

County: Jefferson
Grant No:

PROJECT TITLE: South Port Townsend Bay Marine Protected Area

DELIVERABLES FOR TASK NO:

PROGRESS REPORT: ☐ PROJECT FINAL REPORT: ☒

PERIOD COVERED:

DATE SUBMITTED: February 2014



This project has been funded wholly or in part by the United States Environmental Protection Agency. The contents of this document do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the Environmental Protection Agency, nor does mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation for use.



South Port Townsend Bay Marine Protected Area

Final Report
February 2014

Prepared by
Gabrielle LaRoche, Project Manager



LaRoche + Associates

Port Townsend WA 98368 • 360.531.2458

for

Jefferson County



Marine Resources Committee

380 Jefferson Street, Port Townsend, WA 98368 • 360.379.5610 • www.jeffersonmrc.org

&



Office of Shellfish and Water Protection, PO Box 47824, Olympia WA 98504

THIS PROJECT HAS BEEN FUNDED WHOLLY OR IN PART BY THE UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY UNDER ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT PC-00J32601 TO WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH. THE CONTENTS OF THIS DOCUMENT DO NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THE VIEWS AND POLICIES OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY, NOR DOES MENTION OF TRADE NAMES OR COMMERCIAL PRODUCTS CONSTITUTE ENDORSEMENT OR RECOMMENDATION FOR USE.

Acknowledgements

Marker Buoy Installation Team

Lynn Goodwin, Boat Captain

Amy Leitman, Nam Siu & James Winger - Marine Surveys & Assessments, SCUBA & Dive Support

Bill Matthews, Rigging

Tony Petrillo, JCMRC, Crew

Interpretive Signage

Cory & Catska Ench, Artwork

Sally Chapin, WSU Jefferson County Extension, Graphic Design

Doug Noltemeier, Jefferson County Central Services, Base Map

Port Hadlock Marina, Sign Host

Port of Port Townsend, Sign Host

Public Education & Outreach

Cheryl Lowe, WSU Jefferson County Extension, JCMRC Coordinator

Project Budget Management

Kate Driehaus, WSU Jefferson County Extension

Thanks to Alan Bogner, Office of Regulatory Affairs and the South Port Townsend Bay Management Plan Stakeholders for their hard work in developing a consensus solution for South Port Townsend Bay. A special thanks to Mark Toy, Washington Department of Health for securing the funding for the project.

Table of Contents

Page

1 **Summary**

1 **Background**

Project Location

Uses & Resources

Shellfish

South Port Townsend Bay Management Plan

Jefferson County Marine Resources Committee

4 **Permits & Authorizations**

5 **Marker Buoys**

6 **Boater Education & Public Outreach**

Informational Signage & Rack Cards

Project Outreach

8 **The Future of Voluntary MPAs**

Applicability in Others Locales

Considerations

Appendix A: Permits

Appendix B: Outreach Documentation

Summary

The Jefferson County Marine Resources Committee's (MRC) goal was to protect eelgrass beds and marine water quality in South Port Townsend Bay, known locally as Lower (Port) Hadlock. By establishing a Voluntary Marine Protected Area, they also implemented key elements of the South Port Townsend Bay Management Plan that would satisfy Washington Department of Health (WADOH) and allow shellfish harvest and recreational boat use to co-exist.

Through an extensive 8-month stakeholder process led by the Governor's Office of Regulatory Affairs, the South Port Townsend Bay Management Plan was completed in August 2012. Concurrent with plan development, project partners identified derelict mooring buoys and established a mooring buoy moratorium. The Jefferson County MRC developed signage and brochures and conducted education and outreach activities throughout 2012-2013. In January of 2014, Department of Natural Resources removed the previously identified derelict mooring buoys. In February of 2014, the Jefferson County MRC established a Voluntary Marine Protected Area (Shellfish Protection No-Anchor Zone) with marker buoys.

The South Port Townsend Bay Management plan won the Governor's Award for Smart Communities in June of 2013. As a result of this creative collaboration, shellfish beds remain open and profitable and the bays are also open for transient moorage and for permanent vessel moorage for authorized users. In addition, with the reduced likelihood of inadvertent or illegal vessel discharge, the risk to marine water quality is significantly reduced, and without dragging anchors and ground tackle, eelgrass beds are expected to recover.

Background

Project Location

South Port Townsend Bay is depicted on nautical charts but is known locally as Lower (Port) Hadlock. The project area is located, between the west side of Indian Island and the mainland, just inside Admiralty Inlet, in Jefferson County. The Voluntary Marine Protected Area (Shellfish Protection No-Anchor Zone) is an even smaller area that is



Buoy installation near Port Hadlock Marina, 2014. Photo: Gabrielle LaRoche/JCMRC

"The Governor's Smart Communities Award recognizes smart growth planning and projects that contribute to the quality of life in Washington State. The Mystery Bay and South Port Townsend Bay management plans address conflicting uses of natural resources through a creative and collaborative planning process that involved state, local, and tribal governments; private businesses; and NGOs."
DNR June, 2013



South Port Townsend Bay is known locally as Lower (Port) Hadlock.

landward of an imaginary line running generally from the northern tip of Skunk Island to the dolphins (pilings) just inside the Port of Port Townsend's floating dock (see map in appendix A).

Uses & Resources

Lower (Port) Hadlock is a popular harbor for traveling boaters and serves as a homeport for upland landowners and area residents. Lower Hadlock is also home to the NW School of Wooden Boatbuilding; the Port Hadlock Yacht Club; Port of Port Townsend dock and boat launch; the Port Hadlock Marina; and other commercial, residential, and tribal interests.

Lower Hadlock is an important shellfish area with both commercial shellfish operations and natural shellfish beds that have the potential for harvest by the tribes and the general public. In addition to shellfish, the nearshore marine resources include eelgrass beds, sand lance, surf smelt, coho salmon, cutthroat trout, and the endangered species of steelhead trout and summer chum salmon. The area provides overwintering habitat for waterfowl.

Shellfish

In 2011, commercial shellfish operations in the nearshore of Lower (Port) Hadlock were threatened with a closure by WADOH because of the high density of mooring buoys in the vicinity of shellfish beds and the threat the associated vessels propose to marine water quality. The number of boats exceeded National Shellfish Sanitation Program (NSSP) standards that must be adopted by states that export shellfish commercially. Among other requirements, the NSSP requires the closure of commercial shellfish areas when the number and density of boats exceeds specified numerical limits called the "marina threshold levels". The NSSP standards are designed to prevent contamination of shellfish that could harm human health. An excessive number of boats -- 10 or more -- mooring in an area can produce enough sewage or other discharge to contaminate shellfish.

Along with privately owned companies, western Washington's tribes are also active in commercial shellfish operations and have treaty rights providing access to shellfish beds. Shellfish have been harvested by northwest tribes for thousands of years and shellfish have been farmed commercially for more than 150 years. Not only do shellfish bed closures affect commercial companies, but are also a direct impact to the treaty Tribes' abilities to access shellfish and thus infringes on their treaty rights.

South Port Townsend Bay Management Plan

Building on a model that had worked for nearby Mystery Bay, the Governors Office of Regulatory Assistance convened a group of stakeholders, in early 2012. The goal of the stakeholders was to manage boater use in a manner that ensures continued, year-round harvest of commercial shellfish while balancing that interest with the legitimate use of the bay for public recreation and other commercial use. The stakeholder group included commercial shellfish interests; local businesses, waterfront landowners, and boaters; four treaty tribes; and local, state, and federal agencies.

The South Port Townsend Bay Management Plan contains the following major elements:

1. Permit and manage boat moorage to ensure that shellfish beds are not negatively impacted.
2. Proceed with enforcement process for mooring buoys and boats that have not applied or otherwise cannot be authorized.
3. Manage transient boaters through a Voluntary Marine Protected Area (Shellfish Protection No-Anchor Zone) in part of South Port Townsend Bay (Lower Hadlock) and manage mooring buoy authorizations that contemplate transient use.
4. Establish interpretive displays and material and conduct outreach.
5. Establish a long-term boat monitoring plan to assure that the numbers and densities of boats do not exceed "marina threshold levels".
6. Develop adaptive management to address ongoing changes.

The full plan can be downloaded from the Governor's Office of Regulatory Assistance website
<http://ora.wa.gov/regulatory/default.asp>

Jefferson County MRC

Prior to 2009, the Jefferson County MRC considered establishing a Voluntary Marine Protected Area (No-Anchor Zone) in Lower Hadlock to protect and restore eelgrass beds. The Jefferson County MRC had established a Voluntary Marine Protected Area (No-Anchor Zone) for eelgrass protection along the Port Townsend Waterfront in 2004. Vessel monitoring of the Port Townsend Waterfront shows that the



DNR divers and aquatic resources staff retrieve an old, derelict mooring buoy from South Port Townsend Bay.
Photo: Brady Scott/DNR

The mooring buoy removal project is just one element of the South Port Townsend Bay Management Plan, a multi-partner endeavor to improve conditions for commercial shellfish beds in the bay.



Old mooring buoys pulled from South Port Townsend Bay.
Photo: Brady Scott/DNR

marker buoys and outreach have succeeded in achieving over 98% compliance with the no-anchor zone. Eelgrass surveys were conducted along the Lower (Port) Hadlock waterfront, but the complicated vessel use pattern and proliferation of derelict mooring buoys precluded the Jefferson County MRC from proceeding without project partners.

In 2010, the Jefferson County MRC was approached by Washington Department of Natural Resources and Jefferson County Department of Community Development to establish a Voluntary Shellfish Protection No-Anchor Zone in Mystery Bay. The Jefferson County MRC secured funding from the Northwest Strait Benchmark Account to participate in the development of the Mystery Bay Management Plan and help implement the recommendations. The Jefferson County MRC installed seven marker buoys to delineate a Voluntary Marine Protected Area (Shellfish Protection No-Anchor Zone) in Mystery Bay. Education and outreach included rack cards and interpretive signs. The Jefferson County MRC partnered with WSU Beachwatchers to provide vessel count monitoring. As a result of this creative collaboration, shellfish beds remain open and profitable and the bay is also open for transient moorage and for permanent vessel moorage for authorized users. The Mystery Bay Management Plan, won the national Waterways management Award in September of 2012.

By 2012, the successes of the Jefferson County MRC's Voluntary Marine Protected Areas were well documented when Washington Department of Natural Resources and Jefferson County Department of Community Development once again approached the Jefferson County MRC to establish a Voluntary Shellfish Protection No-Anchor Zone. This time Washington Department of Health secured funds to support the project. The Jefferson County MRC was funded to obtain permits and install four marker buoys to delineate a Voluntary Marine Protected Area (Shellfish Protection No-Anchor Zone) along the Lower (Port) Hadlock Waterfront. In addition, the Jefferson County MRC developed and installed large interpretive signs at the Port of Port Townsend boat launching facility and dock and at the Port Hadlock Marina adjacent to the Harbormaster's office. Two smaller signs were installed in the marina at the location of the pump out facilities, and one was installed at the Port of Port Townsend kiosk at the dock and boat launch facility.

Permits & Authorizations

The South Port Townsend Bay Management Plan called for four marker buoys to delineate the Voluntary No-Anchor Zone. The buoys were to be installed along an imaginary line running generally from the northern tip of Skunk Island to the dolphins (pilings) just inside the Port of Port Townsend's floating dock. Washington Department of Natural Resources was to specify the coordinates for the buoy locations. In October of 2012, the Jefferson County MRC received the buoy locations and began preparing permit applications. The list of required permits follows below. Copies of the permits can be found in Appendix A.

- Jefferson County- Shoreline Substantial Development Permit Exemption; MLA No. MLA13-00102; Case Number - SDP13-00038; Issued - September 16, 2013
- Washington Department of Natural Resources – Aquatic lands Right of Entry Agreement; No. 23-090525; Effective date – January 30, 2014; Termination date – May 31, 2015
- Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife – Hydraulic Project Approval; Control No.131321-1; Issue date – July 15, 2013; Expiration Date – February 14, 2014
- US Army Corps of Engineers – Nationwide Permit 1 Aids to Navigation; Reference NWS-2013-1085; Issued – January 17, 2014
- US Coast Guard – Private Aids to Navigation (PATON) Approval; CG-2554; Issued – January 28, 2014

If any modifications to the buoys, tackle or locations are made, the authorizing agencies must be contacted. Otherwise, the only future action required with respect to authorizations is the conversion of the Washington Department of Natural Resources Aquatic lands Right of Entry agreement. This authorization will terminate on May 31, 2015. Prior to the termination date, the Jefferson County MRC should pursue conversion of the Right of Entry to a conservation lease. This action was taken for the Port Townsend Eelgrass Marine Protected Area when that Right of Entry expired. There was no cost to the Marine Resource Committee for the conservation lease except staff time to prepare the lease application.

Marker Buoys

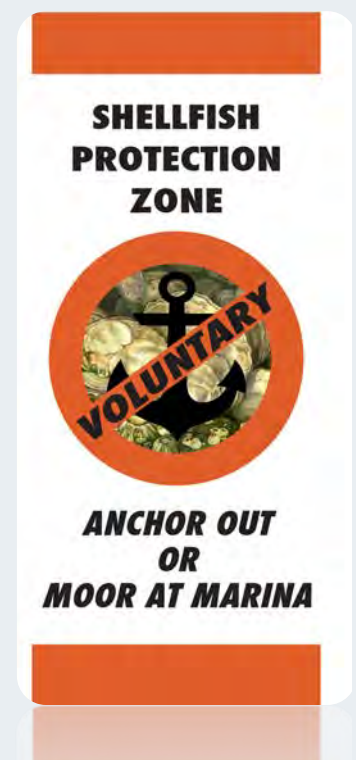
The Jefferson County MRC installed four marker buoys to delineate the Voluntary Marine Protected Area (Shellfish Protection No-Anchor Zone). The buoys were installed along an imaginary line running generally from the northern tip of Skunk Island to the dolphins (pilings) just inside the Port of Port Townsend’s floating dock.

The marker buoys include a “no anchor logo” with text that identifies the voluntary no anchor zone. The Jefferson County MRC used a professional dive team for buoy installation. The marker buoys remain in the water year-around. A dive team should conduct biennial maintenance to clear marine growth from the buoys and anchoring gear.



Marker buoy staged on the Port of Port Townsend dock in Lower (Port) Hadlock, February 2014.
Photo: Cheryl Lowe/JCMRC

Four marker buoys delineate the South Port Townsend Bay Marine Protected Area.



The marker buoys include a “no anchor logo” with text that identifies the voluntary no-anchor zone.

The buoys are 68" can-style regulatory buoys with the project logo affixed to both sides of the 9"-diameter high-density polyethylene resin cylinders. Each buoy is injected with urethane foam, and ballasted at the base with hydraulic concrete, weighing 65 lbs in total. Each has a recessed ½" Stainless Steel mooring eye installed in the base and sits upright in the water with 32" of the buoy above the waterline.

Buoy tackle includes ¼" diameter, three-strand polypropylene line, ¼" thimble eyes, 3/8" and 5/8" screw-pin shackles and jaw-eye swivels, 5" mid-line floats, helical screw anchors. The buoy tackle systems are spliced lines, adding mid-line floats and securing shackle pins with wire keepers. There is a 5-oz weight on the line between the midline float and buoy to prevent the line from floating on the surface at anytime

The marker buoys are anchored with a galvanized helical screw anchor. This type of anchor has a minimal footprint. When coupled with a mid-line float to keep the line from sinking to the bottom at all tidal stages, this system avoids any impact to the surrounding substrate. The anchor nearest to the Port of Port Townsend dock is 66" L x 1" shaft with an 8" helix. Larger anchors (8' L) of the same style were installed in the remaining three locations due to the depth of the water and the depth and composition of the sediments.

Boater Education & Public Outreach

Informational Signage & Rack Cards

The Jefferson County MRC developed informational signage and rack cards similar to the style that was developed for the Mystery Bay Voluntary Marine Protected Area. The signs inform boaters and the public about the purpose of the marker buoys and the no-anchor zone. These signs include the project logo, a map showing the Port Hadlock Waterfront, location of the marker buoys and prominent shoreline features as well as a beautiful full-color illustration of submerged shellfish habitat. Two large signs were installed at key locations: the Port of Port Townsend dock and boat launch facility, next to the Northwest School for Wooden Boat Building, and the Port Hadlock marina, adjacent to the Harbormaster's Office. In addition, smaller signs were installed in the Port Hadlock marina at the location of the pump-out facilities. Images of all signs are provided in Appendix B.

Rack cards provide the same information as the signs in a condensed and portable format (see Appendix B). The rack cards were distributed at all the outreach events and presentations listed in the following section. In addition, the rack cards are available at Port Hadlock Marina office, the Northwest Maritime Center and at WSU Extension office. The Jefferson County MRC will continue to distribute the rack cards at boater education events that are regularly attended as part of their annual work program.

Project Outreach Events

Because this project hinges on a boater education strategy, public outreach efforts are key to the project's continued success. The outreach events and presentations that were conducted during the term of the project are listed below (see Appendix B for documentation). It is recommended that outreach is continued at boater events typically attended by project partners.

September 2012

- Project information booth at Wooden Boat Festival

April 2013

- Project information booth at Earth Day Festival in Port Townsend—April 20, 2013. (Memo to file)
- Northwest Maritime Center e-newsletter. (Email confirming distribution)

June 2013

- Chumsortium meeting—June 6, 2013. (Attendance sheet)
- Hood Canal Watershed Education Network (HCWEN)—June 11, 2013. (Minutes of meeting with attendance list)
- Port Townsend Yacht Club—June 11, 2013. (PTYC email confirming # of attendees)
- WA Sea Grant Recreational Boating Class—June 28, 2013. (Class list)

July 2013

- South Whidbey Yacht Club—July 14, 2013. (SWYC email confirming # of attendees)

August 2013

- E. Jefferson Chapter of Puget Sound Anglers—Aug. 10, 2013. (Sign-in list)
- Shellfest at Fort Flagler State Park—Aug. 17, 2013. (WA State Parks email confirming # of attendees)
- KPTZ –Local community radio talk show (Tossed Salad)—Aug 30, 2013. (No documentation available)

September 2013

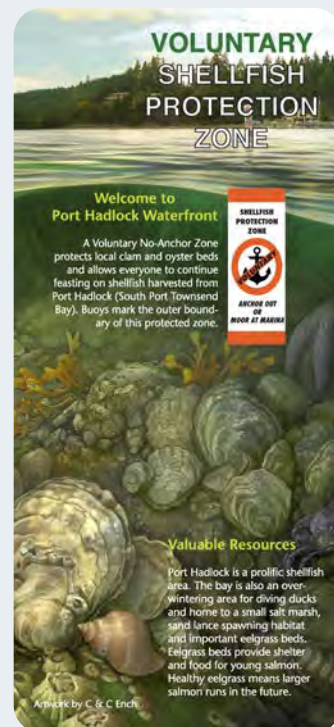
- Wooden Boat Festival (Copy of ad in Wooden Boat Festival Guide, photos of exhibit booth, and signatures on "pledge form")
- Sequim Yacht Club—Sept. 11, 2013. (Sign up sheet)

November 2013

- Kingston Yacht Club—Nov. 21, 2013. (Sign-up sheet)



Smaller signs were installed in the Port Hadlock marina at the location of the pump-out facilities.



Rack cards provide the same information as the signs in a condensed and portable format.

The Future Voluntary of MPAs

Applicability in Other Locales

Marine Protected Areas, when coupled with comprehensive outreach and stakeholder involvement have been successful in Port Townsend and on Marrowstone Island in Mystery Bay, and have the potential to be successfully employed in other locales. As mentioned previously, the Mystery Bay Project received national recognition and both the Mystery Bay and South Port Townsend Bay (Lower Hadlock) were honored with the Governor's Smart Communities Award. The approach serves as a model that could be used in the following locations where boater/shellfish use conflicts exist or are anticipated to exist in the future according to Washington Department of Natural Resources.

- Jefferson County- Matts Matts Bay
- San Juan County- Lopez Island, Shoal Bay, Westcott Bay, San Juan Island.
- Whatcom County- Drayton Harbor (if mooring buoys present/if shellfish harvest is opened)
- Island County- Pen Cove, Whidbey Island (not currently an issue/ maybe an issue in the future)
- Clallam County - Sequim Bay

Considerations

The long-term success of this project hinges on the ability of key stakeholders to remain committed to the project. While the Jefferson MRC will continue to provide some support through its Marine Stewardship Program, all aspects of the project must be shared among project partners (WADNR, Jefferson County DCD and others). The following is a list of required project maintenance.

- One-time conversion of Right of Entry to Conservation Lease – 2015
- Biennial dive to check ground tackle, clear marine growth, replace failing shackles
- Replacement of marker buoys – 5 year factory warranty on graphics; experience in nearby locations indicates 10-year total replacement schedule
- Signage replacement every 5- 10 years depending on exposure
- Rack card reprinting as needed
- Ongoing outreach at boater events typically attended by project partners.