



agenda

Meeting: Northwest Straits Commission

Location: Zoom Virtual Meeting

Date: September 30, 2022

Time: 10:00 AM-12:00 PM

To join the Zoom meeting, [CLICK HERE](#). Meeting ID: 827 0526 3892 Passcode: 483535

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	Welcome and introductions Tribal acknowledgement Approval of August 2022 meeting minutes	Elsa Schwartz
10:10 – 10:30	Committee reports Executive Committee Science Advisory Committee External Relations Committee	Lucas Hart Julia Parrish Chris Castner
10:30 – 10:40	Business items <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collaborative Conservation Workshop• Green crab update• Staffing update• NW Straits Initiative Retreat (proposed dates March 23-24)• Derelict vessel turn-in event planning	Staff Sasha Jeff Lucas Lucas Lucas



agenda

10:40 – 11:10	Monitoring Washington’s marine wildlife by air, water and land	Scott Pearson, WA Dept of Fish and Wildlife
11:10 – 11:15	Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission	Cecilia Gobin, NW Indian Fisheries Commission
10:50 – 10:55	Puget Sound Partnership update	Jennifer Grimm, Puget Sound Partnership
10:55 – 11:25	NWS Foundation update	Don Hunger, NW Straits Foundation
11:25 – 11:55	MRC Reports	MRC Representatives
11:55 – 12:00	Meeting highlights and action items Identify key points and action items from this meeting for MRC reps to report back to their MRCs	All
12:00	Public comment	All

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



Minutes

August 26, 2022 10:00 AM-12:00PM
Zoom - Virtual meeting
Northwest Straits Commission meeting

Attendees:

Commission Members: Elsa Schwartz (Island-Chair), Chris Castner, Julia Parrish, Alan Clark (Clallam), Jeff Taylor (Jefferson), Christina Koons (San Juan), Dianne Hennebert (Skagit), Tim Ellis (Snohomish), Bob Cecile (Whatcom)

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

Others in Attendance: Don Hunger (NW Straits Foundation), Chris Mantegna, Troy McKelvey (Jefferson), Karin Roemers-Kleven (San Juan), Austin Rose (Whatcom)

Absent: Cecilia Gobin (Tribal), Laura Blackmore, Nan McKay, Tom Cowan (Vice Chair)

Welcome and Introductions

Chair Elsa Schwartz opened the meeting with introductions of attendees and the tribal acknowledgment. The Commission approved the minutes from the July 29 meeting as written by consensus.

Committee Reports

Executive Committee: Lucas Hart reported for the Executive Committee. The Committee recommended approval of the proposed 2023 Commission meeting schedule and addition of an October 28, 2022 Commission meeting date. Senator Murray continues to lead on the NW Straits Initiative reauthorization bill. The Senator's staff is working with the Senate Commerce Committee to introduce the legislation in the next session.

Science Advisory Committee: Julia Parrish reported the Science Advisory Committee continues to recruit speakers for Speed Dating with Scientists.

External Relations Committee: Chris Castner reported that Senator Murray's staff are in frequent communication about progress on the NW Straits reauthorization bill. Senator Lovelett will speak at the Collaborative Conservation Workshop. Lucas extended an invitation to Senator Murray to speak at the Collaborative Conservation Workshop, but her schedule is pending.

Business items

- FY22 Congressionally Directed Spending update – Sasha reported that Commission staff distributed a memo, timeline, and project forms for the NW Straits Congressionally Directed Spending to MRCs for one-time funding for 2023. Those agreements will begin January 1, 2023.
- Green Crab update – Jeff reported that fieldwork continues for green crab removal in both Drayton Harbor and Samish Bay. The Washington Conservation Corps crew is finishing their last week trapping on August 25. Jeff and Leah continue to recruit volunteers to help with trapping and outreach. NW Straits Commission staff collaborated with Upper Skagit Indian Tribe, NW Straits Foundation, and Veterans Conservation Corps (VCC) to sample Clayton Beach and neighboring Upper Skagit areas. Additionally, NW Straits Commission staff collaborated with Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Natural Resources, Samish Indian Nation, VCC, Puget Sound Corps, Washington Sea Grant, and Padilla Bay Reserve to conduct a green crab-sampling blitz in Fidalgo Bay.
- Derelict vessel removal planning – Lucas reported NW Straits Commission staff held a meeting with the Department of Natural Resources and tribal partners to strategize on options for removing derelict vessels from tribally owned tidelands.
- Collaborative Conservation Workshop September 16 update – Nathan reported that Senator Lovelett has agreed to speak at the September 16 Collaborative Conservation Workshop. Workshop registrants will receive an email soon that will include the workshop agenda and details about the event, including how to complete the required health screening.

Yellow Island Intertidal Monitoring Project: Chris Mantegna presented to the Northwest Straits Commission. Chris developed this project, with funding from the Doris Duke Conservation Scholar Program, to create opportunities for underserved groups to engage in conservation. Students from various disciplines monitored Yellow Island by cataloging presence and abundance of observed species. Chris hopes to increase the scale and involve other partner organizations in similar student driven monitoring efforts in the future. Learn more about the program [here](#), or find contact information on Chris and other presenters in the Speed Dating with Scientists series [here](#).

Partner updates

Puget Sound Partnership: No report from the Partnership

Northwest Straits Foundation: Don Hunger reported the NW Straits Foundation staff met with an engineers and contractors at Hoypus Point to discuss restoration work scheduled to start in October. Boeing gave the NW Straits Foundation a \$50,000 grant to fund restoration work at new sites. Don extended an invitation to Commission meeting attendees for the Caroline Gibson Scholars event on September 23, 4-6pm at the Northwest Maritime Center 431 Water Street Port Townsend, WA 98368. Register for the event [here](#).

MRC Updates

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

Clallam – Alan Clark

- Freshwater Bay kayak survey took place July 31.
- Forage Fish sampling continues monthly at Cline Spit and Ediz Hook and Elwha beaches East and West.
- Clallam MRC member Bob Vreeland and volunteer Coleman Byrnes sampling Freshwater Bay and Pillar Point for shellfish Biotxin on a monthly basis.

Island – Elsa Schwartz

- Cornet Bay Stewardship Weeding for Whales event was August 6.
- Atlantis Steam ROV Camp occurred at Coupeville Wharf July 29.

Jefferson – Troy McKelvey

- The MRC organized two rain garden work parties on July 29 and August 17, engaging two MRC members and eleven community volunteers, and will be installing a new rain garden next month.
- The MRC contracted an eelgrass survey along the Port Townsend waterfront, which took place the week of July 25.
- The MRC supported the local PT Maritime Discovery Schools Teacher Training program, providing presentations to teachers from Jefferson and Clallam counties on the nearshore ecosystem (what it is, local issues, and restoration and caretaking efforts) as well as the MRCs Olympia oyster restoration work.

San Juan – Christina Koons

- San Juan MRC held successful elections of MRC Chair, Vice-chair, and NW Straits Commission representative and alternate.
- Sinking of Aleutian Isle continues to be of critical concern and MRC is providing support as called upon.
- Projects such as visitor surveys and *Ulva* sampling at False Bay, and vessel surveys throughout the county, are on target.

Skagit – Dianne Hennebert

- The final Bowman Bay Plant Maintenance work party took place August 8. Over 18 volunteers participated including eight or nine volunteers from Crane Aerospace and several new and veteran Salish Sea Stewards. Plant maintenance included weeding, watering, and spreading 7 cubic yards of bark with buckets.
- Fidalgo Bay Day occurred Saturday, August 20 at the Fidalgo Bay Resort. More to report next month.

Snohomish – Tim Ellis

- Snohomish MRC is currently reviewing the draft of the Port Susan Phase 1 final report completed by ESA. Staff will meet on August 18 to discuss the draft before completing a final report in early September.
- The Meadowdale Monitoring Plan is now complete. Next steps include the creation of a Meadowdale Monitoring webpage to host on the MRC website, and the creation of a story map.

- The MRC is hosting a beach cleanup at Picnic Point Park on September 24 in partnership with WSU Snohomish County Beach Watchers and Zero Waste Washington.

Whatcom – Bob Cecile

- The MRC has a vacancy for an economic interest position. This vacancy is advertised on the MRC homepage <https://www.whatcomcountymrc.org/>

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 Commission meeting schedule:** The Commission approved the remaining 2022 dates and the 2023 schedule. See attached schedule for details.
- **Derelict Vessel Removal:** MRCs and tribal partners are compiling prioritization lists for derelict vessel removal to distribute to NW Straits Commission staff. Contact your MRC Coordinator or Lucas Hart (hart@nwstraits.org) for more information.
- **Northwest Straits Initiative Collaborative Conservation Workshop:** Senator Lovelett agreed to speak at the Sept. 16 Collaborative Conservation Workshop. Workshop registrants – watch for an email that will include the workshop agenda and details about the event, including how to complete the required health screening.
- **Congressionally Directed Spending:** NOAA awarded Congressionally Directed Spending for the Northwest Straits Commission for 2023. Funding becomes available January 1 – December 31, 2023. Northwest Straits Commission staff provided instructions for project applications to MRC coordinators.
- **Yellow Island Intertidal Monitoring Project:** Chris Mantegna presented to the Northwest Straits Commission. Chris developed this project, with funding from the Doris Duke Conservation Scholar Program, to create opportunities for underserved groups to engage in conservation. Students from various disciplines monitored Yellow Island by cataloging presence and abundance of observed species. Chris hopes to increase the scale and involve other partner organizations in similar student driven monitoring efforts in the future. Learn more about the program [here](#), or find contact information on Chris and other presenters in the Speed Dating with Scientists series [here](#).
- **Northwest Straits Initiative Reauthorization:** Senator Murray continues to lead the effort for a federal reauthorization of the NW Straits Initiative. Preliminary plans indicate the bill may be introduced in the US Senate after the August recess.

Public comment

Elsa Schwartz invited people to attend the 2022 Coastal and Estuarine Summit, Dec 4-8 in New Orleans. Register [here](#). Early bird registration through Oct 7. The Summit brings together the coastal restoration and management communities to explore issues, solutions, and lessons learned in their work. The Summit Program will address all aspects of coastal and estuarine restoration and management.

September 30, 2022 - The next Northwest Straits Commission meeting: 10am-12pm via Zoom. Find more information [on our website](#).

DRAFT



Executive Committee Meeting
September 19, 2022 • 11:00am-Noon
Notes

Attendees: Tom Cowan, Elsa Schwartz, Julia Parrish, Jeff Taylor

Staff attendees: Lucas Hart, Sasha Horst, Dana Oster, Allie Simpson, Nathan Woods

2023 NWSI retreat: We did not include a NWS Initiative retreat on the 2023 meeting dates schedule. The retreat is typically held over two days in March. The Committee recommended holding an in-person retreat as they feel it helps engage participants. Commission staff will review the schedule to determine proposed dates.

State funding proviso change request: Lucas shared information about a change he is planning to propose to the state funding proviso. The change would create additional flexibility in how the Commission is able to support MRCs and reduce the amount of contracting work for MRC and Commission staff by not requiring all state funds to be distributed directly to MRCs. This was an informational item for the Committee to be aware of.

Science Advisory Committee (SAC) Articles of Association: Dana Oster joined the meeting to participate in the discussion and shared that the Science Advisory Committee addressed the Committee's feedback from the previous Executive Committee meeting. The Committee recommended that a current or former MRC member with science expertise should be highly encouraged but not required as a representative on the Science Advisory Committee, and that engineering should be added to the list of scholarly areas represented. With the proposed changes, the Committee recommended taking the Articles of Association to the full Commission for review and approval.

Diversity Equity Inclusion (DEI): Allie Simpson joined the meeting to share a summary of information and recommendations that she gathered from Commission and MRC staff regarding DEI. The Committee advised that DEI efforts be targeted and goal oriented to assure the work is realistic for the capacity of the organization. Commission staff will start by drafting a DEI statement that outlines a vision and goals. They will gather feedback from MRC staff and bring the statement to the next Committee meeting for further discussion.

NWSC Reauthorization update: Senator Murray's staff reported that the NWS Initiative reauthorization draft bill is on track for introduction soon. They are working with Senator Cantwell to identify the best course of action for introduction. Lucas shared information on the most recent input on the draft language.

Purpose:

The Science Advisory Committee (SAC) advances the use of science in all forms and from all sources within the Northwest Straits Initiative. In this pursuit, the SAC serves both as an advocate for scientific approaches to the work of the Commission and the Marine Resources Committees (MRCs), and as a resource and helps network scientific communities of practice.

Roles and Responsibilities: The SAC primarily supports MRC project development and proposal process, it also contributes to the Annual Conference planning. Specific tasks include, but are not limited to:

- *MRC Projects:*
 - Advisory role to the Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) staff for: assistance in defining and refining the MRC proposal process, including adaptive management of the Request For Proposals (RFP) text and illustrative examples, project reporting structures, and evaluation processes.
 - Evaluative role to the NWSC staff, providing review and feedback on MRC project proposals, outcomes of MRC work, regional projects, and Annual Conference.
 - Advisory role to the MRCs, providing advice on new and ongoing projects.
 - Work towards framing MRC projects at scales that have impacts larger than the individual project. For example, by connecting across MRCs, and other partners when applicable, to deliver regional impacts.
- *Annual Conference:*
 - A minimum of one SAC member (not the chair) will represent the SAC as part of the NWS Commissions annual conference sub-committee.
 - Additional SAC members may assist in defining and refining the Annual Conference. This may include identifying session topics, speaker suggestions and other activities surrounding science, monitoring, science education, and resource management. For example, providing, or identifying providers for training workshops attached to the Conference when applicable.
- *Additional tasks may include:*
 - Provision of expertise on specific topics, as requested by the NWSC Executive Committee or NWS Commission; this could necessitate the creation of ad hoc sub-committees.
 - Advisory role to the NWSC Executive Committee and NWS Commission, providing expert feedback on requests for endorsement and/or support for third party grant proposals or proposed legislation related to scientific matters.
 - Hosting training workshops for MRC members.

Membership: The SAC will contain no less than seven (7) and no more than twelve (12) members at a time, including the Chair of the Committee.

Membership should include a diversity of scholarly areas, such as:

- natural science in marine systems, including both geoscience and living marine resources
- social science in marine systems
- natural resource management in marine systems
- science education in formal and/or informal contexts representation across the career spectrum
- engineering, but not limited to civil and environmental engineering

These areas of expertise could come from the following areas:

- academia
- industry
- government, and specifically including tribal, state and federal representation
- non-profit and non-governmental organization and from across the arc of a career; for instance in academia
- current or former MRC members

All members will:

- be actively working on issues in, around and of the Salish Sea.
- be committed to facilitating equitable and active participation by members of the public in the monitoring, scientific inquiry about, and management of Salish Sea resources as specifically expressed locally at the county level, and through the Marine Resources Committee (MRC) process.
- actively pursue goals and habits that broaden representation in science, marine science, public involvement in science, and public involvement in the Northwest Straits Initiative in particular.

Recruitment:

All seated members are responsible for continuous recruitment of future Committee members. Additional recruitment will come from the Commission staff, the NWSC Executive Committee, and from all Commission and MRC members. Potential recruits and interested parties should be encouraged to contact the SAC Chair, or Marine Program Manager, for more information regarding duties and tasks of SAC membership. All interested individuals should seek nominations, including self-nominations, during the annual recruitment process in November/December; be willing to provide a short CV if asked; and be willing to engage in a conversation with the SAC. The Committee will seek members with experience in and/or an interest in:

- the Northwest Straits region, and the Salish Sea and Pacific Northwest more broadly
- public engagement in science, monitoring and stewardship
- Scholarly qualifications in a relevant discipline

Appointments:

Members will be appointed to two (2) year terms, staggered for stability and consistency. Reappointment to additional terms is possible.

Appointments will be made following a recruitment and review process, and where seated members of the SAC (not up for reappointment) review all prospective recruits, and discuss the selection of a slate that collectively fulfills the broadest constitution of the Committee. The final recommended slate will be reviewed by the Chair, with input from the NWSC Director and Executive Committee, and with the possibility of alternate invitations (including fewer, or more) to meet specific inclusion goals unmet by the proffered slate. The final appointment will be made by the SAC Chair.

Chair:

The Chair will be a member of the Northwest Straits Commission.

Staff:

The Committee will be staffed by the Northwest Straits Commission Marine Program Manager.

Meetings:

There are four full committee meetings per year, see annual calendar below. Two meetings, the MRC proposal review and annual project review and wrap up, will be held in person. Members may miss meetings, but more than half of the meetings missed will require a follow up from the Chair and Marine Program Manager to re-confirm interest and ability to participate. Meeting attendance expectation of individual committee members is two out of the four annual meetings. Continuation of two (2) or more missed meetings after follow up will result in removal from the SAC. Travel and accommodation costs to in person meetings and the annual conference are provided by the NWSC.

Sub-committees:

Members may elect to also serve on sub-committees. All sub-committees will be "ad hoc" - convened for a specific purpose and in pursuit of a particular product (e.g., a report for the Commission), and have a timeline of not more than one year.

Time Commitment:

Committee members are uncompensated. The estimated annual time commitment for SAC participation could include but is not limited to:

- Four (4) meetings for the full Committee (12 hours)
- Participation in the Annual Conference (16-20 hours)
- Participation in the Annual Conference planning sub-committee by minimum one SAC member (~ 8 hours)
- Participation ad-hoc committees if relevant to experience (~6 hours)
- Participation in in-person meeting if feasible (~8 hours)
- Meeting preparation and materials review/input (6-10 hours)

For a total annual time commitment of 50-56 hours

Annual Calendar:

Meeting Timeline	Meeting Tasks
Meeting 1: late January- Late February	1. Finalize slate of new appointments to SAC 2. Provide feedback on RFP for MRC projects (biannual task) 3. Designate SAC representative for Annual Conference planning subcommittee
Meeting 2: late June – mid-July* (meeting in person)	1. MRC proposals due early June, sent to SAC for review and feedback 2. Provide feedback to NWSC staff and discuss MRC projects 3. Provide input and guidance on MRC outcomes to track.
Meeting 3: early September	1. Update on Annual conference planning from SAC rep. Committee to provide input/ assist in recruiting speakers for chosen Annual Conference topics if needed.
Annual Conference: mid- November	Attend Annual Conference
Meeting 4: early December (meeting in person)	1. Review and discuss outcomes of MRC work, regional projects, and Annual Conference for NWSC to capture in annual report. 2. Nominations for SAC appointment (if nominations and membership approach remain as is vs review panel for RFPs). 3. Discuss workplan/actions for SAC on specific expertise/training needs SAC could offer MRCs based on Conference and project work.

*Note: project review timeline may vary depending on funding sources.



Commission staff highlights - [September 2022]

MRC Support

2021-23 MRC grants: The quarterly reporting period for the current MRC grants is coming up after the end of the quarter, September 30. That represents the last quarter of the first year of the two-year award period, and the year one EPA/Puget Sound Partnership funds should be spent and MRCs will begin spending their year two funds as of October 1.

Congressionally directed spending: MRCs have the information and forms to submit project proposals for the awards, which will begin January 1, 2023 and be available through December 31, 2023. There is also the potential for fiscal year 2023 Congressionally Directed Spending. As information becomes available on this Commission staff will reach out to MRC staff.

2023-25 State funding: Lucas shared information with MRC staff about a proposed change to the state funding proviso to allow for more flexibility with the funding and to increase efficiency. MRCs may be asked for a letter of support for this change. Additional information will be shared as it becomes available.

Regional Projects

Eelgrass: The Commission continues to host a monthly workgroup for Salish Sea Eelgrass No-Anchor Zones. This group convenes partners in WA and BC who are working to expand the voluntary no-anchor zone network. During this past meeting, the workgroup met to discuss strategies for buoy maintenance and buoy placement for proposed voluntary no anchor zone sites.

Kelp Plan: Work on a summary table to assess the status of the Kelp Plan actions and list of Puget Sound kelp related projects continue. Staff are pivoting from developing several online meetings to a single in person meeting to collect information on what lessons have been learned from work done over the last couple of years, and what next steps are needed to advance the Kelp Plan actions. This pivot was in response to the Kelp Plan Coordination Advisory Committee's request for fewer meetings and a greater sense of community. An update to the Kelp Plan webpage is also underway.

Kelp Monitoring: Volunteers have completed their kelp surveys for the year. Commission staff will be processing the survey data soon.

European Green Crab (EGC): European green crab trapping is beginning to wind down as tides become less than optimal and availability of field hands decrease. Unfortunately, as trapping efforts are decreasing, catches are increasing, predominately because of an uptick of young of the year EGC (a delayed but expected occurrence). During the week of the 19th, 24 EGC were captured at one site in Samish Bay (to note: from April to August only 23 EGC were captured in all



Commission staff highlights - [September 2022]

Samish Bay), and 23 EGC were captured in Drayton Harbor, with the majority of all captures being made of young of the year EGC.

Derelict Vessels: MRCs and tribal partners are creating lists of vessels they are interested in removing. A prioritization workgroup will be formed in October to evaluate the lists and set priorities. NWS Staff are talking with DNR, MRCs, Sea Grant, and local ports about holding a pilot derelict vessel turn-in event. Derelict vessel work will start in 2023.

Operations

Collaborative Conservation Workshop: An estimated 55 participants joined the event, with some challenging transportation/ferry issues and a few not passing the Ecology health screening. Commission staff sent a post-event evaluation and can share the results, including highlights from what they would like to see as next steps.

Meetings Attended

Allie attended: Commission-Foundation staff meeting 9/1; Salish Sea Voluntary No-Anchor Zone Workgroup 9/8; Collaborative Conservation Workshop 9/16; Executive Committee meeting 9/19; Snohomish MRC meeting 9/21

Dana attended: Commission-Foundation staff meeting 9/1; Island MRC meeting 9/6; Salish Sea Voluntary No-Anchor Zone Workgroup 9/8; Collaborative Conservation Workshop 9/16; Executive Committee meeting 9/19; Nearshore PSEMP 9/20; North Pacific Coast MRC meeting 9/20; Tools to Evaluate Water Quality 9/29; Canopy Kelp Vital Sign Project Team meeting 9/30

Jeff attended: Commission-Foundation staff meeting 9/1; Transboundary Kelp Node – Kelp Restoration/Early Life History WG – 9/13; Collaborative Conservation Workshop 9/16

Leah attended: Collaborative Conservation Workshop 9/16; Snohomish MRC meeting 9/21

Lucas attended: Green crab strategy meeting 8/31; NWSC/F staff meeting 9/1; Jefferson MRC derelict vessel meeting 9/13; NWS Reauthorization meeting 9/14; Collaborative Conservation Workshop 9/16; Derelict vessel turn-in meeting 9/27

Nathan attended: Commission Foundation staff meeting 9/1; Whatcom MRC meeting 9/1; NW Straits Executive Committee meeting 9/19; NW Straits staff DEI discussion

Sasha attended: Commission-Foundation staff meeting 9/1; Jefferson MRC meeting 9/6; Collaborative Conservation Workshop 9/16; Executive Committee meeting 9/19; Clallam MRC meeting 9/19

Northwest Straits Foundation September 2022 Program Updates

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*

Mt. Erie Elementary Rain Garden Work Party



Volunteers celebrate at the Back-to-school rain garden work party at Mt. Erie Elementary on September 3rd

The Northwest Straits Foundation hosted a “back-to-school” rain garden work party at Mt. Erie Elementary School with help from our amazing volunteers, the City of Anacortes, Skagit MRC, and the Anacortes School District.

Caroline Gibson Scholarship in Marine Studies

On September 23rd, 2022, NWSF is hosting a reception honoring the first recipients of the Caroline Gibson Scholarship in Marine Conservation. This year’s scholars are giving short presentations on their graduate research, passion for marine conservation and inspiring hope for the Salish Sea. The reception is 4 pm – 6 pm, Friday, September 23, at the Maritime Center 431 Water Street, Port Townsend, WA. [Click here to RSVP!](#)

Board of Directors

The Board is actively recruiting for new members to start January 1, 2023. The Foundation strives to have representatives from inside the Initiative and we welcome applications from within the MRCs. To learn more, please contact NWSF Board members Nan McKay (nan.mckay10@gmail.com) and Lee Whitford (leewhitford1@gmail.com).

Passport to Marine Adventure

The Passport to Marine Adventure app has been acquiring new reward sites and compiling educational material for around 40 exploration sites. As new businesses get set up on the app, more discounts are available – encourage your friends and family to download the app if they haven't! The current and new sites all touch on different topics; the importance of rain gardens, nearshore restoration, forage fish habitat, bull kelp beds, and more. Local insight from MRC members about these beaches continues to be very helpful. Please contact Program Coordinator Brooke Friesen (friesen@nwstraitsfoundation.org) if you want to suggest a site, provide site information, or share your photos! [Click here to download the Passport to Marine Adventure](#)

Monitoring



Monitoring site on Turn Island in the San Juan Islands

NWSF has been powering through the end of the field season surveying restoration sites from San Juan County to Thurston County and everywhere in between. Our highlight of the field season was staying at Friday Harbor Labs while surveying sites on San Juan, Brown, Turn, and Orcas Islands.

Nearshore Restoration – Clayton Beach

Foundation staff Lisa Kaufman, Jason Morgan, and Haley Sherman had a meeting with the Department of Natural Resources, the Whatcom Marine Resources Committee, Washington State Parks, and David Wallin from Western Washington University to discuss aerial imagery possibilities at the Clayton Beach restoration site. The aerial imagery would be used as a visual tool to monitor changes in the eelgrass beds pre- and post- restoration. There was also a discussion surrounding the possibility of restoring the large, dredged area in the sub tidal region. The area was dredged when the trolley was installed on the shoreline. We believe the area was a large eelgrass bed.

Orca Recovery Day 2022



ORCA RECOVERY DAY October 15th, 2022

Volunteer Opportunity: Cornet Bay Restoration Site

Join The Northwest Straits Foundation and Island County Marine Resources
Committee for Orca Recovery Day 2022

Volunteers will be weeding and spreading mulch to enhance the shoreline. A walking tour of the restoration sites will highlight how restoration at Cornet Bay and sites around the Sound help our Orcas.

NWSF and Island County MRC is hosting an Orca Recovery Day event on Saturday, October 15th. Come from 10am-1pm and help enhance the Cornet Bay Restoration site. [RSVP by clicking here](#)

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Clallam

Month/Year: September 2022

Submitted by: Rebecca Mahan

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

- Continued monthly Forage Fish sampling on three beaches.
- Monthly shellfish biotoxins sampling at Pillar Point and Freshwater Bay.
- Four MRC Members and Coordinator attended NWSI Collaborative Conservation Workshop in Padilla Bay 9/16/22.

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):

September Clallam MRC meeting is September 19th, 2022. Taylor Frierson is guest speaker who will be discussing WDFW's Purple sea urchin project.

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): 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. Kelp monitoring surveys have been completed and data is being processed.

Shellfish Biotoxin monitoring: CMRC member Bob Vreeland and Coleman Byrnes volunteer are sampling Freshwater Bay and Pillar Point on a monthly basis. Both beaches have been closed due to high toxin levels.

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.): 3 MRC members, intern Alisa Taylor and 2 other volunteers helped WDFW process Purple sea urchins the week of September 12th.

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: September/ 2022

Submitted by: Kelly Zupich

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

- MRC Volunteer Appreciation Gathering
- MRC Picnic
- Family Outdoor Day

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

- The Executive Committee is targeting members of the farming and Navy communities to try and get more diverse representation to serve as members. Additionally, Gwendolyn Hannam and Hannah Liss resigned, and we will be working towards filling their vacancies also.

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

- Aug 17: MRC Picnic
- Aug 19: Cornet Bay Stewardship 10:00-2:00
- Aug 20: Family Outdoor Discovery Day
- Aug 25: MRC Executive Committee
- Sept 2: Cornet Bay Stewardship 10:00-2:00
- Sept 6: MRC Committee Meeting

Upcoming Meetings/Events:

- Sept 24: Camano 101 Event
- Oct 4: MRC Committee Meeting
- Oct 8: Shore Friendly/MRC Presentation at Camano Library
- Oct 15: Orca Recovery Day at Cornet Bay
- Oct 20: MRC Executive Committee Meeting
- Nov 1: MRC Committee Meeting

MRC Volunteer Appreciation Gathering : We hosted a volunteer appreciation gathering this month. Our MRC realizes our work would not be possible without the amazing, dedicated volunteers who conduct research, provide education, and steward our restoration sites. We gathered at Bowman Bay on a beautiful sunny day and shared our gratefulness for our volunteers and their work. The volunteers requested that we do this annually. 😊

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):

Cornet Bay Stewardship: We held another event on September 6 to continue spreading the giant pile of hog fuel to help smother the weeds and provide a moisture barrier for the plants and trees. We finally got the whole site mulched! We will continue to layer the mulch to get a nice thick layer to prevent further weeds moving into the site.

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.

Bull Kelp Surveys: Surveys on both islands will wrap up this month. We are working to get all the data in from the teams to get our final reporting done.

Port Susan MSA: We are getting meetings set up to start the second stage of this work.

Derelict Vessels: Over the last month staff and volunteers have been working to locate derelict vessels that can be removed in Island County. Between kayaking, walking, and boating we were able to identify 4 potential boats for removal. Our MRC is focused on boats on private property since most other locations such as County, State, and Navy lands have funding and coverage for removals. There is currently no program to help shoreline homeowners deal with abandoned or derelict vessels showing up on their tidelands.

Outreach – Family Outdoor Day: We hosted an educational booth at the Family Outdoor Day at Fort Casey State Park. The event attracted around 200 children. The volunteers had a wonderful time sharing their knowledge about the importance of our marine food webs with dozens of families. Volunteers noted that the children were well versed on food webs and excited to learn new things.

Outreach – Derelict Vessel Article: We wrote an article for the Whidbey Weekly newspaper covering information about our pilot derelict vessel program. It provides readers with action steps they can take to turn a vessel or report boats they find on our shorelines. [14.38-September-22-2022-WEB.pdf \(whidbeyweekly.com\)](#)

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):



Family Outdoor Day – Volunteer
Barbara Bennett

photo by Mary Williford



Cornet Bay Restoration – Fully mulched!

photo by Kelly Zupich



Volunteer Appreciation Gathering

photo by Kelly Zupich



Derelict Vessel Search

photo by Kelly Zupich

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Jefferson

Month/Year: September 2022

Submitted by: Monica Montgomery

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

- Eight MRC members helped to table the Wooden Boat Festival on September 9-11 in Port Townsend, reaching 353 direct contacts and acquiring 16 new sign-ups for notification of MRC meetings and/or volunteer opportunities.
- The MRC is prepping for a new rain garden installation on [September 28](#) behind the WSU Extension office building in Port Hadlock, to treat stormwater flowing into South Port Townsend Bay.
- The MRC is working with the Sea Dragons to create education outreach materials, including a StoryMap and website project page detailing the ROV derelict crab pot removal efforts (including results from the side scan sonar surveys).

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

August 22 – Forage fish survey at Dabob

August 26 – NWSC monthly meeting

August 27 – Third kelp survey

September 6 – MRC monthly meeting

September 8 – Salish Sea No-Anchor Zones meeting

September 8-11 – Education & Outreach: tabling Wooden Boat Festival

September 12 – Olympia oyster meeting: 2023 shell spread logistics

September 13 – Derelict vessel removal project meeting

September 16 – NWSI Collaborative Conservation Workshop

September 19 – Executive Committee meeting

September 21 – Derelict vessel removal project meeting 2

Upcoming Events/Meetings

September 21-23 – Coast MRC Summit

September 23 – Strait ERN LIO quarterly meeting

September 26 – Forage fish survey at Dabob

September 27 – Derelict vessel turn-in event meeting

September 28 – New rain garden installation in Port Hadlock

September 30 – NWSC monthly meeting

September – Forage fish survey at Adelma

October 4 – MRC monthly meeting

October – Forage fish survey at Adelma, Dabob & Fort Townsend

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:** The survey team is beginning to prepare for the 2022-2023 survey season, working on scheduling a survey date in October.
- **Forage fish - Adelma Beach (Index):** The Project Lead (Jeff) did not survey in August.
- **Forage fish - Dabob Bay (Index):** The Project Lead (Sarah) surveyed on August 22 with the MRC Coordinator, one MRC member (Troy) and one community member (Anne). Sarah plans to survey again on September 26.
- **Kelp:** Two MRC members (Solenne, Brenda), the MRC Coordinator, and two community volunteers (Yewah, Kaiwen) conducted the third and last survey of 2022 on August 27.

2. Rain Gardens:

- The MRC is prepping for a new rain garden installation on [September 28](#) behind the WSU Extension office in Port Hadlock, to capture stormwater flowing into South Port Townsend Bay. Additional plants will be purchased for a separate workday to supplement some of the existing rain gardens.

3. Education & Outreach:

- Eight MRC members (Sarah, Troy, Brenda, Solenne, Betsy, Judy, Frank, Gordon) helped to table the Wooden Boat Festival on September 9-11 in Port Townsend, resulting in 353 direct contacts and 16 new sign-ups for notification of MRC meetings and/or volunteer opportunities.

4. Olympia Oysters:

- The MRC Coordinator and two members (Neil, Gordon) met on September 12 to discuss logistics and cost estimates for spreading a large amount of shell at the Powerlines Site in 2023.
- The subcommittee plans to meet in October to discuss 2023 plans.

5. Voluntary No-Anchor Zones:

- The subcommittee is still working out plans to service the Mystery Bay buoys.
- The MRC Coordinator and one member (Gordon) attended the Salish Sea NAZ meeting on Sep 8.
- The MRC monitored boater compliance during the Wooden Boat Festival, on September 9 and 10, finding 100% boater compliance.

6. Mapping Lost Crab Pots:

- The Sea Dragons team is working on a StoryMap and website project page to share the project with the public, to be finalized by the end of the month.
- The MRC is beginning to scope new locations (i.e., popular recreational crabbing sites) for side scan sonar surveys and ROV removal efforts in 2023.

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 Coordinator and seven MRC members (Sarah, Troy, Neil, Betsy, Brenda Jeff, Heidi) plan to attend the NWSI Collaborative Conservation Workshop on Sep 16.

- The MRC Coordinator and two MRC members (Sarah, Brenda) met with Lucas Hart, Dana Oster and Eric Toews (Port of PT) on Sep 13 to discuss derelict vessel removal and the possibility of Vessel Turn-In events. The MRC will be meeting again to finalize its list of vessels of concern. The subcommittee (Brenda, Sarah, Heidi, Carol) and the MRC Coordinator met again on Sep 21 to follow up on final actions for generating the MRC's list of vessels of concern.

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

August 27 Third kelp survey (Monica, Yewah, Brenda) – Photo by Solenne Walker



August 27 Third kelp survey (Kaiwen, Solenne) – Photo by Yewah Lau



August 27 Third kelp survey (Brenda, Monica, Kaiwen, Solenne) – Photo by Yewah Lau



September 9-11 Wooden Boat Festival – Photos by Monica Montgomery
Sarah and Frank engaging with festival goers at the Jefferson MRC booth





No-Anchor Zone compliant boats at Wooden Boat Festival





MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: San Juan County

Month/Year: Sept 2022

Submitted by: Tyler Davis

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

- First in-person monthly meeting in 2+ years proved fruitful and was much appreciated
- Sinking of Aleutian Isle continues to be of critical concern and MRC held a subcommittee meeting to discuss merits of a town forum
- All summer projects are wrapping up and data currently being summarized for Q4 reporting

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

No new membership, leadership, or staff changes to report. However, recent MRC member Adam Parrott (Port of Friday Harbor) has shown interest in being the LIO representative, replacing Phil Green; we will confirm this at the next meeting in October.

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

- Monthly MRC meeting – Sept 1st (with LIO/CAG)
- Stewardship Network meeting – Sept 7th
- Great Islands Clean-up – Sept 24th
- Next MRC meeting: Oct 6th (virtual)

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

Nothing new to report this month.

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

September is the final month of our 2022 vessel monitoring project. Assessment of data from this project, as well as the *U/va.* sampling and visitor outreach projects at False Bay, will be presented in the impending Q4 report mid-October.

The MSA Plan Strategic Action Review, currently complete in draft format, will have a formal update provided in the Q4 report, with an eye to a final report due by the end of the year.

Plastic Free Salish Sea has been a focus this month. We decided to highlight this program at the NWSC Collaborative Conservation Workshop, and it was very well received and generated good engagement at our table, with several other MRCs expressing interest in adopting the program.

We have also been gearing up for one of PFSS's biggest events of the year, the Fall Great Islands Clean-up. This will be held on September 24th (two days from the time of writing), with organizers in the communities of San Juan Island, Lopez Island, Orcas Island, and Shaw Island. This time around, we have also reached out to some of the outer island communities and have organized a county vessel to pick up their collected beach debris.

There are no updates on the SeaBin, unfortunately.

The MRC has identified and contracted with an artist for our logo redesign. Jason LaClair is a renowned local Salish artist specializing in both logo design and Salish artwork, and is currently sketching some ideas to present to the MRC ahead of October's 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.):

San Juan MRC's first in-person meeting since the dawn of Covid was held this month and proved a great success. In practice, it was a hybrid meeting as some members couldn't make it in person but still joined virtually. Frankie Robertson brought cupcakes, we had coffee, donuts, and fruit, and it felt very convivial and productive. The MRC looks forward to continuing these meetings on a quarterly basis.

We were joined by Brendan Cowan at the September meeting to discuss the sinking of the fishing vessel Aleutian Isle off the west side of San Juan Island, which continues to be a serious issue in our county. Brendan provided a candid and much-appreciated update. At the time of writing, the Aleutian Isle has successfully been lifted from its resting depth of 200+ ft. and been placed on a barge for transport.

Relatedly, MRC Chair Christina Koons hosted an MRC subcommittee meeting to discuss the merits and potential pitfalls of hosting a town forum to address public concerns, comments, and questions. The MRC felt strongly that acting on behalf of the public was important, but a public meeting may not be the most effective and productive use of time, and will instead promote public engagement in a special county council meeting (date TBD) on the subject, supported by a letter to the county council from the MRC.

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



LEFT: Designer MRC cupcakes masterfully created by Frankie Robertson for the MRC's first in-person meeting in 2+ years. Photo courtesy of Christina Koons.

BELOW: Participating in SCAT surveys to assess potential shoreline impact of the sunken Aleutian Isle. Photo on left shows crane barge (upper left corner) staged for vessel lifting; photo on right shows transient orcas passing between crane barge and west side of San Juan Island. Photos courtesy of Tyler Davis.





LEFT: NWSC Collaborative Conservation Workshop on September 16th. The delegation that attended from San Juan County found this meeting both enjoyable and very productive. Photo courtesy of Tyler Davis

BELOW: Flier for the Great Islands Clean-up on September 24th (similar fliers were created for Orcas, Lopez, and Shaw Islands).





Join us!

Saturday, September 24th from 10am-2pm

**Help keep our roads and beaches
litter-free during this biannual,
all-islands community event!**

Great Islands' Clean-up  page for updates
or www.plasticfreesalishsea.org/events

San Juan Island Information

San Juan volunteers can meet at 10am at the San Juan Island Brewing Co. parking lot (410 A St., Friday Harbor) to pick-up trash collection equipment and receive beach/road assignments. Coffee and goodies will be provided to fuel your efforts (bring your own coffee cup)! Drop-off collected trash at same location by 2pm.

Contact **Katie Fleming** with questions.
katief@sanjuanco.com or 360-762-5821

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Skagit

Month/Year: September/2022

Submitted by: Tracy/ Diane

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

- Fidalgo Bay Day was held Saturday, August 20th at the Fidalgo Bay Resort. Thanks to the 36 organizations and 155 volunteers who helped make this year's in-person event a huge success! An estimated 400 people attended. The opening ceremony was led by MRC member Jay Lind and Samish tribal member Rosie Cayou James. The event offered a wide variety of indoor and outdoor educational booths and activities including a beach seining demonstration, a touch tank, a whale skull, microscopes, games, kids crafts, and face painting. 175 attendees participated in the Discovery Passport activity and 35 kids competed in the coloring contest to win a spot on the cover of next year's Discovery Passport. Food included popcorn, a chowder competition from 3 local restaurants, complimentary samples of grilled shellfish, and a no-host traditional Samish salmon BBQ lunch. There were two newspaper articles about the event.

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):

- **September 8-** Skagit MRC Monthly Meeting (9am-11am). The Committee signed a letter of recommendation in support of Skagit Land Trust's grant proposal to revitalize their volunteer stewardship program. In addition, the Committee signed a letter of commitment to collaborate with other community partners in support of the Culturally Responsive Elementary Science Teaching (CREST) project if funded.
- **September 16-** NWSI Collaborative Workshop: Attended by 6 Skagit MRC members.
- **October 13-** Skagit MRC's next Monthly Meeting (9am-11am) 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:** This fall, the Advisory Committee will be focusing on the implementation of a part-time paid stewardship coordinator position. This role will help provide support and coordinate volunteer opportunities with stewards. The Advisory Committee took a month off in August. In September, they will begin reviewing feedback from last year's trainees and presenters and will start the process of planning and refining the 2023 training program. There are 342 stewards, and since 2014 they have contributed over 40,000 hours of service.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** Fidalgo Bay Day was held Saturday, August 20th at the Fidalgo Bay Resort. Thanks to the 36 organizations and 155 volunteers who helped make this year's in-person event a huge success! An estimated 400 people attended. The opening ceremony was led by MRC member Jay Lind and Samish tribal member Rosie Cayou James. The event offered a wide variety of indoor and outdoor educational booths and activities including a beach seining demonstration, a touch tank, a whale skull, microscopes, games, kids crafts, and face painting. 175 attendees participated in the Discovery Passport activity and 35 kids competed in the coloring contest to win a spot on the cover of next year's Discovery Passport. Food included popcorn, a chowder competition from 3 local restaurants, complimentary samples of grilled

shellfish, and a no-host traditional Samish salmon BBQ lunch. There were two newspaper articles about the event. A final report will be prepared in September.

- Forage Fish Surveys: Volunteers will continue surveying at all the sites in September, October, November, and December. This seems to be a rather odd spawning year for surf smelt and they haven't seen the mass spawning events that they usually have seen in previous years. They do not know the cause, but surf smelt are somewhat sensitive to water salinity, so they may have been impacted by the freshwater input from earlier this year. In addition to MRC surveys, the volunteers also extensively survey Fidalgo Bay for DNR, and are thinking about reducing the number of samples they will be taking in the future. The volunteers have also been asked to help do forage fish surveys at the beach property adjacent to the Samish Island flower farm that was recently acquired by the Skagit Land Trust. It will also be a good opportunity for Padilla Bay staff to get involved in forage fish monitoring along those beaches.
- MRC- Salish Sea School Intern: The monitoring continues. The interns will be monitoring for two or three more months, and then putting together data analysis and presentations. Presentations will be held January 7th and Skagit MRC members are invited. It will also be a good opportunity to learn what other participants in the program have been working on. Pete will talk with the Salish Sea School about doing another year of the program with Skagit MRC support.
- Kids on the Beach: So far, Conway is currently the only school signed up to participate in the fall 2022 Kids on the Beach program. Classroom and field activity dates have been set for the middle of October. The spring program will likely involve 2-4 more schools.
- Kayak Kelp Surveys: September is the last month of kelp surveys this season. The kelp appears to be healthy at all sites. Invasive sargassum kelp was present at the Shannon Point East survey site and appeared to be much denser than previously observed. They also saw for the first time *Saccharina latissima*, which had epiphytes all along it. The perimeter track at Coffin Rocks was taken by a new kayaker, so the perimeter looked a little different than previous surveys. 11 purple sea stars were spotted at the Biz Point location.
- Bowman Bay Restoration: The last volunteer party of the year was on August 8th. Nathaniel White with Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group (SFEG) did a final round of watering in early September, and staff will do a final walk-through on September 30th and will provide a final report. SFEG costs were lower than expected because they rigged up a water tank rather than renting one, so there is some money left on the contract. The leftover funding will be used to purchase additional plants for the site.
- Pinto Abalone Recovery: No updates. The field work is complete, and now they are working on data analysis and report writing. A final report will be provided at the end of this month.
- Olympia Oyster Restoration: No updates.
- Sharpes Corner Stormwater Sampling: The Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) required by Ecology for stormwater sampling won't likely be completed and approved prior to the first flush this fall or before the MRC grant funding expires. Skagit MRC plans to collaborate with Amy Eberling's Salish Sea School to do the sampling and lab tests this fall because they have funding which does not require the full QAPP. The MRC will re-evaluate whether the full QAPP requirement is worth the \$2,000 MRC grant funds or if it makes more sense to collaborate with the Salish Sea School do the sampling again next year.

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

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



Photos Below by Cindy Elston: Fidalgo Bay Day 2022 event.





MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Snohomish

Month/Year: September 2022

Submitted by: Elisa Dawson

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

- Snohomish County's derelict vessel contractor has removed all 4 of the derelict vessels that were contracted for removal in 2022. Snohomish County is processing the invoices and then will seek reimbursement from DNR. DNR's new legislation allows for 100% reimbursement, up from the 90% previously available.
- The Meadowdale BNSF railway bridges were installed earlier in September. Work on the estuary continues through October 15. Elisa is working with consultant ESA on the Meadowdale Monitoring webpage which will be hosted on the MRC webpage, and the creation of a story map.
- The MRC is hosting a beach cleanup at Picnic Point Park on September 24th in partnership with WSU Snohomish County Beach Watchers and Zero Waste Washington

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):

Elisa met with Snohomish County Parks staff on August 24th to discuss interpretive signage for the Meadowdale project.

Tom Doerge, Traci Sanderson, Julie Schlenger, and Elisa Dawson completed kelp monitoring at Edmonds on August 25th.

The Meadowdale Monitoring Team met on August 30th.

Staff Elisa Dawson met with Island County MRC Staff Kelly on September 7th to discuss Port Susan Phase 2 work.

Elisa Dawson met with ESA to discuss an amendment to the Meadowdale Monitoring contract for 2023.

Joycelyn Blue, Elisa Dawson, Sara Maxwell, Bob Margulis, Tim Ellis, and Allan Hicks attended the Northwest Straits Collaborative Conservation Workshop on September 16.

Elisa Dawson attended the Coastal MRC conference 9/21/22-9/23/22 in Cathlamet, Washington.

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 has finalized the Port Susan Phase 1 final report, one pager, and supporting materials completed by ESA. MRC Staff are creating an Amendment to the contract with ESA to work on Phase 2, which will start in October.

Derelict Vessels (NWSF funds): Snohomish County's derelict vessel contractor has removed all 4 of the derelict vessels that were contracted for removal in 2022. Snohomish County is processing the invoices and then will seek reimbursement from DNR. DNR's new legislation allows for 100% reimbursement, up from the 90% previously available.

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. September sampling at Picnic Point and Howarth Park was completed on September 13.

Nearshore Restoration: The Meadowdale BNSF railway bridges were installed earlier in September. Work on the estuary continues through October 15. Elisa is working with consultant ESA on the Meadowdale Monitoring webpage which will be hosted on the MRC webpage, and the creation of a story map.

Marine Vegetation Monitoring: Kelp Monitoring throughout Snohomish County was completed in July and August. Snohomish County has hired DNR for eelgrass monitoring in Port Susan and Hat Island, which was completed in late summer as well. The formal report from DNR is expected in early 2023.

No updates for:

- Snohomish Estuary Pilings Project
- Crabber Outreach
- Oil Spills
- Stormwater (formerly Mussel Watch)
- Outreach

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:

- Beach Cleanup – September 24th at Picnic Point Beach
- Forage Fish Monitoring – October 10 at Picnic Point and Howarth Park
- MRC October meeting – October 19, virtual
- Meadowdale Monitoring Team site visit meeting at Meadowdale Park October 26.

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



Meadowdale with one bridge installed. 8/29/2022



Second bridge completed at Meadowdale 9/18/2022

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Whatcom

Month/Year: AUGUST 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 interest position. This vacancy is advertised on the MRC homepage <https://www.whatcomcountymrc.org/>
- A solicitation for the 2022/2023 forage fish intern closed on September 9. 8 applications were received. Applications are currently under review and a candidate will be chosen by September 23.
- The MRC will vote on a new agenda item titled "Community Update" to replace the Public Comment Period in order to no longer be subject to the Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA).

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):

- The MRC held their September meeting on September 1. Highlights included:
 - The committee continued discussing the option of removing the public comment period from their monthly meetings in order to no longer be subject to the Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA). The discussion stemmed from the recent amendment to the OPMA requiring a physical meeting location where the public can attend meetings. This law results in MRC staff and additional County staff hosting the MRC meeting in the Garden Room every month despite very few MRC members or public choosing to join the meeting in person. The Whatcom County Prosecuting Attorney suggested language to include on a new agenda item titled "Community Updates", which would still allow and encourage input from the community on local marine issues of the MRC's interest. The MRC will vote on the language change in October and move forward with meeting in person on a quarterly basis (or as desired), with the remaining meetings hosted virtually.
 - A subcommittee was formed to review the newly released EIS for the Cherry Point North Terminal. The subcommittee will share suggested comments to the full committee, and a decision will be made on submitting a comment letter on behalf of the MRC. Issues of concern include: increased vessel traffic, potential impact to SRKW, and potential increased risk of vessel spill related to both crude and refined product.

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

- MRC Staff will be drafting project proposals for the Northwest Straits Commission Congressional Directed Spending for each of the MRC projects proposed to be funded through that source. Members/Project Champions will be helping finalize the proposals by September 30.

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

Education and Outreach

- [Bellingham SeaFeast](#) occurred on September 17. 3 members shared the MRC booth. A tiny anemone stole the show under the microscope. The MRC made contact with at least 200 visitors – many of whom were not aware of the MRC.
- Staff from the Lummi Nation Natural Resources Department are scheduled to present salmonid research in the South Fork Nooksack River at the October MRC meeting.

Monitoring

- Kelp surveys have been completed at four sites: Cherry Pt/Gulf Rd, Point Whitehorn, Aiston Preserve, and SW Lummi Island. Alden Bank was not surveyed this year. Data will be entered in Kobo Toolbox once received from project champion. Eleanor Hines (Project Champion) will be terming off the MRC in January 2023 and a project champion is needed to continue the project.
- A solicitation for the 2022/2023 forage fish intern closed on September 9. 8 applications were received. Applications are currently under review and a candidate will be chosen by September 23.
- Forage fish surveys have been paused at Little Squalicum Beach due to the [Little Squalicum Beach Park Shoreline Enhancement Project](#) which is well underway. Beach access should be available at Little Squalicum Beach, Little Squalicum Park/Estuary (the MRC's original survey location), and further west of the park/estuary site, in October. The City of Bellingham has mentioned that it would be helpful to match the pre-construction monitoring with post-construction. It was suggested the MRC survey in the beach nourishment areas for both the City's Little Squalicum Estuary and Port's Little Squalicum Beach projects. Two additional sites were recommended further west along the shoreline, which correspond with the City's pre-construction monitoring in 2016 and 2017.

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: