

County: Island
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PROJECT TITLE: Island County Marine Resources Committee Operations and Projects

DELIVERABLES FOR TASK NO: 2.9 Monitoring plan

PROGRESS REPORT: ☐ FINAL REPORT ☒

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Island County Marine Resources Committee Monitoring Inventory

Background

The mission of the Island County Marine Resources Committee (MRC) is to investigate, research, and identify local marine resources, and marine resource and habitat issues; recommend remedial actions to Island County agencies and authorities; carry out such recommendations where so approved; and build local awareness of the issues and broad-based community support for the remedies.

Nearshore monitoring work has been a key component of the MRC's work since its creation in 1999. The MRC has created and supported several monitoring projects, including establishing long-term datasets for several important nearshore species. The MRC has been involved in monitoring forage fish spawning, bull kelp beds, eelgrass beds, juvenile salmonid use of pocket estuaries, pigeon guillemots, and the effectiveness of phytoremediation techniques. The MRC has also been involved in research-based work, including shoreline surveys of feeder bluffs and shoreline armoring, and identification of creosote and marine debris.

In 2017, the MRC conducted an Outreach Needs Assessment to understand the needs and opportunities for internal and external outreach. The MRC interviewed County Department Heads, staff, and one County Commissioner, to identify issues that the MRC could address, and methods for doing so. The assessment showed that the MRC plays a key role in conducting pre- and post-monitoring of nearshore projects. In addition, the assessment indicated that a valuable function of the MRC would be to host a list of monitoring work occurring in Island County.

The MRC decided to address this need and initiate an inventory of nearshore monitoring projects within Island County. The inventory is a living document which will be reviewed and edited periodically. Monitoring projects come and go as needs are met and new ones are identified, and the inventory will attempt to reflect these changes over time.

Purpose

The goal of the monitoring inventory is to identify existing nearshore monitoring work in Island County.

This inventory will:

- Provide a list of existing nearshore monitoring efforts in Island County
- Help the MRC and partners identify monitoring gaps and opportunities
- Identify opportunities for volunteers interested in nearshore monitoring

Methods

In order to fulfill the above stated goals of the monitoring inventory, the MRC developed and discussed a framework to capture relevant information regarding the monitoring projects. The MRC decided to focus on: the project goal, whether it is associated with a parent organization, the duration of the project (e.g. whether there is a set end date), and whether the project is seeking volunteers.

The MRC created a list of organizations to contact to populate the inventory. MRC staff contacted the organizations to gather details about specific monitoring projects. Some contacts suggested additional

organizations to contact that conduct nearshore monitoring in the area. The resulting inventory will continue to be edited and updated as additional information is gathered, new projects emerge, and existing projects adapt or wrap up.

Lessons Learned

- This inventory is a living document. It will continue to be updated as the MRC receives additional information about monitoring efforts and as existing projects make changes.
- While several monitoring projects are included in the inventory, there are likely more to add as additional monitoring efforts are identified. It was suggested to include research-type projects, such as shoreline surveys or identification of derelict gear. These projects will be added to the inventory in the upcoming months.
- When contacting agencies conducting monitoring work, they often provided suggestions for additional organizations to contact. This provided additional helpful information, and should serve as reminder of the breadth of knowledge that can be accessed through partner organizations. It also brought up the question of creating a more clear definition of the type and scope of projects to be included in the inventory in order for it to remain relevant to the MRC.
- The inventory contains a list of ongoing monitoring work. It may also be beneficial in the future to include information on completed work. An understanding of completed work can provide a broader picture of the existing knowledge base, help identify where there are gaps, and whether there is a completed project that could be revisited or adapted to inform current needs.
- This could be a useful planning document for the MRC to reference when considering adding new monitoring work to the existing work plan.

Inventory

Project	Entity	Goal	Connection to parent organization or regional project	Project duration	Seeking volunteers?	Contact info	Additional notes
European Green Crab Monitoring	Washington Sea Grant	Provide early detection for European green crab	Locally associated with Sound Water Stewards	Ongoing	Yes	Emily Grason, egrason@uw.edu	Training is conducted annually by Washington Sea Grant
SoundToxins	Washington Sea Grant	Provide early detection of harmful algae		Ongoing	No	Teri King, guatemal@uw.edu	
Intertidal Monitoring	Sound Water Stewards	Obtain a trend of changes in beaches over a variety of beach types. Provide a citizen science training opportunity for volunteers.		Ongoing, reevaluate in 5 years	Open only to SWS volunteers	Kelly Zupich, whidbey-coord@soundwaterstewards	
Beached Birds	Coastal Observation and Seabird Survey Team (COASST)	Count and identify bird carcasses that wash ashore	University of Washington	Ongoing	Yes	206-221-6893, coasst@uw.edu	A 6-hour training session is provided. See calendar for upcoming opportunities: https://depts.washington.edu/coasst/involved/events.html

Marine Debris	COASST	Collect data on the characteristics and location of small, medium, and large marine debris objects on beaches	University of Washington	Ongoing	Yes	206-221-6893, coasst@uw.edu	A 6-hour training session is provided. See calendar for upcoming opportunities: https://depts.washington.edu/coasst/involved/events.html
Storm Surge Monitoring	United States Geological Survey (USGS)	Document shoreline changes and storm surge impacts	Locally associated with Sound Water Stewards	Ongoing	Yes	Eric Grossman, egrossman@usgs.gov	
Water Quality Monitoring - Cranberry Lake	Deception Pass State Park	Monitor physical and chemical parameters at Cranberry Lake	Locally associated with Sound Water Stewards	Ongoing		Kelly Zupich, whidbey-coord@soundwaterstewards.org	
Forage Fish Monitoring	Island County MRC	Monitor forage fish spawning at sites in Island County in conjunction with completed, planned, and proposed shoreline restoration work. Monitor spawning at WDFW index sites.	WDFW provides training and sample analysis. NWSI provides regional MRC support.	Ongoing	Yes	Anna Toledo, a.toledo@co.island.wa.us	
Bull Kelp Monitoring	Island County MRC	Determine nearshore locations in Island County where bull kelp beds are present. Conduct seasonal monitoring of	NWSI provides regional MRC support	Ongoing	Yes	Anna Toledo, a.toledo@co.island.wa.us	

		selected bed areas.					
Eelgrass Monitoring	Island County MRC	Monitor eelgrass beds in Island County for changes due to disease, human activity, or natural variability	WA DNR provides some analysis support and conducts regional monitoring	Ongoing	No	Anna Toledo, a.toledo@co.island.wa.us	
Pigeon Guillemot Monitoring	Island County MRC	Monitor pigeon guillemot populations as an indicator of local marine health	Whidbey Audubon Society	Ongoing	Yes	Frances Wood, wood@whidbey.com	Training is held every spring
Nearshore Restoration Monitoring	Northwest Straits Foundation	Monitor effects of restoration on nearshore habitat	Driven by goals of Puget Sound Ecosystem Monitoring Program (PSEMP)	Depends on specific monitoring plan for each restoration site. In general, the goal is to conduct monitoring 1 year pre-restoration and 5 years post-restoration. Additional monitoring may be conducted at years 7 and 10.	Yes	Jason Morgan, morgan@nwstraitsfoundation.org	Currently monitoring at Cornet Bay. Plan to start monitoring at Sunlight Shores and Seahorse Siesta