



Meeting: Northwest Straits Commission
Location: Zoom Virtual Meeting
Date: December 9, 2022
Time: 10:00 AM-12:00 PM

To join the Zoom meeting, [CLICK HERE](#) Meeting ID: 814 9176 3145 Passcode: 787870
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 October 28 meeting minutes	Tom Cowan, vice chair
10:15 – 10:25	Committee reports Executive Committee Science Advisory Committee External Relations Committee	Tom Cowan Julia Parrish Chris Castner
10:25 – 10:35	Business items Retreat planning committee DEI Goals discussion and approval	Staff Lucas
10:35 – 11:05	Shoreline restoration for nearshore fishes	Tessa Francis, Lead Ecosystem Ecologist, Puget Sound Institute



agenda

11:05 – 11:10	Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission	Cecilia Gobin, NW Indian Fisheries Commission
11:10 – 11:15	Puget Sound Partnership update	Ahren Stroming, Puget Sound Partnership
11:15 – 11:20	NW Straits Foundation update	Don Hunger, NW Straits Foundation
11:20 – 11:50	MRC Reports	MRC Representatives
11:50 – 11:55	Meeting highlights and action items Identify key points and action items from this meeting for MRC reps to report back to their MRCs	All
11:55 – 12:00	Public comment	All

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

Next meeting: January 27, 2023.



Minutes

DRAFT

October 28, 2022 - 10:00 AM-12:00PM

Zoom - Virtual meeting

Northwest Straits Commission meeting

Attendees

Commission Members: Tom Cowan (Vice Chair), Chris Castner, Dianne Hennebert (Skagit), Tim Ellis (Snohomish), Alan Clark (Clallam), Ahren Stroming (Puget Sound Partnership-alternate), Bob Cecile (Whatcom), Christina Koons (San Juan), Jeff Taylor (Jefferson), Barbara Bennett (Island – Alternate), Nan McKay

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

Others in Attendance: Jan Newton, Julie Schlenger (Snohomish MRC), Brooke Friesen (NWS Foundation), Bob Margulis (Snohomish MRC), Mike McKay (Whatcom MRC), Sarah Fiskens (Jefferson MRC), Austin Rose (Whatcom)

Absent: Elsa Schwartz (Island-Chair), Laura Blackmore, Julia Parrish, Cecilia Gobin

Welcome and Introductions

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

Tom introduced Representative Debra Lekanoff, state representative for the 40th district, and welcomed her to the meeting and thanked her for joining the Commission meeting.

Representative Debra Lekanoff provided opening remarks for the meeting and thanked the Commission and MRCs for work on derelict gear, derelict vessels, green crab and other projects.

She shared information on some of the important issues coming up in the next state legislative session, such as investments in clean water and habitat and discussed some of the issues surrounding net ecological gain, which was a centerpiece of [HR 1117](#), a bill Rep. Lekanoff sponsored in the last biennial session.

Committee Reports

Executive Committee: Tom Cowan noted that there was no Executive Committee meeting this month.

Science Advisory Committee: Dana reported that the committee is working on taking the articles of association that were adopted by the Commission and mapping out a plan for putting them into action for 2023, including plans for recruiting and identifying the areas of expertise that would align with planned MRC projects.

External Relations Committee: Chris Castner reported that there is no new news on the reauthorization bill ([S4903](#)). It was introduced and referred to committee, but there has been no further action. He is tracking closely and will report any action.

Business items

- Commission staff shared the updated [2023 meeting dates](#), which includes an in-person conference and retreat, as well as some tentative locations for in-person meetings during the year.
- Pew kelp grant – Dana reported on progress on the Pew Charitable Trusts funding that the Commission has to support linking science and policy related to kelp. She has been leading the project by holding conversations and workshops to assess how we review projects and potential impacts to kelp, then synthesizing those discussions to identify challenges and recommendations for multiagency guidance to support improved implementation of existing rules and regulations to protect kelp.
- Derelict vessels – Dana thanked the MRCs and tribal partners for submitting vessel lists for prioritization. She is in the process of forming a workgroup that will meet to prioritize the vessel list. She anticipates scheduling a November meeting and potentially another meeting in January. She encouraged Commissioners to reach out to her if interested in learning more.

Backyard Buoys Project

Jan Newton is a senior principal oceanographer with the Applied Physics Laboratory of the University of Washington and affiliate professor in both the UW School of Oceanography and the School of Marine and Environmental Affairs. She presented to the Commission on the Backyard Buoys Project, which is a program designed to provide community-driven stewardship of lower cost technologies to provide real time wave data. Information about the project is available at www.backyardbuoys.org/.

She also gave a quick overview of the Northwest Association of Networked Ocean Observing Systems. More information: <http://www.nanoos.org/>.

Partner updates

Puget Sound Partnership: Ahren Stroming attended and introduced himself as the Special Assistant for Federal Affairs, who will serve as Laura Blackmore's alternate for Commission meetings in the future. Ahren has been with the Partnership for the last three years and is looking forward to serving as a valuable partner for the Commission. Ahren shared three recent updates from the Partnership:

- The partnership has released their 2023-25 biennial budget rankings, a prioritized list of state agency 2023-2025 budget requests related to Puget Sound recovery. The document can be found here: <https://pspwa.box.com/s/owm36i5u0upo7m7km1t14dsreb7vajxb>.
- The Habitat, Shellfish, and Stormwater Strategic Initiative Lead Requests for Proposals are now open. These provide grants to subrecipients that accelerate Puget Sound Recovery. The RFPs can be found here: <https://pugetsoundestuary.wa.gov/rfp/>.

- The [PUGET SOS bill](#), which would establish national Puget Sound office at EPA, was incorporated into the WRDA bill (Water Resources Development Act). The bill is expected to pass via vote next month, and they are tracking that closely.

The Commission moved and approved by consensus that Ahren Stroming serve as the Puget Sound Partnership alternate.

Northwest Straits Foundation: Provided a written update.

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. Both beaches have been closed due to high toxin levels.

Island – Barbara Bennett

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

Jefferson – Troy McKelvey

- 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.

San Juan – Christina Koons

- 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

Skagit – Dianne Hennebert

- 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.

Snohomish – Tim Ellis

- 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.

Whatcom – Bob Cecile

- 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”.

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:

- Representative Debra Lekanoff from the 40th district provided opening remarks for the meeting and thanked the Commission and MRCs for all you are doing. She shared information on the some of the important issues coming up in the next state legislative session, such as investments in clean water and habitat and discussed some of the issues surrounding net ecological gain, which was a centerpiece of [HR 1117](#), a bill Rep. Lekanoff sponsored in the last biennial session.
- Jan Newton with the Applied Physics Laboratory of the University of Washington (<http://oceanacidification.uw.edu>) shared information on a Backyard Buoys project that she and partners are working on. More information at www.backyardbuoys.org. She also gave a quick

overview of the Northwest Association of Networked Ocean Observing Systems. More information: <http://www.nanoos.org/>.

- 2023 Northwest Straits conference: All MRC members are encouraged to save the date for our 2023 conference, to be held on November 3-4 at the Northwest Maritime Center in Port Townsend.
- The Commission welcomed Puget Sound Partnership Special Assistant for Federal Affairs Ahren Stroming as the new alternate member to the Commission.

Public comment

There was no public comment.

Next meeting

December 9, 2022 - Northwest Straits Commission meeting: 10am-12pm via Zoom. Find more information [on our website](#).



**Executive Committee Meeting
November 14, 2022 • 11:00am-12:00pm
Notes**

NWSC Program focus areas and needs – Lucas and Dana presented their thoughts on how NWSC programs and projects have grown over the last several years. They asked the Executive Committee to consider how the NWSC should prioritize program focus areas to maintain a balance between the MRC-centric mission of the NWSC, our role as a convener around broader regional issues, and constraints we face in mobilizing funding at the NWSC and MRCs—such as limitations in our ability to hire additional help. They discussed European green crab, kelp conservation and monitoring, voluntary no-anchor zone expansion and derelict vessel removal among other projects the NWSC is engaged in. To assess the situation and provide further insight, the Executive Committee would like to continue the conversation at the next Executive Committee meeting and discuss:

- Origins of various programs the NWSC is working on (did the program start with an MRC?) and how they fit in the context of the NWSC mission and reauthorization
- Current staff roles and current staffing limitations
- What options exist for contracting and hiring if we receive additional funds

The Executive Committee will help evaluate these areas and recommend focused topics for discussion at a full Commission meeting.

Diversity Equity Inclusion (DEI): Allie proposed DEI goals for the NWSC to consider. The goals were drafted with MRC and NWSC staff input. The Executive Committee recommended the goals be presented to the full Commission. The Committee also recommended that actions be developed for each goal as a next step. Draft goals included:

- *Membership:* Achieve NWSI membership and engagement that is representative of the diverse communities within each county to assure representative leadership.
- *Projects:* Deliver projects that are meaningful to and positively impact the diverse communities within each county in order to encourage broader communities to be stewards in their public and private activities.
- *Staff:* Create equitable career opportunities in marine conservation through NWSI staff, internships, and staff support (consultants, etc.) positions.
- *Communications:* Have inclusive and relevant messaging for the diverse communities in the Northwest Straits region to ensure information and materials are accessible to all.

2023 NWSI retreat: The La Conner Country Inn is reserved for the NWSC March retreat.

Northwest Straits Initiative Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Vision Statement and Goals

“The Initiative serves everyone who inhabits the Northwest Straits.” – NWSI Strategic Plan 2019-2024

Background:

The stated result in the Engagement and Partnership goal of the Northwest Straits Initiative (NWSI) Strategic Plan is that “the Initiative serves everyone who inhabits the Northwest Straits.” To ensure this result and others in the Strategic Plan are met, the NWSI will need to make a concerted effort to intentionally address institutional deficiencies and to ensure a focus on Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion is evident across the Initiative.

Maintaining the status quo will not accomplish the goal of serving everyone within our communities. Commission and MRC staff drafted a DEI vision and goals for the NWSI to outline intentions and create alignment for a way forward that weaves diversity, equity, and inclusion into the fabric of the organization and operations. The vision and goals to implement these intentions within the NWSI are based on goals and objectives in the current 2019-2024 NWSI Strategic Plan.

As an Initiative, we have already begun incorporating a culture focused on inclusion through:

- Partnering and actively communicating with Tribes to accomplish MRC and regional projects
- Providing paid internships and fellowships focused on marine conservation to college students, early career professionals, and veterans
- Working with tribal partners to create and state a Tribal Acknowledgement before public meetings

DEI Vision: We envision a broad, diverse, and inclusive group of individuals engaged in the health of their local ecosystems to ensure a thriving, resilient, and healthy Salish Sea. Our hope is that pursuing an equitable approach to marine conservation will engage, empower, and benefit all who inhabit the Northwest Straits.

Goals:

- *Membership and engagement:* Achieve NWSI membership and engagement that is representative of the diverse communities within each county.
- *Projects:* Deliver projects that are meaningful to and benefit the diverse communities within each county.
- *Staff:* Create equitable and inclusive career opportunities in marine conservation through NWSI staff, internships, and staff support (consultants, etc.) positions.
- *Communications:* Have inclusive and relevant messaging for the diverse communities in the Northwest Straits region to ensure information and materials are accessible to all.



Commission staff highlights - [December 2022]

MRC Support

Congressionally directed spending: Commission staff has continued to work with MRC and Ecology staff to move the new agreements forward with a start date of January 1, 2023. It is anticipated that they will be routed for signature in December.

2021-23 Grant agreements: Year one of these two-year grant agreements is now complete, and Commission staff is working with MRCs on managing and monitoring the grants as they carry on into year two.

Regional Projects

Kelp Plan: Northwest Straits Commission staff is planning a workshop for late winter/early spring to assess the status of the Kelp Plan's actions and determine the appropriate and needed next steps in the plan's implementation. The Puget Sound Project Inventory, a compilation of all known kelp projects in Puget Sound, is nearing completion and is being used to assist in the assessment of the Kelp Plan's actions. The Kelp Plan Coordination Advisory Committee is meeting in mid-December.

Kelp Monitoring: Northwest Straits Commission staff is analyzing monitoring and survey data collected by volunteer kayakers over summer. A data review workshop for participating volunteers and other interested parties is being planned for mid-January.

Green Crab: Northwest Straits Commission European green crab trapping concluded in early November. From April to November 2022, Northwest Straits Commission staff set 2,894 traps (24-h deployments) and captured 313 European green crabs in Whatcom County and set 3,414 traps (24-h deployment; includes a large inter-agency effort in Fidalgo Bay) and captured 83 European green crabs in Skagit County. Staff are currently entering and checking data from 2022 for submission to WA Dept of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

Forage Fish: Northwest Straits Commission staff and WDFW are planning a zoom meeting in late January for an MRC volunteer project check-in and to hear from WDFW about their sample results and trends in the data.

Derelict Vessels: The workgroup of MRC representatives and Tribal partners met to discuss the criteria and process for prioritizing the over 20 vessels submitted for removal using Congressionally Directed Spending funds. Workgroup members will provide final input on criteria before ranking vessels.



Commission staff highlights - [December 2022]

Operations

Staff: The Program Coordinator and Communications Consultant positions are being recruited and are open until filled.

Budget: The 2022 US Fish and Wildlife Service award for the Voluntary No-Anchor Zone project and the Pew funding for advancing the Kelp Plan will come to the end of their award periods at the end of December. In January the award periods will start for the Congressionally Directed Spending (FY22) and the 2023 US Fish and Wildlife Service grant to continue the Voluntary No-Anchor Zone project.

Meetings Attended

Allie attended: Jefferson MRC meeting 11/1; Whatcom MRC meeting 11/3; Ecology agency-wide DEI assessment meeting 11/29; NWSC Derelict Vessel workgroup 12/1; Restore America's Estuaries 2022 Coastal and Estuarine Summit 12/4-8

Dana attended: San Juan MRC meeting 11/3; Whatcom MRC meeting 11/3; Kelp policy Advisory meeting 11/14; NWSC Derelict Vessel workgroup 11/15 & 12/1 & 12/9; Floating Kelp Canopy Vital Sign project team meeting 11/16 & 11/30; Phytoplankton and primary production 12/6; Jefferson MRC meeting 12/6.

Jeff attended: Island MRC meeting (11/1); Snohomish MRC meeting (11/16); Ecology agency-wide DEI assessment meeting 11/29; San Juan MRC retreat (12/1); Restore America's Estuaries 2022 Coastal and Estuarine Summit (12/4-8); Kelp Plan Coordination Advisory Committee meeting (12/13)

Leah attended: Jefferson MRC meeting 11/1; Whatcom MRC meeting 11/3; Forage Fish and Food Webs PSEMP Workgroup meeting; Washington State Joint Agency GIS Day 11/16; Skagit MRC Kids on the Beach 11/18; Ecology agency-wide DEI assessment meeting 11/29; NWSC Derelict Vessel workgroup 12/1; Restore America's Estuaries 2022 Coastal and Estuarine Summit (12/4-8)

Lucas attended: Ecology Program Management Team (PMT) DEI meeting 10/31; Derelict Vessel Workgroup meeting 11/15; Salish Sea Institute Advisory Board meeting 11/16; Clallam MRC Staff Planning meeting 11/29; Ecology DEI Consultant Update meeting 11/29; Derelict Vessel Workgroup Meeting 12/1; Clallam MRC Staff Planning meeting 12/5; Jefferson MRC meeting 12/6

Sasha attended: Island MRC meeting 11/1; Marine Resources Advisory Council meeting 11/2; Beach Seine with Kids meeting 11/9; derelict vessel workgroup 11/15; Clallam MRC fellowship discussion 11/17; Ecology agency-wide DEI assessment meeting 11/29; derelict vessel workgroup 12/1

Northwest Straits Foundation November 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*

Hoypus Point Restoration



Volunteers and staff celebrate after planting over 1,300 plants at the newly restored Hoypus Point

The final phase of restoration at the Cornet Bay Day Use Area of Deception Pass State Park was completed by PNW Civil, Inc. in November. The project, designed by Blue Coast Engineering, removed 350 linear feet of armor rock, concrete, and fill from Hoypus Point on the northern end of the park to restore the habitat forming processes that support this bluff-backed beach. Hoypus Point was historically the site of a ferry that shuttled residents between Whidbey and Fidalgo islands before the Deception Pass bridge was built. 19 volunteers joined Foundation, Island MRC, and State Parks staff in planting over 1,300 trees, shrubs, grasses, and perennials to reestablish a marine riparian corridor to benefit salmon, forage fish, and birds. Funding for the project was provided by the Salmon Recovery Funding Board and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's Estuary & Salmon Restoration Fund. Come join us this spring as we begin the next phase of work – stewarding this amazing place to ensure the vegetation flourishes.

Caroline Gibson Scholarship in Marine Studies

Applications are open for 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. Learn more by emailing info@nwstraitsfoundation.org!

Salish Sea Conservation Corps

Applications opened November 21st for the Salish Sea Conservation Corps school year program. Visit our website to learn more! <https://nwstraitsfoundation.org/salish-sea-conservation-corps/>

Newly Lost Net Reporting, Response, and Retrieval Program



Net Removed near Port Madison, WA

This fall has continued to be a busy season for our newly lost net Reporting, Response, and Retrieval Program. Four nets were removed over the past month, in large thanks to our tribal partners' collaboration on the reporting and removal of newly lost gillnets. It is imperative that newly lost nets are reported immediately so we can locate them and initiate removal efforts before weather conditions cause them to move and potentially be lost forever. We cannot do this without our partners in fisheries throughout the Puget Sound region.

This is a "no-fault" program. No one wants to lose gear, it's an unfortunate event that happens but we have the mechanisms in place to take action. Help us in protecting our marine resources by reporting lost nets at derelictgear.org or **360-733-1725**.

Bowman Bay Planting Party



Volunteers plant native trees and shrubs at the Bowman Bay Restoration Site

On November 3rd, the Northwest Straits Foundation partnered with Skagit County Marine Resources Committee to host a planting party at Bowman Bay. A total of 17 volunteers planted over 175 native plants at the seven-year post-restored pocket beach. The added vegetation will improve the upland conditions of the site, as some of the vegetation planted in 2015 has struggled to survive. Thank you to all our volunteers!

Shore Friendly Planting

NWSF staff joined with the Washington Conservation Corps Crew from Whatcom County and the Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association to assist a landowner near Sandy Point and the Nooksack delta in the first phase of converting a large area of their beachfront lawn to native trees and shrubs.

The landowners covered the grass with cardboard and created a hügelkultur mound from logs and limbs as the base of the planting area. The team covered the mound with 8 cubic yards of compost and mulch and then planted 38 trees and shrubs. These plants will help control erosion and drainage and will contribute nutrients to the soil and beach. Additional mounds will be created over the next year and more trees and shrubs will be added closer to the shoreline.

This site is adjacent to another property planted with Shore Friendly support in 2021.

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Clallam

Month/Year: November 2022

Submitted by: Rebecca Mahan

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

- Continued forage fish sampling on Cline Spit, Elwha beaches and Ediz Hook.
- Rebecca Mahan attended Responding to Climate Change Impacts to Intertidal Shellfish Resources Workshop.

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

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

Monthly MRC Meeting: will be on December 19th.

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, Elwha Beaches and Ediz Hook.

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

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: November/ 2022

Submitted by: Kelly Zupich

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

- MRC Presentation for Navy Families
- Hoypus Point Planting Party
- Coupeville Wharf 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:

- Nov 1: MRC Committee Meeting
- Nov 10: Presentation for Navy Personnel
- Nov 17: Hoypus Point Planting Party
- Nov 18: Skagit MRC - Kids on the Beach
- Nov 21: Executive Committee Meeting

Upcoming Meetings/Events:

- Dec 6: MRC Committee Meeting
- Dec 8: Climate Change Panel Discussion w/ South Whidbey Scholl District Students
- Dec 22: Executive 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):

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, Seahorse Siesta.

Bull Kelp Surveys: We are still working to get all the data from the volunteers.

Hoypus Planting Party: Our MRC worked with NWSF to host a planting party. We focused on recruiting folks to help with the planting since Lisa and Brooke focused on the details for the day of. It was an exciting day that was very rewarding. 1,300 plants were successfully put into the ground. Volunteers seemed to leave with smiles on their faces. Thank you to all the wonderful volunteers.

Outreach – Navy Presentation: MRC Chair, Barbara Bennett worked with local Navy veterans to set up an opportunity to speak to a group about our MRC. She did a wonderful job tying the work of the Island MRC in with basic information about the importance of our marine ecosystems. 36 attended, most were retired Navy along with their spouses. We look forward to finding new ways to communicate our work to the different populations in Island County. Barb was successful in recruiting members to join the MRC at this event. We have one retired navy person apply already.

Outreach – Coupeville Wharf Video: Back in July we worked with the Sound Water Stewards, Atlantis Steam, Blue Skies Drone, to get video from above and below the Coupeville Wharf. The MRC helped to identify the underwater organisms found in the film and taught the Atlantis Steam students about the importance of our marine ecosystem. The video will be hosted and shown at the Coupeville Wharf. The video covers topics like history and natural history of the local area. Currently, the video credits say Kelly Zupich, MRC. I have put in a request to Sound Water Stewards to change it to say Island County Marine Resources Committee. <https://vimeo.com/767123994>

Outreach – Skagit Kids on the Beach: Island MRC got a last-minute invite to assist Skagit with their Kids on the Beach program. Forage Fish volunteer Paul Williams and I showed up bright and early on 11/18. We assisted a seasoned volunteer with guiding a group of students through a full Forage Fish survey. The students were a lot of fun to work with and while it was very cold the day was beautiful. We are grateful for the experience and hope that we can find ways to support each other’s work into the future.

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):



Skagit Kids on the Beach

photo by Kelly Zupich



Hoypus Point - Dunegrass

photo by Kelly Zupich

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Jefferson

Month/Year: November and December 2022

Submitted by: Monica Montgomery

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

- The MRC hosted one last rain garden work party on Oct 28, attended by 4 volunteers and 2 staff who helped weed, replant, and mulch two rain gardens at Franklin/Adams and Lincoln/Adams in Port Townsend.
- The MRC swapped out the Port Townsend waterfront no-anchor zone spar buoys with winter floats in preparation of the stormy winter season.

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

October 22 – Forage fish survey at Adelma
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 11 – Forage fish survey at Dabob
November 19 – No-Anchor Zones team swapped the buoys along the Port Townsend waterfront
November 22 – MRC Executive Committee meeting
November 22 – Storm surge monitoring
December 1 – Climate change and Shellfish Impacts Workshop, hosted by Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe
December 2 – Storm surge monitoring

Upcoming Events/Meetings

December 6 – MRC monthly meeting
December 9 – Strait ERN LIO meeting
December 9 – NWSC monthly meeting
December – Forage fish survey at Dabob and Adelma

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 planned a second survey on November 4, however, canceled due to weather conditions.

- **Forage fish - Adelma Beach (Index):** The Project Lead (Jeff) surveyed on October 22.
- **Forage fish - Dabob Bay (Index):** The Project Lead (Sarah) surveyed on October 24 with the help of one MRC member (Troy) and one community volunteer (Cheryl), and on November 11 with the help of two MRC members (Janette, Troy).
- **Kelp:** Nothing to report.

2. Rain Gardens:

- The MRC hosted one last rain garden work party on Oct 28, attended by 4 volunteers (including 1 MRC member, Janette; Vern, David, Christi) and 2 staff (Monica, Bob). The group did some final weeding (still dealing with thistle) and added supplemental plants and mulch two rain gardens, located at Franklin/Adams St. and Lincoln/Adams St.

3. Education & Outreach:

- Nothing to report.

4. Olympia Oysters:

- Two MRC members (Neil, Joanie) and the MRC Coordinator attended a Climate Change and Shellfish Impacts Workshop hosted by Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe on December 1. The workshop included a presentation by Wendel Raymond about a recent study synthesizing shellfish data across the Puget Sound region (including Jefferson MRC Olympia oyster data) to assess the impacts of the 2021 heat wave.

5. Voluntary No-Anchor Zones:

- The team (Troy, Bryan, Gordon) swapped 11 Port Townsend spar buoys with winter floats on November 19, using the Port of Port Townsend’s boat.

6. Mapping Lost Crab Pots:

- Nothing to report.

7. Storm Surge Monitoring:

- On November 22, Project Lead, Jeff, and two community volunteers (Dave, Barney) monitored wave run-up near the NW Maritime Center in Port Townsend and assessed a new potential monitoring site near Chetzemoka Park. Jeff and Dave monitored again on December 2.

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):

October 28 Rain garden work party in Port Townsend



Photo by Monica Montgomery



Pile of thistle removed from the Franklin/Adams St. rain garden. Photo by Monica Montgomery.

November 19 Port Townsend buoy maintenance



Photo by Troy McKelvey



Photo by Troy McKelvey



Photo by Gordon King



Photo by Gordon King

November 22 Storm surge monitoring



Photo by Monica Montgomery.



Photo by Monica Montgomery

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: San Juan County

Month/Year: Nov 2022

Submitted by: Tyler Davis

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

- Ten boats in Friday Harbor and surrounds were tagged during a derelict vessel patrol on Nov 18th
- Two MRC positions have vacated and their openings are currently being advertised
- Letter sent to San Juan County Council outlining concerns highlighted by the sinking of Aleutian Isle

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

MRC members Ivan Reiff and Carl Davis have tendered notice of stepping down from their positions with San Juan MRC, creating two vacancies that we are currently in the process of filling. MRC support staff have been advertising the last couple weeks, plan to conduct interviews in December, with the intention of new appointments being made by January 2023. The MRC will be repeating this exercise in a few months as the positions vacated by Megan Dethier and Phil Green will need to be replaced after they reach their term limits in June 2023.

MRC member Adam Parrott was approved as representative to the San Juan County Local Integration Organization (SJC LIO).

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

- Aleutian Isle Debrief – Oct 28th (attended in-person by Frances Robertson in Seattle, WA)
- Plastic Free Salish Sea meeting – Nov 1st
- Stewardship Network meeting – Nov 2nd
- Pacific States/British Columbia Oil Spill Task Force Annual Meeting – Nov 2nd
- Monthly MRC meeting – Nov 3rd (with LIO/CAG)
- Next MRC meeting: Dec 1st – annual MRC Retreat (all day)

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

Nothing new to report this month, though Tyler Davis will be presenting a grant application to the county Lodging Tax Advisory Committee (LTAC) on December 7th for the MRC to upgrade the facilities at the Cattle Point Interpretive Center.

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

Plastic Free Salish Sea is mentoring three juniors from Friday Harbor High School for their Community Projects class. Two students are working to create an Adopt-a-Road program similar to the existing Adopt-a-Beach program, and another student is developing a project using ecobricks.

Progress on assessing mooring buoys via aerial photos was delayed in previous months as we needed to first replace the intern position that had been working on this project. This month, intern Yuki Wilmerding agreed to help finish this project.

The MSA Plan Strategic Action Review is on track for a final report by the end of the year. Chapter 5 (Threats and Stressors) was completed this month and is with the MSA subcommittee for review. The entire morning session of the annual MRC retreat on Dec 1st has been set aside to discuss and finalize the MSA Plan.

On November 18th, Tyler Davis, Marta Green, and Phil Green, with the support of San Juan County Deputy Bryce Peterson, conducted another derelict vessel patrol, this time focusing on Friday Harbor, including Beaverton and Shipyard Coves. Ten boats were tagged and several others noted.

Relatedly, the Morning Star (Blind Bay, Shaw Island), a vessel that was tagged in September of this year and listed as a top priority for San Juan County's submission for the NWSC's Derelict Vessel Workgroup's consideration, has since sunk and awaits salvage.

The new MRC logo, designed by Salish artist Jason LaClair, has been finalized and will be unveiled at the Dec 1st MRC retreat.

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 drafted and sent a letter to the San Juan County Council summarizing concerns highlighted by the Aleutian Isle incident on August 13th, 2022, including the need for increased oil spill response resources within the county, increased wildlife deterrence response, securing and training air-quality monitoring equipment, and improved community communication. A follow-up letter has been drafted and, if approved at the Dec 1st retreat, will be sent to San Juan County Council, outlining some legislative recommendations along with the request that council send these legislative recommendations to the 40th district representatives.

The Aleutian Isle was also a hot topic of conversation at the Pacific States/British Columbia Oil Spill Task Force Annual Meeting on November 2nd. Several MRC staff and members attended this virtual conference, which brought together nearly 300 interested and invested parties from WA, OR, CA, HI, AK, and BC to discuss oil spill prevention and response in the region.

MRC and San Juan County Department of Environmental Stewardship staff are working on a grant application to the Habitat Strategic Initiative Lead with the National Estuary Program for a multi-year project assessing vessel impacts on our marine ecosystems in San Juan County. County council approved pursuit of this grant, which is due the first week of December. If granted, there will be opportunities for the MRC to offer insight, advice, and otherwise be involved with this project.

The December MRC meeting will be replaced with a full-day annual retreat to focus on finalizing the MSA, developing and refining subcommittees, looking ahead to 2023, and simply enjoying an in-person get together. This event will be held at Friday Harbor Labs on Dec 1st from 9am-4pm.

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



Three of the ten derelict vessels tagged on November 18th in and around Friday Harbor. Photos courtesy of Tyler Davis.



MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Skagit

Month/Year: November-December/2022

Submitted by: Tracy/ Diane

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

- **Bowman Bay Planting Party:** Skagit MRC partnered with the Northwest Straits Foundation to host a planting party at Bowman Bay on November 3rd. 17 volunteers, MRC members, and NWSF staff planted over 175 native plants. We were able to get it done a lot faster than anticipated, thanks to our wonderful volunteers and NWSF staff. The atmospheric river arrived shortly afterwards to give the plants a good soaking.
- **Kids on the Beach:** 50 8th grade students from Conway Middle School participated in beach seining and forage fish survey activities at the Fidalgo Bay RV Park on November 18th. Despite the cold weather, a broken hose, getting locked out of the building twice, and finding very few fish or forage fish eggs, it was a great day for Kids on the Beach!

Membership/Leadership changes (new/departing members, changes to chair/vice-chair, NWSF representative/alternate, staff): No changes.

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

- **November 10-** Skagit MRC Monthly Meeting (9am-11am). Two graduate students from the School of Marine and Environmental Affairs at the University of Washington presented their research project with the Audubon Washington to evaluate multi-level governance on shorebird habitat management and conservation in Puget Sound.
- **December 9-** Skagit MRC's monthly meeting was held in person at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort. The regular business meeting was followed by a field trip to the Mt. Erie School Rain Garden in Anacortes.

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:** 2023 SSS training will start February 7th through April 25th. Classes will be held Tuesdays from 1pm to 5pm at Padilla Bay. Promotional materials and the registration form have been updated and posted on the Skagit MRC website: www.skagitmrc.org. The deadline to register is January 31, 2023. The speaker schedule has been drafted and will be posted on the MRC website after it's been finalized.
- **Fidalgo Bay Day:** Skagit MRC is seeking a new Project Lead for Fidalgo Bay Day. The date for the 2023 Fidalgo Bay Day event has been tentatively set for Saturday, August 26, 2023. We plan to reserve the Fidalgo Bay Resort facility as well as the Shannon Point Touch Tank.
Forage Fish Surveys: Forage fish surveys continue at our nearshore restoration sites and Index sites.
- **MRC- Salish Sea School Intern:** The interns finished collecting forage fish data at March's Point in November. They are currently working on data analysis, a final report, and presentation. Virtual presentations will be held January 7th.
- **Kids on the Beach:** 50 8th grade students from Conway Middle School participated in beach seining and forage fish survey activities at the Fidalgo Bay RV Park on November 18th with help from volunteers and Padilla Bay NERR Education staff.

- Kayak Kelp Surveys: September was the last month for kelp surveys this season. The Northwest Straits Initiative will kick off the 2023 survey season with a regional meeting in early spring for MRC's to share survey data and get geared up for the upcoming survey season. Eleanor Hines with RE-Sources recently presented the kelp survey program to the Hole in the Wall kayak group in Anacortes in October which sparked some interest from experienced kayakers to help with the kelp surveys.
- Bowman Bay Restoration: Skagit MRC partnered with the Northwest Straits Foundation to host a planting party at Bowman Bay on November 3. 17 volunteers, MRC members, MRC staff, and NWSF staff applied compost and planted over 175 native plants. Several volunteers also participated in the forage fish survey following the planting party.
- Pinto Abalone Recovery: The [2022 Pinto Abalone Final Report](#) is now complete and available on the Skagit MRC website. Field work will start up again in February or March 2023.
- Olympia Oyster Restoration: Field work is complete for the 2022 season. We will be conducting a Bay-wide survey in partnership with the Puget Sound Restoration Fund in 2023 with NOAA Congressional funding. Bay-wide surveys will only occur at 5-year intervals as funding allows. The last bay-wide survey was completed in 2018.
- Sharpes Corner Stormwater Sampling: We were unable to complete the QAPP prior to the first flush. The MRC is currently looking into other QAPPs that have been approved for similar projects to use as a guideline. We hope to get some sampling done this spring.

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: Kids on the Beach - Conway Middle School Students at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort on November 18th.



Photo Credit: Jillian Brinko



Photo Credit: Mira Lutz



Photo Credit: Mira Lutz

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Snohomish

Month/Year: November 2022

Submitted by: Elisa Dawson and Joycelyn Blue

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

- The Port Susan Subcommittee from Snohomish County and Island County attended a kick-off meeting with ESA consultants on November 15. The group discussed the draft communications plan, which is set to be completed by December 15.
- The Snohomish MRC partnered with WSU Beach Watchers to host a Beach Cleanup at Howarth Park on November 22.

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

Laura Gurley has announced she will not be renewing for her third term on the MRC and will resign as a member at the end of 2022.

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

The Meadowdale Monitoring team met onsite to discuss the status of the project on October 26.

The MRC conducted forage fish sampling on November 7.

Joycelyn and Elisa attended the MRC staff meeting on November 14.

The Port Susan team hosted their kickoff meeting on November 15.

The MRC had their in-person retreat on November 16 to discuss MRC leadership, recruitment, and the 2023 Annual Workplan.

Joycelyn Blue met with Ardi from the Ocean Research College Academy in Everett on November 17 to discuss collaboration opportunities with the MRC.

Elisa Dawson met with Kitsap County staff to discuss derelict vessel removal programs on November 18.

The MRC partnered with WSU Beach Watchers to host a beach cleanup on November 22.

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

None.

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

Port Susan Marine Stewardship Area (MRC grant project for 2021-2022): The Port Susan Subcommittee from Snohomish County and Island County attended a kick-off meeting with ESA consultants on November 15. The group discussed the draft communications plan, which is set to be completed by December 15.

Derelict Vessels (NWSF funds): No Updates.

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. November sampling at Picnic Point and Howarth Park was completed on November 8.

Nearshore Restoration: Meadowdale construction of the estuary area is complete, and the pathways and bridges are being finalized. The Park is expected to open to the public by the end of 2022. Snohomish County management is reviewing the Meadowdale Monitoring webpage which will be hosted on the MRC webpage, and the Meadowdale story map.

Outreach: The Snohomish MRC partnered with WSU Beach Watchers to host a Beach Cleanup at Howarth Park on November 22.

Oil Spills: The Oil Spill subcommittee met on November 7 to discuss plans and priorities for 2023.

No updates for:

- Marine Vegetation Monitoring
- Snohomish Estuary Pilings Project
- Crabber Outreach
- Stormwater (formerly Mussel Watch)

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

None.

Upcoming Events:

- Forage Fish Sampling December 5
- Meadowdale Monitoring Team meeting December 8
- MRC Meeting December 21

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

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Whatcom

Month/Year: NOVEMBER and DECEMBER 2022

Submitted by: Austin Rose

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

- **As of January 31, 2023, the MRC will have two vacancies, one Citizen-at-Large (current member is eligible to re-apply and one Scientific). An application for the Scientific seat was received on 12/2, and will be reviewed by the Executive Committee in mid-December.**
- **The MRC has drafted a comment letter to the City of Bellingham expressing concerns about the proposed housing development on the north side of North Chuckanut Bay. The 30-day comment period began 11/24. It is anticipated that the MRC's letter will be submitted by mid-December.**

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

Final elections for the MRC Officer Positions occurred at the December meeting:

MRC Chair – Heather Spore, MRC Vice-Chair – Jim Boyle, MRC NWSC rep.- Bob Cecile, and NWSC alt. rep. – Mike MacKay. Official elections will be made at the December meeting.

As of January 31, 2023, the MRC will have two vacancies, one Citizen-at-Large (current member is eligible to re-apply and one Scientific). An application for the Scientific seat was received on 12/2, and will be reviewed by the Executive Committee in mid-December.

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

The MRC held their November meeting on November 3. Highlights included:

- **Chuckanut Bay Voluntary No-Anchor Zone:** Dana Oster and Allie Simpson shared data collected during summer 22' to inform the installation of a No-Anchor Zone in Chuckanut Bay. Allie worked with volunteers to collect the number of vessels anchoring in the bay within the eelgrass delineation. In September 2022, the Northwest Straits Foundation contracted with Confluence to complete an up to date eelgrass survey using UAV, divers, and towed underwater video, to determine the extent of the eelgrass bed. Multiple vessels anchored in the area throughout the summer – particularly during July and August. Vessels often anchored 100-300 ft from the trestle. There are four separate eelgrass beds along the shoreline that total 8.6 acres. Members expressed concern about the cost benefit of the project, but understand a critical need to protect eelgrass beds. Data on potential damage to the eelgrass would be helpful to justify costs of the project. Commission staff requested authorization from the MRC to move forward with permitting applications for Chuckanut Bay. Member agreed to move forward with the permitting. Austin met with Commission staff after the meeting and it was suggested that the MRC take more time to consider the project. The MRC will use the CDS funds - originally allocated to hire a consultant and purchase supplies for the No-Anchor Zone – to further the proposed

eelgrass protection project at Wildcat Cove, in addition to the derelict vessel removal work.

- Staff will be coordinating a subcommittee to outline goals and expectations for an MRC retreat in early 2023 – which will be funded with CDS funds.

- Members will be drafting a comment letter regarding a [proposed housing development](#) on the north side of North Chuckanut Bay. The 30-day comment period is expected to begin on 11/24. Project contacts from the City of Bellingham presented the proposal to the MRC in 2021. The MRC has since heard concerns from the local neighborhood – particularly regarding the proposed stormwater management. The MRC has their own concerns about how the development will impact the health of the ecosystem in N. Chuckanut Bay and the current MRC projects in the bay (Olympia oyster restoration and efforts to improve water quality for recreation shellfish harvesting opportunities). The draft letter will be presented at the December MRC meeting for committee approval to submit to the City of Bellingham.

- The committee determined that the decision-making platform could be used more effectively when voting via zoom. Members volunteered to work with staff to introduce protocols and expectations that are clear and more inviting to each committee member present.

- MRC staff participate in the Whatcom Coastal and Riverine Compound Flood Vulnerability and Risk Assessment project. Project information was shared with the Committee. The project goal is to convene a multi-jurisdictional and collaborative partner team to complete a Vulnerability & Risk Assessment for marine shorelines and lower Nooksack riverine shorelines in Whatcom County based on a common set of agreed upon assumptions, scenarios, and probabilistic outcomes. This will be used by jurisdictions for regulatory purposes to address projected climate impacts and build community resilience. Partners include Whatcom County departments, USGS, Lummi Nation, large cities (Bellingham, Ferndale, and Blaine), WA SeaGrant and Port of Bellingham. Compound flood models were developed by USGS through [Coastal Storm Model System \(CoSMoS\)](#) for Puget Sound.

The MRC held their December meeting on December 1. Highlights included:

- Eleanor Hines led her last meeting with the MRC, terming off after serving 8 years. Eleanor was presented with a wooden paddle, carved by Nadine Bob, Lummi Nation. Big thanks to Eleanor for all that she has done Initiative wide, and her wish to continue working with the MRC in a different capacity.

- A member with the “Save Mud Bay Cliffs” neighborhood group joined the meeting to share concerns about a proposed housing development on the north end of North Chuckanut Bay. The MRC also discussed their draft comment letter to the City of Bellingham, which outlines the same concerns the Chuckanut community has voiced. The proposed stormwater management plan is of particular concern given the bay is already jeopardized by stormwater, septic systems, and constricted tidal flow from the train trestle.

- Kurt Baumgarten, Port of Bellingham and Kathy Ketteridge, Blue Coast Engineering, provided a presentation on the Little Squalicum Beach Park Shoreline Enhancement Project, and emphasized the expected improved habitat for forage fish spawning.

- The committee discussed draft additions to their Policies and Procedures to establish a clear procedure for voting by zoom. Members felt that the process has been inconsistent in the past and wanted to set clear expectations as they transition to mostly virtual meetings.

- Analiese Burns, City of Bellingham, provided a presentation on the Little Squalicum Estuary Project, a recently completed restoration project on the Squalicum shoreline. The MRC is conducting their forage fish spawning surveys within the beach nourishment areas of that project.

-The CDS funding grant will not go to the Whatcom County Council until January 2023. After the contract is approved there will be a job posting for the additional MRC staff position.

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):

- The forage fish survey intern hired in October has to resign her position due to a conflict with her other employment. A new job announcement will be posted in December.

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.):

[Salmon Evolution](#) recently joined a Cherry Point Aquatic Reserve Implementation Committee meeting to propose a land-based Atlantic salmon aquaculture facility at a (~50 acre) site at Cherry Point that is currently zoned for industrial uses. Salmon Evolution is a Norwegian company, established in 2017, and have been in operation since March 2022. They presented their proposal in effort to seek input prior to EIS scoping to ensure community concerns are addressed. Committee members expressed great concern about the implications of this development (i.e. the critical habitat for herring, crabs, and juvenile salmon).

[American Fisheries Society Washington – B.C. Chapter](#) will be hosting their chapter meeting in Bellingham in March 2023. Staff with the Bellingham Technical College Fisheries and Aquaculture Program reached out to program partners to garner interest in attendance and participation for the meeting. The chapter's committee members expressed a desire for local hosts and participants that could enrich the Bellingham meeting. This could include hosting a local event for meeting participants, organizing a symposium, or simply helping out with compiling a list of suggested places to eat and drink. Any level of engagement would be greatly appreciated. The MRC was informed of the event and some members may choose to participate and share information about the Whatcom MRC.