



Meeting: Northwest Straits Commission
Date: June 23, 2023
Time: 10:45 AM-2:00 PM
Location: Odlin State Park and
Grace Episcopal Church,
70 Sunset Ln, Lopez Island, WA 98261

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.

Today we are on the ancestral and current homelands of the Lummi, Swinomish, and Samish Tribes.

10:45 Meet at Odlin State Park	Welcome and introductions Tribal acknowledgement	Tim Ellis, Chair Jane Fuller, San Juan County Council
11-12:00	MRC Presentations and Lunch <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentation at Odlin – 20 Minutes• Transportation to church – 20 minutes• Lunch and presentation – 20 minutes	San Juan MRC, Sam Whitridge and Christina Koons
12:00-12:30	Business Items <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kelp Plan Summary• Communications Plan• MRC Lead Staff Meeting Update• Kelp Indicator Data	Jeff Whitty Jessica Owens Lucas Hart Dana Oster



agenda

12:30-12:55	Committee Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Executive Committee• Science Advisory Committee• External Relations Committee	Alan Clark Julia Parrish Nan McKay
12:55-1:15	Puget Sound Partnership update	Ahren Stroming
1:05-1:40	MRC Reports	MRC Representatives
1:40-1:50	Meeting highlights and action items	All
1:50-2:00	Round table	All
2:00	Adjourn	

*BBQ hosted by Tom Cowan after the meeting from 2:30-5:30 at 3299 Center Road, Lopez Island, 98261.

Next meeting: July 28, 2023 – Padilla Bay



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May 26, 2023 10:00 AM-12:00 PM
Virtual Zoom Meeting
Northwest Straits Commission meeting

Attendees:

Commission Members: Tim Ellis (Snohomish – Chair), Ginny Broadhurst, Christina Koons (San Juan), Jeff Taylor (Jefferson), Elsa Schwartz (Island), Laura Blackmore (Puget Sound Partnership), Nan McKay, Tom Cowan, Don Hunger (Foundation), Julia Parrish

Commission Staff: Sasha Horst, Caitlyn Blair, Dana Oster, Lucas Hart, Jeff Whitty, Allie Simpson

Others in Attendance: Austin Rose (Whatcom), Dana Flerchinger (Whatcom)

Absent: Cecilia Gobin (NWIFC), Alan Clark (Vice-chair - Clallam), Diane Hennebert (Skagit), Bob Cecile (Whatcom)

Welcome and Introductions:

New chair of the Commission Tim Ellis opened the meeting with introductions and the Tribal Acknowledgement.

Committee Reports:

Executive Committee: Lucas stepped in for Alan to share Executive Committee updates. The Executive Committee welcomed Tim as the Chair and Alan as the Vice-Chair of the NW Straits Commission. Jeff, Elsa, and Tom shared about their leadership roles on the Commission and provided insight on ongoing topics for Tim and Alan to be aware of.

The Committee also debriefed on Nan, Jerry, Lucas, and Jeff's trip to Washington D.C. for Puget Sound Day on the Hill.

The Committee also touched on regional work that the Marine Program at the NW Straits Commission has taken on. The Marine Program outline describes three tiers of project support, which are MRC project support, multi-regional project support, and broad scale project support. The Committee plans to bring this forward to the Commission for discussion at a future meeting.

External Relations Committee: Nan outlined the successes of Puget Sound Day on the Hill, sharing that their attendance, meetings, and activities at the event were very well organized by the Puget Sound Partnership and the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission. One of the main



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priorities in attending was to garner support for federal reauthorization of the NW Straits Initiative. Nan shared that Senator Murray is committed to working on reauthorization. Senator Cantwell's staff said she plans to co-sponsor. Meetings were also held with Representative Larsen, Representative Kilmer, and with staff from Representative Schrier and DelBene's offices. Representative Larsen was asked to sponsor a House companion bill. He is reviewing the Senate reauthorization bill to gain a better understanding of the legislation. Nan mentioned that they are working to get a letter from Governor Jay Inslee supporting reauthorization.

Lucas shared that he attended a meeting with Representative Huffman's staff to discuss supporting kelp conservation efforts. Representative Huffman is a Congressman from California. Lucas added that having NW Straits reauthorization as a priority at Puget Sound Day on the Hill helped foster good conversations with our delegation.

Laura added that a survey is going out to all participants to get feedback from the event, and they are hoping to put out a summary report of the event for the first time.

Lucas thanked MRC Staff for their support in gathering letters from each of the seven county councils/commissions. The letters from counties and tribes were shared with members of Congress.

Science Advisory Committee: Julia deferred to Dana to provide updates about the Science Advisory Committee. Dana welcomed new Science Advisory Committee member [David Trimbach](#). Dana mentioned that there will be a Science Advisory Committee meeting in June for members to provide input and engage with MRC project proposals. Julia added that these meetings are to provide helpful insight, and to assist in making the Science Advisory Committee more relevant to MRCs.

Business Items:

Staff provided updates on the following business items:

Welcome Ginny Broadhurst: Lucas invited the Commission to welcome Ginny Broadhurst as the new Governor's Appointee. Ginny shared about her background with the NW Straits Initiative and her current position as the Director of the Salish Sea Institute at Western Washington University.



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Welcome Tim and Alan: Lucas invited the Commission to welcome Tim Ellis and Alan Clark as the Chair and Vice-Chair of the NW Straits Commission.

MRC Grant proposal submissions: Sasha gave an update on the status of MRC grants from the Commission. The due date for MRC proposals was May 26, and MRCs will receive two grants totaling \$192,000(year 1)/\$192,500(year 2) over the next two-year period. Many thanks to the MRC staff and project leads for their work in developing projects and preparing proposals. Next steps are for review and coordination with MRCs, and the full slate of projects will be brought to the Commission for review at a meeting this summer.

NW Straits communication position update: Jessica Owens has been hired as the Communications Coordinator for the NW Straits Commission, starting June 1

State budget updates: Lucas provided updates on the 2023-2025 state budget, The NW Straits Commission will be receiving funding through a kelp proviso to support kelp conservation and monitoring work. In addition to funding for the Commission, money will also be passed through to partners doing kelp conservation work, such as the Squaxin Island Tribe, Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe, Samish Tribe, and Puget Sound Restoration Fund.

In addition, the MRC funding proviso was included in the state budget, which is \$910,000 for this biennium. This year, the language was also altered to provide more flexibility for MRCs in receiving funds. MRCs can now direct their funding to be used on their projects via the NW Straits Commission.

Green crab funding to the NW Straits Commission will also continue at flat levels throw the WA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife. To bolster funding for The NW Straits Commission's green crab work, a funding request is being submitted to the green crab emergency taskforce workgroup.

NW Straits Commission Meeting – San Juan County: Caitlyn shared that the NW Straits Commission meeting on June 23 will be from 10:45 AM - 2:00 PM on Lopez Island, first at Odlin County Park, where we will hear from the San Juan County MRC about their projects. We will then move the meeting to the Grace Episcopal Church. Please contact Caitlyn with any questions regarding the meeting.

Partner Updates:



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Puget Sound Partnership: Laura shared that Puget Sound Day on the Hill was successful. Laura also mentioned that they held a fruitful Ecosystem Coordination Board meeting in San Juan County. The next leadership council meeting will be June 7-8, where shellfish beds will be a highlight discussion. The Puget Sound Partnership is also looking to collaborate with the Transportation community to work toward salmon recovery efforts.

Foundation Updates: Don shared with the Commission that the NW Straits Foundation will be hosting a 20th anniversary event on June 10 from 2-6 PM at Jerry Masters' house. Don also gave an overview of the successes of the Salish Sea Conservation Corps, where several WWU students were involved with mentorship, trainings, presentations, and hands-on field projects. The NW Straits Foundation is looking for funding for this program for its second year. The crew was proud to announce their findings of 10,544 juvenile chum salmon at Cornet Bay. The NW Straits Foundation has also been working with the journalism program at WWU to provide internships for students at the NW Straits Foundation.

MRC Updates:

Clallam - Alan Clark (not present, written from MRC Report)

- Continued Forage Fish sampling on three beaches.
- Three Olympia oyster surveys have occurred.

Jefferson – Jeff Taylor

- The MRC organized a Digging for Dinner event on April 23. The event provided education to 39 participants about Salish Sea clams, where to find them, and how to harvest safely and sustainably.
- In partnership with Puget Sound Restoration Fund and WDFW, the MRC organized community presentations to share about Olympia oyster restoration opportunities in Kilisnoe Harbor and to solicit input from Marrowstone community members, on May 4 (virtual) and May 7 (in-person with a beach walk). Over 20 tideland owners have expressed interest in beach walks with biologists and further exploration of possible restoration efforts.
- With the help of WSU Extension, Native Salvage Plant Foundation, groundskeeping staff and three volunteers, the MRC installed a new rain garden at the Old Alcohol Plant Inn in Port Hadlock



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Island County – Elsa Schwartz

- The MRC hosted a Forage Fish class for the South Whidbey School District.
- The MRC had a table at the Penn Cove Water Festival.

San Juan County – Christina Koons

- The spring Great Islands Cleanup event was held on April 22nd. This year a total of 301 people collected 4,574 pounds of litter on Shaw, Orcas, San Juan, Stuart, Decatur, Sucia, and Lopez Islands
- There was no May MRC meeting and instead MRC members attended the boat-based Salmon Recovery site visits on May 4th. This year they visited shoreline armor sites on Lopez and Orcas.

Snohomish – Tim Ellis

- The MRC hosted an Earth Day event on April 22 in partnership with WSU Beach Watchers and Tulalip Tribes. This cleanup utilized the Escaped Trash Assessment Protocol and was held at Mission Beach. Around 30 volunteers were in attendance and a total of 145 lbs of trash was removed from the beach.
- The crabber subcommittee and members of the Oil Spill subcommittee decided again to do crabber outreach. for the first two weekends of crabbing at the Everett Marina. In addition to handing out crabber information and supplies the committee will add oil spill kits donated by Washington Sea Grant and Snohomish County oil spill phone number magnets. The subcommittee is also developing a short survey of yes/no questions to get a bit more information from the public on crab pot loss/prevention of loss.
- A college intern has been hired by Snohomish County to assist the Marine Program this summer. The intern will start in June.

Skagit – Diane Hennebert (not present, written from MRC Report)

- Salish Sea Stewards Social and Data Sharing Event held May 9th at Padilla Bay. It was a great turnout with around 35-40 in attendance. Five speakers presented some of the data that volunteers have been collecting on forage fish, bull kelp, March Point Heronry, beach seining, intertidal monitoring, etc. Presentations were followed by a potluck social.
- Shoreline Landowner Workshop held April 29th at Seafarer's Memorial Park in Anacortes. Excellent presentations by Herrera and Nickel Brothers! Although it was a low turnout with only around 15 shoreline property owners in attendance, they were all engaged and



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asked a lot of great questions. Several were from the same neighborhood and were interested in getting a technical site visit.

Whatcom – Austin Rose

- Staff are working to organize a MRC retreat in late September early October. Triangle Associates (formally Veda Environmental) is available and interested in facilitating.
- The MRC will work with David Wallin, Western Washington University, to conduct eelgrass surveys by drone several times throughout the summer to quantify/ photo document the eelgrass coverage and potential damage that may occur as a result of boat use in Wildcat Cove, Larrabee State Park. In addition, DNR will be conducting a survey in late August, and will attempt to complete 3m transects in the focus zone around the Wildcat Cove boat launch, and 10m transects in the rest of the cove out to where vegetation is not detected (deep water zone).
- The annual Olympia oyster survey in N. Chuckanut Bay occurred on May 8 and May 10 with the help of two different groups of students enrolled in the Bellingham Technical College Fisheries and Aquaculture Program. Very few LIVE Olympia oysters were found within the test plots. The MRC is considering abandoning the pilot restoration project in N. Chuckanut Bay and transitioning their efforts to Drayton Harbor. The success of Oly oyster restoration efforts in Drayton led by the Puget Sound Restoration Fund (PSRF) is visible. Brian Allan, PSRF, will be joining the June MRC meeting to discuss their work in Drayton and ways the MRC could consider adding to the project.

Meeting Highlights and Action Items:

The Commission identified the following key highlights:

- The next Puget Sound Partnership Leadership Council meeting is June 7-8 at the LOTT Clean Water Alliance in Olympia. One topic on the Leadership Council agenda is the trend in declining shellfish bed in Puget Sound. This topic will be from 9:20-10:00 on June 7. The Alliance for a Healthy South Sound will follow that up with a local forum from 10:15-12:15 that will cover shellfish beds and nutrient management. The meeting will be streamed on TVW. Click [here](#) for the link to watch the meeting.
- The NW Straits Foundation is hosting a 20th year anniversary event at Jerry Masters' house on June 10 from 2-6 p.m. Contact Brooke Friesen friesen@nwstraitsfoundation.org for information.
- Due to boat launch design, boaters launching at Larrabee State Park in Whatcom County drive over critical eelgrass habitat at lower tides. The Whatcom MRC is working with WWU professor David Wallin to assess damage caused by boat launch use in the area.



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- The Canadian federal government approved the Roberts Bank container terminal expansion. This project is expected to have direct impacts on Salish Sea species, as the port is in a critical habitat for Southern Resident Orca Whales and Chinook salmon.
- Four representatives from the NW Straits Initiative attended Puget Sound Day on the Hill in Washington DC. Northwest Straits Commission reauthorization was one of three priorities at this year's event. Reauthorization includes federal appropriations. Senator Murray is committed to working on reauthorization. Senator Cantwell plans to co-sponsor. Attendees also held meetings with Representative Larsen, Representative Kilmer, and with staff from Representative Schrier and DelBene's offices. Representative Larsen was asked to sponsor a House companion reauthorization bill. He is reviewing the Senate reauthorization bill to gain a better understanding of the legislation. Governor Jay Inslee's staff has offered to write a letter of support for reauthorization.

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Public Comment:

Julia shared that the UW College of the Environment was successful in recruiting Dr. Corey Garza as the Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. He is a marine ecologist and is developing programs to further diversify programs at UW and Friday Harbor Labs.

Lucas commented on the Roberts Bank terminal project. He suggested that individuals take a look at the project as it is occurring a large Salish Sea estuary.

Don is recruiting board members for the NW Straits Foundation and is looking to fill three-year terms that start October 1, 2023.

Jeff shared that Jefferson County MRC has created a subgroup to get student representation on the MRC.

*The next meeting will be the Northwest Straits Commission meeting June 23, 2023, on Lopez Island at Odlin County Park the Grace Episcopal Church.



Commission staff highlights - [June 2023]

MRC Support

2021-23 MRC Grants: The current MRC agreements are now in the final quarter of the state funding availability, and payment requests/progress reports are now due to close out that funding source. The final quarter of the agreements is July-September, and the annual reporting for projects will be due at the end of that quarter.

2023 CDS MRC Grants: MRCs are currently working on the projects in these agreements, and several are awaiting the possibility of an extension into 2024. Commission staff will work with MRCs to execute amendments when we receive confirmation from NOAA that the award can be extended.

2023-25 MRC Grants: Commission staff and the Science Advisory Committee are now reviewing proposals for the 2023-25 award period. MRCs will each receive two awards – one beginning in October 2023 that will provide State/EPA funds, and the second beginning in January 2024 with NOAA funds. A full list of projects and MRC budgets will be provided to the Commission at the August meeting.

Regional Projects

Kelp Plan: Staff finished the draft of the 2020-2023 Kelp Plan Summary Report, which consists of a synthesis of the advances, lessons learned, and next steps of the actions within the Kelp Plan since its publication. The draft will be submitted for review in July, before final publication.

Kelp Monitoring: Staff continued to collaborate with WA DNR on development of a MRC Kelp Kayak Monitoring Program StoryMap and report on recommendations to advance the monitoring program. Staff also continued to work with kayak volunteers to get them prepared for the monitoring season.

Green Crab: NWSC staff have participated in multiple outreach efforts related to green crab management. Staff have been working closely with Skagit MRC on creating a letter for shoreline landowners showcasing the collaboration effort of green crab trapping in Skagit County as well as highlighting what landowners can do to help. Staff also presented on Drayton Harbor trapping efforts at a transboundary green crab webinar hosted by British Columbia based non-profit Friends of Semiahmoo Bay for World Oceans Day. In collaboration with Washington Conservation Corps, the green crab efforts will be highlighted in a radio interview with Skagit Talks. Staff also submitted two reports related to funding for WA Department of Fish and Wildlife and for the Recreation and Conservation Office.



Commission staff highlights - [June 2023]

Derelict Vessels: Vessels in Island and Jefferson Counties were removed in partnership with MRCs and Washington Department of Natural Resources. Near Langely, NWSC and MRC funds were used to remove a vessel, and DNR funds were used to remove a second vessel during the same operation to save costs on both removals. In Jefferson County, a vessel from Kala point was removed and transported to the Port of Port Townsend to be recycled as part of a vessel recycling event held on June 5th with DNR. Commission staff continue to coordinate with Swinomish on tribal permits needed for removing two planned vessels, and with the Makah Tribe on hosting a derelict vessel turn in event in Neah Bay.

Voluntary No-Anchor Zones: Commission staff and partners conducted bidder interviews for the social marketing campaign Request for Quotations and Qualifications. Commission staff coordinated with Foundation staff on plans for eelgrass surveys in Drayton Harbor and the development of a Quality Assurance Project Plan.

Operations

Staff: Welcome to Jessica Owens, our new Communications Consultant!

Budget: The 2021-23 state biennium is ending on June 30. Anyone with travel or other expenses through the end of June should submit those for reimbursement (MRC representatives to your MRC staff, governor appointees to Caitlyn). The 2023-25 biennium begins July 1 and Commission staff is working with kelp partners to pass through funding in the state budget through a proviso and working with WA Dept of Fish and Wildlife on an interagency agreement for green crab funding, in partnership with Padilla Bay Reserve.

Communications

Communications plan review: Exploring the communications work that is already in place and looking at what aligns with current communications channels and needs.

Media Roster: Collecting publications and contacts for outreach and publications.

Reauthorization Communications: We're in the planning stages to identify and review timelines, communication material needs, and exploring what elements of an awareness campaign would be beneficial.

Meetings Attended

Allie attended: Communications Consultant interviews for No Anchor Zone project 6/1; Skagit MRC landowner letter review 6/7; World Oceans Day presentation 6/8; MRC lead



Commission staff highlights - [June 2023]

staff 6/12; Green crab data hub meeting with WDFW 6/13; Green crab scope of work meeting 6/22

Dana attended: Statewide DEI Conference sessions (Wednesdays in June), Science Advisory Committee 6/5; Washington Seaweed Collaborative Spring meeting 6/6; Kelp Policy Advisory Committee meeting 6/7; NWSC and MRC Staff Meeting 6/12

Jeff attended: Washington Seaweed Collaborative Spring meeting 6/6; PSP Leadership Council meeting/Trends in Shellfish Beds 6/7; Kelp Policy Advisory Committee meeting 6/7; NWSC and MRC Staff Meeting 6/12; Transboundary Kelp Node Participative Science Workgroup meeting 6/13; DNR Marine Vegetation Implementation Strategy meeting 6/21; Transboundary Kelp Node Data Integration Workgroup meeting 6/27

Leah attended: Skagit MRC landowner letter review 6/7; World Oceans Day presentation 6/8; MRC lead staff 6/12; Green crab data hub meeting with WDFW 6/13; Green crab scope of work meeting 6/22

Lucas attended: Port Townsend derelict vessel turn-in event 6/5; Northwest Straits Foundation 20th anniversary event 6/10; MRC all-staff meeting 6/12; DEI conference session 6/14; Communications staff meeting with Puget Sound Partnership 6/14 and Ecology 6/15; Salish Sea Institute Advisor Board meeting 6/20;

Sasha attended: Statewide DEI Conference sessions (Wednesdays in June), Science Advisory Committee 6/5; External Relations 6/7 and 6/21; Executive Committee 6/21

Caitlyn attended: San Juan MRC Meeting 06/01; NWSC and MRC Staff Meeting 06/12; DEI Keynote Office of Equity Webinar 06/14; Executive Committee Meeting 06/21; Incorporating DEIB and Anti-Racism Webinar 06/21; NWSC Meeting 06/23

Jessica attended: External Relations 6/7 and 6/21; NWSC and MRC Staff Meeting 6/12

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Island

Month/Year: June/ 2023

Submitted by: Kelly Zupich

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

- White Paper – SLR/Resiliency
- Cornet Bay & Hoypus Point Stewardship Event

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

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

Previous Meetings/Events:

- May 23: Cornet Bay & Hoypus Point Stewardship Event
- May 25: Exec MRC Meeting
- Jun 6: MRC Meeting - Camano

Upcoming Meetings/Events:

- June 30: Cornet Bay & Hoypus Point Stewardship Event
- July 21: Cornet Bay & Hoypus Point Stewardship Event
- August 1: MRC Meeting Hybrid
- August 30: Cornet Bay & Hoypus Point Stewardship Event

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):

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, Glendale, and Hidden Beach.

Bull Kelp Surveys: Volunteer training took place this month. The new team members for Hoypus and Possession Point are getting set up and ready for their first survey.

Port Susan MSA: No update

Stewardship – Cornet Bay: We are working out a plan with WA State Parks and the NWSF for watering Cornet Bay phase #2 and the Hoypus Point sites this summer. We hosted our first stewardship event this year on May 23rd. There was a new weed found on the beach, so we focused most of our energy getting all of that removed. The mulch seems to be doing its job in the main area by preventing large amounts of weeds to come up. Unfortunately, we found that the Sitka spruces found along the whole Cornet Bay restoration shows signs of illness. We took a specimen to the WSU Extension office, and they diagnosed it with three parasitic infections. In response we are going to try and provide more water so they are less stressed and likely will need to get an arborist out to make recommendations for treatment.

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.):

Advisory - White Paper: Our MRC in collaboration with the Island County Commissioners are working to develop a white paper featuring Climate Resilience and Sea Level Rise. Barbara Bennett is taking lead and spending countless hours working through the details. We will be asking multiple partners and departments to review and give feedback before we present this to the Board of Island County Commissioners this fall.

Advisory – Crosswalk: Our MRC in collaboration with the Island County Planning Department will be working to develop a crosswalk from the Comprehensive Management Plan to the Shoreline Management Plan to cover important topics like Sea Level Rise and Bluff stability. The Comprehensive Plan will be worked on over the next couple of years.

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



Bull kelp Survey Training – Possession Point

Photo by Kelly Zupich



Cornet Bay Stewardship

Photo by Kelly Zupich

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Jefferson

Month/Year: June 2023

Submitted by: Monica Montgomery

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

- The MRC onboarded three interns (MRC Assistant, Crabber Outreach Coordinator, and Rain Garden Community Coordinator) in mid-late May who have already accomplished a ton of work in a short amount of time. The MRC has finalized interviews and has offered a fourth internship (Storm Surge Monitoring Program Coordinator).
- The MRC completed contracted side scan sonar surveys on May 23 and 24 and began ROV derelict crab pot removal operations in a portion of Port Townsend Bay the week of June 6-13, recovering a total of 13 pots. Removal operations will resume on closed days of the recreational crabbing season.
- The MRC conducted an Olympia oyster population survey on June 5 at the North and partial South Powerlines Sites in Discovery Bay with the help of community volunteers. Results show a nice bell curve, indicating a healthy population with continued recruitment; average density of 324 Olympia oysters per square meter; and an estimated total population of 123,000 individual Olympia oysters.

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

May 22 – MRC executive committee meeting

May 23 & 24 – Side scan sonar surveys in Port Townsend Bay, including a community presentation for Adelma Beach residents on May 23

May 27 & 28 – MRC tabling Hood Canal Fjord Fest

May 30 – MRC DEI meeting

May 30 – Rain garden work party at Franklin/Adams

June 2 – Strait ERN LIO meeting

June 5 – Olympia oyster population survey at Powerlines site (Discovery Bay)

June 6 – “Searching for Seaweed” public education event

June 6 – MRC monthly meeting

June 6-13 – ROV derelict crab pot removal operations in Port Townsend Bay

June 11 – Rain garden work party at Benton/Clay

June 12 – MRC staff retreat

June 15 – Rain garden mulching party at Franklin/Adams and Benton/Clay

June 15 – Crabber education workshop

Upcoming Events/Meetings

June 17 – First kelp kayak survey

June 19 – Kelp linear extent survey

June 20 – MRC executive committee meeting

Early July – Contract large shell spread in Discovery Bay

July 1 – Dock outreach targeting recreational crabbers at Port Townsend Bay
July 15 or 16 – Second kelp survey
July 18 – MRC executive committee meeting
July 18, 19, 25, 26 – ROV derelict crab pot removal operations in Port Townsend Bay
August 1 – MRC monthly meeting

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:** Awaiting results for the 2022-2023 season.
- **Forage fish - Adelma Beach (Index):** The Project Lead (Jeff) sampled on May 31 with the help of one volunteer (Cindy).
- **Forage fish - Dabob Bay (Index):** The Project Lead (Sarah) surveyed on May 24 with the help of one MRC member (Troy) and one volunteer (Mark).
- **Kelp:** The team will be conducting the first survey of the season on June 17 and a linear extent survey on June 19 to assess kelp in other areas around East Jefferson County.
- **Storm surge monitoring:** The team interviewed two candidates and has made an offer for the internship position.

2. Rain Gardens:

- The rain garden intern, Isabelle, began on May 25. She conducted a rain garden maintenance assessment across Port Townsend with project lead, Janette, to prioritize rain gardens for work parties.
- On May 30, Janette organized a small work party at Franklin/Adams to cut back the thistle that continues to be a problem here and apply approved herbicide, with the help of Isabelle and two community volunteers.
- Isabelle helped the property owner at Benton/Clay weed the rain garden here on June 11.
- Isabelle organized a mulching party on June 15 to finish weeding at Franklin/Adams and apply mulch at the Franklin/Adams and Benton/Clay rain gardens, also attended by the MRC Coordinator, Bob (WSU Extension), and three community volunteers.
- Isabelle is working on a StoryMap to highlight MRC co-sponsored rain gardens, to educate the public about these resources and identify stewards going forward.

3. Education & Outreach:

- The MRC tabled the Hood Canal Fjord Fest, sharing education about shellfish and promoting the upcoming crabber workshop, on May 27 and 28 in Brinnon. The MRC reached 276 direct contacts and had 11 community members sign up to learn more about upcoming MRC meetings and project volunteer opportunities.
- The MRC organized a “Searching for Seaweed” event at Point Hudson (Port Townsend) on June 6, hosting 23 participants eager to learn about the diversity of Salish Sea seaweeds and sustainable harvesting practices.
- The Crabber Outreach Coordinator intern, Ally, started on May 19. She organized a subcommittee meeting to create the workshop agenda, confirmed speakers, and organized, promoted and hosted the crabber workshop, which took place June 15 and was attended by 30 members of the public. Guest

speakers included Jason Morgan (NWSF), Don Velasquez (WDFW), Annie Raymond (Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe), and Troy McKelvey (MRC recreational interest and crabber).

- Ally will be conducting dock outreach on opening day, July 1, alongside Roy and Troy at the Port Townsend Bay boat ramp.

4. Olympia Oysters:

- The MRC conducted an Olympia oyster population survey at the North and partial South Powerlines sites on June 5. The project lead, Neil, one MRC member (Gordon), MRC Coordinator, MRC Assistant intern (Amelia), and four community volunteers participated. Results show a nice bell curve, indicating a healthy population with continued recruitment; nice densities at 324 Olympia oysters per square meter; and an estimated total population of 123,000 individual Olympia oysters.
- The MRC Coordinator is working on contracting Hood Canal Oyster Co. for a large shell spread event, planned for early July.

5. Voluntary No-Anchor Zones:

- Nothing to report.

6. Mapping Lost Crab Pots:

- The MRC contracted Coastal Sensing & Survey to do side scan sonar surveys in Port Townsend Bay on May 23 and 24. The project lead (Jeff), MRC Coordinator, MRC Assistant intern, and two Sea Dragons (Logan, Oscar) participated in the survey.
- The MRC and Sea Dragons conducted ROV crab pot removal operations the week of June 6-13, recovering 13 total pots and identifying a number of targets that were not pots (i.e., marine debris). The team will resume removal operations on closed days of the recreational crabbing season between July 11 and August 30.

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.): Nothing to report.

Photos (photos of recent projects or members—include project, photo credit and additional info): All photos by Monica Montgomery unless otherwise noted. See below:

May 23 & 24 Side scan sonar surveys of Port Townsend Bay



Logan (Sea Dragon), Ben (Coastal Sensing & Survey), Amelia (MRC Assistant intern) and Oscar (Sea Dragon) deploying the side scan sonar.



Oscar (Sea Dragon) prepping to mark potential derelict crab pots as Amelia (MRC Assistant intern) controls the winch to adjust the depth of the side scan sonar.

June 5 – Olympia oyster population survey at Powerlines site (Discovery Bay)



Community volunteers, Steven Yanoff and Cheryl Lowe (also former MRC Coordinator) counting and measuring Olys within the quadrat.



Volunteers counting and measuring Olys at Discovery Bay.



MRC Assistant intern, Amelia Kalagher, and volunteer Call Nichols, counting and measuring Olys.



MRC member, Gordon, and volunteer Mark Buchli, posing with a cluster of Olys.

June 6 – “Searching for Seaweed” public education event



MRC member, Nam Siu, leading the seaweed walk, educating participants about the diversity of Salish Sea seaweeds and how to harvest them sustainably.



A young “Searching for Seaweed” participant learning to harvest seaweed.

June 15 – Crabber education workshop



Crabber Outreach Coordinator intern, Ally Galiotto, welcoming the crabber workshop participants.



MRC recreational interest representative, Troy Mckelvey, leading a crab pot rigging demonstration.

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: San Juan County

Month/Year: June 2023

Submitted by: Sam Whitridge & Katie Johnson

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

- The San Juan MRC was represented at the bill signing ceremony with Governor Inslee on May 15th as he signed ESSB 5371.
- The ECB Local forum was a great success, with MRC members presenting about oil spill risk and prevention, including the increased importance of a transboundary emergency response towing vessel (ERTV), as well as supporting increased protection of marine habitats for threatened and endangered species from vessel traffic impacts.
- The June MRC meeting was held in person at the San Juan Island Grange and included a cake break to celebrate the ending term of two long-time members: Phil Green and Megan Dethier.

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

Two long time MRC members are terming out at the end of June: Phil Green and Dr. Megan Dethier. Both have made huge contributions to the marine environment of the Salish Sea, and we are grateful for their endless efforts. Recruitment for new members ends on June 16th and interviews for replacement members will begin in the coming weeks.

A new Derelict Vessel Coordinator has been hired to assist with the oversight and coordination of the Derelict Vessel program. Kari Koski comes with a wealth of knowledge and experience. The County has also secured an intern, Makenna Pittman, who will be assisting with Be Whale Wise boater outreach and the MRC mooring buoy permit project.

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

- San Juan Local Forum - May 18th
- June MRC Meeting in person – June 1st
- MRC Staff Meeting – June 12th
- NWSC Meeting on Lopez Island – June 23rd
- Government to Government Training - June 23rd
- Next MRC Meeting – July 6th

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

No new funding updates this month.

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

After completing site visits on May 4th, the San Juan MRC, acting as the Salmon Recovery Citizens Advisory Group (CAG) are preparing to review and score the three projects submitted for funding this year. The Salmon Recovery TAG and Review Panel have already completed their review. All three projects hold promise; however each were deemed to need more information through the initial reviews. Final proposals will be due in late June and then the MRC/CAG will begin its final evaluation.

On May 18th San Juan County hosted a local forum for the Ecosystem Coordination Board. MRC members and SJC staff presented about the importance of oil spill risk and prevention, vessel traffic increase along the transboundary passage, and the increased need for an ERTV in either Roche Harbor

or Sydney Harbor to maximize response capabilities. Frances Robertson, Marine Program Manager, presented on recreational boater impacts on sensitive marine habitats, including increased vessel presence and negative impacts on eelgrass beds. MRC Member Lovel Pratt presented on vessel traffic future projections. The ECB was highly receptive to the ask for their help in encouraging federal representatives and the transboundary caucus to address the urgent need for a dedicated ERTV to protect Haro strait and Boundary Pass from a catastrophic oil spill.

Be Whale Wise sandwich boards have been placed at both Roche Harbor and the Port of Friday Harbor to help educate and remind boaters about practicing safe recreation around wildlife. We have scheduled Dock Talks to provide boater education at Roche Harbor 2-3 times per month throughout the summer. Our first was on Friday, June 9 and while rainy, it was a success. Makenna, Katie, and Frankie passed out whale warning flags and discussed new SRKW regulations. On the return trip we stopped at Bell Point to preform a vessel survey. MRC members across the islands will start surveying anchor out zones at opportunistic times throughout the summer.

A derelict vessel patrol was preformed on Wednesday, June 14th. Kari, Tyler, and Makenna went out with the sheriff to do follow-up visits on previously flagged or tagged vessels.

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.):

On May 15th, Governor Inslee signed ESSB 5371 providing additional vessel related protections for Southern Resident killer whales into law. San Juan County Marine Project Manager Frances Robertson and MRC member Lovel Pratt were able to be there to participate in the signing. The MRCs efforts to pilot and launch the whale warning flag in Washington State has helped towards the results of today and the flag will only become more important as a tool for boaters to alert each other to the presence of whales. As of January 2025, all recreational boats will be required to stay 1000 yards away from Southern Residents.

The San Juan MRC has been advising San Juan County Council regarding the Roberts Bank 2 Terminal expansion in British Columbia. In early June, San Juan County Council submitted a letter to the Premier of BC expressing opposition to the project, while advocating for the need for an ERTV should the project ultimately continue to completion.

Sam and Katie attended the MRC staff meeting at Padilla Bay on June 12th. It was a great opportunity to meet with other coordinators and discuss how things are running at each MRC.

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



San Juan County marine project manager [Frances Robertson](#) and MRC member Lovel Pratt (Marine Protection and Policy Director, [Friends of the San Juans](#)) were able to be there to witness Governor Inslee signing ESSB 5371, providing additional vessel related protections for Southern Resident killer whales.



Intern Makenna Pittman, counting vessels at Bell Point.

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Snohomish

Month/Year: June 2023

Submitted by: Elisa Dawson and Joycelyn Blue

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

- Snohomish County and the MRC welcomed our Marine Ecology Intern Ariel Shiley. Ariel will work on a variety of projects throughout this summer.
- Crabber outreach is scheduled for the first two weekends of crabber season at the Everett Marina 10th street boat launch.
- The Snohomish MRC in partnership with WSU Beach Watchers and City of Everett is hosting a post-4th-of-July beach cleanup on Jetty Island on July 7th.

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

The MRC is currently recruiting new members and specifically looking for applicants who can represent Economic Interests and Local Government Interests. There is also one vacant At-Large Position. Interviews for new members are expected to occur this fall.

Ariel Shiley our Marine Ecology Intern has started and will be working with us on a variety of projects through September.

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

Elisa Dawson participated in the Kelp and Eelgrass Health Plan Executive Work Group on May 25.

Joycelyn Blue and Elisa Dawson met with the Meadowdale Monitoring workgroup on May 31.

Joycelyn Blue and Elisa Dawson met with the consultants for the Port Susan project on June 1.

Elisa Dawson attended the Kelp Policy Advisory Group meeting on June 7.

Joycelyn Blue and Elisa Dawson met with Max Showalter (DNR) to discuss the Kelp and Eelgrass Protection Zone on June 7.

Elisa Dawson, Joycelyn Blue, Ariel Shiley, and David Bain attended the ORCA Possession Sound Student Showcase on June 8.

Elisa Dawson, Joycelyn Blue, and Ariel Shiley attended the MRC and NWS Staff meeting on June 12.

The WSU Beach Watchers were present at Meadowdale to answer questions from the public on June 20.

Ariel Shiley and Joycelyn Blue attended the Dept of Ecology's 6PPD information session webinar on June 21.

The MRC monthly meeting was held on June 21.

MRC staff and members attended the NWSF and WDFW virtual crabber workshop on June 23.

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 2021-2023): ESA is working on a second draft of the story map. New Port Susan progress visuals were drafted and reviewed. The subcommittee and consultants meet on June 28.

Derelict Vessels (NWSF funds): Postings for 7 vessels were completed on June 8. Newspaper legal notices were posted in June, and letters to last known owners were sent. SWM is working on getting bids for the removals from contractors, and removal is expected to occur in August-September.

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, Howarth Park, and Meadowdale. Upcoming forage fish sampling is planned on July 20 and 24.

Nearshore Restoration: The Meadowdale Monitoring Team has begun taking data for year 1 monitoring. Plants have been installed and the restoration site is close to being finalized. Final as-builts are being collected.

Outreach: Beach cleanups in partnership with WSU Beach Watchers continue to be held quarterly. A beach cleanup at Jetty Island is scheduled for July 7 in partnership with the City of Everett.

Crabber Outreach/Oil Spill Preparedness and Prevention: Crabber and oil spill outreach is scheduled for July 1-2 and 8-9 at the Everett Marina. The subcommittee is finalizing a short survey of yes/no questions to get a bit more information from the public on crab pot loss and prevention of loss. The subcommittee is meeting on June 26 to discuss final logistics.

Marine Water Quality: MRC staff and members attended the ORCA Possession Sound Student Showcase on June 8. SWM staff are scheduled to join on data collection cruises with ORCA students throughout the summer.

Marine Vegetation Monitoring: Kelp monitoring has been scheduled for summer 2023. Schedule below:

July we monitor all of our kayak-based sites.

July 13 Mukilteo. Meet at Lighthouse Boat Ramp at 7:30AM

July 17 Edmonds. Meet at Brackett's Landing at 10AM

July 18 Meadowdale. Meet at Brackett's Landing at 9:30AM. This day is a long paddle.

Dates we're holding as backup in case of weather and needing to change plans are 7/14 and 7/19.

August we monitor anywhere we found a kelp bed (typically only Edmonds) a second time by Kayak. Then we go out by motorboat to monitor Hat Island.

August 14 Hat Island vessel monitoring

August 15 is back up for Hat Island

August 28 Edmonds. Meet at Brackett's at 8AM.

Hold July 29 and July 30 as backup dates in case of any changes needed.

September we will just monitor Hat Island by motorboat. This comes after a request from Tulalip Tribes after they did some observations and found that the bed might develop more after August.

September 26th we plan to monitor Hat Island again.

Holding September 27th as a backup date.

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:

- Crabber Outreach July 1-2 and 8-9
- Jetty Island Beach Cleanup July 7
- Forage Fish Sampling July 20 and 24
- MRC Meeting July 19, held virtually

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



Marine Ecology Intern, Ariel Shiley.

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Whatcom

Month/Year: JUNE 2023

Submitted by: Austin Rose

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

- Brian Allan, Puget Sound Restoration Fund (PSRF), joined the June MRC meeting and provided insight on the pilot Olympia oyster project in N. Chuckanut Bay and the potential of continuing restoration in Drayton Harbor. There is a need to gather basic information to identify test plot locations in Drayton – which may include the inside of Semiahmoo Spit and the tide waters of California Creek.
- Commission staff are assisting the MRC with getting an eelgrass survey of the entirety of Drayton Harbor conducted. They will work the Foundation to get an RFP out soon. The work will likely happen this summer and will inform the potential VNAZ, Olympia oyster restoration, and European Green Crab work.

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

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

The MRC held their May meeting on June 1. Highlights included:

- Brian Allan, Puget Sound Restoration Fund (PSRF), provided insight on the pilot Olympia oyster project in N. Chuckanut Bay and the potential of continuing restoration in Drayton Harbor. There is a need to gather basic information to identify test plot locations in Drayton – which may include the inside of Semiahmoo Spit and the tide waters of California Creek. Brian suggested thinking holistically about the water body versus just ease of access. Hydrodynamics/eddy locations in Drayton Harbor need to be examined more closely to determine the viability of this location for oyster retention.
- The MRC will not be meeting in August due to summer vacations
- Very low counts of live Olympia Oysters were recorded during the 2023 population survey. The MRC is discussing other steps for continuing the project. Collection and analysis of larval retention with the help of Bellingham Technical College will continue this summer. Paul Troutman will be terming off the MRC at end of 2023. A new project champion will need to be identified.
- Rick Beauregard provided an overview of the Harmful Algal Bloom (HABs) project that the MRC has adopted. The HABs project samples for harmful algal blooms and other phytoplankton at 2 sites: Drayton Harbor and Birch Bay Harbor. Other sampling includes collecting mussels for biotoxin analysis and Dungeness crab larval sampling to determine if larval tracking is a better way to manage the resource.

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):

- Chuckanut PIC
On May 25, MRC hosted an outreach event in partnership with Whatcom County Health and the Whatcom County Public Works Pollution Identification and Correction Program. Invitations were sent to 496 households in the Chuckanut Village and surrounding areas. The event was hosted near the entrance to North Chuckanut Bay and provided an opportunity for Chuckanut residents to learn about water quality monitoring, the Olympia Oyster project, septic system use, shellfish sampling and biotoxin monitoring, and European Green Crab monitoring within the Bay. Staff from Whatcom County Health,

Whatcom County Public Works, and MRC staff and volunteers were available to answer questions and share knowledge with the community. About 15 people showed up to the event, most of who lived in the immediate Chuckanut Village neighborhood. Whatcom Public Works staff and MRC volunteers shared water quality data and background information on the PIC project. Whatcom County Health emphasized the relationship between water quality and healthy shellfish harvest areas and detailed how septic systems operate. The individuals who attended were passionate about limiting negative impacts to the Bay and expressed concerns about improper septic maintenance in the community, the potential impacts of the proposed Jones Subdivision housing development, and the issue of pet waste and people not properly disposing of their pet waste in the area. Although attendees engaged in meaningful conversations about how to best protect the Bay, different outreach tactics will be necessary to reach those less readily involved with the community. The overall turnout was not as successful as we hoped, particularly in targeting individuals who had less knowledge of the efforts being done to protect North Chuckanut Bay. The MRC partnered with the Whatcom County PIC program and Whatcom County Health on an outreach event at the beach entrance to North Chuckanut Bay on May 25. Postcard invitations were sent to approx. 770 residents in the Chuckanut watershed and adjacent neighborhoods. Updates on Chuckanut Bay water quality, septic system information and maintenance incentives, shellfish and biotoxin monitoring, the MRC Olympia oyster restoration work and European Green Crab info will be shared.

- Marine Vegetation

Commission staff are assisting the MRC with getting an eelgrass survey of the entirety of Drayton Harbor conducted. They will work the Foundation to get an RFP out soon. This will benefit multiple projects (Oly oyster & green crab) so it is worth it to get as much data as possible. Dana Flerchinger has been scouting good locations to take vessel monitoring photos in Drayton to inform the needs for a VNAZ. The Port of Bellingham is aware of the MRC efforts in the area though do not have the ability to help with monitoring vessels.

- Olympia oyster restoration

The MRC is considering setting up some Olympia oyster test plots in Drayton Harbor within the tidewaters of California Creek and inside Semiahmoo Spit. Brian Allan that the Puget Sound Restoration's (PSRF) efforts in Drayton have been a "mixed bag". PSRF introduced a few hundred thousand individuals in Drayton and he believes that "a few million are required." In Chuckanut, there is variability in how the oyster shells carrying Olympia spat were spread within the test plots (within some plots the shells were piled densely in the middle of the site, leaving large areas with no oyster shells). MRC members have observed the Bellingham Technical College students tossing the quadrats onto the pile rather than randomly including bare spots. MRC members suggest that these dense sites may be the ones that showed data with high rates of survival in past years. Which indicates that shells should be densely stacked in smaller sites and not scattered sparsely across a site that is too large for the number of shells we have. This could increase survival and improve monitoring results. Brian Allan also suggested the MRC think holistically about the water body rather than choosing sites that are convenient. The fine sediments of N. Chuckanut Bay may not be ideal for Olympia oysters, however the MRC would like to conduct a more careful search to find adequate habitat and consider that piling shells more densely might provide better substrate and better results.

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.