



# Minutes

June 28, 2024, 10:00 AM-12:00 PM  
Virtual Zoom Meeting  
Northwest Straits Commission meeting

## Attendees

Commission Members: Jamie Stephens, Tim Ellis (Snohomish), Mike MacKay (Whatcom), Ken Collins (Island), Laura Bradstreet (Puget Sound Partnership), Ginny Broadhurst, Darla Smith (Skagit – Alternate), Alan Clark (Clallam), Jeff Taylor (Jefferson), Nan McKay, Julia Parrish, Cecilia Gobin, Karin Roemers-Klevin (San Juan – Alternate)

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

Others in Attendance: Chris Porter, Tevin Medley, Edline Francois, Rhiannon Colaci, Don Hunger, Keith Estes, Jude Apple, Sarah Fisken (Jefferson – Alternate)

Absent: Lynne Wenberg-Davidson, Christina Koons

## Welcome and Introductions:

Tim opened the meeting with the tribal acknowledgement and introductions.

The May minutes were approved as written by consensus.

Lucas introduced and welcomed Jamie Stephens, the new gubernatorial appointee to the NW Straits Commission.

**Athena Group Project Presentation:** Tevin Medley and Athena Group shared a brief update of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion assessment survey, focus groups, and a project summary presentation. If you are interested in receiving the presentation link, please contact Caitlyn Blair ([blair@nwstraits.org](mailto:blair@nwstraits.org)).

**Speed Date with a Scientist - Ohop Creek Stormwater Management Pilot Project:** Keith Estes from Long Live the Kings presented on the Ohop Creek stormwater management pilot project. The project tested the efficacy of using an above ground compost-based biofiltration system to collect and clean stormwater from roadway runoff. [Learn more about the Ohop Creek project](#) and please reach out to Keith ([kestes@lltk.org](mailto:kestes@lltk.org)) with any questions or requests for presentations to MRCs.



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## Business Items

Staff provided updates on the following business items:

**European green crab funding through the Department of Ecology budget request:** Lucas shared that the Department of Ecology will be prioritizing a funding request for European Green Crab (EGC) research in the next biennium. This is separate from the NWS Commission's work on EGC. NWS will be talking with WDFW about continuing the funding they currently provide for NWS work in Drayton Harbor and Samish Bay in the next biennium.

**July NW Straits Commission Meeting:** Due to a scheduling conflict in Clallam County, the NW Straits Commission meeting on July 26 will now be held in Jefferson County at the Port Townsend Yacht Club from 10:00 – 3:00 PM. Please reach out to Caitlyn ([blair@nwstraits.org](mailto:blair@nwstraits.org)) for any questions.

## Project Updates

**No-Anchor Zone Phase 2 Planning:** Dana shared that the NW Straits Commission worked with a consultant to develop a social marketing strategy for the no-anchor zone project. In Phase 2 of this project, the NW Straits Commission will decide how to implement the social marketing strategies for the 2025 boating season.

**DEI Phase 2 Planning:** The NW Straits Commission staff is planning for Phase 2 of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion work, following the work in Phase 1 completed in June. Several needs for DEI were identified in the survey results that Athena Group shared. An additional \$40,000 was budgeted in our FY22 NOAA award for this work, expiring in December 2024. The Commission moved and approved by consensus contract with the Athena Group for DEI Phase 2 in the amount of \$40,000.00.

## Committee Reports

**Executive Committee:** The Committee had a joint meeting with the NW Straits Foundation Executive Committee to discuss improving coordination and collaboration between the NW Straits Commission and the NW Straits Foundation. The Executive Committees agreed that the retreat planning process being done with ECO Resource Group and the September 19 retreat will be a good way to prioritize topics to address. The planning process has participants from the NWS Commission, Foundation, and MRCs.



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**External Relations Committee:** On June 18, 2024, U.S. Senator Patty Murray (D-WA), and U.S. Representative Rick Larsen (D-WA-02) reintroduced legislation to reauthorize the Northwest Straits Initiative. Reauthorization will recognize the Initiative as a federal program and acknowledge the importance of locally driven marine conservation. As Congress moves through the legislative process, we will keep you informed on the progress through the current session, which ends January 3, 2025. For additional information, please see our [Looking Ahead web page](#). NWS Commission staff, Commissioners, MRC members and partners are working together to plan a site visit for Senator Murray on July 16 to highlight the reauthorization bill at Padilla Bay.

**Science Advisory Committee:** The Committee had a productive meeting in person on June 26, 2024. The meeting focused on the structure of the MRC reports to create a simpler format to assist with MRCs and staff to move quickly through project reporting. The Committee also discussed the Science Advisory Committee session planned for the annual conference.

## MRC Reports

### Clallam – Alan Clark

- Clean Pacific oyster shell was spread at the Sequim Bay site for Olympia oyster restoration.
- Several MRC members attended an informational and listening workshop on marine carbon dioxide removal held by American University researchers.

### Island – Ken Collins

- The MRC's most recent stewardship event took place at Hoypus Point and Cornet Bay. We began at Hoypus Point to address the encroaching weeds, then moved to Cornet Bay for additional weed removal. This year, the Canada Thistle infestation appears to be more severe at Cornet. We are collaborating with the Noxious Weed Coordinator to find solutions. This week, staff sprayed the thistle and plan to start watering next week.
- PSP Leadership Council: The local forum provided a fantastic opportunity for our MRC to showcase the work we've accomplished over the past year. Patrick Havel presented the Climate Change White Paper, while Jill Lipoti discussed the Shoreline Armoring Survey. Staff also shared updates on Cornet and Hoypus Point. Following the forum, Island MRC hosted a site visit to Cornet and Hoypus. It was a beautiful day, offering the perfect chance to highlight the importance of continued funding for maintaining the health of restoration sites after construction ends.

### Jefferson – Sarah Fiskén



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- Olympia Oysters – 12 attendees counted live Olympia oysters in an oyster bed in south Discovery Bay. Volunteers counted oysters in 2'x2' quadrat subsections along a transect line, collecting a total of 60 samples over 4 hours.
- On June 26 the MRC hosted a crabbing 101 workshop.
- The MRC is working to recruit a student member to fill a position on the MRC.

## **San Juan – Karin Roemers-Klevin**

- June marks the end of Jeff Dyer's time on the SJC MRC. He has been an important part of the committee, volunteering his time and expertise. His experience as a commercial captain brings keen insight to the MRC. Jeff is truly an all-star and we will sorely miss him. Interviews are underway to fill his seat, with several good prospects moving forward.
- Aerial surveys to study recreational boating density amongst sensitive habitats are underway for the summer. Systematic line-transect surveys will be flown at least twice per month between now and September. Through this project we hope to understand the connection between boater presence and activity on eelgrass habitat health and identify impact hotspots or priority sites for protection and/or restoration.

## **Skagit – Darla Gay Smith**

- European Green Crab Molt Survey Training- June 15 at Padilla Bay: Hosted by Skagit MRC, Northwest Straits Commission, and Padilla Bay NERR. 23 people registered, only 6 attended. It was a very engaged group with lots of great questions!
- 2025 Skagit County Comp Plan Update- Stakeholder Interview with MRC: Teams meeting held June 21, attended by 6 MRC members. Interview took one hour. Thought provoking questions and discussions!

## **Snohomish – Tim Ellis**

- The MRC will be doing crabber outreach at the Port of Everett on July 6 and 7.
- The MRC welcomes to Cassie Laney, the MRC's summer intern who will be working on creating a shoreline assessment framework!

## **Whatcom – Mike MacKay**

- Mark Fairhart was appointed to the MRC on June 4, filling a Citizen-at-Large seat.
- Brigid Wills and Eleanor Hines (representing the Cherry Point Aquatic Reserve Citizen Stewardship Committee (CPAR CSC)) and Erica Bleke (representing Department of Natural Resources Aquatic Reserves Program (DNR ARP)) presented on the Cherry Point Intertidal Monitoring Program. Historically, RE Sources has provided support for these surveys, with the RE Sources' lead scientist and Aquatic Reserves Stewardship Coordinator AmeriCorps member providing coordination and training support. Cherry Point Aquatic Reserve Citizen Stewardship Committee sees the value in continuing to collect this data and is looking for a new partner(s) in Whatcom County to provide funding, logistical, and additional scientific support. The MRC is assessing the possibility of taking



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on Cherry Point Aquatic Reserve intertidal monitoring as a project coordinator. A decision will be made by the end of summer.

## Partner Updates

**NW Straits Foundation:** Don Hunger shared that there will be a celebration on July 1, 2024 for Jason Morgan's 10<sup>th</sup> year working at the NW Straits Foundation. The NW Straits Foundation is also working with Whatcom MRC on rain gardens and the eelgrass at Wildcat Cove. Don will be providing a NW Straits Foundation 101 presentation at the San Juan MRC meeting in July.

**NW Indian Fisheries Commission:** Cecilia Gobin shared that the Army Corps of Engineers amending their regional conditions to nationwide permits for shoreline stabilization activities. The Northwest Division will be accepting and approving the amended regional conditions, which would put more protection in place for forage fish.

**Puget Sound Partnership:** Laura Bradstreet shared that the Puget Sound Partnership submitted a letter of support for what Cecilia shared about the Army Corps of Engineers amendments to the regional conditions to permitting for shoreline stabilization activities. The Partnership met with Island MRC at their leadership council meeting earlier in June. Reauthorization. The Partnership recognized Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) and Senator Rick Larsen's (D-WA-02) reintroduction to legislation to reauthorize the NW Straits Initiative that was announced June 18, 2024. Laura also shared that Ahren and his partner delivered a healthy baby boy earlier this month, and Ahren will be on leave until August 6, 2024.

**Public Comment:** No public comment.