

COUNTY: Jefferson  
**Grant No: SEANWS-2021-JeCoWS-00007**

PROJECT TITLE: Jefferson County MRC Operations and Projects

TASK NUMBER: 4-Eelgrass and shellfish voluntary no anchor zones

T4.4

Year one final report

PERIOD COVERED: October 1, 2021 – September 30, 2022

DATE SUBMITTED: September 30, 2022



Jefferson County  
**Marine  
Resources  
Committee**



**Northwest  
Straits**  
INITIATIVE



**PUGET SOUND**  
PARTNERSHIP



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**Jefferson County Marine Resources Committee**  
**2022 Voluntary Eelgrass and Shellfish Protection No-Anchor Zones Summary Report**

**Project Overview**

The Jefferson County MRC has three buoy fields that protect eelgrass and shellfish habitats by encouraging boaters to anchor outside of these areas to prevent anchor and chain damage:

- Port Townsend waterfront (Port Townsend Bay) – thirteen buoys have been permitted for protecting eelgrass here, with eight buoys installed in 2004 and five added in 2015.
- Port Hadlock (South Port Townsend Bay) – four buoys were installed in 2014 to keep boats from anchoring too close to shellfish beds.
- Mystery Bay – seven buoys were installed in 2010 to help limit the number of boats anchored near commercial and Tribal shellfish beds, with five buoys marking the voluntary shellfish protection area and two marking the seaward limits of the Mystery Bay State Park area where boats can anchor.

The weather conditions stay relatively calm in Mystery Bay and near Port Hadlock, so buoys here are left in place all year round and are periodically serviced to remove marine growth and replace underwater hardware. The Port Townsend waterfront buoys experience significantly more wave and wind action in the winter months, so the MRC pulls the large (~66 pound) spar buoys out in the fall and replaces them with floats that do not exert as much pull on the anchors. The MRC No-Anchor Zones Subcommittee monitors the buoy fields periodically throughout the year to ensure that the buoys are in place and functioning properly, and to assess boater compliance and effectiveness of the no-anchor zones.

Project Lead: Troy McKelvey

Subcommittee Members: Gordon King, Nam Siu, Pam Petranek, Solenne Walker, Bryan DeCaterina, Sarah Fiskien, Brenda Johnson, Roy Clark

**October 2021 – September 2022 No-Anchor Zone Project Activities**

October 12 – The subcommittee (Gordon, Brenda, Bryan, Troy) and MRC Coordinator met to discuss dive plans and needs, with volunteer operations allowed to resume with the adoption of the MRC dive plan in September

December 17 – The subcommittee (Gordon, Brenda, Bryan, Troy, Liz, Sarah) and MRC Coordinator met to discuss survey design and contract work for an eelgrass survey along the Port Townsend waterfront

January 22 – The dive team swapped four summer spar buoys with winter floats along the Port Townsend waterfront

May 22 – The dive team (Gordon, Bryan, Troy, Pam) swapped the four winter floats with summer spar buoys along the Port Townsend waterfront and relocated four anchors, installing a total of eight spar buoys

June 12 – The dive team (Gordon, Bryan, Troy) along with former Port of Port Townsend Commissioner and MRC representative Steve, installed three more summer spar buoys, totaling 11 spar buoys

July 7 – One MRC member, Troy, attended the Salish Sea No-Anchor Zones meeting.  
July 31 – The dive team (Gordon, Bryan, Troy), with the donated use of Hama Hama Oyster Co.'s boat, serviced the Port Hadlock buoys, cleaning off marine growth and swapping out underwater hardware  
September 8 – One MRC member, Gordon, and the MRC Coordinator attended the Salish Sea No-Anchor Zones meeting, to share the MRC's buoy design with minimal use of metal hardware to reduce corrosion and therefore need for maintenance.

Additional monitoring activities and dates are detailed below in the Buoy Maintenance and Boater Compliance Summaries. **MRC members contributed a total of 73 volunteer hours to the Voluntary No-Anchor Zones project.**

### **Buoy Maintenance Summary**

MRC volunteers who are highly skilled certified divers have in large part maintained the no-anchor zone buoys since 2004, when the first set of buoys were installed along the Port Townsend waterfront. While these divers have upheld high standards for safe diving practices, these practices had not been formally documented in a dive safety manual – until September 13, 2021. By adopting a dive safety manual, the MRC aimed to ensure that diving for MRC projects is conducted in a manner designed to minimize accidental injury, as well as to conform to applicable rules and regulations of the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries (L&I). This year, MRC volunteer divers began working on a backlog of maintenance needs, since they had not been able to service underwater hardware since prior to 2020.

#### Condition of Buoy Fields: Port Townsend

Due to scheduling conflicts and weather conditions, the volunteer dive team was unable to swap the summer spar buoys with winter floats as they normally do in the fall. On December 31, an MRC member, Frank, retrieved an eelgrass protection no-anchor zone buoy that had broken loose from the Port Townsend waterfront, likely due to stormy winter conditions.

It was not until January 22 that four MRC members (Pam, Troy, Bryan, Gordon) were able to swap the buoys along the Port Townsend waterfront. Pam skippered the Port of Port Townsend boat, Bryan and Gordon dived, and Troy offered support from the boat. The team swapped out the four summer spar buoys that had remained at the surface (of the 13 permitted) with winter floats and checked the integrity of the ropes and hardware of most of the screw anchors, replacing some.



*Port Townsend winter floats. Photo by Troy McKelvey.*

On May 22, three MRC members (Gordon, Bryan, Troy) and a former Port of Port Townsend Commissioner and MRC representative, Steve, used the Port's boat to swap the four winter floats and relocated some of the missing buoys, installing a total of eight summer spar buoys. The same team went out again on June 12 to install three more spar buoys, bringing the total number of functioning no-anchor zone buoys to 11 of the 13 permitted.



*Retrieved eelgrass protection buoy covered in marine growth.  
Photo by Troy McKelvey.*



*Bryan prepping an eelgrass protection buoy for installation.  
Photo by Troy McKelvey.*

### Condition of Buoy Fields: Port Hadlock

The team (Gordon, Bryan, Troy), with the help of the nearby aquaculture company (Hama Hama Oyster Co.) and donated use of their boat, did maintenance on the Port Hadlock buoys on July 31. All four buoys were nearly sunk, and one anchor was nearly broken off. The team replaced the anchor and cleaned the buoys, refitting them with new shackles and rope.



*Gordon getting ready to scrape marine growth off one of the Port Hadlock buoys. Photo by Troy McKelvey.*



## Condition of Buoy Fields: Mystery Bay

The MRC has not been out to do maintenance at this buoy field since prior to 2020 and has been aware of the poor conditions here. On January 9, a former MRC member, Dale Moses, reported that three no-anchor zone buoys and two state park boundary buoys were missing from Mystery Bay, with only one no-anchor zone buoy intact and one partially submerged. However, on September 3, MRC member Brenda reported that four, not five, buoys were missing. Three of the five no-anchor zone buoys – tattered and partially sunken – and neither of the two state park boundary buoys remained at the surface. See her photos below.



Possibly buoy #1: Significantly tattered (needs to be replaced) with some marine growth on its rope



Possible buoy #3: Weathered and sunken nearly halfway, with significant marine growth on its rope



Possibly buoy #4: Dented and sunken about halfway, weighed down by marine growth

Plans to service this buoy field in early then mid-September were canceled for various reasons. The team plans to service Mystery Bay as soon as possible, now aiming for some time in October.

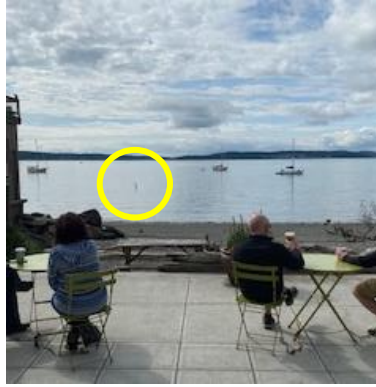
## **Boater Compliance Summary**

### Port Townsend

One MRC member, Frank, diligently monitored the Port Townsend buoy field between October 1 and August 22, with a total of 15 monitoring days recorded, typically in the mornings. See a sample of Frank's photos documenting compliant boaters below (buoys in yellow circles).



*May 25, 2022*



*July 10, 2022*



*August 7, 2022*

Six additional monitoring days by the MRC Coordinator, Bob Simmons (WSU Extension), and another MRC member, Gordon, bring the total to 21 monitoring days. Only one boat was observed anchoring within the boundaries of the buoys, during the Wooden Boat Festival which attracts hundreds of boats and thousands of visitors to Port Townsend Bay. This resulted in 95% boater compliance with the Port Townsend eelgrass protection no-anchor zone this year.



*Vessel anchored within the eelgrass protection no-anchor zone (yellow circle) on September 9, during the Wooden Boat Festival. Photo by Monica Montgomery.*

*Table 1: October 2021 – September 2022 results of monitoring boater compliance at the Port Townsend eelgrass protection no-anchor zone.*

<b>Date of Monitoring</b>	<b>Monitor</b>	<b>Number of Vessels Anchored Inside the No-Anchor Zone</b>
Oct 1, 2021	Frank	0
Nov 5, 2021	Frank	0
Dec 9, 2021	Frank	0
Dec 29, 2021	Frank	0
May 25, 2022	Frank	0
May 27, 2022	Frank	0

Jun 26, 2022	Gordon	0
Jul 4, 2022	Frank	0
Jul 8, 2022	Monica	0
Jul 10, 2022	Frank	0
Jul 15, 2022	Monica	0
Jul 21, 2022	Frank	0
Jul 25, 2022	Frank	0
Jul 31, 2022	Frank	0
Aug 7, 2022	Frank	0
Aug 12, 2022	Frank	0
Aug 20, 2022	Frank	0
Aug 22, 2022	Frank	0
Aug 26, 2022	Monica	0
Sep 9, 2022	Frank/Monica	1
Sep 10, 2022	Bob	0

#### Port Hadlock

This site was not monitored for boater compliance this year.

#### Mystery Bay

This site was not monitored for boater compliance this year.