



Meeting: Northwest Straits Commission
Location: Zoom Virtual Meeting
Date: October 28, 2022
Time: 10:00 AM-12:00 PM

To join the Zoom meeting, [CLICK HERE](#) Meeting ID: 870 3181 3923 Passcode: 961546
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	Opening and introductions Tribal acknowledgement Approval of August 2022 meeting minutes	Tom Cowan, vice chair
10:10 – 10:20	Welcome	Representative Debra Lekanoff, 40 th District
10:20 – 10:30	Committee reports Executive Committee Science Advisory Committee External Relations Committee	Tom Cowan Julia Parrish Chris Castner
10:30 – 10:40	Business items 2023 meeting and retreat dates Pew – final workshop	Staff Lucas Dana



agenda

10:40 – 11:10	Backyard Buoys Project	Jan Newton, University of WA
11:10 – 11:15	Puget Sound Partnership update	Jennifer Grimm, Puget Sound Partnership
11:15 – 11:45	MRC Reports	MRC Representatives
11:45 – 11:50	Meeting highlights and action items Identify key points and action items from this meeting for MRC reps to report back to their MRCs	All
11:50 – 12:00	Public comment	All

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

Next meeting: December 9, 2022, 10am-12pm.



Minutes

September 30, 2022 - 10:00 AM-12:00PM
Zoom - Virtual meeting
Northwest Straits Commission meeting

Attendees:

Commission Members: Elsa Schwartz (Island-Chair), Chris Castner, Julia Parrish, Dianne Hennebert (Skagit), Tim Ellis (Snohomish), Cecilia Gobin (Tribal), Nan McKay, Karin Roemers-Kleven (San Juan-alternate), Alan Clark (Clallam), Jennifer Grimm (Puget Sound Partnership), Mike MacKay (Whatcom – alternate)

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

Others in Attendance: Don Hunger (NW Straits Foundation), Phil Salditt (NW Straits Foundation), Austin Rose (Whatcom), Scott Pearson (WA Dept of Fish and Wildlife)

Absent: Bob Cecile (Whatcom), Christina Koons (San Juan), Tom Cowan, Jeff Taylor (Jefferson), Laura Blackmore

Welcome and Introductions

Chair Elsa Schwartz opened the meeting with the tribal acknowledgment and introductions of attendees. The Commission approved the minutes from the August 26 meeting as written by consensus.

Committee Reports

Executive Committee: Lucas noted that the approved 2023 Commission meeting schedule did not include a retreat. The Commission approved by consensus to cancel the March 31 meeting in favor of a two-day retreat. Commission staff will identify potential retreat dates to confirm with the Commission at a later meeting. The Executive Committee recommended adoption of the Science Advisory Committee's draft Articles of Association, which the Commission approved by consensus. Lucas also reported that he is working with Department of Ecology staff to revise the language on the state funding proviso for the 2023-25 biennium.

Science Advisory Committee: Julia Parrish thanked the Commission for approving the Committee's Articles of Association. She plans to work on scheduling meetings, which will be less frequent but more pointed, as well as adding depth to the current membership. She also noted that the members of the Committee who were able to attend the Collaborative Conservation Workshop gave positive feedback on the event.

External Relations Committee: Chris Castner reported that Senator Murray introduced the Northwest Straits Initiative reauthorization bill ([S4903](#)), which was referred to the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee. He will share updates on the bill activities as action happens and asked the members of the Commission to consider and share ideas on what outreach they might want to do on the bill once it passes.

Business items

- Collaborative Conservation Workshop – Sasha shared a summary of the evaluations submitted by participants at the September 16 event. Overall, there was a positive response, and staff will work on following up on any action items recommended.
- Green crab update – Jeff shared an update on the green crab trapping season to date, including a late season surge in the number of crabs caught predominantly due to the appearance of small (juvenile) European green crabs, many of which were caught in saline tidally-influenced regions of creeks. Members of the Commission had a variety of questions related to activities, what is known and not known about the population, as well as the Commission’s role and next steps.
- Staffing update – Lucas reported that the Program Coordinator position is vacant and will be posted soon, along with a Communications Consultant position.
- Derelict vessel turn-in event planning – Lucas updated the Commission on the discussions around derelict vessels. Interested MRC and tribal representatives will be forming a prioritization workgroup in October, and planning is underway with WA Dept of Natural Resources on derelict vessel removal as well as a pilot derelict vessel turn in event.

Commented [HS(S1): Flagging this edit as changed since the original draft was sent out. This incorporates two edits.

Monitoring Washington’s marine wildlife by air, water, and land: Scott Pearson from WA Dept of Fish and Wildlife shared a presentation on surveying Washington’s seabirds and marine mammals. He noted that they work closely in partnership with other agencies and entities. The reasons for monitoring include understanding population status, trends, and distribution; ecosystem impacts; impact of human activities; and emerging issues. The causes of declines, effectiveness of conservation actions, the importance of specific places, and the impacts of one species on another are all of interest to the state.

Data collected on marine birds and mammals can be explored online at <https://geodataservices.wdfw.wa.gov/wp/MarineSeabird/index.html>, or data on winter seabirds at <https://gispublic.dfw.wa.gov/WinterSeabird/>.

Partner updates

NW Indian Fisheries Commission: Cecilia Gobin shared an update on the derelict vessel partnership between the NW Straits Commission and interested tribes. She noted that there is a lot of interest, but also some capacity and liability issues to resolve.

Cecilia also reported that tribal leaders will be travelling to Washington, DC to meet with headquarter officials about key habitat issues and asks that Tribes have asked for, and continue to ask for, through the Treaty Rights at Risk Forum. The trip is expected to occur in November.

Puget Sound Partnership: Jennifer Grimm updated on staffing for the Partnership, with Ahren Stroming joining as the Special Assistant for Federal Affairs, who will serve as Laura Blackmore's alternate for Commission meetings in the future. Jenn also noted that there is a Request for Proposals out from the Strategic Initiative Leads. Those are available at <https://pugetsoundestuary.wa.gov/rfp/>.

Northwest Straits Foundation: Don reported that the Foundation board recently approved their annual budget, which includes piloting the Salish Sea Corps in 2023, stewardship activities, continuation of the Caroline Gibson scholarships, strengthening outreach, and highlighting the work of MRCs through the Passport to Marine Adventure app.

MRC Updates

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

Clallam – Alan Clark

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

Island – Elsa Schwartz

- 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.
- MRC Picnic
- Family Outdoor Day: We hosted an educational booth at the Family Outdoor Day at Fort Casey State Park. The event attracted around 200 children.

Jefferson – Troy McKelvey

- 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).

San Juan – Karin Roemers-Kleven

- 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

Skagit – Dianne Hennebert

- 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.

Snohomish – Tim Ellis

- 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

Whatcom –

- 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).

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 Reauthorization:** The Northwest Straits Initiative reauthorization bill was introduced in the Senate ([S4903](#)) by Senator Murray. It was referred to the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee.
- **Monitoring Washington’s marine wildlife by air, water, and land:** Scott Pearson from WA Department of Fish and Wildlife gave an overview of how they monitor seabirds and marine

mammals, in partnership with other agencies and entities. To explore data collected, go to <https://geodataservices.wdfw.wa.gov/wp/MarineSeabird/index.html>

- **Green crab:** Commission staff shared a late season update on green crab trapping, noting a surge in the number of crabs caught.
- **Derelict vessels:** Lucas updated the Commission on planning efforts for the derelict vessel removal and the pilot derelict vessel turn in event. A workgroup will be formed in October made up of interested MRC and tribal representatives. The workgroup will guide prioritization of vessel removals in 2023.

Public comment

There was no public comment.

October 28, 2022 - Northwest Straits Commission meeting: 10am-12pm via Zoom. Find more information [on our website](#).

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Commission staff highlights - [October 2022]

MRC Support

Congressionally directed spending: Commission staff are working with MRC project leads and staff to finalize the project proposals for grant agreements that will begin January 1, 2023.

2021-23 Grant agreements: Quarterly reporting and invoices, along with year one project deliverables are due from MRCs. Commission and Ecology staff are reviewing those for approval and payment. A selection of project reports will be shared in the [online resource library](#) section of our website.

Regional Projects

Kelp Plan: Staff presented the Kelp Plan to the transboundary Eastern Pacific Kelp Forest Restoration Workshop, hosted by The Nature Conservancy in San Francisco, which discussed restoration efforts from British Columbia through Baja California. Staff also presented the Kelp Plan at the Puget Sound Kelp Research and Monitoring Workgroup and discussed the development of a Puget Sound Kelp Project Inventory and need for people to fill in a survey to populate the inventory.

Additionally, staff hosted the final workshop as part of the project to link science and policy for kelp funded by Pew Charitable Trusts. Just under 40 people participated in the virtual workshop to collaborate on guidance and information needed to support implementation of rules and regulations that can better conserve kelp.

Kelp Monitoring: Surveys have concluded for the season and MRCs are continuing to upload their survey data to KoboToolbox for analysis.

Green Crab: Green crab surveys continued throughout October thanks to the involvement of WDFW technicians and recruited volunteers. Capture rates remained elevated for most of the month in Drayton Harbor and Samish Bay. The exception was in late October in Samish Bay, where no green crabs were captured in a single night set (10/20-21) in Colony Creek or during the same week at the mouth of Colony Creek or Taylor Shellfish, which were both trapped by Taylor Shellfish.

Forage Fish: Many MRC samples have made their way down to Olympia in the past month and WDFW has a new Washington Conservation Corps crew starting this month to process samples. The next data update from Kate Olson will be in early November.



Commission staff highlights - [October 2022]

Derelict Vessels: MRCs and tribal partners submitted a total of 18 vessels, to date, to be considered for removal in 2023. The Commission will form a prioritization workgroup to rank the vessels. The NW Straits Commission is talking with Sea Grant, local ports, and Dept. of Natural Resources about collaborating on derelict vessel turn-in events in 2023.

Operations

Staff: The Northwest Straits Commission Communications Consultant position is posted. The position will remain open until filled.

Meetings Attended

Allie attended: Puget Sound Kelp Research and Monitoring Workgroup (10/12);

Dana attended: Eastern Pacific Kelp Forest Restoration Workshop 10/3 & 10/4 Puget Sound Kelp Research and Monitoring Workgroup 10/12; Canopy Kelp Vital Sign Project Team Mtg 10/14; Linking Kelp Science and Policy Workshop 10/18; Current Efforts to Address 6PPD in Washington State 10/27; Canopy Kelp Vital Sign Project Team Mtg 10/28

Jeff attended: Presented at the Nature Conservancy's Eastern Pacific Kelp Forest Restoration Workshop 10/3-4; Presented at Puget Sound Kelp Research and Monitoring Workgroup (10/12); Skagit MRC meeting 10/13; Habitat Strategic Initiative Lead funding introduction 10/17; Linking Kelp Science and Policy Workshop #2 10/18; Snohomish MRC meeting (10/19); Transboundary Kelp Node Working Group meeting (10/26)

Leah attended: Puget Sound Kelp Research and Monitoring Workgroup (10/12); Skagit MRC meeting (10/13); Snohomish MRC meeting (10/19)

Lucas attended: Attended Puget Sound Day on the Sound 10/4; Shorelands and Environmental Assistance Program meeting with Governor Inslee staff 10/10; Habitat Strategic Initiative Lead funding introduction 10/17; Kelp workshop 10/18;

Sasha attended: Spills Program All Staff meeting 10/12; Ecology QA Team meeting 10/10; Results WA Lean Conference - Leveraging Diversity 10/19; Crab Team/MyCoast discussion 10/24



2023 meeting schedule

Virtual meetings are 10am-12pm via Zoom. In-person meetings are 10am-3pm, with lunch provided. In-person meeting locations are to be determined but will rotate throughout the Northwest Straits region.

January 27, 2023 (virtual)

February 24, 2023 (in-person) – Snohomish (tentative)

March 30-31, 2023, Retreat (in-person) – location pending

April 28, 2023 (virtual)

May 26, 2023 (in-person) – San Juan (tentative)

June 23, 2023 (virtual)

July 28, 2023 (in-person) – Island (tentative)

August 25, 2023 (virtual)

September 29, 2023 (in-person) – Skagit (tentative)

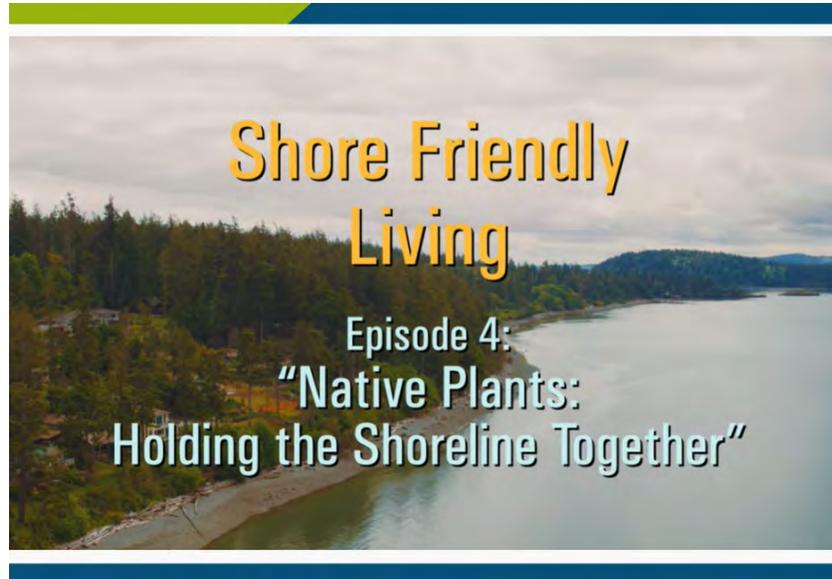
November 3-4, In-person conference, Port Townsend – Northwest Maritime Center

December 8, 2023 (virtual)

Northwest Straits Foundation October 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*

Shore Friendly Living Video Series: Native Plants - Holding the Shoreline Together



Screenshot from the newest Shore Friendly Living Video. Click the photo to watch!

We completed the fourth installment of our Shore Friendly Living series providing shoreline landowners with resources to protect their properties and the critical nearshore habitat they share. This one is the first of several videos focusing on vegetation management. Our marine riparian zones create the vital connections between the backshore/uplands and the marine waters. Trees and shrubs help to knit soils together while providing nutrients to the fish, bird and invertebrates that use the nearshore.

This video provides landowners with a big picture perspective of why vegetation matters. Future episodes in the vegetation series will drill down into the specific topics of the best native plants for shorelines, managing invasives, and managing views on bluffs.

In addition to finding opportunities to remove hard armor or prevent new armor from being installed, Shore Friendly programs across the region are working to provide resources to landowners to improve habitats that are manageable. Often, vegetation is the one thing shoreline landowners are willing to change that can have significant benefits to our shorelines while adding erosion protection to their homes.

Many thanks to Ben Alexander of Sound Native Plants, Walking Distance Media, Veda Environmental and of course our Shore Friendly partners at Swinomish Tribe and Thurston County Conservation District for assisting with the production of the video.

Visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-UsOWxh5xzY> to watch!

Hoypus Point Restoration



Construction progress at Hoypus Point (L) surf smelt egg found at Hoypus Point (R)

Restoration started, and then stopped at Hoypus Point when required forage fish surveys discovered eggs on the beach. PNW Civil completed as much of the upland work as they could to keep the project moving along including getting a start on excavating some of the fill, but a second survey ten days later resulted in more eggs. An overarching goal of this project is to improve the habitat utilized by these fish, so we are excited to know they are already there. Once construction resumes, their habitat will be even more suitable with 350 linear feet of armor removed and a riparian zone re-established with native trees, shrubs, and dunegrass.

Lummi Quarry Restoration

After seven years of planning, construction is set to begin at the end of October at the Lummi Quarry site, now known as Aiston Preserve. The site, owned and stewarded by the Lummi Island Heritage Trust will have shoreline armor and fill removed, a new pocket beach created, and an existing pocket beach restored. Additional work will recreate a marine riparian zone and reforested uplands while also completing required reclamation activities to ensure a safe and accessible site once it opens to the public in the future. NWSF has been grateful for the opportunity to assist the Heritage Trust and partners in moving this project from vision to implementation.

Caroline Gibson Scholarship in Marine Studies

We are looking forward to kicking off the second year of the Caroline Gibson Scholarship in Marine Studies. Like last year, we will be awarding three scholarships to students studying majors related to Marine Science in the Salish Sea region. We will be opening the application in November, so look for an announcement to share with your friends, family and students!

Derelict Gear

On August 30th the Northwest Straits Foundation received a report of a derelict gillnet at Point Roberts. After communications with WDFW and tribal enforcement officers it was determined a dive removal team was necessary and the Foundation's response team mobilized for operation. The crew of F/V Cadence spent 12 hours working to remove every piece of the 12,000 ft² net. The net was full of Dungeness crab, a common site for nets removed in the Point Roberts area. An estimated 1,420 Dungeness crab were entangled in the net, about 70% of which were female crab. Also found entangled in the net were approximately 260 red rock crab, 80 spiny dogfish sharks, 80 starry flounders, and 1 rhinoceros auklet which is the first seabird of its kind found in the over 5,800 nets removed by the Foundation.

Remember to do your part by reporting lost nets at derelictgear.org or 360-733-1725. We are here to help and get these nets out of the water before considerable harm is done.



A portion of the net removed filled with Dungeness crab

Orca Recovery Day – October 15, 2022



Volunteers at Cornet Bay worked hard on Orca Recovery Day to spread mulch

Northwest Straits Foundation partnered with Island County Marine Resources Committee to host an Orca Recovery Day event at Cornet Bay and Hoypus Point. Volunteers spread mulch to help the plants retain water and block invasive plants. Afterwards, the Foundation’s Director of Programs, Lisa Kaufman, led an educational walking tour to Hoypus Point. A huge thank you to all attendees!

Catch More Crab

On September 20th the Catch More Crab campaign concluded its advertising on the Facebook and Instagram platforms. The advertisements consisted of four educational videos that aimed to educate recreational crabbers on how to employ proper crabbing techniques and prevent crab pot loss. Foundation staff are compiling the results for inclusion in a report which will be available to the public in the coming months. Overall, our ads were displayed on 1,100,348 screens and watched 502,497 times.

Polnell Point

Northwest Straits Foundation completed the Cultural Resources Survey for the Polnell Point Restoration Project on September 27th. Our next steps are working with USFWS and the Navy on permitting and working towards final design with a goal of moving to the construction phase in Summer/Fall 2023.

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Clallam

Month/Year: October 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.

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):

In the October 17th MRC meeting Jason Morgan, Marine Project Manager for the the NWSF did a report out on the results of the Dungeness Bay and Port Townsend Bay Derelict Crab Pot 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.

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.):

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: October/ 2022

Submitted by: Kelly Zupich

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

- Orca Recovery Day at Cornet & Hoypus
- Camano Library Presentation – Shore Friendly Practices
- Hoypus Point Drone Footage and Educational Video

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

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

Previous 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

Upcoming Meetings/Events:

- Nov 1: MRC Committee Meeting
- Nov 10: Tentative – Hoypus Point Planting Party
- Dec 6: MRC Committee Meeting

Funding updates (newly awarded grants, in-kind support or other funding commitments): None
We are working to get a couple mini grants from the Salmon Recovery Technical Committee. The grants will be used to get an educational video made featuring Hoypus Point and plants or associated materials for Cornet Bay and/or Hoypus Point.

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

Cornet Bay Stewardship: We hosted an event to celebrate Orca Recovery Day. The day started with volunteers helping to finish spreading the “never ending” pile of mulch! Then we facilitated a guided walk for the volunteers to learn about the restoration history of Cornet Bay and walked out to see Hoypus Point restoration in progress. It was a beautiful day for us to spend the day in celebration of Orcas and the progress towards making a better habitat for all. Overall, we spread 20 yards of compost and 40 yards of mulch at site 1 at Cornet Bay this year.

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: We are working to get all the data in from the teams.

Port Susan MSA: We met with Snohomish MRC to discuss and plan next steps. While ESA develops a Communication plan for Snohomish, Island MRC will decide how to move forward once we have that report.

Outreach – Camano Library Presentation: As part of a continuing series of talks at the Camano library, Ann Prusha and Jill Lipoti presented information about preservation and enhancement of shoreline areas in Island County. Ann Prusha began by discussing the importance of the natural processes from bluffs and beach areas that support eel grass and kelp in the near shore areas. Then Jill Lipoti discussed the forage fish which make these forests of submerged vegetation their home. The forage fish are food for salmon and our iconic whale population. Jill and Ann described various volunteer opportunities for attendees who wanted to get more involved in citizen science about these topics. Ann provided information about the Shore Friendly program. Commissioner Janet St. Claire also spoke about the importance of preserving our marine resources. Attendees enjoyed the presentation and stayed afterward to speak to the presenters.

Outreach – Hoypus Drone Footage: The Watershed Company and MRC staff got out to Hoypus to get Pre-restoration drone footage of the site. Additionally, we plan to get footage during construction and post. An educational video will be made to share on social media, our websites, etc.

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):



Orca Recovery Day at Cornet Bay

photo by Kelly Zupich



Orca Recovery Day – Guided walk

photo by Kelly Zupich



MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Jefferson

Month/Year: October 2022

Submitted by: Monica Montgomery

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

- The MRC, with the help of 15 volunteers and 3 staff, installed a new rain garden on Sep 28 behind the WSU Extension office building in Port Hadlock, to treat stormwater flowing into South Port Townsend Bay. Going forward, this rain garden will also serve as an educational site for teaching about stormwater issues.
- The MRC will host its last rain garden work party of the year on Oct 28, to weed, replant, and mulch some of the established rain gardens in Port Townsend.
- On Oct 7, the MRC began its seventh year of monitoring forage fish spawning at Fort Townsend State Park.

Membership/Leadership changes (new/departing members, changes to chair/vice-chair, NWSC representative/alternate, staff): Liz Hoenig-Kanieski resigned from her District 1 Alternate position.

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

Past 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 28 – Forage fish survey at Adelma

September 30 – NWSC monthly meeting

September 30 – Derelict vessel removal meeting

October 4 – MRC monthly meeting

October 7 – Forage fish survey at Fort Townsend

October 10 – Olympia oyster subcommittee meeting re: 2023 plans

Upcoming Events/Meetings

October 24 – Forage fish survey at Dabob

October 28 – NWSC monthly meeting

October 28 – Port Townsend rain garden work party

November 1 – MRC monthly meeting

November 4 – Forage fish survey at 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 MRC conducted its first survey of the season on October 7, with the MRC Coordinator, 3 MRC members (Sarah, Janette, Troy), and 1 community volunteer, Gregg.
- **Forage fish - Adelma Beach (Index):** The Project Lead (Jeff) surveyed on September 28.
- **Forage fish - Dabob Bay (Index):** The Project Lead (Sarah) surveyed on September 26 with the MRC Coordinator and two community members (Cheryl, Anne).
- **Kelp:** Nothing to report.

2. Rain Gardens:

- The MRC is prepping for its last rain garden work party in Port Townsend on [October 28](#).

3. Education & Outreach:

- Nothing to report.

4. Olympia Oysters:

- The subcommittee (Neil, Joan, Sarah, Gordon, Janette, Frank, Brent) along with the MRC Coordinator and community volunteer, Heather G., met on October 10 to discuss 2023 plans. These include spreading a large amount of shell at the expanded Powerlines Site (contracted work), spreading some shell at the Lagoon Site (community volunteer event), population surveys at both the North and South Powerlines Sites, community engagement efforts for scoping out a Kilisut Harbor Olympia oyster restoration project, and a reconnaissance trip at Broad Spit in Dabob Bay.

5. Voluntary No-Anchor Zones:

- The subcommittee is still working out plans to service the Mystery Bay buoys.

6. Mapping Lost Crab Pots:

- The MRC Coordinator is finalizing edits to the StoryMap and WDFW reports, and will be beginning to work on the permit application for next year's activities.
- The MRC is researching 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 three MRC members (Sarah, Troy, Heidi) attended the NWSI Collaborative Conservation Workshop on Sep 16.
- The MRC submitted its list of derelict vessels for removal in 2023.

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

September 28 Rain garden installation in Port Hadlock



Photo by Monica Montgomery



Photo by Monica Montgomery



Photo by Monica Montgomery



Photo by Monica Montgomery



Photo by Monica Montgomery



Photo by Erica Guttman

October 7 Forage fish survey at Fort Townsend (In photos: Janette, Sarah, Gregg)



Photo by Monica Montgomery



Photo by Monica Montgomery

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: San Juan County

Month/Year: Oct 2022

Submitted by: Tyler Davis

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

- Eight boats in Blind Bay (Lopez Island) and West Sound (Orcas Island) were tagged during a derelict vessel patrol on Sept 23rd; illegal mooring buoys were also surveyed and mapped
- Great Islands Clean-up (Sept 24th) was a great success with more 180 volunteers collecting in excess of 1,700 pounds of trash
- Excellent presentation at October MRC meeting (Oct 6th) by Chris Mantegna, sharing results of 2022 intertidal monitoring project on Yellow Island

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) will replace Phil Green as LIO representative; we did not have a quorum to confirm this at the October meeting, and will do so at the November meeting. Additionally, we are beginning the process of replacing several MRC members: one member who has been a nonparticipant for several months (Ivan Reiff), and three others who have impending term limits in the next several months (Carl Davis, Phil Green, and Megan Dethier).

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

- Great Islands Clean-up – Sept 24th
- Plastic Free Salish Sea meeting – Oct 4th
- Stewardship Network meeting – Oct 5th
- Monthly MRC meeting – Oct 6th (with LIO/CAG)
- Next MRC meeting: Nov 3rd (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):

Assessment of data from the 2022 vessel monitoring project and the False Bay *Ulva*. sampling and visitor outreach projects have been submitted with the Q4 report.

A formal update of the MSA Plan Strategic Action Review was included in the Q4 report and is on track for a final report by the end of the year; MRC subcommittee members are reviewing chapters 2, 3, 4, and 7.

On September 23rd, Tyler Davis and Sam Whitridge, with the support of San Juan County Deputy Bryce Peterson, conducted the first derelict vessel patrol of the season, focusing on Blind Bay (Lopez Island) and West Sound (Orcas Island). Seven boats were tagged in Blind Bay and one at Orcas Landing; three of these boats were listed and submitted to the NWSC for priority removal consideration.

The Fall Great Islands Clean-up, one of Plastic Free Salish Sea's biggest events of the year, was a resounding success. 181 volunteers from San Juan, Orcas, Lopez, Shaw, and Stuart Islands collected 1,733lbs of trash along 112.8 miles of shorelines and roads. PFSS is already excitedly planting seeds for spring 2023's event, which very appropriately will fall on Earth Day, April 22nd.

SeaBin finally received its missing part, just in time to be mothballed for the fall/winter until boating season kicks off in 2023.

The new MRC logo is in final stages of refinement with Salish artist Jason LaClair, with the intention of presenting it to the MRC at the November 3rd 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.):

MRC members in attendance of the October 6th meeting were treated to a wonderful presentation by Chris Mantegna about intertidal species monitoring on Yellow Island this past summer. Chris highlighted the changes since similar studies in 1990 and 2004, as well as shared the joy of field work with the undergrads she was mentoring.

The MRC is planning our annual MRC retreat for December 1st (normal MRC meeting date). The tentative plan is to hold an in-person event at Friday Harbor Labs that would cover most of the day. We would spend half the day working through the MSA plan with the goal of getting the plan across the finish line. The 2nd half of the day would focus on MRC planning for 2023 with an emphasis on asking MRC members to take the lead on communicating projects they would like to focus on. We would also like to use the retreat as an opportunity to build rapport among the MRC members given that we have had some committee member turnover in the last year.

Now that the FV Aleutian Isle incident is behind us, the MRC is looking for ways to provide input to the various incident debriefs that are happening. An MRC subcommittee is working on drafting a letter highlighting some of the committee's key concerns including: lack of air monitoring in the immediate aftermath, reports of strong diesel odors on the west side of San Juan Island, volunteer engagement when an event like this happens, and the current state of IOSA. The letter will be provided to County Council and members of the incident response team in order to ensure some of these key concerns are included in planning for future oil spill events.

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



Three of the eight derelict vessels tagged on September 23rd. These three were submitted to the NWSC for consideration (clockwise from top: Dudek Barge, Blind Bay; Morningstar, Blind Bay; Metaphor, Orcas Landing). Photos courtesy of Tyler Davis.



RIGHT and BELOW: Great Islands Clean-up efforts (clockwise from right: Stuart Island collection transported to Jackson's Beach; San Juan Sanitation picking up San Juan Island's collection; Franke Robertson and fam heading out to collect trash at Jackson's Beach). Photos courtesy of Department of Environmental Stewardship staff.



MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Skagit

Month/Year: October/2022

Submitted by: Tracy/ Diane

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

- **Bowman Bay Planting Party- November 3, 2022 (9am-12pm):** Additional plants for the Bowman Bay restoration site were purchased with leftover funding. Skagit MRC is co-hosting a planting party with the Northwest Straits Foundation on November 3 from 9am to 12pm. We are asking volunteers to RSVP and to provide their own garden tools and gloves.
- **Kids on the Beach:** New this fall we have a modified version of Kids on the Beach involving high school students. The first field program was held October 5th with Concrete High School Students collecting mudflat exploration data at Bay View State Park. The Kids on the Beach field day with Conway Middle School was supposed to be held on October 19th at the Fidalgo RV Park but was postponed due to poor air quality from wildfire smoke. We plan to reschedule.

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):

- **October 13-** Skagit MRC Monthly Meeting (9am-11am). MRC members shared what they learned at the NWSI Collaborative Conservation Workshop and discussed some of the comments received and revisions made to the MRC project proposals for the NOAA Grant application.
- **November 3-** Bowman Bay Planting Party (9am-12pm). [RSVP](#) encouraged.
- **November 10-** 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:** The Advisory Committee is currently focused on the implementation of a part-time paid stewardship coordinator position with congressional funding. This role will help provide support and coordinate volunteer opportunities with stewards and maintain a strong volunteer base. Currently, the consensus of the AC is that a professional in the communication/ecology field (working less hours) would be more beneficial than a new college intern each year. The AC held a meeting on October 20th to review the draft schedule for the 2023 SSS training, and to develop a communication plan for promoting the training and coordinating volunteers. Training will start February 7th through April 25th. Classes will be held Tuesdays from 1pm to 5pm again at Padilla Bay.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** After a 2-year Covid hiatus, this year's Fidalgo Bay Day was held Saturday, August 20th at the Fidalgo Bay Resort with both indoor and outdoor activities. This free educational event was attended by over 300 people and was a huge success thanks to the 36 organizations and 155 volunteers who helped make it happen. The [2022 Fidalgo Bay Day Final Report](#) is now complete and available on the Skagit MRC website. Planning for the 2023 event will start in November.
- **Forage Fish Surveys:** Forage fish surveys continue. We have reached the 5-year post-construction monitoring requirement at our restoration sites so we will either stop sampling or

reduce sampling at these sites in 2023. Sampling at the DNR Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve sites will likely be reduced as well. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife maintains the database for the forage fish survey data collected, including 6 sites in Skagit County, and shares results with forage fish volunteers and partners on a regular basis. They also host quarterly meetings to touch base with the volunteers and partners. Jason Morgan with NWSF oversees and analyzes the data collected at our restoration sites and will compile it into a final report. DNR maintains and analyzes the data collected at the Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve site. The data is shared in reports to the Citizen Stewardship Committee and posted on the DNR's Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve website. Fidalgo Bay has the most forage fish spawning activity compared to all of the other monitoring sites in Skagit County.

- MRC- Salish Sea School Intern: The interns will continue collecting monitoring data through November. The interns will then put together data analysis, a final report, and presentation. Virtual presentations will be held January 7th.
- Kids on the Beach: Typically, the Kids on the Beach program involves grade school and middle school students. But starting this fall we will have a modified version involving high school students. The first field program this fall occurred October 5th with Concrete High School Students who collected mudflat exploration data at Bay View State Park. Conway Middle School's field day was supposed to be held on October 19th at the Fidalgo RV Park but was postponed due to poor air quality from wildfire smoke. We plan to reschedule. The field activities will include beach seining and forage fish surveys with the help of volunteers.
- Kayak Kelp Surveys: September was the last month for kelp surveys this season. Several new Salish Sea Stewards helped with the kelp surveys this year. The kelp appears to be healthy at all sites and expanded in growth compared to the last survey. Three purple sea stars were observed at the Biz Point kelp bed site. The survey track at Coffin Rocks looks different than previous years due to smokey haze, strong currents, and the new extension of the kelp bed. The winds and waves really picked up during the Shannon Point kelp survey. The survey team had to retreat and head back to shore. Unfortunately, they were unable to reschedule the September survey at Shannon Point.
- Bowman Bay Restoration: Skagit MRC has a sub-Award Agreement with Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group to manage the plant maintenance work at Bowman Bay. On September 9th Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group Ameri-corps and staff removed the water bags that were placed next to the conifers and spread mulch. They rented a water truck and watered the plants at the site on September 22. The final walk through with the MRC Project Lead and SFEG staff occurred September 30th. Some of the new plantings did not do very well this year because they were planted a little later in the season due to the birth of the elephant seal at Bowman Bay followed by a dry hot summer. The Final Report is now complete. Costs were lower than expected, so there was some money left on the contract with Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group which was used to purchase additional plants for the site. The contract with SFEG expired September 20th. To get the 150 new plants in the ground this fall, Skagit MRC is partnering with the Northwest Straits Foundation to co-host a volunteer planting party at Bowman Bay on November 3rd from 9am to 12pm. Volunteers are asked to RSVP and to provide their own garden tools and gloves.
- Pinto Abalone Recovery: The [2022 Pinto Abalone Final Report](#) is now complete and available on the Skagit MRC website. Puget Sound Restoration Fund and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife were able to spawn and raise about 1.3 million abalone larvae to settlement stage. Diver surveys were conducted at four of the eight Skagit abalone restoration sites and found 275 abalone. About 20% of those had emigrated offsite. Abalone densities were over 0.23/m² to a little over 1/m², which were above the 0.15/m² densities required for successful spawning to occur. The abalone have grown a little over 2 inches. No outplanting occurred at the Skagit restoration sites this year. Over 7,283 juvenile abalone were outplanted in San Juan County.

- Olympia Oyster Restoration: Overall, this year has been a very good year for oyster larval recruitment. It was the highest larval recruitment that we've ever seen. Several bags of oyster seed were collected from Fidalgo Bay and transported to Padilla Bay, Kukatali, and Similk Bay. One set of the shell string at Weaverling spit didn't survive the winter, most likely due to the exposure to boat traffic and storm action. The three shell strings at the trestle were collected and are currently being analyzed by the Puget Sound Restoration Fund.
- Sharpes Corner Stormwater Sampling: No Updates

Other (anything not covered above, including local issues of interest to the regional group, advisory actions the MRC is taking, questions to the Commission, etc.): 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: October 2022

Submitted by: Elisa Dawson and Joycelyn Blue

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

- The Snohomish MRC partnered with Zero Waste Washington and WSU Beach Watchers to host a Beach Cleanup on September 24 for International Coastal Cleanup Day. The Cleanup was at Picnic Point Beach, where over a dozen volunteers picked up nearly 75 pounds of trash. The Cleanup utilized the Escaped Trash Protocol developed by the EPA to assess the impact of trash of the beach. The data collected from this citizen science work will be used for a region-wide effort to better understand trash loading throughout Puget Sound.
- MRC Staff have finalized the Amendment to the Port Susan contract with ESA to work on Phase 2 of this project. The notice to proceed was issued in early October. A kick-off meeting is scheduled with Snohomish County MRC Members and Staff and Island County Members and staff for November 15. A draft communications plan is set to be completed by December 15.

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 Picnic Point Beach Cleanup was on September 24 (see outreach update below for more info).

Elisa Dawson attended a Derelict Vessel Turn-In call hosted by the Northwest Straits Commission on September 27.

Elisa Dawson attended the marine waters webinar “Tools to evaluate water quality” on September 29 and the follow up webinar “Biological integrity of key species and habitats” on October 6.

Elisa Dawson has an interview with the Everett Herald on October 10 on the derelict vessel removal program. See derelict vessels update below for a link to the article.

Joycelyn Blue conducted forage fish monitoring on October 10 with several MRC volunteers.

Elisa Dawson attended a Shore Friendly planning call with the Northwest Straits Foundation on October 13.

Elisa Dawson and Joycelyn Blue attended a call with WSU Beach Watcher Coordinator Jonathan Robinson on October 17 to discuss the 2023 contract with WSU Beach Watchers.

The MRC hosted their monthly meeting on October 19. The group discussed Green Crabs, The Port Susan MRC Grant Phase 2, and prepared for the November Retreat.

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): MRC Staff have finalized the Amendment to the Port Susan contract with ESA to work on Phase 2 of this project. The notice to proceed was issued in early October. A kick-off meeting is scheduled with Snohomish County MRC Members and Staff and Island County Members and staff for November 15. A draft communications plan is set to be completed by December 15.

Derelict Vessels (NWSF funds): An article was published in the Everett Herald on Snohomish County and the MRC's work removing derelict vessels: [4 more decaying boats removed from Snohomish County shores | HeraldNet.com](#)

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. October sampling at Picnic Point and Howarth Park was completed on October 10.

Nearshore Restoration: The Meadowdale BNSF railway bridges were installed earlier in September. Work on the estuary continued through October 15, the available fish window. Plants will be installed in the Estuary in late October. 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. A draft initial findings report was provided by DNR in early October. The formal report from DNR is expected in early 2023.

Outreach: The Snohomish MRC partnered with Zero Waste Washington and WSU Beach Watchers to host a Beach Cleanup on September 24 for International Coastal Cleanup Day. The Cleanup was at Picnic Point Beach, where over a dozen volunteers picked up nearly 75 pounds of trash. The Cleanup utilized the Escaped Trash Protocol developed by the EPA to assess the impact of trash of the beach. The data collected from this citizen science work will be used for a region-wide effort to better understand trash loading throughout Puget Sound. For more information about how trash is impacting our local waterways, check out the [Plastic Free Salish Sea Campaign](#) and [EPA's Trash Free Waters](#).

No updates for:

- Snohomish Estuary Pilings Project
- Crabber Outreach
- 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:

- Meadowdale Monitoring Team site visit meeting at Meadowdale Park October 26.
- Forage Fish Monitoring – November 7 at Picnic Point and Howarth Park
- MRC staff meeting November 14
- Port Susan Kick-off Meeting November 15
- MRC Retreat November 16

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



Photo: Trash sorting using EPA Protocol. Photo by Julie Schlenger.

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Whatcom

Month/Year: OCTOBER 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/>
- The MRC voted to remove their Public Comment period in order to no longer adhere to the Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA). This change allows the MRC to meet virtually as they wish and hold hybrid meetings on a quarterly basis. The Public Comment has been replaced with "Community Updates".

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

An application from Jackie Dexter to fill the vacant Economic position was received on 10/21. A recommendation memo was sent to the Whatcom County Executive office and is expected to be approved on November 9. Jackie Dexter has worked for Drayton Harbor Oyster Company and is in the process of starting her own aquaculture business in Birch Bay.

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

- The MRC held their October meeting on October 6. Highlights included:
 - Devin Flawd, Stock Assessment Manager, Lummi Nation Natural Resources Department, provided a high-level overview of different aspects of the department's monitoring program, restoration efforts, goals, and hatchery operations. Devin his presentation on the Chinook population, which is in severe decline. This has led to the South Fork Nooksack Chinook Rescue Program. The goal is to restore self-sustaining conditions in Nooksack Chinook habitats through restoration planning, technical analysis, land acquisition, restoration project implementation, CREP program implementation, and forestland management. The MRC meetings provide an important forum for Lummi Nation to share data and goals with the public.
 - The committee voted to no longer adhere to the Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA) and adjusted the language on their agenda from "Public Comment" to "Community Updates". This time will be provided for information updates from meeting visitors or committee members at each regularly scheduled meeting. A person who wishes to address the Committee in-person at a monthly meeting are welcome to do so during a designated Public Comment period. In this instance, the Committee will prepare to adhere to the OPMA and offer a physical location for the meeting to be held while also allowing remote attendance (hybrid meeting). The Committee will hold hybrid meetings on a quarterly basis, or as preferred, and hold strictly remote meetings the rest of the year. The next in-person/hybrid meeting will occur on

December 1.

- The committee approved a draft thank you letter to the Protect Mud Bay Cliffs committee for sharing their concerns with the MRC about a proposed development on the North end of North Chuckanut Bay. This proposed development will continue to be tracked by the MRC, and the committee will consider providing a comment letter within the public comment window.

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

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

Monitoring

- Kelp surveys were been completed at three sites: Cherry Pt/Gulf Rd (August and September), Aiston Preserve, and SW Lummi Island. Data was entered in Kobo Toolbox. Eleanor Hines (Project Champion) will be terming off the MRC in January 2023 and a member has volunteered to champion the project under more of a coordination role.
- Lela Childs was hired as the new MRC Forage Fish Intern. Lela is a WWU student majoring in Biology. Her past work experience with the Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association (NSEA) made her a top candidate for the position. Welcome Lela!
- The MRC has chosen to survey four sites along the Squalicum shoreline with the beach nourishment of restoration projects that were just completed. This adjustment was approved by WDFW. Marine Park will no longer be a survey site.
- It continues to be difficult to retain volunteers to help with water quality sampling in Chuckanut Bay. The MRC has still been sampling monthly since 2014. Water quality sampling could get folded into the Whatcom County PIC sampling calendar and be completed by Whatcom County staff if the MRC choses to no longer be involved with that aspect of the project. Education and outreach to the adjacent community is a great fit for the MRC given all the MRC projects implemented in the bay. Members expressed interest in taking on more of that role.
- The committee discussed scoping additional pilot sites within N. Chuckanut Bay that could be more supportive for Olympia oyster retention. There is interest in expanding the project and purchasing additional cultch to set up those additional sites. A subcommittee will be formed to discuss next steps.

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.):

MRC Staff met with NWSF staff to discuss collaboration with the Salish Sea Conservation Corps. A handful of opportunities were discussed (i.e. building capacity for the Beach Seine with Kids program, water quality monitoring, Olympia oyster work). Staff have already made connections with a fourth year environmental marine science major at WWU.