

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

PROJECT TITLE: Southern Resident Killer Whale

DELIVERABLES FOR TASK NO: 2

PROGRESS REPORT: []

FINAL REPORT [X]

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

DATE SUBMITTED: October 8, 2018

2.3 Progress Report, including list of actions and commitments by stakeholders



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.

Southern Resident Killer Whales – Progress Report

The MRC continued to advance its efforts to help the Southern Resident Killer Whales. The Boat-Noise Sub-Committee met in July and August to continue to coordinate efforts with the Whale Flag study, discuss the developments of the Governor's SRKW Task Force with regards to vessel impacts and proposed actions, and discuss the options for management of the west side of San Juan Island, including grant proposals being prepared by the County staff on behalf of the MRC to seek additional funding to help address these issues.

The MRC were successful in securing funding from the Marine Mammal Commission (\$17,000) that will allow the effectiveness of the flag to be assessed and help initiate the second year of the pilot study. In addition County staff, on behalf of the MRC applied for funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to continue the pilot study through 2019 and expand the study into neighboring counties and into the Seattle area. The decision to expand the study was based on preliminary results from the pre-season survey that indicated that of those respondents that were boating within San Juan County but were not County residents the majority were from neighboring counties or the Seattle area. Flag distribution continued through this last quarter along with outreach material. Flags and outreach material were distributed to members of the Northwest Straits Commission as well as the Governor's Task Force.

Vessel based data collection by Soundwatch began on July 1st and continued into September. The post-season survey is running through October to assess boater awareness and knowledge regarding whales and the Be Whale Wise guidelines and law after a season of outreach and education.

The results of the pre- and post-season surveys, along with the vessel data will be analyzed during November 2018 and an interim report summarizing the results of the first year of the pilot study will be prepared during January 2019.

The MRCs SRKW efforts will continue through the end of 2018 and into 2019. These efforts will include a continuation of the Whale Warning Flag project into its second pilot year, and new efforts regarding the SRKW for a community based effort to assess management options for the west side of San Juan Island. These community and County based efforts are included as potential action in the draft Task Force report to Governor Inslee and the MRC and County are planning a series of workshops to engage key interest groups through the fall of 2018 as well as working with scientists to produce science based options to better protect key foraging areas on the west side.

Supporting documents:

- Subcommittee meeting agendas and notes
- Whale flag in action
- Outreach material – Port signage
- Copy of post-study survey

The Whale Flag:



The Whale Warning Flag being flown by Soundwatch while the team monitors J35 and her deceased calf.



The Whale Warning Flag being flown by commercial whale watch vessel, the Western Prince.



The Whale Warning Flag being flown at the Lime Kiln Lighthouse land station.

Outreach material: Port signage in action



Port signage on display on Lopez Island. These signs are also on display at the Port of Friday Harbor and on Orcas Island.



**SAN JUAN COUNTY
MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE
BOAT NOISE SUBCOMMITTEE**

**Monday July 2, 2018
9:00 – 11:00 AM
Call in number: 360.370.7592**

**Spring Street meeting room
Public Works 915 Spring Street
Friday Harbor**

Agenda

9:00 AM	Convene Meeting <i>Frances Robertson, Chair</i>
9:00 AM	Introductions
	Items for discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task Force update wrt vessel/noise impacts (<i>Jeff, Giles</i>) • Whale Flag Pilot Study Status Update (<i>Frances</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Flag distribution</i> • <i>Education & Outreach Campaign</i> • <i>Pre-Study survey and flag outreach efforts</i> • Signage • Communication between PWWA and land-based flag operators on SRKW locals • Whale and Salmon sanctuary – West side voluntary no-boat zone (<i>All</i>) • Summary of project proposals related to vessels and SRKW presented to Task Force (<i>Kendra & Frances</i>) Next Steps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalize MSA & rock map (<i>MRC members with external review State, Fed & County</i>) • 2nd Community meeting on SRKW Fall 2018 (<i>Kendra</i>) Any Other Business
11:00 PM	Adjourn Sub Committee meeting

SAN JUAN COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE
BOAT NOISE SUBCOMMITTEE

JULY 2, 2018
Public Works Office, Friday Harbor, San Juan Island
MEETING MINUTES

Commented [FR1]: Boat/noise SC needs to be changed to reflect the presence of boats not just the noise.

SubCommittee Members in Attendance – Frances Robertson (County/MRC); Ivan Reiff (MRC), Christina Koons (MRC, via phone); Lovell Pratt (MRC), Taylor Shedd (Soundwatch); Kendra Smith (MRC/County).

SubCommittee Members Absent – Jeff Friedman (MRC), Debra Giles, Lynne Barre (NOAA), Penny Becker (WDFW), Jason Gunter (Discovery Sea Kayaks), Karin Roemers-Kleven (MRC), Tom Murphy (Outdoor Odysseys Kayaks)

Topic	Key Discussion Points and Agreements	Actions and Next Steps
1. Convene Meeting	9:05am	
2. Flag Distribution	<p>Yesterday we handed out 25 flags, mailed out 5 to individuals, 10 to WDFW, and more but we want to get more out to whale watch operators. One issue has been raising flagpoles to deploy flags. We are keeping contacts for boaters who take flags with aims to follow up at the end of the season. People with interest in deploying flags should be directed to the MRC website</p> <p>Ivan offers to keep flags in his office to give out upon request.</p> <p>Kayak companies were invited but couldn't make it to this meeting.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Frances will give Ivan 10 flags and a log sheet- Christina will pick up more flags on the 11th for distribution on Orcas
2. Introductions	9:16	
3. Vessel working group and Task Force Update – Lovell Pratt	<p>The group was divided into large commercial vessels and smaller ones that would include whale watch, fishing, and recreational. Most recommendations focused on the smaller vessels, for the larger vessels the recommendation is to coordinate with the ECHO program out of Vancouver. For example, ECHO had a voluntary slow-down last year and will do the same this</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Lovell will send exact language from recommendation from working group

	<p>season. The most relevant recommendation regards the voluntary no-go zone – the language is very diplomatic and soft because of concerns raised at the last meeting by Kevin Ranker and others.</p> <p>There was another recommendation with respect to permitting for whale watch operators. Canada will be announcing new vessel regs to go into effect July 11th. And a trial period of <i>mandatory</i> slow-down for boats whenever resident whales are around started yesterday, July 1st</p> <p>In the Vessel Working group, the discussion of permitting is still in a preliminary phase. The task force saw a draft proposal in order to discuss and make suggestions.</p> <p>Some people from the working group and the task force and Friends of the San Juan have discussed a paper by Lacey, “what needs to be done to improve the situation for resident whales in the San Juans?” with a focus on ship noise. It may have some examples of ship strikes on resident whales.</p> <p>There’s also a study by Erin Ash using resident whales as a case study for management. Instead of the whole west side being shut down, it suggests smaller more manageable areas. Now she wants to redo this study with more information available from Beam Reach, etc. Especially in light of changing whale behavior, they’re more spread out over west side, if we can take the approach of predicting whale presence.</p> <p>AIS use would make this easier – you’d be able to see what’s happening on the water from a computer. Hopefully social pressure will help too, even with just a voluntary requirement. Whale watch boats will be required to have AIS. Situational awareness that comes with AIS would make a big difference, especially for smaller boats.</p> <p>Larger recreational boats want notifications on AIS - they want to know where whales are in order to avoid them. If AIS was used more broadly it could be a tool for enforcement. Having no-go zones on</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lovell will send around the study regarding analysis of ship noise impacts on resident whales - Lovell will provide information about comment period for recommendations to task force - Christina will find out facts from contacts in Alaska, send along to Frankie to share with committee
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	<p>digital charts & AIS would help them be more effective.</p> <p>The MRC wants to track what's happening on the West side, especially any implementation. Last October there was a 2-day meeting in Bellingham hosted by the Coast guard, the consensus: the interaction between large & small commercial vessels and trans-boundary cooperation needs to improve, AIS use by smaller vessels needs to increase.</p> <p>The MRC is advisory to the Council, but also for outreach to the public. If we see an opportunity for the public to engage we can post information. As a group we can't engage without going through the Council.</p> <p>As the Task Force winds down in August, we should gather up products from all the subcommittees and be able to draft something for Jamie to take to the Task Force and say 'these are the issues which are important to move forward for San Juan County' That would need to happen by the end of August in order to get something to the governor by October 1st.</p> <p>We want to make sure the west-side no-go zone is part of the conversation, recommending what the process will be or what stake-holders should be considered.</p> <p>Harvesting Chinook in Area 7 is a big issue. Is there no allowance for a Chinook shutdown now? It's a question for WDFW</p>	
Back to flag distribution	<p>We have flags, inserts for the "Be whale wise" guidelines, sent to Skagit, Whatcom, etc. Also distributing around San Juan Island & a box for Orcas Island. Giving out the new insert with upcoming boat licenses in the County licensing office.</p> <p>We're nearing the end of the pre-study survey & need to email the last 25 flag recipients to follow up and make sure they complete the survey. That's good data for the first pre-study survey, then we'll</p>	

	<p>re-launch mid-September through October. Over the next couple of weeks we'll work with Ivan & Jeff to distribute to more whale-watching boats.</p> <p>There's been a good response at the Port of Friday Harbor, we've set up a table near the life-vests. At RH we need more yacht rendezvous with captive audience. Frances will get a calendar and get on the mailing list. We're also planning to be at the boat shows in Seattle in 2019.</p>	
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West side Lime Kiln	<p>Question, 'is there a way to let people know on the west side when whales are present?' Discussion of Sound Watch as a point person in communication with the Lighthouse and County Park.</p> <p>There is a flag that can be deployed where the diver-down flag is deployed - that would let kayakers know who are coming out of Deadmans Bay. That would work since there are typically 2 people in the gift shop, and at least 3 interns. If this flag is for all whales (not just residents) it could happen a lot. It's not just who can be on site to raise flag, but also to do education. There are naturalists at Land Bank, work with Giles and Whale Scouts to see how volunteers can help</p> <p>Soundwatch has added the flag info to their education repertoire, making sure boaters know about the guideline of 200 yds and the pilot study happening with the flags. Everyone has been pretty receptive so far, taking brochures with a picture of the flag</p>	<p>-Frankie will check with Giles and Whale Scouts</p> <p>-Frankie will give Taylor another box of brochures/inserts</p>
Summary of proposals	<p>We sent Jamie Stevens down to the last Task Force meeting with several proposals from the County that the MRC is concerned with;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -hydrophone at Eagle Point -other options for West Side no-boat zone -more statewide look at Chinook prey issue <p>Kendra passes around a packet from June 13th. Jamie wanted to get some projects into the queue with costs/level of effort etc. This gets at a lot of the protection goals and touches on whale flags, protecting forage hot spots, and development of the west-side zone.</p> <p>On page 7 - 'recreation and viewing management' came out of the conversation regarding kayaking. This was edited by national and county parks, looking at how we can do dispersion, find other locations for land-viewing and other kayak launch sites. County park is jammed and needs alternative dispersion.</p> <p>Last proposal - taking a more strategic approach to which watersheds are most likely to be resilient with respect to Chinook and the pathway for southern</p>	<p>-Kendra will follow up with Milene at the County about how we can accept donations</p>

	<p>resident whales. We need 'salmon depositories' along the coast, particularly for L and K pods. These are the stepping stones for whales – need watersheds to maximize production. It's not just southern Puget Sound watersheds – we need to open the conversation to what locations are going to produce large fish at the right time in systems more resilient to climate change, making sure the whales will actually encounter a fish. Survivability of salmon is going to continue to be a problem – it'll get worse before it gets better. We need to prepare people for that. Terminal fisheries is a great way to know we've reached escapement goals ie. Sufficient fish to spawning grounds to replace next generation. Terminal fisheries would be a more sustainable strategy, but you'd still want a percentage bump on pre-spawn mortality. But in order to make recommendations regarding production, we need the full picture of resiliency etc.</p> <p>The green/yellow/red color for status of projects is a scoring scheme which should be discussed and adjusted, then update Task Force.</p> <p>We have the opportunity to run a second community meeting in the Fall. We can readdress where we are, bring in all the stakeholders and the tribes, recreational fishers, and kayak groups. NW Straits commission is also planning to discuss SRKW at their November meeting. The Pacific Rim film series is in October, one thought is to tie in a community meeting and Task Force update. The task force wants an open public-meeting format for the community.</p>	
Meeting adjourned	10:45	

Commented [FR2]: Needs to reflect LP's comments regarding the need for the MRC to have given it's blessing.

Would have been better to have been actual MRC grass roots efforts. Really, is totally fine to be just San Juan County.

Boating with Whales in the Salish Sea: Post Season Survey 2018

The core critical habitat of the endangered Southern Resident killer whale is located in the heart of the Salish Sea within the San Juan Islands. When Southern Residents are present in the Salish Sea during the spring, summer and fall there are vessels within acoustic range of the whales virtually all the time hindering their ability to navigate, detect increasingly scarce prey, and communicate.

In an effort to address vessel impacts around the San Juan Islands the County and the San Juan County Marine Resources Committee are piloting the use of a Whale Warning Flag.

This post-season survey is part of this pilot study. The survey aims to measure public knowledge, attitude and actions related to boating with whales in the Salish Sea and the use of the Whale Warning Flag. The survey is anonymous and open to all interested in participating, but particularly those who are residents and visitors to San Juan County.

Thank you for your time. The survey is in 3 sections and should take approximately 5 minutes to complete.

*** Required**

1. 1) Did you complete the pre-season survey in 2018?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

2. 2) Are you a resident of San Juan County? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

3. 3) Did you visit San Juan County during the spring, summer or fall of 2018 and partake in boating activities?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

4. 4) If you visited, where did you visit from?*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ A neighboring County (e.g., Whatcom, Skagit, Islands, Jefferson)
- ☐ Seattle and South Puget Sound
- ☐ Outside Washington State
- ☐ Canada
- ☐ Another Country
- ☐ Other: _____

5. 5) Do you own a boat?*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

6. 6) If yes, what kind of boat do you own?*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Small non-motorized (e.g., kayak or row boat)
- ☐ Private small open motorized
- ☐ Private medium cabin motorized
- ☐ Private large motorized
- ☐ Sail Boat
- ☐ Eco-tour kayak
- ☐ Eco-tour - vessel
- ☐ Government Agency / Enforcement
- ☐ Research
- ☐ Commercial Fishing
- ☐ Tribal Fishing

7. 7) How long have you been boating in the San Juans?*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ 0-1 years
- ☐ 2-5 years
- ☐ 6-10 years
- ☐ 11-20 years
- ☐ 21- 30 years
- ☐ 31 - 40 years
- ☐ 41 - 50 years
- ☐ > 50 years

8. 8) What is your main boating purpose?*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Recreation e.g., visiting other islands
- ☐ Recreational whale watching
- ☐ Recreational fishing
- ☐ Commercial fishing
- ☐ Tribal fishing
- ☐ Commercial whale watching & wildlife Tours
- ☐ Research
- ☐ Government work (e.g., County, State or Federal)

Section 1: Knowledge/Perception

This section asks questions related to your awareness, and the information that you possess about boating around whales in the Salish Sea.

WHALE WISE BOATING

9. 9) Are you familiar with the Be Whale Wise Guidelines and regulations?*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

10. 9a) If yes, do you think you are able to follow them?*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

11. 9b) If yes, what are the most important Be Whale Wise Guidelines and Regulations a boater can follow?

12. **10) When you see a grouping of boats on the water, could that mean whales are present?**

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Maybe

13. **11) If you see a bait ball, or birds swooping in one area could that mean whales might be in the area?**

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Maybe

14. **12) If you answered yes to Questions 8 and/or 9, do you adjust your boating to follow the guidelines?**

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Maybe

15. **13) If you are in the vicinity of whales how many yards should you maintain between you and the whales?**

DANGERS

16. **14) To the best of your knowledge, have boats collided with whales in this general area in recent times?**

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Don't know

17. **15) Do you think boat-whale collisions are dangerous to whales?**

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Don't know

18. **16) Do you think boat-whale collisions are dangerous to people?**

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

Section 2: Attitudes towards whales

This section addresses the wider sociocultural orientations boaters have – consciously or not – about whales, and their relations with whales, in the water.

19. **17) When you are boating and whales are in the area, do you seek them out or continue on your way?**

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Seek out
- ☐ Continue on

20. **18) Do you enjoy watching whales when you are boating?**

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

21. **19) Do you think you should change your boating behavior when whales are nearby?**

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe
- ☐ Don't know

22. **20) When you are boating, is your first concern the task you are out to accomplish - such as fishing, or getting from point A to point B?**

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Sometimes

23. **20a) If yes, do whales being in the area ever get in the way of your task?**

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5
Every Time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Never					

24. 21) When you are boating near whales, do you hope they will come close or do something spectacular (like breach or tail slap or spyhop)?

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Always	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Never

25. 22) Do you feel a sense of guardianship over whales (e.g., do you go out of your way to keep them safe when you are boating)?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Don't know

Section 3a: The Whale Warning Flag

This section addresses your knowledge of the Whale Warning Flag.

Whale Warning Flag



26. 23) Did you see this flag flying this summer?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

27. **23a) If yes, did you think the flag was it of sufficient size?**

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Yes - I could see it clearly on other boats	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	It was too small and I could not see it clearly on other boats.

28. **24) If you saw a boat or land station flying this flag, do you know what it means?**

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Yes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	No

29. **25) If you saw a boat or land station flying this flag, would you see the flag as a warning?**

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Maybe

30. **25a) If no, please explain briefly what this flag indicates to you?**

31. **26) What are the 3 key things you should do if you see the flag?**

32. **27) If you saw a boat or land station flying a whale warning flag, would this have any effect on how you are boating? e.g. would you slow down?**

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Every Time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Never

33. **28) If you had a Whale Warning Flag on your boat, would you raise the flag when you are in the vicinity of whales?**

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
100% Likely	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	I would not

34. **29) Do you think the introduction of a Whale Warning Flag will make a difference in how boaters behave around whales?**

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe
- ☐ Don't Know
- ☐ Other: _____

Section 3b: Using the Whale Warning Flag

This section is for those that received a Whale Warning Flag in 2018

35. **30) Did you receive a flag this summer?**

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

36. **31) Did you encounter whales when boating this summer?**

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

37. **31a) If yes, did you fly the flag?**

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

38. **32) If you did encounter whales but did not fly the flag why not?**

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Unable to rig the flag on my boat
- ☐ Forgot to raise the flag
- ☐ Did not want to raise the flag
- ☐ Other

39. 33) Did you find the flag challenging to use?*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

40. 34) Should there be different size flags available depending on the size of your vessel?*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Additonal comments

41. 35) In the future would you be willing to pay a small fee for the flag?*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

42. 36) Do you have additional comments to share regarding the Whale Warning Flag? e.g. Can we improve the flag? Where else should we share the information on the flag?

Thank you for your time in completing this survey.

43. Any final comments



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