaging for the voluntary no-anchor zones.
- Collaborative Conservation Workshop –Nathan reported that Commission staff are working on logistics and the planning group will share an agenda soon. Registration for the event is still open, please register if you have not done so already. The event is scheduled for September 16, from 11am-4pm at the Padilla Bay Reserve.
- Congressional funding update - Lucas reported Commission staff are awaiting feedback from NOAA on the application for fiscal year 2022 Congressional funds, which includes project proposals prioritized by MRCs. Funds are anticipated to begin January 1, 2023.

### Partner updates

**Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission:** Cecilia Gobin reported the NW Indian Fisheries Commission is working with tribes to compose a list of derelict vessels they would like to prioritize for removal through the NW Straits Commission derelict vessel removal project being planned with 2022 Congressional funds. Cecilia also said they are finalizing a review of the NW Straits Initiative reauthorization bill and she believes the NW Indian Fisheries Commission will support it, with a few recommendations for changes in word choice.

**Puget Sound Partnership:** No report from the Partnership.

**Northwest Straits Foundation:** Don Hunger reported the NW Straits Foundation is recruiting for new board members. Don also stated there is strong support for the Salish Sea Conservation Corps program they are developing. Next year is the pilot year for the program and they intend to build structure for it as a formal



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AmeriCorps program in support of the NW Straits Initiative. Don wants the program to maintain flexibility to support marine conservation in diverse ways year-round.

## **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.
- Pigeon Guillemot surveys are in full swing.

### **Island – Elsa Schwartz**

- Cornet Bay Stewardship event took place on July 8.
- Bull kelp surveys began mid-June and will continue through to the fall.

### **Jefferson – Jeff Taylor**

- Sea Dragons team continues with ROV surveys. Jefferson MRC hopes to continue to work with the Sea Dragons to locate and recover derelict crab pots in East Jefferson County.
- Jefferson MRC partnered with Port Townsend Marine Science Center and co-hosted a virtual panel on Dungeness crab research and management efforts featuring Emily Buckner from Puget Sound Restoration Fund and Pacific Crab Research Group, Liz Tobin with the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe and Katelyn Bosley of Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.
- Jefferson MRC tabled the Forever Streamfest event in Port Angeles on June 25.

### **San Juan – Christina Koons**

- New Marine Program staffing structure has been implemented by San Juan MRC, which is designed to make better use of staff time and skill sets.
- 45 visitor assessments completed at False Bay and Ulva Sp. sampling is now well underway.

### **Skagit**

- Salish Sea Stewards picnic was held at Padilla Bay on Saturday, July 16.
- Forage fish survey volunteers hosted an educational forage fish survey station at the Fidalgo Bay Resort for several small groups of Latinx kids from the Washington State's Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Program (GEAR UP).

### **Snohomish – Tim Ellis**



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- Stakeholder meetings for the Port Susan Conservation Action Plan (CAP) Update Project on June 30 and July 6. These meetings focused on plan implementation and discussing the Objectives & Strategic Actions of the CAP with focus on areas such as climate change, invasive species, and human, social, and cultural wellbeing.
- Derelict vessel contractor has removed two derelict vessels from the Snohomish Estuary.
- Crabber Education subcommittee conducted in-person outreach at the 10th Street Boat Launch in Everett on July 1, 2, 8, and 9.

### **Whatcom – Bob Cecile**

- Whatcom MRC has a vacancy for an Economic interest position.
- SW Lummi Island Beach Cleanup successfully removed 452lbs of trash from the beach.

### **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:

- **Northwest Straits Initiative Collaborative Conservation Workshop** will be held at Padilla Bay Reserve September 16; from 11 AM to 4 PM. The event is planned for MRC members, MRC Staff, NWS Commission Board and Staff, and NWS Foundation Board and staff. Registration for the event is still open, MRC members and staff should have received a direct email invite. Please register by August 8, if you have not done so already. Contact [Nathan Woods](#) with questions.
- **Derelict Vessel Removal:** NW Straits Commission staff are working with WA Department of Natural Resources, tribal partners, and MRCs to plan derelict vessel removals and pilot a derelict vessel turn-in event using Congressionally Directed Funds. MRC members interested in joining the project workgroup should reach out to Lucas Hart.
- **San Juan MRC:** San Juan County recently restructured staffing to better coordinate staff support for the Marine Resources Committee, the Citizen Advisory Group for Salmon Recovery, and the Local Integrating Organization.
- **Terry Williams:** The Commission noted the passing of Terry Williams, one of the founding members of the NW Straits Initiative and a tribal leader. Terry was instrumental in establishing the Initiative's strong tribal partnerships, and he made significant contributions to conservation locally, nationally, and internationally. Read an article in the Everett Herald about Terry [here](#).

### **Public comment**

There was no public comment.



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August 26, 2022 - The next Northwest Straits Commission meeting: 10am-12pm via Zoom. More information can be found [on our website](#).