



Minutes

April 26, 2024, 10:00 AM-12:00 PM
Virtual Zoom Meeting
Northwest Straits Commission meeting

Attendees

Commission Members: Tim Ellis (Snohomish – Chair), Mike MacKay (Whatcom), Alan Clark (Clallam – Vice Chair), Christina Koons (San Juan), Ginny Broadhurst, Laura Bradstreet (Puget Sound Partnership), Jeff Taylor (Jefferson), Ken Collins (Island), Lynne Wenberg-Davidson (Skagit), Nan McKay, Julia Parrish, Cecilia Gobin
Commission Staff: Leah Skare, Caitlyn Blair, Sasha Horst, Lucas Hart, Allie Simpson, Jessica Owens, Jeff Whitty, Dana Oster
Others in Attendance: Craig Thomas, Thomas Koontz, Don Hunger

Welcome and Introductions:

Tim opened the meeting with the tribal acknowledgement and introductions.

The March minutes were approved as written by consensus.

Tim shared that the NW Straits Commission elections for Chair and Vice Chair will occur at the May meeting. Please e-mail Nan McKay (nan.mckay10@gmail.com) with your nominations.

Use of Science in Ecosystem Recovery Partnerships in the Puget Sound: Tom Koontz and Craig Thomas from the University of Washington presented about how collaborative partnerships use science in the Puget Sound basin. Their presentation is not available to distribute, but they noted that MRCs can contact them if they would like a presentation.

Business Items

Staff provided updates on the following business items:

2024 NW Straits Initiative Retreat: Lucas shared that ECO Resource Group will be assisting with our retreat planning. The retreat conversations will inform the concept of what the NW Straits Initiative is today and how it has evolved over the last 25 years. Lucas shared the proposed timeline, as well as the process for selecting questions for individual interviews. Questions will be formed by representatives of the NW Straits Initiative, ECO Resource Group will refine the



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questions, and representatives from the NWSI will help finalize the questions. Results from the interviews will be shared at a later date.

DEI Update: Allie shared an update about the NW Straits Initiative's progress with Athena Group on an internal DEI assessment of the Initiative. A survey will be sent out in May for all NW Straits Initiative members. Allie and Caitlyn will be reaching out to the DEI project team to review the survey questions. We will continue to inform the NW Straits Commission on our progress.

Project Updates

Community Needs Assessment: Dana recommended everyone attend the Snohomish MRC meeting on May 15, 2024, from 6:30 – 8:30 PM. The UW Evans School will be presenting their summary of the community needs assessment at the Snohomish MRC meeting.

Senator Murray "Thank You" Video: Jessica shared the draft of the "Thank You" video for Senator Murray, which thanks Senator Murray for helping secure funding for 2024 and for her ongoing support of the NW Straits Initiative.

Kayak Kelp Monitoring: Jeff shared that the 2024 kayak monitoring season is kicking off. Commission staff is coordinating a workgroup, inclusive of MRCs, NW Straits Commission staff, and NW Straits Foundation staff. The goal is to share key notes, provide input, and share their experiences. The annual kayak kickoff will be on May 1, 2024, at Padilla Bay. Jeff is working on providing a kayak safety course at Bowman Bay. Please contact Jeff (whitty@nwstraits.org) for more information.

San Juan Vessel Turn-In Event

Dana and Christina shared the successes of the San Juan County vessel turn-in event in Friday Harbor. Fourteen vessels were removed and deconstructed in partnership with the NW Straits Commission, Department of Natural Resources, and the Port of Friday Harbor.

Committee Reports

Executive Committee: Alan shared that the Committee discussed mitigation funds at the last meeting. Ahren Stroming will be attending a future meeting to share about the Puget Sound Partnership Conservation Credit Fund. The Committee also discussed the NW Straits Commission mission statement as it appears in the 1998 Murray Metcalf report. The Committee would like to review this mission statement to evaluate what, if anything, has changed since it was written.

External Relations Committee: Nan shared that several MRC members and Lucas will be attending Puget Sound Day on the Hill and they are starting to schedule meetings with



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representatives. The Committee is hoping to set up meetings with legislators from the NW Straits region.

Science Advisory Committee: Julia shared that at the recent Committee meeting, they discussed social science workshops for MRCs. They also discussed how this workshop could influence the Committee feature session at the 2024 NW Straits Initiative conference.

Green Crab Ad Hoc Committee: Lucas shared that April 29, 2024, is the next meeting. The Committee will have more updates at the May Commission meeting.

MRC Reports

Clallam – Alan Clark

- A planting event was held at Ediz Hook on March 26 and March 28, 2024, in partnership with the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe and Clallam Conservation District. 59 volunteers planted 3,000 plants and sowed 5 pounds of seed over two days.
- The MRC hosted Max Showalter and Cynthia Harbison during the April meeting to discuss the [kelp and eelgrass health plan](#) from DNR, and MRC members and staff provided feedback and relevant local connections.

Island – Ken Collins

- The MRC hosted a stewardship event at Cornet Bay and Hoypus point on April 10, 2024.
- MRC member Kirk Larsen and MRC staff Kelly Zupich joined the South Whidbey School District Alternative Learning Experience (ALE) class to conduct a mock forage fish survey at Keystone Farm.

Jefferson – Jeff Taylor

- The MRC interviewed four candidates for the MRC Coordinator position.
- Eelgrass protection summer spar buoys were deployed on April 7, 2024.
- Two yards of cultch were spread in the south end of Discovery Bay on April 15, 2024, for Olympia oyster restoration.
- The Digging for Dinner event will be held on April 27, 2024, in Quilcene.

San Juan – Christina Koons

- The Free Vessel Turn-In Event was a smashing success – literally! Thanks to strong partnership with NWSC, DNR, and Port of Friday Harbor at least 14 vessels have been removed and deconstructed from county waters. Watching long-time, dilapidated boats make the transition from potential marine debris to safely surrenders and dismantled makes all the difference for local marine waters.
- The Spring Great Islands Clean Up happened on April 20, 2024, with activities on all four ferry serviced islands and independent cleanups were coordinated on several outer



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islands including Waldron, Yellow, Stuart, and Decatur. The remaining debris were picked up via boat and taken to the transfer station on April 22, 2024. MRC members diligently spread the word, including outreach to marinas and hanging fliers for boaters to participate as well.

Skagit – Lynne Wenberg-Davidson

- **Kids on the Beach** – Concrete High School participated on April 10, 2024. Two classes of 10th grade Physical Science students and one class of 11th grade Environmental Science students participated in the Kids on the Beach program at Padilla Bay. Every student was involved in data collection including density and diversity of intertidal organisms at three locations along a transect line. They also collected weather, water temperature and substrate composition data.
- **Pinto Abalone Restoration** – The Puget Sound Restoration Fund partnered with the Seattle Aquarium and Samish Tribe to help with surveys and out planting this year. Surveys took place February-March. Out planting will take place in April and June. It is anticipated that more than 10,000 juvenile abalone will be out planted to at least 10 different recovery sites, 4 of which will be in Skagit County.

Snohomish – Tim Ellis

- The MRC, WSU Beach Watchers, and Tulalip Tribes hosted an Earth Day beach clean-up at Mission beach on April 22, 2024, from 10 AM – 12 PM.
- A subset of the MRC is planning to resume monthly forage fish sampling at Howarth Park on April 27, 2024.

Whatcom – Mike MacKay

- On April 19, 2024, the MRC had their first Beach Seine with Kids at Boulevard Park with Lummi Nation School. 60 students were able to attend.
- The MRC is organizing the Wildcat Cove project to provide posters and cards to educate the public about the impacts of launching their boats on eelgrass.

Partner Updates

NW Straits Foundation: The NW Straits Foundation refreshed the Passport to Marine Adventure application through donor funding. Kayla Mrozik is working to update the application to share with the public. The NW Straits Foundation spring celebration is May 5, 2024, at the Edmonds Yacht club.

NW Indian Fisheries Commission: Cecilia Gobin shared that the NW Indian Fisheries Commission is working with the Army Corps of Engineers to amend the regional conditions of shoreline armor permitting. They will likely share a special public notice in the coming weeks about the comment period, which will be open for thirty days. Stay tuned for the notice. Cecilia also shared the film



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Fish Wars that was screened at the 50th anniversary of the Boldt Decision event will be premiering at the Seattle International Film Festival. Please visit this [website](#) for more information.

Puget Sound Partnership: Laura shared that Puget Sound Day on the Hill is from May 13-17, 2024, and they are looking forward to advocating for reauthorization and appropriations for the NW Straits Initiative.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.