

County: San Juan County  
Grant No: SEANWS-2017-SJCoPW-00001

PROJECT TITLE: Orcas Landing Interpretive Project

DELIVERABLES FOR TASK NO: 3

PROGRESS REPORT: [ ]

FINAL REPORT [ X ]

PERIOD COVERED: July 1, 2018 – September 30, 2018

DATE SUBMITTED: October 8, 2018

3.3 Progress Report – finalized illustration of Ecology sign, and finalized sketch of Connections Nature sign included. Installation is due to occur in late fall 2018.



This project has been funded wholly or in part by the United States Environmental Protection Agency under Assistance Agreement PC-00J90301. 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.

## **Orcas Landing Progress Report**

The production of the interpretive signs are being finalized. The Ecological Systems sign has been completed and the production of the second sign – Connections to Nature is well underway with the final painting being completed. This second sign depicts the traditional reef net fishing system, a common method used to harvest fish by the Coast Salish peoples who used the San Juans. This sign is out for review by local tribes after significant input from local tribal representatives, including from the San Juan MRC Tribal representative Patti Gobin to ensure that the tribal interests are consistently portrayed with their preferences for depiction of their historic and current activities in the San Juans.

The site development has been significantly delayed due to a longer than expected land use permit process. San Juan County Public Works now expects the construction to begin in September, and be completed in November. Because of this delay the signage placement will not be able to occur when planned. Signs are now expected to be installed during winter 2018-2019.

Despite this project running over time due the development delays the MRC will continue to engage with the County on the Orcas Landing Site development and conduct the pre-and post-site surveys during the 2018-2019 year once the site has been fully developed and the signs have been installed.

Supporting documents:

- Final art work for sign 1 – Ecological Systems
- Final sketch for sign 2 – Connections to Nature



# *A Rich and Vibrant Home for All*

The waters before you contain a rich marine ecosystem and wide variety of habitats—from eelgrass meadows and kelp forests to rock reefs, deep channel sand waves, brackish tidal marshes and pocket beaches.

These diverse habitats serve as a shelter for millions of organisms — from microscopic single cell plants to tiny crustaceans to clams, scallops, crabs, and shrimp — and small forage fish like surf smelt, sand lance and herring.

The forage fishes, in turn, become the preferred prey of salmon—Chinook, chum, pink, and coho—as well as seabirds and many marine mammals in the Salish Sea.

This is a web of life, interconnected—one that contains multitudes.

In recent years, salmon, herring, and eelgrass habitats along with populations of resident orcas have begun a serious and startling decline.

What's happening here? Evidence points toward a disruption of the food chain due to shoreline development, storm drain runoff, sewage dumping, carbon emissions, climate warming and ocean acidification.

How can we help? Efforts include preserving natural beaches, shorelines, eelgrass meadows and other habitats, and eliminate pollution in the Salish Sea. Support continued research into fish ecology, climate change, and marine ecosystems, and volunteer to help organizations working to restore our natural environment. Let's work together to protect, preserve, and restore our home for future generations.





# Connection With Nature

Coast Salish peoples have gathered the bounty of the waters around the San Juan Islands since time immemorial. They used the traditional reef-net system to catch the abundant salmon, with nets woven from nettle plants. Local knowledge of the seasonal tides and migrations of all five species of salmon remain critical to foraging success. Fishing and shellfish harvesting continues today around the Islands by the Coast Salish commercial and recreational fishers.

For many, the act of gathering seafood to eat with family and friends is still a vital, life-sustaining practice. These experiences help instill a deep understanding of the interdependence and connectedness of marine life, and the importance of preserving, protecting, and restoring marine habitats and food webs.

Reef netting was developed here by tribal fishermen centuries ago. Cedar net between the two canoes is lifted, trapping salmon in the process. Teamwork and patience is required for success.

*Just like kelp, side lines define path for salmon.*

*Salmon swim in direction of tidal current.*

*Bunches of beach grass tied to floor lines increase the illusion of a normal sea bed.*

Reef-net fishing can still be found in a few locations around the San Juan Islands, but most fishing has been replaced by motorized boats, gill nets, purse seines, rods and reels. Techniques and gear may have changed but the essential act of fishing remains as it always has been.

