



Meeting: Northwest Straits Commission
Date: September 29, 2023
Time: 10:00 AM- 3:00 PM
Location: Coupeville Library, 788 NW Alexander St. 98239-0745
Wi-Fi: Sno-Isle Library Guest

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 Swinomish and Tulalip Tribes.

10:00 -10:15	Welcome and introductions Tribal acknowledgement August Meeting Minutes Approval	Tim Ellis, Chair
10:15-10:30	Remarks from Island County Commissioner Bacon	Commissioner Melanie Bacon
10:30-11:00	Roberts Bank Terminal 2 Presentation	Ginny Broadhurst
11:00-11:30	Island County MRC Presentation <i>Jill and Barbara will be presenting on the Climate Change White Paper and their new Water Quality Project.</i>	Jill Lipoti and Barbara Bennett, Island MRC
11:30-11:45	Business Items <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Patty Murray Legacy Award• November conference registration• Recognition certificates• 2024 Commission meeting schedule	Lucas Hart Caitlyn Blair Jessica Owens Caitlyn Blair



11:45-12:15 PM	Revisiting the Tribal Acknowledgement	All
12:15-1:15 PM	Working Lunch	
1:15-1:40 PM	Committee Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Science Advisory Committee• Executive Committee• External Relations	Dana Oster Alan Clark Tom Cowan and Lucas Hart
1:40-1:50 PM	NW Indian Fisheries Commission Update	Cecilia Gobin
1:50-2:00	NW Straits Foundation	Lisa Kaufman
2:00-2:30 PM	MRC Reports	MRC Representatives
2:30-2:40 PM	Meeting highlights and action items	All
2:40-2:50 PM	Round table	All
2:50-3:00 PM	Public Comment	All
3:00 PM	Adjourn	

**We will not be having a meeting in October, please save the date for the NW Straits Initiative Conference from November 3-4 at the NW Maritime Center in Port Townsend. The next regular business meeting will be held on December 8, 2023.*



Minutes

August 25 10:00 AM-12:00 PM
Virtual Zoom Meeting
Northwest Straits Commission meeting

Attendees:

Commission Members: Tim Ellis (Snohomish -Chair), Alan Clark (Clallam- Vice Chair), Tom Cowan, Nan McKay, Diane Hennebert (Skagit), Christina Koons (San Juan), Cecilia Gobin (NWIFC)

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

Others in Attendance: Rep. Debra Lekanoff (40th District Representative), Monica Montgomery (Jefferson), Austin Rose (Whatcom)

Absent: Ginny Broadhurst, Elsa Schwartz (Island), Julia Parrish

Welcome and Introductions: Tim opened the meeting with introductions and the tribal acknowledgement.

The Commission approved the July Commission meeting minutes by consensus.

The Commission approved the previously distributed May and April Commission meeting minutes by consensus.

Remarks from 40th District Representative Debra Lekanoff:

Tom Cowan introduced 40th District Representative Debra Lekanoff.

Debra Lekanoff shared her appreciation for the NW Straits Commission, and honored Terry Williams who introduced her to the NW Straits Commission. She expressed her ongoing support in the legislature for salmon and natural resource conservation issues.

Committee Reports:

Executive Committee: Alan shared that the Committee discussed holding a joint meeting between the NW Straits Foundation and NW Straits Commission Executive Committees to talk about collaboration and the relationship between the two organizations. Don and Lucas are working together to create a plan for the meeting.

The Executive Committee recommended to the Commission that a new annual award be established in the name of Senator Patty Murray. An ad-hoc committee would be formed to name



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the award and outline a selection process. The award would be presented at the annual conference. The Commission supported moving forward with the award by consensus.

Science Advisory Committee: Dana updated the Commission in Julia's absence. The Committee had a meeting on July 30. Tessa Francis, a member of the Committee since 2015, received a new position as Chief of Staff for the US National Nature Assessment for Biden administration, and will not be serving on the Committee once her position begins. The Committee discussed previous member nominations and will be extending invitations to those previously nominated in 2024. The Committee has also been reviewing Speed Date with A Scientist topics for 2024.

External Relations Committee: Nan shared that the Committee is focused on reauthorizing the Northwest Straits Initiative. Senator Cantwell appears supportive of the bill. The Committee is awaiting her formal support. At that point, Senator Murray would like to introduce the bill. They are aiming to introduce the bill in mid-September. Congressman Larsen is prepared to introduce a companion bill in the House. Don Hunger and the NWS Foundation hosted a recent visit to Clayton Beach by Congressman Rick Larsen.

Business Items:

Staff provided updates on the following business items:

Conference Planning Update: Caitlyn updated the group that the NW Straits Initiative conference registration will open on August 30. She reminded the group that this Conference is not an open invitation to spouses or family members.

DEI Update: Allie shared that the NW Straits Commission is moving forward with efforts to hire a DEI consultant to assist with an internal assessment of the NW Straits Initiative.

Senator Murray Visit: In early August, Senator Murray visited Lone Tree Point to learn about MRC-Swinomish Indian Tribal Community collaborations. Commission members, staff, and partners joined the visit. Lucas gave thanks to everyone who attended and assisted with planning.

Social Marketing for Voluntary No-Anchor Zones: Sasha shared that the contract has been sent out to be signed with Peak Sustainability Group who will help develop a social marketing toolkit to share with partners and MRCs.

2023-2025 MRC Grant Approval:



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Sasha shared the list of MRC projects that will be funded with Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Washington state general fund dollars. Sasha asked for official approval to move forward with these projects, along with approval to make some minor adjustments as final project details are collected. Another grant will be going to MRCs using the NOAA congressionally directed spending from fiscal year 2023. Additional projects will be proposed with that source of funding.

The Commission approved the 2023-2025 MRC grant proposals and future adjustments by consensus.

Partner Updates:

Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission: Cecilia shared with the group that the NW Indian Fisheries Commission and partnering tribes are watching for reauthorization updates and will provide input when the time is right. Cecilia is working with Lucas to formalize her tribal appointment seat on the NW Straits Commission. They are also talking about a second tribal seat. Cecilia and Lucas drafted a letter to the Secretary of Interior for her appointment. Cecilia plans to share the letter at the September NW Indian Fisheries Commission meeting for approval.

MRC Reports:

Clallam – Alan Clark

- Continued Forage Fish sampling on three beaches
- Elwha Beach surveys are randomly occurring. These surveys are documenting people/dog use as well as counting dog waste not in CMRC's provided waste can.
- Shellfish biotoxin surveys happen bi-monthly during the summer months.
- Sound Toxin sampling is taking place once a week.
- New outreach coasters have been received and MRC members are distributing them to local businesses.
- Kayak based kelp surveys took place August 14 & 15.

Jefferson – Monica Montgomery

- The MRC organized a shell spread workday on July 31 and with the help of five community volunteers, the MRC Coordinator, and two MRC members (Neil and Gordon), we distributed shell from the remainder of the 1,200 bags delivered to the Powerlines restoration site in Discovery Bay.
- The MRC, with help of the rain garden intern, organized rain garden maintenance work parties at the NW Maritime Center on August 1 and the Jefferson County Courthouse on August 10, created a [Story Map](#) featuring the MRC's network of 18 rain gardens, and



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posted ads in the local newspapers to encourage community members to steward or "adopt" a rain garden.

- The MRC is actively recruiting new members: District 1 Representative/Alternate, District 3 Representative/Alternate, and Marine Science Research and Education Representative/Alternate.

Island – Taken from Report

- Shore Friendly Outreach – This month we chose the contractor that we want to move forward with for the shoreline armoring survey. We are now in the process with Island County to get the contract approved and signed. Our hope is to begin the survey by September 1.
- Stewardship at Cornet Bay and Hoypus Point – We hosted our third stewardship event of the summer. Cornet Bay is looking good overall. We removed some vetch and trailing blackberry at Hoypus point that was encroaching on our new plantings. The survival rate is high so far. Watering at both places is taking place weekly.

San Juan – Christina Koons

- The SJC MRC has a brand-new blog – Currents! This will be a light, fun way to connect with the community and share the stories of the projects the MRC is working on. Check it out [here](#).
- Summertime outreach on Plastic Free Salish Sea initiatives have gone well with tabling at the county fair and launch of plastic film recycling bin pilot at the local grocery.

Snohomish – Tim Ellis

- The Port Susan subcommittee met on August 14 and reviewed the webpage updates. The final webpage and story map will be announced in a September press release.
- The MRC had their annual picnic on August 16 at the Mukilteo Lighthouse Park. Everyone enjoyed the social time and the sunny weather.

Skagit – Diane Hennebert

- The Foundation and MRC hosted a compost and mulching event at Bowman Bay on August 3. The plants are looking much better with weekly watering. The October 12 MRC meeting will be combined with a planting party at Bowman Bay.
- The bay-wide Olympia oyster population survey which takes place every 5 years in Fidalgo Bay is now complete. There was a [recent article](#) in the Skagit Valley Herald.
- Skagit MRC formed a subcommittee to develop a strategic plan for expanding our MRC membership and filling diversity and representation gaps. The subcommittee will hold it's first meeting in October.



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Whatcom – Austin Rose

- The MRC is drafting a letter to the Birch Bay community as more European green crab have been found in that area. The intent of the letter is to keep the public informed on how to identify and report an EGC sighting.
- The MRC retreat has been scheduled for October 21, 9-1 PM at the Squalicum Boathouse. The retreat will be facilitated by Hilary Wilkinson, Triangle Associates.

Public Comment: No public comment.

DRAFT



Executive Committee Meeting
September 18, 2023 • 11:00am-12:00pm (Zoom)
Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

Committee Members: Alan Clark (Chair), Tim Ellis, Nan McKay, Jude Apple, Julia Parrish

NWSC Staff: Caitlyn Blair, Lucas Hart, Sasha Horst, Jessica Owens

Absent:

Appreciation Certificates: NW Straits Commission staff created an appreciation certificate to present to Jamestown S’Klallam Tribal Chair Ron Allen at the November conference as a thank you for the address he will be making to our group. Similar certificates can be used to recognize additional speakers. Staff asked for the Committee’s feedback on the certificate, which includes a kelp photo with thank-you signatures from the NWS Commission, staff etc. The Committee recommended moving forward with the appreciation certificates.

External Funding Policy: The NW Straits Commission recently approved the marine program description. The next step is to create policies and procedures that assist in implementing the program. NW Straits Commission staff recommended to the Committee that we create policies to support sections two (Regional MRC projects and programs) and three (Broadscale leadership on regional marine priorities). The NW Straits Commission already has a funding policy to support section one of the program description. The Committee agreed with the staff recommendation to move forward with creating these policies. Lucas will update the NW Straits Commission at the September meeting.

Second tribal seat: At the last Executive Committee meeting, Lucas presented the idea of creating a second tribal seat on the Commission, as described in the draft NWS reauthorization bill. Since the last meeting, Lucas and Cecilia Gobin discussed the idea. Lucas reported that he and Cecilia talked about the NW Straits Commission MRC majority and how the majority would change by adding an additional seat. They also discussed if tribal representatives should be compensated. The Committee recommended that Lucas revisit the NW Straits operating procedures to determine if all decisions are made by consensus. This can inform us on the importance of the MRC majority. Regarding compensation of tribal seats, the DEI consultant may be able to assist in this discussion. Both facets of this topic will be revisited by the Executive Committee.

NW Straits Commission Retreat: The Executive Committee discussed holding a NW Straits Commission Retreat in February. This would be in addition to the NWS Initiative retreat in spring. The Committee recommended that staff discuss possible agenda topics and bring ideas back to the Committee at the next meeting. The Committee would like to make sure that time spent at a retreat adds value beyond what can be accomplished at a regular Commission meeting.



Commission staff highlights - [September 2023]

MRC Support

2021-23 MRC Grants: MRCs are in the final days of these two-year awards that end on September 30, 2023. Final deliverables for all projects are now due, along with the final payment requests in order to close out the agreements in the next 45 days.

2023 CDS MRC Grants: Commission staff are working with MRC staff and project leads to finalize project proposals for the grant agreements that will have a January 1, 2024 start date.

2023-25 MRC Grants: Commission and Ecology staff completed preparation and review of all MRC proposals, and at this time all MRCs have received their 2023-25 grant agreement for county review and signature for projects and operations using the Washington State general funds and EPA funds via the Puget Sound Partnership. These agreements have an October 1, 2023 start date.

Regional Projects

Kelp Plan: Staff have been hard at work integrating input from partners on the Kelp Plan Status Update. Additionally, staff have been working on multiple upcoming Kelp Plan communication tools in-house and with partners, including a Kelp Plan Communication Plan and an up-and-coming Kelp Plan website update.

Kelp Monitoring: MRC kayakers finished another successful year of kelp monitoring during the final week of September. A total of 21 sites were monitored in 2023. NWSC will now begin to compile and process the received data. A big thank you goes to all of the amazing kayakers for volunteering their time and calories. Staff have also been working with WA DNR and MRCs to integrate the 2022 kayak data and a few MRC sites that now have 5-years of data into the WA DNR's WA State Floating Kelp Indicator.

Green Crab: The Washington Conservation Corps crew finished their last week of trapping at the end of August and gave excellent feedback about their service term with NWSC and the green crab program. Trapping will be able to continue in both Samish Bay and Drayton Harbor through September, and into October as tides allow, with joint support from WDFW technicians, volunteers, VCC, and staff. NWSC staff hosted a workshop for Skagit Conservation District's Watershed Watchers program to train volunteers on WSG & WSU Extension's new Molt Search program.

Derelict Vessels: The Wanderlust in Bellingham was successfully removed in August and NWSC and Whatcom MRC staff coordinated on a press release. Of the initial round of MRC



Commission staff highlights - [September 2023]

and tribal vessels 10 out of 11 have been removed. A vessel on Camano Island is delayed due to active forage fish spawning on the beach. The costs of the 10 removals have been under budget, allowing for a second round of vessel submissions by the MRCs and tribes on the workgroup. Staff are currently compiling the new vessels and proposed vessel turn-in events. Staff continue to coordinate with DNR and the Makah tribe on the tentative plan to co-host a vessel turn in event in spring 2024. Additional proposed turn-in events include Snohomish MRC/Port of Everett, San Juan MRC/Port of Friday Harbor, and Skagit MRC/Port of Skagit/Swinomish Indian Tribal Community.

Voluntary No-Anchor Zones: Staff held the Salish Sea Eelgrass Workgroup meeting where partners met with the social marketing consultant to provide guidance on available programs and resources. Staff attended a project kick off meeting with the social marketing consulting team as work begins to develop the social marketing campaign.

Operations

Staff: N/A

Budget: The fiscal year 2023 Congressionally Directed Spending from NOAA was awarded as of September 19. This funding starts on January 1, 2024 and ends December 31, 2026.

Meetings Attended

Allie attended:

Dana attended: Presented at the States Organization for Boating Access Conference 8/29; NWSI staff meeting 9/6; San Juan MRC meeting 9/7; Conference Planning Committee meeting 9/13; Kelp Plan Coordination Kelp Advisory meeting 9/13; Salish Sea Eelgrass Protection Workgroup meeting 9/14; Skagit MRC meeting 9/14; No-Anchor Zone Social Marketing kickoff meeting 9/19; WA Kelp Coordinators meeting 9/25

Jeff attended: Jefferson MRC meeting 09/05; NWSC/NWSF/MRC Staff Meeting 09/06; Hosted Kelp Plan Coordination Kelp Advisory Meeting 09/13; Snohomish MRC Meeting 09/20; WA Kelp Initiatives/Plans Coordinators Meeting 09/25

Leah attended: Kelp Surveys with DNR 08/31; WCC Presentations 09/05; NWSC/NWSF/MRC Staff Meeting 09/06; EGC Workshop for Skagit Conservation District 09/10; No Anchor Zone Workgroup 09/14; Skagit MRC Meeting 09/14; Snohomish MRC Meeting 09/20

Lucas attended: Skagit Valley Herald interview 8/29; NWSC Staff meeting 9/4; Jefferson MRC Meeting 9/5; External Relations meeting 9/6, 9/13; NWSI staff meeting 9/6; Island MRC



Commission staff highlights - [September 2023]

volunteer appreciation meeting 9/9; Annual report meeting 9/12; Conference Planning meeting 9/13; Senator Murray Award Ad-Hoc Committee 9/13; Salish Current Interview 9/14; NWSC Staff meeting 9/19; Everett Herald Interview 9/19; Ocean Climate Workshop 9/20; NWSF 20th Anniversary event 9/22; Derelict Vessel Check-in with Ecology 9/27

Sasha attended: NWSC/MRC/NWSF staff meeting (virtual) 9/6; Senator Murray Award Ad-Hoc Committee 9/13; Executive Committee 9/18; Skagit MRC meeting 9/14; Clallam MRC meeting 9/18; Voluntary No-Anchor Zone kickoff meeting 9/19; Salish Sea No-Anchor Zone workgroup 9/14

Caitlyn attended: Jefferson MRC meeting 09/05; NWSC/NWSF/MRC Staff Meeting 09/06; San Juan MRC Meeting 09/07; Whatcom MRC Meeting 09/07; Conference Planning Committee Meeting 09/13; Skagit MRC Meeting 09/14; Executive Committee Meeting 09/18; Snohomish MRC Meeting 09/20; NW Maritime Center Site Visit 9/21; NW Straits Commission Meeting 09/29

Jessica attended:

Skagit Valley Herald interview 8/29; NWSC Staff meeting 9/4; Island MRC meeting 9/5; External Relations meeting 9/6; NWSI staff meeting 9/6; Salish Current Interview 9/8; Annual report meeting 9/12; Conference Planning meeting 9/13; Salish Sea No-Anchor Zone workgroup 9/14; Everett Herald Interview 9/19; Voluntary No-Anchor Zone kickoff meeting 9/19; NW Maritime Center Site Visit 9/21; NW Straits Commission Meeting 9/29



DRAFT – 2024 meeting schedule

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

January 26, 2024 (Virtual)

February 22-23, 2024 Island/Skagit
***Retreat TBD**

March 28-29, 2024 Island/Whatcom
***Retreat TBD**

April 26, 2024 (Virtual)

May 31, 2024 (In-person) Skagit

June 21, 2024 (Virtual)

July 26, 2024 (In-Person) Clallam

August 23, 2024 (Virtual)

September 27, 2024 (In-Person) Snohomish/Island

November 8-9, 2024 In-person Conference – Maple Hall (La Conner – TBD)

December 6, 2024 (Virtual)

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Clallam

Month/Year: September 2023

Submitted by: Rebecca Mahan

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

- Continued Forage Fish sampling on three beaches.
- Elwha Beach surveys are randomly occurring and so far there has been 11 surveys.
- Shellfish biotoxin surveys happen bi-monthly during the summer months.
- Sound Toxin sampling is taking place on Mondays (March -Oct). They have found the phytoplankton that causes diuretic shellfish poisoning in low numbers.
- A new batch of MRC outreach cards (coasters has been ordered). Local businesses love them.

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)

The monthly MRC meeting was held September 18th 2023.

The Clallam MRC is tabling at The Dungeness River Festival September 22nd.

Funding updates (newly-awarded grants, in-kind support or other funding commitments): The 2023-25 MRC Department of Ecology contract is scheduled on the September 25th BOCC work session. Signature by BOCC Chair will be on September 26th.

Project Updates (project activities and highlights from the past month, any new projects identified): Kayak based kelp bed surveys have been completed for the season at Freshwater Bay and Clallam Bay

Pigeon guillemot nests surveys occurred for 10 weeks and MRC members Ed Bowlby and Mary Sue Brancato are working on entering the data.

Several Clallam MRC members continued to collect the monthly Forage fish samples at Cline Spit and Ediz Hook and Elwha beaches East and West.

Clallam MRC continues to supply doggie waste bags on the levee west of the Elwha River mouth and survey beach use by humans and dogs.

Educational/Outreach coasters are being distributed to local businesses by MRC members. A few local businesses have asked for more. The Clallam MRC has ordered 7500 more coasters in 3 designs.

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 Clallam MRC's new retractable poster and logo are complete and we will have them by the end of the month.

Photos (photos of recent projects or members—include project, photo credit and additional info): Olympia Oyster survey picture with CMRC member Nancy Stephanz recording data. Photo credit: Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe's Shellfish Biologist Annie Raymond.



MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Island

Month/Year: September / 2023

Submitted by: Kelly Zupich

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

- **American Shoreline Podcast - Could The Marine Resource Committee Model Be America's Coastal Solution?**
- **Derelict Vessel Article - Whidbey News Times**
- **Volunteer Engagement 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:

- August 30: Cornet Bay & Hoypus Point Stewardship Event
- September 4: MRC Monthly Meeting
- September 9: Bowman Bay MRC Volunteer Engagement Picnic

Upcoming Meetings/Events:

- September 30: Camano 101
- October 3: MRC Monthly Meeting
- October 7: Shore Friendly Workshop – Oak Harbor Library
- October 14: Orca Recovery Day Planting and Weeding for Whales – Cornet Bay / Hoypus Point
- November 7: MRC Monthly Meeting

Volunteer Engagement Event: Our MRC members and MRC Project volunteers ended the monitoring season with a gathering at Bowman Bay to share our successes and challenges along with some team building. Thank you to our wonderful volunteers!

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

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

Monitoring – 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: Surveys are continuing through the end of September.

Port Susan MSA: Island and Snohomish MRC are developing a brochure with ESA to showcase the Port Susan MSA update. The brochure will share the goals and progress that has been made in the

conservation of Port Susan. We will continue to work on this with ESA until we get a product that both MRCs are happy with.

Stewardship – Cornet Bay: We hosted our 4th stewardship event of the summer. The Cornet Bay site is looking very good overall. We focused on removing some encroaching grasses and topping all the Canada thistle flowers to keep them from going to seed. Canada thistle will continue to be an issue at the Cornet Bay site for a while. We will continue to spray annually and work to keep the invasive plants from going to seed. We also made it down to Hoypus for some light weeding around the plants. Overall, both sites are looking well. Watering continued up until last week. On October 14, Orca Recovery Day, we will be hosting our next planting and weeding event.

Water Quality Testing: The Water Quality team has been working with the Science Advisory Committee to get the proposal language just right for the next two years of funding.

Shore Friendly Outreach: Our Shoreline Armoring Survey will begin the week of September 18. Additionally, the plans for the upcoming Shore Friendly Workshop are coming together. This week we are sending out an invite to shoreline homeowners on Whidbey Island.

Education - Podcast: Our MRC was invited to participate in the American Shoreline Podcast this month. It was a great opportunity for two of our members to share our work and tell the country about why MRCs are so important in our region. Additionally, we were able to discuss the unique marine habitats and ecosystems we have in the Salish sea. [ASPEN | Could The Marine Resource Committee Model Be America's Coastal Solution? \(coastalnewstoday.com\)](https://www.coastalnewstoday.com/story/news/local/2023/09/14/american-shoreline-podcast-island-mrc/7048444002/)

Education - Article: The Whidbey news Times wrote an article featuring the derelict vessel removals in Island County. Island MRC staff was interviewed along with State DNR, Jerry Farmer. It's a great article showing off our work in Island County. (Unfortunately, they omitted the info shared about the NWSC) [County, state seek to remove abandoned boats | Whidbey News-Times \(whidbeynewstimes.com\)](https://www.whidbeynewstimes.com/story/news/local/2023/09/14/county-state-seek-to-remove-abandoned-boats/7048444002/)

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):



Volunteer Engagement Event –
Bowman Bay

Photo by Kelly Zupich



Cornet Bay Restoration - Rosehip

Photo by Kelly Zupich

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Jefferson

Month/Year: September 2023

Submitted by: Monica Montgomery

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

- At the last MRC meeting on Sep 5, the MRC decided by consensus to add a Local Youth (starting age of 15-21 years old) representative position to the MRC. The term for this role will be up to four years to allow for flexibility and will be determined at the start of their term.
- The MRC tabled Wooden Boat Festival on September 8-10, making 442 direct contacts, signing up 34 individuals to be notified of MRC meetings and volunteer opportunities, and collecting 19 completed community input surveys.
- The MRC is organizing a rain garden installation on Sep 21, at the Swan School (24th St. and Kuhn St.) in Port Townsend with 11 community volunteers signed up for morning and late afternoon shifts and students set to help in the afternoon. This will be the MRC's last installation as we shift focus to maintenance of what will be a network of 19 rain gardens.

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

- The MRC decided by consensus at the last monthly meeting (Sep 5) to add a Local Youth (starting age of 15-21 years old) representative position on the committee to serve a term of up to four years.
- The MRC Member Recruitment subcommittee met on September 11 to review applications for the District 1 Rep/Alt, District 3 Rep/Alt, and Marine Science Rep/Alt positions. Interviews with seven candidates are being scheduled on October 3 and 10.

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

Past Events/Meetings

August 17 – MRC derelict vessel subcommittee meeting
August 22 – MRC executive committee meeting
August 22 – MRC DEI subcommittee meeting
August 25 – NW Straits Commission meeting
August 29 – MRC SMP subcommittee meeting
September 1 – Education & Outreach Wooden Boat Festival prep
September 5 – MRC monthly meeting
September 6 – NWSC/NWSF/MRC staff meeting
September 7 – MRC SMP subcommittee meeting
September 8-10 – Tabling Wooden Boat Festival
September 11 – MRC Member Recruitment subcommittee meeting
September 14 – Salish Sea No-Anchor Zone meeting
September 15 – Forage fish survey at Dabob Bay
September 19 – MRC executive committee meeting

Upcoming Events/Meetings

September 21 – Rain garden installation in Port Townsend
September 22 – Strait ERN LIO quarterly meeting
September 25 – Storm Surge Monitoring Program Coordinator intern's first day
September 26 – MRC SMP subcommittee meeting
September 27 – Kilisut Harbor Olympia Oyster team meeting
October 2 – MRC SMP subcommittee meeting
October 3 – MRC Member Recruitment Interviews
October 3 – MRC monthly meeting
October 7 – Port Townsend Maker's Fair (ROV project featured)
October 10 – MRC Member Recruitment Interviews
October 21 – Tentative Shoreline Landowner Outreach workshop
October 24 – MRC executive committee meeting
October 26 – Forage fish survey at Fort Townsend State Park restoration site

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:** Results from the 2022-2023 season were provided by our partners at the Point No Point Treaty Council, with only 1 late eyed smelt (site 1) and 1 dead smelt (site 3) detected from the October 7 survey. Going forward, the MRC will be shortening the survey season to Oct-Dec at this site, with the next survey planned for October 26.
- **Forage fish - Dabob Bay (Index):** The Project Lead (Sarah) surveyed on September 15 with the help of two community volunteers (Cheryl, Anne).
- **Kelp:** Nothing to report.
- **Storm surge monitoring:** The Storm Surge Monitoring Program Coordinator intern, Nathaniel Ashford, will begin his internship on September 25.

2. Rain Gardens:

- The next and final rain garden installation is set for [September 21 at the Swan School](#) (24th and Kuhn St.) in Port Townsend. Eleven community volunteers are signed up to help with the installation during the morning and later afternoon shifts. Students will help during the afternoon shift with support from teachers and parents.
- One community volunteer has signed up to "adopt" a rain garden in Port Townsend, which entails taking lead on maintaining a specific rain garden by weeding, watering and mulching it as needed throughout the year and notifying the MRC when extra hands or supplies are needed.

3. Education & Outreach:

- The project lead, Joanie, and subcommittee member, Sarah, met with the MRC Coordinator on September 1 to design a cornhole board game for the Wooden Boat Festival. The board was painted with eelgrass habitat covering the top two holes and deeper waters covering the bottom hole. Joanie made bean bags with different critters (Dungeness crab, herring, sea stars) and anchors drawn on them. Participants would be instructed to toss only the bean bags with anchors on them into the

deeper waters and bean bags with marine critters into the eelgrass habitat. The cornhole game was a hit at the Wooden Boat Festival!

- Ten MRC members, the MRC Coordinator, and previous Coordinator/community volunteer (Cherul) tabled Wooden Boat Festival in Port Townsend on September 8-10, making 442 direct contacts at the table and signing up 34 individuals to be notified of MRC meetings and volunteer opportunities.
- The MRC implemented a new community input survey, to learn more about marine conservation concerns and educational interests from East Jefferson County residents and visitors, at the Wooden Boat Festival, receiving 19 completed forms.
- The Jefferson County shoreline landowner outreach workshop is tentatively set for October 21.

4. Olympia Oysters:

- The MRC's Aquatic Lands Conservation License (#23-A97627) for its three Olympia oyster restoration sites in Discovery Bay has been issued, allowing for up to 100 cubic yards of clean shell to be placed through August 31, 2028.
- The project lead, Neil, and MRC Coordinator will be meeting Kilisut Harbor partners on September 27 to discuss the summer's beach walks with Marrowstone property owners as well as plans for Olympia oyster restoration in this area.

5. Voluntary No-Anchor Zones:

- The team plans to swap the summer spar buoys with winter floats in Port Townsend in late September pending team member schedules and availability of an appropriate boat.
- Sarah and Neil/Brent conducted two surveys of the Port Townsend no-anchor zone, noting 100% compliance, during the Wooden Boat Festival.

6. Mapping Lost Crab Pots:

- Project lead, Jeff, and at least one of the Sea Dragons members will be recording a conversation about the ROV project on September 25 to be featured on the KPTZ's *Nature Now* series.

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 SMP subcommittee met on August 29 to discuss edits to a drafted letter of recommendations, and again on September 7 to discuss next steps. Further discussions are scheduled for September 26 and October 2, with the anticipation that the County will be providing an updated draft on September 20 ahead of a planned public hearing tentatively set for October 4.
- The DEI subcommittee met on August 22 to finalize edits to the MRC's business rules for adding a new Local Youth representative role.
- The derelict vessel subcommittee (Heidi, Sarah) met on August 17, adding two new vessels in Jefferson County to the updated list of vessels to be considered for the next round of removals.

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

All photos by Monica Montgomery unless otherwise noted. See photos below:

September 1 – MRC Members Joanie Hendricks and Sarah Fisker painting an eelgrass no-anchor zone themed cornhole board game in preparation of Wooden Boat Festival



September 9 – Cheryl Lowe (previous MRC Coordinator/community volunteer) and MRC Member Nam Siu tabling at Wooden Boat Festival



September 10 – MRC Member Neil Harrington counting vessels anchored outside the Port Townsend no-anchor zone buoy field (photo by MRC Member Brent Vadopalas)



September 10 – Vessels anchored outside the Port Townsend no-anchor zone buoy field signified by yellow highlighted buoys below (photo by MRC Member Brent Vadopalas)



MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: San Juan County

Month/Year: September 2023

Submitted by: Sam Whitridge & Katie Johnson

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

- **MRC members are preparing for the Fall Great Islands Cleanup happening on September 30. Activities for the day include not only picking up litter from beaches and roadways, but also a nurdle-hunt, screen printing t-shirts with Alchemy Arts Center, and Escaped Trash Protocol training with Zero-Waste Washington.**
- **All summer projects are wrapping up and data currently being summarized for Q4 reporting.**

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

We received several interesting applicants for the remaining committee member position. Interviews have been conducted and the issue of diversity and need has been opened to the committee for input. Discussion amongst the committee revolved around one candidate who represents eco-tourism and the whale watching industry. This was identified as a segment of the community that is not currently represented on the committee. The new prospective member has been recommended to San Juan County Council for MRC membership approval at their Sept 26th meeting.

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

- Plastic Free Salish Sea subcommittee meeting – August 28th
- NWSF/NWSC/MRC staff meeting – September 6th
- Stewardship Network meeting – September 6th
- MRC/CAG/LIO Meeting - September 7th
- MRC Staff meeting with Congressman Rick Larsen's staff-September 26th
- Washington Maritime National Heritage Area Intro Event – September 26th
- Ad Hoc Transboundary Caucus -September 29th
- Next MRC meeting – October 5th

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

No new funding to report for this month.

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

MSA The MSA plan is in the last phase of formatting and revisions to create a clear, concise, and beautifully designed final product.

PFSS: MRC members will participate in the upcoming fall Great Islands Cleanup, happening on September 30. Participants will help gather trash and debris from beaches and roadways across San Juan Island, Lopez Island, Orcas Island and Shaw Island. This season's celebration will be happening at Jackson's Beach and will include activities for all people. Friends of the San Juans will be hosting a nurdle-hunt. Zero-waste Washington workers will help train volunteers to categorize and identify debris for Escaped Trash Protocol.

DV Prevention: The derelict vessel subcommittee has been refining the criteria for vessel removal. As summer ends as does the busy boating season and DV patrols will resume soon.

Eelgrass Protection: Vessel presence surveys have been completed throughout the summer. MRC volunteers will be uploading all survey data into the kobo toolbox and we will analyze this information and compare the data to 2021 and 2022.

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.):

Adam Parrott, MRC member, and Frances Robertson, Marine Program Manager, attended the States Organization for Boating Access (SOBA) Education & Training Symposium at the end of August. This conference centered around recreational boating access, an issue of high priority for the San Juan MRC. Adam presented about the electrification of marinas and shared this presentation with the MRC at the September meeting. Understanding how the needs and impacts for both residential and transient boaters will change once more boats become electric. The use and function of marinas changes significantly if this energy source becomes the new normal.

MRC Staff Sam Whitridge sat down for an interview with journalist Adam Sowards for his upcoming article in the Salish Current on NWSC Reauthorization. The article is scheduled to be published on Sept 22nd.

The last captive Southern Resident Killer whale, commonly known as Tokitae, passed away at the Miami Seaquarium at the end of August. The Port of Friday Harbor hosted the Lummi Nation, Se Si' Le, House of Tears Carvers, and over 400 community members at Jackson's Beach to celebrate both the life and loss of this whale. Several MRC members and county staff attended the honoring ceremony. This is not just the loss of a whale, but the story of Tokitae reflects the plight of Native Americans, forced from their homeland, sequestered and culture squashed. Plans were underway for Tokitae to return home to the Salish Sea, however sadly passed on before she could return home. The work of the MRC in advocating for SRKW will continue.

MRC Staff Sam Whitridge and Tyler Davis presented at the Friday Harbor Labs to a group of community college students about MRC related issues of eelgrass protection and sea level rise. The audience was a group of community college students who are participating in a pilot program focused on exposing students to real world problem solving in Geoscience majors, particularly in the marine environment. The study hopes to test the effectiveness of place-based programming to increase recruitment in geoscience majors and ultimately leading to this population pursuing science careers.

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

Social media ad for the GICU.





Derelict Vessel Coordinator, Kari Koski out on patrol.



Tyler Davis, Environmental Project Manager, presenting to marine geoscience community college students about Sea-level rise participating in a pilot program at the Friday Harbor Labs.

MRC Monthly Report to the Northwest Straits Commission

County: Snohomish

Month/Year: September 2023

Submitted by: Elisa Dawson and Joycelyn Blue

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

- The Snohomish MRC has two upcoming grant projects: a 5-year strategic plan and conducting education and outreach on marine vegetation. Both subcommittees for next year's grant projects are working on materials for the consultant hiring process.
- Interviews for new MRC members are planned for the week of October 23rd.
- A Ribbon-Cutting event is being held at Meadowdale on October 6th, and a Community Open House on October 7

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 occurring in late October.

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

Joycelyn Blue participated in the ORCA research cruise on Aug 17.

Elisa Dawson and Joycelyn Blue attended the NWSC/NWSF/MRC staff meeting at Padilla Bay on Sep 6.

The Strategic Plan subcommittee met on Sep 7 to prepare materials for the consultant hiring process.

The MRC monthly meeting was held virtually on Sep 20.

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): The final versions of the story map and website are complete, and ownership of the story map was transferred to the County. The presentation to the Snohomish Watershed Council is on September 27.

Derelict Vessels (NWSF funds): The contractor tour was conducted on July 10. After some delays with contracting, removal of all 7 vessels is expected to start in September and be completed by early November.

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. Forage fish sampling occurred on Sep 14 and 18 and is scheduled for Oct 11 and 26. Ariel Shiley, Joycelyn Blue, and Phil Salditt attended the WDFW Forage Fish Training on Aug 30.

Nearshore Restoration: A site tour with Puget Sound Partnership, Washington Recreation and Conservation Office, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and University of Washington was conducted at Meadowdale on Aug 24. An RFP for a consultant to help with future years of monitoring at Meadowdale was released in Sep. Vegetation monitoring was posted on Sep 19 and review is in early October. A Ribbon-Cutting event is being held at Meadowdale on October 6th, and a Community Open House on October 7

Outreach: Beach cleanups in partnership with WSU Beach Watchers continue to be held quarterly. MRC staff met with the coordinator for WSU Beach Watchers to finalize the plan for the 2024 Beach Watchers Training.

Crabber Outreach/Oil Spill Preparedness and Prevention: MRC staff attended the WSU Virtual Molt Search Training on Aug 23.

Marine Water Quality: SWM staff and ORCA staff met with Ecology to discuss the ORCA QA/QC plan on September 24. Ariel Shiley and MRC staff continued to meet with subject experts within Snohomish County and narrow down the factors that would be best included in a marine report card. Ariel gave a presentation on her work to the MRC on September 20th.

Marine Vegetation Monitoring: Kelp monitoring is currently being conducted for summer 2023. The MRC monitored the Edmonds kelp beds again on Aug 28. Tim Ellis observed a few kelp plants in Mukilteo in the area north of the survey area and took photos. In the future, the kelp team will expand their survey area for Mukilteo to include this area.

In September the monitoring team plans to monitor only 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. On Sep 26th we plan to monitor Hat Island again.

The Marine Vegetation subcommittee met on Aug 31 to continue planning for outreach efforts in 2024. The group is currently working on materials necessary to hire a consultant.

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 Oct 11 and 26
- Next MRC Meeting Oct 18 in person at the Tulalip Bay Marina building
- MRC Conference November 3-4 in Port Townsend
- Mussel Cage deployment in Snohomish County November 13

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: SEPTEMBER 2023

Submitted by: Austin Rose

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

- The MRC retreat has been scheduled for October 21, 9-1pm, at the Squalicum Boathouse. The retreat will be facilitated by Hilary Wilkinson, Triangle Associates.
-

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 September MRC meeting was held virtually on September 7. Highlights included:
 - Staff from Whatcom County Planning and Development Services shared information about the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan 2025 Update. The process and timeline were shared. Whatcom County Council identified priorities for the Comp Plan Update ([AB2022-251](#)), one of which was Habitats for Fish and Wildlife. The proposed amendments to this priority will come to the Whatcom MRC for review.
 - Caitlyn Blair answered questions related to the upcoming NWSI Conference in Port Townsend.
 - The MRC will be re-scheduling their November 2 meeting due to the NWSI Conference.
 - Whatcom County applied for a second round of funding through the Ecology Shoreline Master Program Competitive Grant to allow the County to continue the vulnerability assessment and initiate applicable code review and adaptation planning. Final report from previous funding award can be viewed here [Whatcom County Compound Flood Vulnerability Assessment \(June 2023\)](#)
 -

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):

- Marine Vegetation – Eelgrass at Wildcat Cove, Larrabee State Park
Imagery from the Wildcat Cove Drone surveys conducted by David Wallin at WWU show changes to the mudflats on July 14th (prior to the opening of the crabbing season) as compared to July 17th and 31st (after the crabbing season opened on July 15th). The extent of vehicle tracks appears to expand out further from the main boat launching area, indicating multiple boats launching concurrently within the cove. The surveys also indicate an increase in prop wash in the deeper eelgrass beds. David is working on additional analysis to determine percent cover of eelgrass throughout each of the surveys. We have been meeting with our social marketing consultant regularly to determine the best steps forward to prevent damage to eelgrass beds in the cove (whether that be informative signage or exploring with Parks the option of only having a single lane for launching).
- Kelp Surveys
Four kelp surveys have been completed at Pt. Whitehorn, Cherry Pt/Gulf Rd., SW Lummi, and the Aiston Preserve. Kelp appeared healthy and many other species were observed in and around the kelp beds (kelp crabs, nudibranchs, sea stars, fish, many types of jellyfish)
- Chuckanut PIC
Water quality sampling has continued throughout the summer, with concentrations of fecal coliform exceeding the marine water quality standards at all of the sites and exceeding freshwater standards at

many of the sites. Many of the freshwater sites have been too dry to sample throughout the summer. Because we are not seeing an improvement in water quality in the Bay, the county is holding off on meeting with the Department of Health to discuss reclassification of portions of the bay for recreational shellfish harvest. We are also working on a more in-depth analysis of the data to determine if there are any seasonal trends at any of the sites to determine if seasonal openings of recreational shellfish harvest could be a viable option. The County is also discussing an eDNA project with the EPA to further evaluate sources of fecal coliform at priority sites to evaluate samples for human biomarkers to determine if this is primarily a septic system issue.

- Forage Fish

September 2023 is the last month for the MRC Intern, Hannah Pittman. We will not be recruiting a new intern. Surveys will be conducted by MRC staff and community volunteers. 9 surfsmelt were found at site LSE-1 on 3/16/2023, and one was found on 4/14/23.

- Derelict Boat Removal – *Wanderlust*, Bellingham Bay tidelands

Removal of the *Wanderlust* occurred on August 22. The vessel was sitting upright on shoreline vegetation (mostly woody debris) just outside the Nooksack River Delta in Whatcom County, Aquatic/Conservancy shoreline jurisdiction. The vessel was a Coast Guard documented vessel that washed up on the beach of a private property owner during winter storms in 2018. The contractor stated that a forage fish survey was to be conducted prior to any work. There is no known forage fish spawning in this area of shoreline. There is a documented smelt spawning south of this area, information was gathered in 1996. An Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act- AHERA good faith asbestos survey as well as survey for lead paint and PCBS was conducted prior to any work. Vessel was dismantled and removed from beach via excavator and tracked Dump truck. Smith Gardens allowed the contractor to stage their equipment and dumpsters on their property. A thank you letter will be sent on behalf of the MRC.

Other:

- [Rick Larsen Visit](#)

Dana and Bob Cecile attended the Clayton Beach site visit on August 18th along with Congressman Rick Larsen, Skagit MRC members, NW Straits staff, State Parks staff, Herrera consultants, WA Fish and Wildlife representatives, and Sinclair representatives. The newly installed bridge looked fantastic and definitely improves access to the beach. Congressman Rick Larsen seemed impressed with the proposed plan to restore Clayton Beach (Essentially removing all of the pylons and debris that you can see in the photos), so we will see how that massive project continues to develop. There is also interest in having the Skagit and Whatcom MRCs partner to conduct forage fish surveys at the main beach to assess its suitability as forage fish spawning habitat and to support the restoration project.

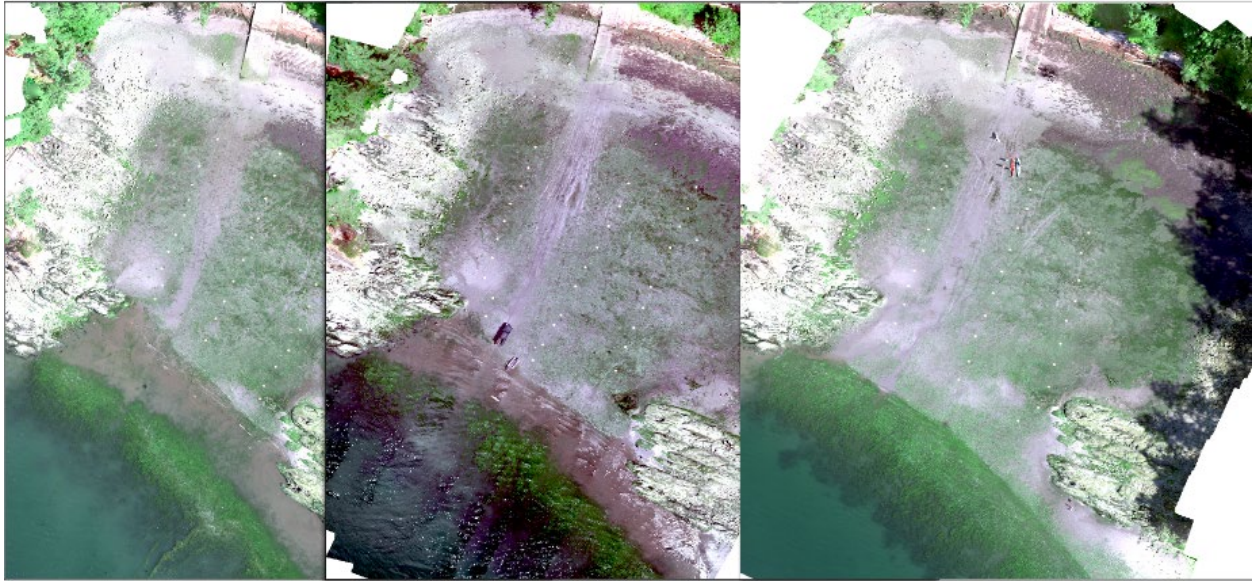
Photos: Wanderlust location



Photo collage of Wanderlust removal



Drone imagery from David Wallin, WWU



Color imagery for Wildcat Cove at ~10:15 on July 14, the day before the opening of crabbing season. Tide stage ~ -1.5 ft. Sun angle 45 degrees. Note denuded track through eelgrass created by boat launch activity.

Color imagery for Wildcat Cove at ~noon on July 17, two days after the opening of crabbing season. Tide stage ~ -1.8 ft. Sun angle 57 degrees. Note wider denuded track through eelgrass created by boat launch activity as well as track through the subtidal eelgrass.

Color imagery for Wildcat Cove at ~10:00 on July 31

Clayton Beach Site Visit. Photos: Dana Flerchinger

