



Minutes

January 31, 2025, 10:00 AM-3:00 PM
In-Person meeting, Coupeville Library, Coupeville WA
Northwest Straits Commission meeting

Attendees

Commission Members: Tim Ellis (Snohomish – Chair), Mike MacKay (Whatcom – Alternate), Ginny Broadhurst, Christina Koons (San Juan), Jeff Taylor (Jefferson), Lynne Wenberg-Davidson (Skagit), Jamie Stephens, Elsa Schwartz, Emily Grason

Commission Staff: Dana Oster, Jeff Whitty, Caitlyn Blair, Sasha Horst, Lucas Hart, Allie Simpson, Jessica Owens

Others in Attendance: Jill Lipoti, Kelly Webb, Patrick Havel, Nan McKay, Sarah Fisker (Jefferson – Alternate)

Absent: Ken Collins (Island), Alan Clark (Clallam – Vice Chair), Cecilia Gobin (NW Indian Fisheries Commission)

Welcome and Introductions:

Tim opened the meeting with the tribal acknowledgement and introductions.

The Commission approved the December 2024 meeting minutes as written by consensus.

The Commission appointed Elsa as the chair for the External Relations Committee.

The Commission approved the Skagit MRC grant amendment.

Recognition for Nan McKay

The Commission recognized Nan McKay for her long-time contributions to the NW Straits Commission as a Governor's appointee. Nan began her first term on the Commission in 2013 and served for more than 11 years, including one year as vice-chair, three terms as chair of the Commission, and years as Chair of the External Relations Committee. Nan's brought incredible knowledge of Puget Sound issues and the network of organizations and people who work toward Puget Sound conservation.

Committee Updates:

Science Advisory Committee: Emily Grason shared that the Committee met during the week of January 19. At the meeting, the Committee welcomed Emily Horton, PhD, a social scientist at U.S. Fish and Wildlife. The meeting also focused on the Committee's workplan for 2025. The Committee will also be hosting another seminar for MRC members in October, more details to come.



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External Relations Committee: Lucas shared the reauthorization bill did not pass in the 118th Congressional session that ended on January 3, 2025. Representative Larsen’s staff is evaluating a strategy to reintroduce the bill this session. We continue to watch federal and state directives with changing administrations.

Executive Committee: Lucas shared that the Committee discussed the NW Straits Initiative definition and presentation for the January 31 NW Straits Commission meeting. The Committee also reviewed the norms for Courageous Conversations for NW Straits Commission adoption. Additionally, the Committee approved adding the NW Straits Commission to a letter of support for [HB 1631](#), which establishes bull kelp as the state marine forest.

Strategic Planning Committee: Lucas shared the Strategic Planning Committee, comprised of himself, Dana Oster, Sasha Horst, Jessica Owens, Ken Collins, Lynne Wenberg, Jeff Taylor, and Elsa Schwartz, met to review the NW Straits Commission mission and vision. The Committee also discussed other themes for the April Retreat. The Committee is working on drafting initial goal/objectives and strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, which will be reviewed by the Commission in the future.

Public Comment and Partner Updates

Jill Lipoti, Island MRC, asked how the NWS Commission would be handling Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion work moving forward as federal priorities shift to other areas. There was a discussion about next steps, such as MRCs discussing how they would like to carry this work forward.

Commissioner Updates

Salish Sea Institute – Ginny shared that the Salish Sea Institute and College of the Environment WWU are hosting a winter speaker series. Lovel Pratt, Marine Protection and Policy Director at Friends of the San Juans and San Juan MRC member, gave a presentation on [commercial shipping impacts and risks in the Salish Sea](#).

WA Sea Grant – Emily shared that following a recruitment process there is a recommendation for a new WA Sea Grant faculty director.

MRC Reports

Clallam MRC – Shared from Report



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- The MRC developed a refined draft of its roles and responsibilities for members and various member roles.
- The MRC is focused on planning its projects for the next biennium, with a retreat/workshop planned for the membership on February 24th.

Island MRC – Jill Lipoti

- The selection committee came together in mid-January to decide the winner of the Jan Holmes Award. The committee decided to welcome two other winners each year.
- The MRC has turned in a water quality QAPP for review.

Jefferson MRC – Jeff Taylor

- The MRC elected Betsy Carlson as the MRC Chair, and Emily Buckner as the Vice Chair at the December 2024 MRC meeting.
- Forage Fish – Quilcene Marina: January 21 – The MRC had a Forage Fish meeting with WDFW and Port of Port Townsend at Quilcene Marina to discuss sampling locations. Sampling will start in the next few weeks.

San Juan MRC – Christina Koons

- The MRC interviewed several great prospects for the open committee seat in early January. After deliberation, Charles Bookman of Lopez Island has been recommended to join us. Charles brings a wealth of experience and marine knowledge, and the MRC is excited to welcome him into the fold.
- The MRC also has a new County Council liaison. Jane Fuller will take the place of previous council member Cindy Wolf.
- Planning is underway for a late winter marina operators roundtable. The goal is to bring together small and large marina operators to understand what shared challenges they face and see how the MRC can assist. The roundtable is tentatively scheduled for late February.

Skagit MRC – Lynne Wenberg

- OTGP-2024 Grant Amendment: Allocated remaining grant funds to Forage Fish Monitoring and Skagit Shoreline Needs Assessment Phase 3 Projects.
- The MRC formed an MRC Executive Committee consisting of MRC Staff, Chair, and Vice-Chair. The first meeting was held January 29th.
- Salish Sea Stewards Training begins February 18. There is still space available! As of January 16, there are currently 15 people registered. The maximum is 26. Classes will be held on Tuesdays from 1-5 PM at Padilla Bay.

Snohomish MRC – Tim Ellis



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- On February 8th at 7 PM, Snohomish County Beach Watchers and the MRC are hosting their annual starlight beach walk at Edmonds Olympic Beach.
- The MRC subcommittees are currently working on the annual report in Canva and deciding updates to the design.

Whatcom MRC – Mike MacKay

- The MRC approved new officer positions.
- Two members, Heather Spore and Dan Sulak departed the MRC in January.
- The MRC conducted a kickoff meeting for their 4th year of the Beach Seine with Kids project.

NW Straits Meeting Norms for Courageous Conversations

Allie presented the proposed meeting norms for courageous conversations, as well as their goals and purpose. These norms will be utilized in NW Straits Commission meetings to establish expectations and solutions for tackling difficult conversations.

The meeting norms were approved by NW Straits by consensus with the recommendation that the norms be included in the onboarding materials for NW Straits Commissioners. It was also recommended that Commissioners sign onto an agreement of the norms each year.

NW Straits Initiative Definition and Structure Presentation and Discussion

Lucas gave a presentation about the NW Straits Initiative definition that was originally drafted by the 2024 NW Straits Initiative retreat planning group and discussed during the retreat in September of that year. It was later revised by the NW Straits Commission Executive Committee. It reads: The Northwest Straits Initiative is a community-led collaboration dedicated to protecting and restoring the marine environment of northwest Washington. It is composed of the NW Straits Commission and seven locally based Marine Resources Committees. Together they identify and address priority NW Straits marine conservation issues.

The presentation addressed questions that have been asked about the definition, discussed benefits of adopting the definition and challenges it could help solve, changes that would result from adoption of the definition, and how relationships between the NW Straits Commission, MRCs, and Foundation could be structured in the future under the proposed definition.

The Commission provided feedback on the information that was shared in the presentation. Key feedback included:



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- Potential unintended consequences of adopting the definition need to be considered before moving forward
- Soliciting the Foundation's perspective is important before making any decisions
- It's important to continue acknowledging the project collaborations that happen across the NW Straits Commission, Foundation, and MRCs and how that work would change if the proposed definition were adopted

The definition will be revisited after more information can be gathered.



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February 28, 2025, 10:00 AM- 12:00 PM
Virtual Zoom Meeting
Northwest Straits Commission meeting

Attendees

Commission Members: Tim Ellis (Snohomish – Chair), Rick Beauregard (Whatcom), Ginny Broadhurst, Christina Koons (San Juan), Jeff Taylor (Jefferson), Lynne Wenberg-Davidson (Skagit), Jamie Stephens, Elsa Schwartz, Emily Grason, Ken Collins (Island), Ahren Stroming (Puget Sound Partnership), Alan Clark (Clallam – Vice Chair)

Commission Staff: Dana Oster, Jeff Whitty, Caitlyn Blair, Sasha Horst, Lucas Hart, Allie Simpson, Jessica Owens

Others in Attendance: Don Hunger, Bill Berger, Wayne Watne, Austin Rose

Absent: Cecilia Gobin (NW Indian Fisheries Commission)

Welcome and Introductions:

Tim opened the meeting with the tribal acknowledgement and introductions.

The Commission approved the January 2025 meeting minutes as written by consensus.

Committee Updates:

Science Advisory Committee: Emily Grason shared that the Committee is working on reviewing correspondence that will go out to MRCs, offering project consultation by members of the SAC on one new or ongoing project of each MRC.

External Relations Committee: Elsa Schwartz shared that Lucas is working on providing a NW Straits Commission 101 presentation to the new Department of Ecology Director, Casey Sixkiller.

Executive Committee: Alan Clark shared that himself, Lucas, and Tim had a meeting with Don Hunger (NW Straits Foundation Director) and Betsy Lyons (NW Straits Foundation Board President) about the NW Straits Initiative definition. The Committee also shared that the Commission may be hosting Department of Ecology Director, Casey Sixkiller at the NW Straits Commission meeting in Whatcom County on July 25. The Committee also discussed the annual conference as NW Straits Commission staff are working with the Department of Ecology on a mechanism to receive payments to allow for the possibility of paid attendees at the event on November 7-8.



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Strategic Planning Update

Lucas Hart shared that the Strategic Planning Committee is working on the NW Straits Commission mission statement, a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) exercise, and are in the process of securing a retreat facilitator.

Lucas facilitated an activity with meeting attendees and shared a summary of SWOT ideas the Committee came up with. Attendees added their thoughts and comments, which will be included in strategic planning materials for later discussion.

Business Items

Staff gave updates on the following business items:

NW Straits Commission Norms for Courageous Conversations: Allie Simpson shared a new example attached to Norm 4: Listen and don't assume. Staff is working on a commitment document for NW Straits Commissioners to sign.

DEI Phase 2 Wrap Up and Knowledge Base: The Commission's newly implemented [Knowledge Base](#) hosts a wealth of diversity, equity and inclusion resources for building engagement and community partnerships for MRCs. Start with the [Knowledge Base Guide](#) to see a quick description and link to each resource included in the Knowledge Base. Additionally, this Knowledge Base is meant to be built upon, and we intend to add resources to it as we continue this work. If you have/find resources you think would be beneficial to add, or have questions please contact Allie Simpson (simpson@nwstraits.org) or Caitlyn Blair (blair@nwstraits.org).

MRC Request for Proposal Policies: Sasha shared three policies for review and approval that will be incorporated into the pending MRC Request for Proposals. Two of the policies were already existing and one is new. The existing policies, including the Match Policy and Funding Policy, were approved as presented. The Commission approved by consensus the Conflict of Interest Policy with minor edits as suggested by the Commission during the meeting.

NW Straits Commission Retreat: Caitlyn reminded attendees about the NW Straits Commission retreat on April 3-4 at Padilla Bay. The retreat is held for NW Straits Commissioners, Commission staff, and MRC staff. More information about the agenda and logistics will be available in the coming weeks. If you have questions, please e-mail Caitlyn at (blair@nwstraits.org).

MRC Reports

Clallam MRC – Alan Clark



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- The MRC will hold a work session on February 24th to develop projects for the next biennium.
- The MRC will be hosting a [planting event on March 6th for the Ediz Hook revegetation project](#), in partnership with the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe and Clallam Conservation District. Approximately 50 local elementary students are expected to attend and help plant native beach plants.
- The MRC hosted two presenters from WA DNR – Cynthia Harbison and Bree Turner – during the February monthly meeting who shared their work on marine vegetation strategy and held a collaborative discussion with the MRC.

Island MRC – Ken Collins

- **Jan Holmes Award:** The selection committee came together this year, and after many years of expressing that we wish we could celebrate more volunteer's and their hard work. We decided to update the award to "volunteers" of the year. Island County has so many amazing volunteers that we want to celebrate and acknowledge. This year's winners are Barbara Bennett for service, PaulBen & Jeanie McElwain for science, and Lee Badovinus for education.
- **Sound Waters University:** Kirk Larsen and Kelly Zupich taught two classes at Sound Waters University. The focus was on how community science makes a difference. Our audience had a lot of great questions. We shared about how our projects make a difference in our local area. Additionally, we brought in equipment from our various projects to show participants.

Jefferson MRC – Jeff Taylor

- Interviews were held for the Marine Science Alt member position on February 7. New member, Jon Waggoner, was offered the position and accepted. He is currently being onboarded and will officially start sometime in March 2025.
- **Forage fish – Quilcene Marina:** January 29 – Forage Fish sampling started at Quilcene Marina.

San Juan MRC – Christina Koons

- The Great Islands Cleanup is scheduled for April 12 on Lopez Island and April 26 on Orcas, San Juan, and Shaw islands. For more information, please see the [Plastic Free Salish Sea website](#).
- Monthly beach cleanups are back! The spring schedule is filling up quickly with local organizations who are helping the MRC host and successfully remove microplastics and debris from Jackson's Beach. Check out the PFSS webpage for more info: <https://plasticfreesalishsea.org/>.



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- The MRC has been invited to participate in a North Sound Marine Vegetation Brown Bag Luncheon on April 2 from 11:30-1pm. During this time we will hear about the latest implementation strategy from the Habitat Leads who use these strategies to guide investments and steer conservation and recovery projects. Groups will be encouraged to share their challenges with marine vegetation and share efforts taken to protect and recover these important marine habitats.

Skagit MRC – Lynne Wenberg

- Salish Sea Stewards classes commenced February 18 with 24 registered participants. First class included an introduction to the Skagit MRC and a brief history of the Salish Sea Stewards presented by MRC members Pete Haase and Darla Gay Smith. The second class included an introduction to the Northwest Straits Commission presented by Lucas Hart. [2025 training schedule](#) is available on the Skagit MRC website.
- Skagit MRC is collaborating with Swinomish Indian Tribal Community, Island MRC, Jefferson MRC and NWSF on a potential derelict crab pot removal project in Skagit Bay. They are exploring the possibility of using an ROV for surveying and removing derelict pots. They have scheduled a demo with Oceanbotics ROV (<https://oceanbotics.com/>) on March 11 at Cornet Bay.

Snohomish MRC – Tim Ellis

- The starlight beach walk on Saturday 2/8 was well attended with over 100 members of the public.
- The MRC subcommittees are currently working on the annual report in Canva and deciding updates to the design.

Whatcom MRC – Rick Beauregard

- 2 members, Paul Meyer and Colin Wahl were appointed to the MRC in February.
- The MRC will be reviewing drafts of the Climate and Environment Chapters for the 2025 Comprehensive Plan update and providing feedback, particularly on policies related to marine resources.
- The MRC is co-hosting two workshops with the Northwest Straits Foundation: A Shore Friendly Workshop and A Shore Friendly Contractors Workshop for Whatcom & Skagit Counties.

Commissioner Updates

Salish Sea Institute: Ginny went to a herring conference in Victoria hosted by the Tsartlip Nation. She is also giving talk at Lummi Island Heritage Trust talk.

Puget Sound Partnership: Puget Sound Day on the Hill is scheduled for April 29-May 2, 2025. The NW Straits reauthorization will remain one of the key priorities. More information as the event is planned can be found at <https://psdoth.org/>.



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Public Comment and Partner Updates

The NW Straits Foundation will be holding a Caroline Gibson Scholars Event on Saturday, March 29, 1:00 – 3:30 at the Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve. All are welcome to attend. See the NW Straits Foundation website for more details and to RSVP.



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April 25, 2025, 10:00 AM- 12:00 PM
Virtual Zoom Meeting
Northwest Straits Commission meeting

Attendees

Commission Members: Tim Ellis (Snohomish – Chair), Alan Clark (Clallam – Vice Chair), Christina Koons (San Juan), Jeff Taylor (Jefferson), Ken Collins (Island), Rick Beauregard (Whatcom), Jamie Stephens, Lynne Wenberg-Davidson (Skagit), Emily Grason, Ginny Broadhurst

Commission Staff: Dana Oster, Jeff Whitty, Caitlyn Blair, Sasha Horst, Lucas Hart, Allie Simpson, Jessica Owens, Leah Skare

Others in Attendance: Rayme Ivers, Sarah Fisken (Jefferson – Alternate)

Absent: Elsa Schwartz, Cecilia Gobin (Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission), Larry Epstein (Puget Sound Partnership)

Welcome and Introductions

Tim opened the meeting with the tribal acknowledgement and introductions.

The Commission approved the February 2025 meeting minutes as written by consensus.

NW Straits Commission Chair and vice-Chair Elections

Alan Clark was elected chair and Jamie Stephens was elected the vice-chair of the NW Straits Commission. Many thanks to Tim Ellis, outgoing chair, for his service the last two years.

Committee Updates

Science Advisory Committee: Emily Grason shared that the Committee will be meeting virtually at the end of April, and in person in June. The Committee is preparing for project proposal review and the MRC project consultations. At the June meeting the Committee will review a selection of MRC project proposals. Kathy Wolf will be stepping down at the end of June; we appreciate her service on the Committee.

External Relations Committee: Lucas shared that Senator Murray and Representative Larsen have reintroduced the reauthorization bill. For updates about reauthorization, visit the NW Straits Commission [website](#). Lucas also shared that he is working with the Department of Ecology to evaluate contingency options for future funding. In April, Lucas, Alan, and Jamie updated state electees on NW Straits Commission and MRC projects.



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The NW Straits Commission signed onto a letter supporting HB 1631, which establishes bull kelp as the Washington state marine forest. The bill highlights the importance of bull kelp to marine ecosystems and regional cultures. The bill passed and was signed by Governor Ferguson on April 16, 2025. For more information, see the [King 5 Article](#).

Executive Committee: Alan Clark shared that at the March meeting, the Committee discussed Puget Sound Day on the Hill. Reauthorization is among the priorities and includes a \$10 million annual appropriations request as a placeholder. NW Straits Commission staff outlined talking points, and Puget Sound Partnership organized sign on letters; Tim Ellis signed the Day on the Hill letters on behalf of the NWSC after Executive Committee approval. The Committee also discussed NW Straits Commission strategic planning, which will be discussed in greater detail at the May NW Straits Commission meeting. Other updates from the committee included: The NW Straits Commission submitted comments on the Shoreline Management Act rules related to kelp conservation during open comment period; Commission meeting agendas have been restructured to capture time for designated Commission seats (Puget Sound Partnership and NW Indian Fisheries Commission). Updates from all others will be captured in the Public comment/partners section. A recommendation was brought forward that the Executive Committee serve as the nomination committee for the NW Straits Commission Environmental Leadership Award. The Commission approved by consensus.

Business Items

Staff gave updates on the following business items:

NW Straits Commission Norms for Courageous Conversations: Allie shared that the norms for courageous conversations were updated, and can be viewed in the [Knowledge Base](#). NW Straits Commission staff created an agreement acknowledging that the Commission will adhere to the norms. This will be brought in hard copy to be signed by Commission members at a future in-person meeting.

May Meeting – in-person in Clallam County: Caitlyn shared that the May meeting will be held at the Dungeness River Nature Center in Clallam County. Staff and others will be providing options for carpooling from Port Townsend to Sequim. Stay tuned for more information in the coming weeks about travel times and ferry information and contact info@nwstraits.org If you have questions. We look forward to seeing you there!

MRC Grants: Sasha and Dana have held consultations with each MRC about their project proposals. The due date for MRC proposals is May 29.



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Project Updates

Kelp Kayak Kickoff and Safety Training: There will be two Kayak Kickoffs for 2025 MRC kelp monitoring volunteers, the first will be at Padilla Bay from 10:00 – 2:00 PM on May 2, and the second one will be at the WSU Jefferson County Extension Office in Port Hadlock from 1:00 – 4:00 PM on May 14. There will be three kayak safety trainings for MRC kelp monitoring volunteers at Bowman Bay, Fidalgo Island on May 31 and June 1, and at North Beach, Port Townsend on June 7 (two classes per day). Registration has closed for all events but if you have any questions or would like to attend a safety training, please contact Jeff Whitty (whitty@nwstraits.org) right away.

Impact Report: The 2024 Impact Report is being shared widely and is the second most visited page on the NW Straits Commission website. If you are interested in sharing the report, please visit the [website](#) or contact Jessica Owens (owens@nwstraits.org).

Green Crab: Allie shared that staff and Washington Conservation Corps (WCC) have started seasonal trapping for European green crab in Drayton Harbor and Samish Bay. They are working with the Department of Fish and Wildlife to train technicians to trap crabs using NW Straits Commission protocol at Drayton Harbor. The WCC crew was trained to trap in Samish Bay. Department of Fish and Wildlife has caught 32 Green crabs including 2 gravid females. WCC captured 6 green crab including multiple molts, and Taylor Shellfish caught 4 for a total of 10 crabs. They set around 300 traps in Drayton Harbor and 200 in Samish Bay.

Retreat Debrief

Lucas shared some updates and reflections from the retreat. Consultants provided a draft report that will be circulated to the Strategic Planning Committee, and then to the NW Straits Commission. The draft plan contains the mission, vision, purpose, values, strategic goals, objectives, and actions that came out of the retreat. The NW Straits Commission will plan to review the draft at the May NW Straits Commission meeting.

MRC Reports

Clallam MRC – Alan Clark

- The MRC hosted a HAZWOPER refresher and oiled wildlife response training on April 15 and 16.
- The MRC shared an advisory letter with County Commissioners regarding shoreline armoring in the 3 Crabs Rd area.
- Alan Clark gave a presentation to the Sequim Bay Yacht Club on April 9, explaining what the Clallam MRC is and works on.



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Island MRC – Ken Collins

- Camano 101 is one of the MRC's favorite opportunities to connect with the Camano Island community. Volunteers had engaging conversations with attendees and enjoyed the chance to network with other environmental programs at the event.
- The MRC joined the Woodhaven High School class to teach students how to identify local forage fish egg species. The students were incredibly curious and did an excellent job documenting their findings—some even sketched detailed drawings of the different eggs they discovered! The MRC is excited to continue this partnership and inspire more local students to explore and learn about marine science.

Jefferson MRC – Jeff Taylor

- The Olympia oyster restoration team emptied 1,500 bags of Pacific oyster shell at the Discovery Bay Powerline site.
- The Searching for Seaweed Workshop was held on April 4, 16 participants attended.

San Juan MRC – Christina Koons

- The Spring Great Islands Cleanup is scheduled for April – 4/12 on Lopez Island and 4/26 on Orcas, San Juan, and Shaw islands.
- MRC members and staff participated in a North Sound Marine Vegetation Brown Bag Luncheon on April 2 to hear about the latest implementation strategy from the Habitat Leads who use these strategies to guide investments and steer conservation and recovery projects. Learning about different strategies and hearing what projects are happening across the North Sound was inspirational and a great opportunity to collaborate for greater impact.
- Salmon Recovery Site Visits were on April 3 and 4, where MRC members learn in depth about potential salmon recovery projects and act as the Citizens Advisory Group to rank and score projects for the socioeconomic merits.

Skagit MRC – Lynne Wenberg

- **Bowman Bay Beach Seining:** On April 7, Bowman Bay beach seiners caught 831 chum in one day! It exceeded the total annual counts from previous sampling years.
- **Native Oyster Restoration StoryMap:** Now available on the Skagit MRC website homepage: [click here](#)
- **Forage Fish Surveys:** After 13 years of leading the forage fish surveys, project lead Pete Haase officially handed the baton over to Catherine Houck. Pete will continue to be the Skagit MRC's Project Lead while Catherine is learning the ropes.
- **2025 Salish Sea Stewards Graduation Celebration- April 29!** Victor Garcia, one of the new volunteers in the 2025 Salish Sea Stewards Training program and an active forage fish survey volunteer, was recently appointed by the Governor to serve on the Washington



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State Fish and Wildlife Commission for a six-year term. The Commission oversees the fish and wildlife rules and regulations.

Snohomish MRC – Tim Ellis

- The MRC 2024 Annual Report is available on the Snohomish County MRC [website](#).
- The MRC presented their Annual Report to County Council on April 15 and is planning to follow up to the Council with recommendations.

Whatcom MRC – Rick Beauregard

- The MRC will be hosting the first Beach Seine with Kids event on April 22nd with Harmony Elementary School.
- On March 31, staff with the Puget Sound Restoration Fund conducted a reconnaissance survey in Drayton Harbor to identify key habitat features, target species, and assess the general distribution of Olympia oysters at selected sites in Drayton Harbor. The goal of this survey was to inform the MRC about Olympia oyster restoration possibilities within Drayton Harbor.

Commissioner Updates

There were no Commissioner updates.

Public Comment and Partner Updates

There was no public comment.



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May 30, 2025, 10:30 AM-3:00 PM

In-Person meeting, Dungeness River Nature Center, Sequim WA
Northwest Straits Commission meeting

Attendees

Commission Members: Alan Clark (Clallam – Chair), Jamie Stephens (Vice Chair), Larry Epstein (Puget Sound Partnership), Lynne Wenberg (Skagit), Emily Grason, Tim Ellis (Snohomish), Jeff Taylor (Jefferson), Christina Koons (San Juan), Rick Beauregard (Whatcom), Ken Collins (Island)
Commission Staff: Allie Simpson, Sasha Horst, Jeff Whitty, Caitlyn Blair, Lucas Hart, Dana Oster, Leah Skare

Others in Attendance: Ed Bowlby, Lyn Muench, Chris Burns, LaTrisha Suggs (Clallam MRC Chair), Hansi Hals (Jamestown S’Klallam), Brenda Johnson, Cathy Lear, Sarah Fisker (Jefferson – Alternate), Mike Doherty, Randy Johnson (Clallam County Commissioner District 2), Rebecca Mahan, Nancy Stephanz, Jake Beattie

Absent: Elsa Schwartz, Cecilia Gobin (NW Indian Fisheries Commission), Ginny Broadhurst

Welcome and Introductions:

Alan welcomed attendees with introductions and the Tribal acknowledgement.

The April meeting minutes were approved as written by consensus.

Welcome to the Dungeness and Tribal Comments

Hansi Hals, Natural Resource Director with Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe shared remarks about projects and initiatives that Jamestown S’Klallam is working on and spearheading. Currently, the list of marine projects and programs that Jamestown is working on includes restoration at the mouth of the Dungeness River, invasive species control, stewardship planning, marine water quality, sea level rise, biotoxin monitoring, algal blooms, Olympia oyster population assessments, and European Green Crab trapping efforts at several sites. For more information about natural resource projects with Jamestown S’Klallam, visit their [website](#).

Remarks from Clallam County Commissioner

Commissioner Randy Johnson, District 2, shared some remarks about Clallam County, environmental and humanitarian issues the county is facing, and recent projects and developments. The county must weigh many important priorities when considering budgets.

Blue Schools Initiative Presentation

Jake Beattie, CEO of the NW Maritime Center presented on their Blue Schools Initiative. The Blue Schools Initiative aims to educate and connect students with maritime careers. For more information about the Blue Schools Initiative, visit the NW Maritime Center [website](#).



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Identify, Investigate, Integrate, Inform: MRCs as Advisory Bodies

LaTrisha Suggs, Clallam MRC Chair, presented about Clallam MRCs role as an advisory body to county government. The presentation included processes the MRC created to determine when to advise their county commissioners on local issues. For more information, please see the Clallam MRC [website](#) or e-mail LaTrisha Suggs (lsuggs@jamestowntribe.org).

MRC Reports

Clallam MRC – Alan Clark

- Olympia Oyster annual population surveys took place on May 15th and 16th.
- The MRC held its annual leadership election. LaTrisha Suggs will remain as Chair, and Alan Clark will serve as both Vice Chair and NWSC Representative.

Jefferson MRC – Jeff Taylor

- An evening lecture event was held in connection with Puget Sound Restoration Fund at the Port Townsend Library on May 15, to discuss kelp life history and presence in WA state, and the new monitoring buoy stationed off North Beach in Port Townsend.
- Digging for Dinner Workshop was held on May 18th, 33 participants attended.

Island MRC – Ken Collins

- The recent community Sea Level Rise (SLR) meeting with homeowners reflected the high degree of emotion and frustration on the topic.
- The open MRC coordinator position has closed for application. We eagerly await candidate review and hiring. In the meantime, our work is constrained and we are being selective in what we take on short term.

San Juan MRC – Christina Koons

- The Spring Great Islands Cleanup was a great success with over 300 volunteers cleaning 171 miles of beaches and roadways across San Juan County resulting in 2,925 pounds of debris removed. A huge thank you to everyone who participated in this biannual event protecting marine waters from plastic pollution.
- Marine Project Manager Frances Robertson traveled to Washington, D.C. for Puget Sound Day on the Hill to advocate for San Juan County's marine priorities and the reauthorization of the Northwest Straits Initiative, joining partners to engage lawmakers on key Puget Sound restoration issues.

Skagit MRC – Lynne Wenberg

- Bowman Bay Beach Seining- The story of the month is Chum! 933 just for April 2025! This breaks all the records for chum found to date at Bowman Bay. Checkout the [NWSF Facebook post](#).
- La Conner School Rain Garden- May 18th- La Conner Elementary School 4th and 5th graders participated in a class on rain gardens with hands on learning activities taught by



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MRC Project Lead Elizabeth Drozda. The interpretive sign donated by Westar Solutions has been printed and is ready to install.

- Kids on the Beach- We just wrapped up the 2025 spring KOTB program which delivered an authentic hands-on marine science learning experience to over 200 students in Skagit County! We even found a European Green Crab molt this year, which served as an excellent learning opportunity. Recent article in the [Skagit Valley Herald](#).

Snohomish MRC – Tim Ellis

- The derelict vessel subcommittee and the marine vegetation subcommittee have been busy writing project proposals for the 25-27 grant funds.
- Drafts of the MRC and Tulalip Tribes signs at Kayak Point Park about the ecological, historical, and culture importance of Port Susan were reviewed at the May MRC meeting.

Whatcom MRC – Rick Beauregard

- The MRC will present their 2024 Annual Report to the Whatcom County Council Climate Action Natural Resources Committee on May 27.
- The MRC hosted 4 schools across 3 Beach Seine with Kids field events. The April 22nd event had the largest catch yet with 938 chum, 1 chinook, 1 coho, and 1 shiner perch! This year, the MRC also partnered with the Salish Sea School to run additional stations at the field events for a more interactive learning experience for the students.
- On May 29th, the MRC will be working with students from Bellingham Technical College to conduct the North Chuckanut Bay Olympia oyster population survey. This will be the last population survey in North Chuckanut Bay as this site has not yielded promising results for Olympia oyster restoration over the past 6 years.

Draft Strategic Plan Review

Lucas shared the draft of the 2025-2030 Northwest Straits Commission Strategic Plan and introduced an exercise for attendees to provide feedback. Commissioners and staff were given time to consider if major components were missing and if grammatical corrections were needed.

Attendees shared their comments and suggestions for revising and improving the draft strategic plan. No substantial changes were recommended. Some minor additions and edits were suggested. Staff will take the feedback and incorporate it into a new revised draft. The draft plan will be considered for approval at the June Commission meeting.

Committee Updates:

Science Advisory Committee: Emily shared that the Committee met in April to discuss their schedule for the rest of the calendar year. The Committee will postpone holding training series



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until 2026. In 2025, the Committee will focus on feedback for MRC project proposals and consultations, as well as planning for the 2025 annual conference.

Executive Committee: At the May meeting, the Committee discussed the NW Straits Commission strategic plan and federal funding. The NW Straits Commission is working with the Department of Ecology on contingency plans in case federal funding is impacted. A preliminary FY26 supplemental budget request was submitted to the agency. The \$910,000 MRC funding proviso (\$455,000/year) was included in the state legislative budget for the 2025-2027 biennium.

External Relations Committee: Lucas shared about external relations topics. The reauthorization bill passed out of the Senate Commerce Committee and was heard in a subcommittee of the House Natural Resources Committee. Rep. Larsen and Rep. Randall spoke about the bill during the hearing. Staff submitted a grant proposal to the Department of Fish and Wildlife for European Green crab funding. Lucas, Dana, Lynne and Tracy will be meeting with Swinomish Tribal Chairman Steve Edwards in June to discuss partnership opportunities.

Business Items

NW Straits Commission staff gave updates on the following business items:

Website Update: Commission staff is collaborating with WaTech to transition the nwstraits.org website to a new platform. We are currently in the contracting phase, with the hopeful goal of beginning work this summer. Stay tuned.

Conference Save the Date November 7-8: Save the date for November 7-8 at Maple Hall in La Conner, Skagit County. Registration will open in August. The conference planning committee is making progress on conference sessions with guidance from the pre-conference survey that was filled out in March. Stay tuned for updates about speakers and the agenda on the [Conference website](#).

MRC Grant Proposals: All MRC grant proposals were submitted on May 29. Proposals will be submitted for review by staff and reviewed by the Science Advisory Committee. MRCs can expect feedback mid-late July.

Kelp Forest Alliance Letter of Support: The NW Straits Commission approved by consensus its support for the Kelp Forest Alliance Initiative that will help to connect the global kelp community and develop regional kelp-focused action plans and assessments for interested regions where they currently do not exist. Chair Clark will send an email to the Alliance voicing the Commission's support. For more information, visit the [website](#).

Project Updates

WA Kelp Project Inventory: Jeff provided an update on the WA Kelp Project Inventory, a collaborative tool to report and view information on kelp "projects" (projects, programs, initiatives,



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etc.) in Washington State. The inventory is a tool to see who is doing what with kelp in Washington. This tool was developed in collaboration with a list of partners including Puget Sound Partnership, WA Department of Natural Resources, the Kelp Node, and the Kelp Plan Coordination Advisory Committee. The inventory is set to be launched in early June.

Derelict Vessel Turn In: Port of Skagit was awarded the 2025 Environmental Stewardship from the Washington Public Ports Association for their work on the derelict vessel turn in event. The NW Straits Commission was a partner on this event.

Anchor out of Eelgrass: Dana shared that the Anchor Out of Eelgrass social media campaign is live. Please visit the website at AnchorOut.org and follow the campaign on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), and [Threads](#)!

Commissioner Updates

Puget Sound Partnership: Larry Epstein shared updates about the state and federal budgets. The state budget was enacted and EPA funding for Puget Sound is currently being reviewed at the federal level.

Public Comment and Partner Updates

There were no public comments or partner updates.



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June 27, 2025, 10:00 AM- 12:00 PM
Virtual Zoom Meeting
Northwest Straits Commission meeting

Attendees

Commission Members: Pete Haase (Skagit – Alternate), Alan Clark (Clallam – Chair), Tim Ellis (Snohomish), Jamie Stephens (Vice Chair), Kirk Larsen (Island – Alternate), Elsa Schwartz, Jason Lim (Puget Sound Partnership – Alternate), Cecilia Gobin (NW Indian Fisheries Commission), Rick Beauregard (Whatcom), Jeff Taylor (Jefferson), Christina Koons (San Juan)

Commission Staff: Dana Oster, Jeff Whitty, Caitlyn Blair, Sasha Horst, Lucas Hart, Allie Simpson, Jessica Owens, Leah Skare, Daniel Duncan

Others in Attendance: Mike MacKay (Whatcom – Alternate), Austin Rose, Melissa Ciesielski, Fiona Beaty

Absent: Ginny Broadhurst

Welcome and Introductions

Alan opened the meeting with the tribal acknowledgement and introductions.

The Commission approved the May 2025 meeting minutes as written by consensus.

Alan introduced Jason Lim, Puget Sound Partnership alternate, and Daniel Duncan, NW Straits Veterans Conservation Corps intern.

Committee Updates

Science Advisory Committee: The Committee has been busy holding project consultations with MRCs. The Committee expressed that these meetings assisted in their understanding of MRC operations and procedures. The Committee reviewed and provided feedback on 13 project proposals and met in person in June to discuss the feedback.

External Relations Committee: U.S. Rep. Rick Larsen will be visiting Island MRC July 1 and Jamie and Lucas briefed U.S. Rep. Emily Randall's staff on the NWS Commission's work. Alan is looking at opportunities to for a site visit with WA State Rep. Adam Bernbaum. NWS Commission's NOAA and EPA funding are delayed. Timelines for this funding are not currently known.

Executive Committee: The Committee met in June and discussed ways to add value to in-person Commission meetings, such as adding more project site visits. Staff will evaluate feasibility as meetings are planned. Additionally, the Committee discussed the strategic plan and sharing the information within the plan with partners, so they're informed on our work. Budget was also



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discussed. Due to delayed NOAA and EPA funding, NW Straits Commission staff have been talking with MRCs about contingency planning for their project proposals.

Business Items

Staff gave updates on the following business items:

July NWS Commission Meeting in Whatcom County: Caitlyn Blair shared that the July NWS Commission meeting will be in Bellingham at the Whatcom County Civic Building on July 25, 2025 from 10 – 3 PM. Stay tuned for the agenda and materials and reach out to info@nwstraits.org if you have any questions.

Strategic Plan Approval: The NW Straits Commission approved the 2025-2030 strategic plan by consensus. Pete Haase, Skagit MRC alternate abstained. The plan was developed over a six-month process and is intended to be an internal tool to guide NWS Commission staff in prioritizing actions that advance the Commission’s mission to: “protect and restore the marine waters, habitats, and species of the NW Straits region by supporting Marine Resources Committees and advancing their community-driven priorities.”

Project Updates

Whatcom Vessel Turn-in Event: Dana shared that applications are being accepted for the Whatcom Vessel Turn-in Recycling Event until July 15. For more information, please see [the flyer](#). Currently, there are 10 boats that have applied and been approved. Media Day for the event will be on August 6.

Dana Oster was recently interviewed about the Whatcom Vessel Turn-In Event. Listen to [Love Your Waterfront Episode 37](#), June 12, 2025.

MRC Reports

Clallam MRC – Alan Clark

- The MRC submitted its grant proposal for the next biennium, containing eight projects.
- The kelp monitoring team kicked off their monitoring season with a “shake-out” practice paddle at Freshwater Bay on June 17.
- Following Cathy Lear’s retirement, Rebecca Mahan has resumed her position as MRC Coordinator.
- The MRC hosted Amy Olsen, Seattle Aquarium Research Scientist, for a presentation on local sea otter foraging during the June monthly meeting.

Island MRC – Kirk Larsen

- Coordination for Abandoned and Derelict Vessel (ADV) removal is planned for late June near Possession Point Kelp Bed.



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- Recruiting for Kelp Bed surveyors was so successful there is a waiting list!
- Guest Speaker Carlos Anderson from Whidbey Audubon was at the June MRC meeting.

Jefferson MRC – Jeff Taylor

- ROV Derelict Crab Pot Removal project removed 37 pots from Port Townsend Bay and Kilisut Harbor over 4 days and provided an educational/training opportunity for 15+ students and community members.
- Crabbing 101 (Catch more Crab) Workshop was held on June 25.

San Juan MRC – Karin Roemers-Klevin

- Karin Roemers-Klevin will be renewed for an additional term on the MRC and Joey Ullman will be replacing Craig Smith on the Committee. We are excited to have Karin back, and to welcome Joey, but we will sorely miss Craig's insight and wisdom on marine issues.
- Plastic Free Salish Sea set sail with the San Juan Island Yacht Club to steward beaches at Stuart, Sucia, and Jones Island State Marine Parks. During the two-day event over 20 volunteers cleared nearly 20 pounds of debris and litter from the shores, improving the marine environment for all.
- MRC members and staff participated in the Island Oil Spill Association (IOSA) response drill to practice protocol and safety measures to be prepared in the case of an incident. Being ready and knowing how to respond will enable better protection of marine waters and resources.

Skagit MRC – Pete Haase

- **Salish Sea Stewards Luncheon Social-** event held on June 14 at Padilla featured speaker Hadley Beahan from the Wolf Hollow Wildlife Rehabilitation Center on San Juan Island and included volunteer opportunities for Skagit County residents. An enthusiastic group of Salish Sea Stewards alumni from several years attended.
- **Bowman Bay Stewardship Day-** on June 4th more than a dozen Bowman Bay volunteers assisted with weeding the plantings at the restored beach. The native plant growth was so healthy it was tough to find weeds! The Northwest Straits Foundation and Skagit MRC event organizers were impressed by the enthusiasm and willingness of the volunteers to hunt for weeds in the dense native plant growth.

Snohomish MRC – Tim Ellis

- Welcome to our Marine Ecology Intern, Caliana Weber, who will be working on several MRC projects including a focus on shoreline assessment and a Possession Sound marine report card.
- The MRC is gearing up for kelp monitoring and has chosen dates. MRC members are planning for crabber outreach at the Port of Everett during opening week of crabbing season.

Whatcom MRC – Rick Beauregard



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- On May 29, the MRC conducted their final Olympia oyster population survey in North Chuckanut Bay with the assistance of students from the Bellingham Technical College Fisheries and Aquaculture Program. At two of the seven surveyed sites, a few live adult Olympia oysters were observed, but no larval recruitment was seen. This was the last population survey in North Chuckanut Bay as this site has not yielded promising results for Olympia oyster restoration over the past 6 years.
- On June 24, staff with WDFW, the MRC, and the NWSC will head to areas of Drayton Harbor that were identified by the Puget Sound Restoration Fund as suitable habitat for Olympia oyster restoration. The goal of this survey will be to identify specific plots that would be the most suitable to set up bioassays for further testing.
- The Whatcom MRC needs a Chair, and has two vacancies, both for recreation interest positions.

Speed Date with a Scientist. Centering Community Values in Marine Planning

Fiona Beaty presented on her research while at University of British Columbia. She works in service of community and Indigenous-led marine stewardship throughout the coastline of British Columbia. Fiona's presentation titled: *Centering Community Values in Marine Planning* highlighted how social sciences can provide opportunities to elevate and integrate community values in marine planning processes. More details and information on this research are available in the [*Emerging Issues Publication. Centering Community Values in Marine Planning.*](#)

Commissioner Updates

NW Indian Fisheries Commission: NW Indian Fisheries Commission has been engaging with the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) on nationwide permit programs, which deal with overwater structures that might inundate the waterscape that affects marine areas, or Tribal access to marine areas. The public comment period for the U.S. ACOE proposal to reissue and modify nationwide permits is currently open and will close on July 18, 2025. The proposal was published in the [Federal Register](#) on June 18, 2025.

Puget Sound Partnership: Jason Lim reported that an initial draft of the updated Action Agenda is planned for review later this summer, and that workshops for the [Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Plan Addendum](#) are underway. The Governor's budget forecast is \$700+ million lower than originally forecasted. A timeline for appointing the Puget Sound Partnership Director has not been released.



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Public Comment and Partner Updates

There was no public comment.



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July 25, 2025, 10:10 AM- 3:00 PM
Northwest Straits Commission meeting

Attendees

Commission Members: Jeff Taylor (Jefferson), Ken Collins (Island), Elsa Schwartz, Emily Grason, Rick Beauregard (Whatcom), Jamie Stephens (Vice Chair), Alan Clark (Clallam – Chair), Tim Ellis (Snohomish), Pete Haase (Skagit – Alternate), Ginny Broadhurst, Karin Roemers-Klevin (San Juan – Alternate), Larry Epstein (Puget Sound Partnership)

Commission Staff: Dana Oster, Jeff Whitty, Caitlyn Blair, Sasha Horst, Lucas Hart, Allie Simpson, Jessica Owens, Leah Skare, Daniel Duncan, Suzanne Shull

Others in Attendance: Glen “Alex” Alexander, Eric Lewis (Blaine City Council, Ward 1), Steve Seymour, Kaylee Galloway, Dana Flerchinger, Gary Stoyka, Mike MacKay (Whatcom – Alternate)

Absent: Christina Koons (San Juan), Cecilia Gobin (NW Indian Fisheries Commission)

Welcome and Wildcat Cove Site Visit

Commissioners arrived at Wildcat Cove for the Whatcom MRC site visit. Alan opened the meeting with the tribal acknowledgement.

Remarks from Whatcom County Council Member Kaylee Galloway

Whatcom County Council member Kaylee Galloway shared remarks about current efforts in the County that relate to the work of the Commission, and on the collaborative role of the MRC within county government. She shared that the County is working on several adaptation strategies and mitigation in response to climate change, after completing a climate vulnerability assessment to identify assets to protect, the hazards that may put those assets at risk, and an assessment of the overlap of assets and hazards. Whatcom County is also working on their [2025 Comprehensive Plan Update](#), and coordinating closely with Lummi Nation and Nooksack Indian Tribe on coordination of culvert removal to improve salmon migration routes.

Whatcom MRC: Working Together for Eelgrass Protection

Whatcom MRC member, Glen “Alex” Alexander presented on the MRC’s eelgrass protection and preservation work at Wildcat Cove near Larrabee State Park. The MRC partnered with WA Department of Natural Resources and Western Washington University to conduct eelgrass surveys at the site and developed and are now implementing a social marketing campaign to prevent boaters from driving on or dragging their boat on the eelgrass. The NW Straits Foundation hired interns to support the effort by informing boaters about how to avoid impacting the eelgrass habitat when using the boat launch. For more information about Whatcom MRC’s eelgrass protection project, visit their [website](#).



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Commissioner Introductions

Commissioners reconvened at the Whatcom Public Works building. Alan Clark opened the second half of the meeting with introductions.

Remarks from Ginny Broadhurst

Ginny Broadhurst shared remarks regarding her time serving on the NW Straits Commission and noted that she is resigning her position as a Gubernatorial appointee.

Committee Updates

Executive Committee: The Committee reviewed the NW Straits Commission July meeting agenda and draft strategic plan poster. The Committee also discussed funding redistribution opportunities to support MRCs while expected federal funds are pending. The topic will be revisited if need be in the future.

External Relations Committee: Elsa Schwartz shared on July 15, 2025, the House Natural Resources Committee advanced H.R. 2860, a bill to reauthorize the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative through 2031 and provide federal funding to support locally led marine resource conservation. A Senate version, S. 1433, passed out of the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee earlier this year. It proposes \$3 million per year in funding to the Northwest Straits Commission. Both bills now await full House and Senate votes before they can become law. Additionally, U.S. Representative Larsen is reaching out to MRCs to schedule site visits at their local project sites in August.

Science Advisory Committee: The Committee has held consultations with five MRCs on project proposals. Each MRC was offered the opportunity and five followed up to request a consultation. The Committee is also identifying ways to engage with MRCs in order to provide specialized individual advice on specific topics of expertise and ensure MRCs are receiving multiple perspectives as a full Committee.

Business Items

Staff shared updates on the following business items:

NWSC Meeting Norms Agreement: At the January 2025 NW Straits Commission meeting, Commissioners and staff reviewed and approved the NW Straits Commission Meeting Norms document. To encourage participation in the norms, Commissioners suggested and approved creating an agreement document for NW Straits Commission members and staff to sign. Staff provided the agreement document for Commissioners and staff to sign.



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MRC Conference November 7 & 8: Registration for the MRC Conference will be available in August! Stay tuned to the [2025 Conference Website](#) for more information as planning is well underway, and subcommittees are working hard to outline their sessions and invite speakers.

Strategic Plan Poster: NW Straits Commission staff prepared a draft strategic plan poster that illustrates the key points of the recently approved internal-facing strategic plan. The poster is meant to be used as an external-facing communications tool. The Executive Committee voiced their support for the poster. The NW Straits Commission approved the poster by consensus and can be viewed on the [NW Straits Commission website](#).

Blue Schools Initiative Letter of Support: The Northwest Maritime Center recently presented to the NW Straits Commission on their Blue Schools Initiative. They submitted a \$2.35M Congressional Directed Spending Request to Senator Cantwell's office to support this initiative. They have requested a letter of support from the NW Straits Commission. The NW Straits Commission approved the letter of support by consensus.

Blaine Marine Economy and Research Institute for Sustainability (MERIS)

Steve Seymour presented about the Blaine Marine Economy and Research Institute for Sustainability (MERIS). MERIS is a Blaine-based marine-centric multi-use hub for industry, community, and applied research builds upon existing local resources and networks unique to Blaine, Washington.

Sound IQ

Suzanne Shull and Jessica Owens provided an update about the new Sound IQ, a web-based platform for MRC and Commission data that we will be re-launching soon. Please feel free to explore the [website "soft" launch](#), which is a limited release of the site before the full launch. The goal of a soft launch is to test functionality, gather feedback, and fix issues without the visibility of a full-scale launch. We are working on video tutorials which will be included in the full launch, stay tuned for updates! Please contact info@nwstraits.org if you have feedback or questions.

MRC Reports

Clallam MRC – Alan Clark

- A Clallam Bay "shake-out paddle" took place on June 25, for the kelp monitoring team to practice with their gear and protocol and re-familiarize themselves with the site.
- Members and volunteers on the kelp monitoring team participated in filming for an educational film by Puget Sound Ecosystem Monitoring Program and NOAA collaborators.



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The film will focus on estuary restoration and nearshore habitat monitoring efforts, especially related to the Elwha River and salmon recovery.

Island MRC – Ken Collins

- The MRC has a new coordinator! We are pleased to welcome Elise Adams.
- The MRC had the pleasure of meeting with Representative Larsen (WA 2nd congressional district) at the Keystone Reserve.
- The MRC reviewed and added comments to the Island County Comprehensive Plan
- Kelp Kayak monitoring has begun thanks to lead Carter Webb!

Jefferson MRC – Jeff Taylor

- ShrimpFest tabling event, attended June 21. 5 MRC members and 1 past MRC member volunteered to table from 9am-6pm and made 168 direct contacts.
- Crabbing 101 (Catch more Crab) Workshop was held on June 25. 16 attendees heard from 3 speakers (Jason Morgan, NWSF; Liz Tobin, Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe, and Daniel Sund, WA Dept of Fish and Wildlife) on derelict crab pots and the importance of properly placing pots out, crab identification, fisheries management and regulation, and a hands-on demonstration from MRC member Troy McKelvey on how to assemble and place a crab pot.

San Juan MRC – Karin Roemers-Klevin

- Dock talks are well underway for the summer. Our interns are connecting with boaters about best practices to lessen their impact on marine habitats, passing out whale warning flags, and providing resources for a safe boating experience.
- Plastic Free Salish Sea is celebrating Plastic Free July with a social media campaign on Facebook and Instagram to share ideas for how to cut down on single use plastics and educate about plastic recycling.
- The MRC is helping plan and support the San Juan Local Integrating Organization for a local forum with the Puget Sound Partnership Leadership Council in late August. Several MRC members will offer their subject matter expertise through presentations or conversations on a boat tour to see some of the key issues faced in San Juan waters.

Skagit MRC – Pete Haase

- MRC Member and former Project Lead of the Salish Sea Stewards, Darla Gay Smith received special recognition from the Skagit MRC for her countless contributions in building a successful Salish Sea Stewards training program.
- Bowman Bay Beach Seining stats from January 2024 – June 2025 we captured a total of 3,935 fish representing 23 unique species. In June we caught 2 Chinook and a big striped surf perch (have only ever caught a couple of these)



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- This year approximately 5,600 juvenile pinto abalone were outplanted at 8 sites in Skagit including 3 brand new sites.

Snohomish MRC – Tim Ellis

- Two MRC members conducted crabber outreach on July 5 and 6 and spoke with 122 crabbers at the Port of Everett.
- The marine vegetation subcommittee is working to plan an outreach event focused on the kelp and eelgrass of Mukilteo and Hat Island. The event will be held on September 10 at the Rose Hill Community Center in Mukilteo.

Whatcom MRC – Rick Beauregard

- Applications for Whatcom County's Vessel Turn-In event closed on July 15, with vessel turn in and recycling starting on July 28. A media day will be held on site for the project team, invited media, and elected officials on August 6.
- The first bull kelp monitoring survey will occur at Aiston Preserve on July 25. Surveys at Cherry Point, Southwest Lummi Island, and Point Whitehorn will occur in August.
- The Whatcom MRC needs a Chair, and has two vacancies, both for recreation interest positions.

Project Updates

European Green Crab Update: Allie Simpson provided an update on European Green Crab management in Drayton Harbor and Samish Bay. In Drayton Harbor, 381 green crabs were caught out of 1,800 traps that were set. Staff work closely with WA Dept. Of Fish & Wildlife as well as partners from other organizations including US Fish and Wildlife to trap Drayton Harbor. Most green crabs are captured from the "Pillars" site and mouth of Dakota Creek.

Commissioner Updates

Puget Sound Partnership: The Partnership is in the process of executing their new funding agreement with US Environmental Protection Agency. This agreement includes funds that support the NW Straits Commission, including support that routes on to the MRCs. The Partnership is still operating under a state spending freeze on contracts, hiring and travel, and they expect that to continue for the foreseeable future. The Leadership Council will meet in San Juan on August 20-21. The 2026-2030 Draft Action Agenda is now in the first steps of Tribal review.

Public Comment and Partner Updates

There was no public comment.



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August 29, 2025, 10:00 AM- 12:00 PM
Virtual Zoom Meeting
Northwest Straits Commission meeting

Attendees

Commission Members: Alan Clark (Clallam – Chair), Jamie Stephens (Vice Chair), Tim Ellis (Snohomish), Jeff Taylor (Jefferson), Ken Collins (Island), Lynne Wenberg (Skagit), Elsa Schwartz, Christina Koons (San Juan), Emily Grason, Rick Beauregard (Whatcom), Jason Lim (Puget Sound Partnership)

Commission Staff: Caitlyn Blair, Allie Simpson, Leah Skare, Sasha Horst, Jeff Whitty, Jessica Owens

Absent: Cecilia Gobin (NW Indian Fisheries Commission)

Welcome and Introductions

Alan opened the meeting with the Tribal acknowledgement and introductions.

The Commission approved the July meeting minutes by consensus.

Committee Updates

Executive Committee: The Committee discussed fundraising guidelines, the MRC Full Potential conference session, and recommended the 2026 NW Straits Commission meeting dates be brought to the NW Straits Commission for approval.

External Relations Committee: The Committee shared the NOAA award for fiscal year 2024 was approved. U.S. Representative Rick Larsen held several site visits in the region during the August Congressional recess, with San Juan and Snohomish MRCs hosting at project sites. The NW Straits reauthorization bill is still pending in this session of Congress. After committee markup the House and Senate versions are slightly different and would require reconciliation if passed.

Science Advisory Committee: The August Committee meeting was cancelled; however, the Committee has been in conversation about their role in the 2025 MRC Conference.

Conference Updates

Conference Registration is Live: Registration for the 2025 MRC Conference is live, check your email to register! Please visit the [website](#) for information on registration, hotels, meals, and the agenda. Please do not forward registration to anyone. Registration closes October 7!

Inviting Guests to the Conference Keynote: Conference attendees may invite a guest to attend the keynote dinner on November 7 for a small fee. Details about fees are included in the registration.



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If you are interested in bringing a guest, please fill out the information on the registration form. If you have questions, email Caitlyn Blair (info@nwstraits.org).

Conference Session: MRC Full Potential: There will be a conference session called "Reaching your MRC's Full Potential" where MRCs can share and gather successful project strategies from other MRCs and identify barriers and opportunities in reaching your MRC's full potential. MRC members are encouraged to discuss these items prior to the conference to get conversations started. This session will be highly collaborative and interactive. If you have questions, please reach out to Sasha (horst@nwstraits.org).

Conference Session: Collaborative Networking: Jessica shared the Collaborative Networking activity will include lightning round presentations on projects, then round table networking about the projects. MRC members are encouraged to share about project successes, lessons learned, and other project related material. If your MRC is interested in participating, reach out to Jessica Owens (owens@nwstraits.org). Materials are due by September 19.

Business Items

Staff gave updates on the following business items:

Draft 2026 NWSC Meeting Dates: The draft NWSC meeting schedule for 2026 was reviewed by the Commission. The dates will be brought to the September in-person meeting for final approval.

Funding and budget update: The FY24 NOAA grant has been awarded. Also in process is the funding agreement with the Puget Sound Partnership for U.S. EPA funding for the Commission. The NW Straits Commission is very appreciative of Jason Lim and other staff at the Puget Sound Partnership for their support and help securing the EPA funding. MRC staff have been informed about these budget updates.

September NW Straits Commission meeting on San Juan Island: The September NW Straits Commission meeting will be on September 26 at the San Juan Island Grange. Please visit the [website](#) for additional meeting information and stay tuned as we will send more details leading up to the meeting.

Project Updates

Whatcom Vessel Turn-in Event: The Port of Bellingham, Whatcom MRC, Whatcom County, Nooksack Indian Tribe, Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Washington State Department of Ecology, Northwest Straits Commission, and other partners hosted a free vessel turn-in recycling event, which is still underway. The event is part of DNR's vessel turn-in program to prevent derelict or abandoned boats and protect marine habitats. 29 vessels were turned in and 22 were deconstructed and recycled. The remaining boats are awaiting testing to deconstruct. The event will wrap up in the next few weeks.



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Approval of 2025-27 MRC Grant Proposals

The Commission approved the 2025-27 MRC grant proposals by consensus.

MRC Reports

Clallam MRC – Alan Clark

- The MRC has been awarded an alternative funding source through the Strait Ecosystem Recovery Network to begin in October 2025 for the Elwha Stewardship project (SaniKan and dog waste bags).
- Pinto abalone survey dives in the Port Angeles subregion and surveys of both Freshwater Bay and Clallam Bay are planned within the next month.
- Forage fish sampling was briefly paused at Elwha Beach, with guidance from WDFW, due to safety concerns following the Indian Creek fuel spill. Sampling is now safely resuming.

Island MRC – Ken Collins

- Pacific herring eggs were found at Cavalero Beach!
- Completion of three Hoypus Point and Cornet Bay stewardship events this summer.
- Shark Lady has finally been removed from Holmes Harbor!

Jefferson MRC – Jeff Taylor

- Development of Outreach and Education video for Wooden Boat Festival/future O+E events underway.
- Seaweed Pressing Workshop was held on August 8. 12 attendees met in the WSU Classroom to hear a lecture on seaweed anatomy, ecology, and regional kelp and eelgrass work. Participants then watched a seaweed pressing demo and created their own pressings.

San Juan MRC – Christina Koons

- The MRC was well represented at the San Juan County Fair through an informational booth and a Litter Critter Lab hosted by Plastic Free Salish Sea. It was a great way to engage the public in our work and share the message of marine resource protection and restoration.
- San Juan MRC is recruiting for a youth position to join the committee. In early August the County Council approved and enthusiastically supported adding up to two youth positions on the committee to hear from young people about their concerns and ideas to support valuable marine resources, habitats and all those who enjoy them.
- Recent connections with state leadership include a site visit from Rep. Rick Larsen and NWSC Governor's appointee Jamie Stephens to view progress of the Jackson Beach restoration and MRC participation at the San Juan Local Forum for Puget Sound Partnership Leadership Council.

Skagit MRC – Lynne Wenberg



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- Nearshore Assessment and Priorities ([NEAP Story Map](#)) and [NEAP Tool](#) now available on the Skagit MRC website and the new SoundIQ! A video tutorial will be available soon.
- Two recent articles about native oyster restoration including interviews with Skagit MRC member Paul Dinnel about our oyster restoration work in Fidalgo Bay. Paul is also working with University of Washington students to measure the diversity of marine critters in native oyster restoration areas compared to areas with no oysters at various locations in Puget Sound.

Snohomish MRC – Tim Ellis

- The marine vegetation subcommittee is working to plan an outreach event focused on the kelp and eelgrass of Mukilteo and Hat Island. The event will be held on September 10 at the Rose Hill Community Center in Mukilteo.
- Cali, the Marine Ecology Intern, has created a few Instagram reels of our kelp monitoring that have been shared on the NW Straits Instagram. Check them out!

Whatcom MRC – Rick Beauregard

- The MRC completed kelp surveys at Aiston Preserve on August 8, Cherry Point/Gulf Rd. and SW Lummi Island on August 9th and Point Whitehorn on August 22.
- The MRC will be tabling at upcoming outreach events including Run with the Chums (part of Whatcom Water Week) on September 13th and Bellingham SeaFeast on September 27.

Commissioner Updates

Puget Sound Partnership: Jason Lim shared that due to uncertainties at the federal level, the spending and hiring freeze will continue indefinitely. The governor's leadership team has wrapped up the interviewing process for the executive director position. They will hopefully have the position filled soon.

Public Comment and Partner Updates

There was no public comment.



Minutes

September 26, 2025, 10:30 AM- 3:00 PM
Northwest Straits Commission meeting

Attendees

Commission Members: Alan Clark (Clallam – Chair), Jamie Stephens (Vice Chair), Mike MacKay (Whatcom – Alternate), Elsa Schwartz, Lynne Wenberg (Skagit), Jeff Taylor (Jefferson), Emily Grason, Tim Ellis (Snohomish), Kirk Larsen (Island – Alternate)

Commission Staff: Jeff Whitty, Caitlyn Blair, Sasha Horst, Lucas Hart, Allie Simpson

Others in Attendance: Dr. Frances Robertson, Katherine Dietzman, Councilmember Jane Fuller, Sam Whitridge

Absent: Christina Koons (San Juan), Cecilia Gobin, Puget Sound Partnership representative

Welcome and Jackson Beach Site Visit

Commissioners arrived at Jackson Beach for the San Juan MRC site visit. Alan opened the meeting with the tribal acknowledgement.

Jackson Beach Restoration Site

Dr. Frances Robertson and Sam Whitridge presented on the removal of the creosote pilings at Jackson Beach. In 2023, the MRC received funding from the NW Straits Commission through NOAA and the Puget Sound Partnership's Nearshore Conservation Credit Program to remove the derelict creosote pilings of a former gravel production operation. The remaining piles were a significant source of contamination to the marine environment. The pilings were removed to improve water quality and conditions for eelgrass habitat, as well as to reduce toxins to forage fish and promote habitat for rearing juvenile salmon. For more information about this project, visit the project page on the [San Juan MRC website](#).

Reconvene

Jamie Stephens, vice chair, reconvened the Commission at the San Juan Grange to conduct the remainder of the meeting.

Remarks from San Juan County Councilmember Jane Fuller

Councilmember Jane Fuller shared remarks about her work in San Juan County and the County's role in establishing the first MRC, which became a model for the other NW Straits MRCs.

1 Boat, 2 Boat, 3 Boat, 4... Understanding Vessel Presence and Use in San Juan County

Dr. Frances Robertson presented the MRC's work conducting aerial surveys of areas that have high boater density in the San Juan Islands in order to monitor eelgrass beds. The results of the project will be used to compare areas of high vessel density with sensitive and culturally



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important marine habitats, such as eelgrass meadows, forage fish spawning habitats, and shellfish beds. For more information on this project, please visit the San Juan MRC eelgrass protection and vessel monitoring [webpage](#).

Approval of the NW Straits Commission August Meeting Minutes

The Commission approved the August meeting minutes by consensus.

MRC Reports

Clallam MRC – Alan Clark

- Chase O'Neil onboarded as the new MRC Project Coordinator and Habitat Biologist II for Clallam County.
Pinto abalone survey dives took place in mid-September in the Port Angeles subregion. Some abalone were found and one site was identified for potential out planting in the future.

Island MRC – Kirk Larsen

- Completion of three Hoypus Point and Cornet Bay stewardship events this summer.
- New interest by Island County community members in MRC participation!

Jefferson MRC – Jeff Taylor

- 2025 Wooden Boat Festival Marine Science and Stewardship Stage and tabling booth were a big success!
 - 1404 visitors over 3 days to the stage, and 285 visitors to the booth
 - 19 presentations, discussing puffins, pinto abalone, shellfish health, oyster restoration, kelp, impacts of the Elwha River dam removal, plankton and much more!
 - 3 days of a hands-on plankton microscope activity
 - Development of an MRC promo video, to show between presentations and at future tabling events
- Project leads submitted draft Summary Reports for SEANWS-2023 projects and are being finalized by the Coordinator.

San Juan MRC – Sam Whitridge

- The MRC has been advising San Juan County Council on the OPALCO Tidal Energy Pilot Proposal and is preparing a comment letter for County Council to submit prior to the Sept 30th deadline.
- San Juan MRC held interviews in early September for youth position to join the committee. The interview subcommittee plans to make a recommendation to the full MRC at our October meeting.



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- The Great Island Cleanup is scheduled for Saturday, October 4th.

Skagit MRC – Lynne Wenberg

- Nearshore assessment and Priorities (NEAP) Tool 'How-To' Video is now available on Sound IQ and the Skagit MRC website!
- Fidalgo Bay Day took place Saturday, September 13 at the Fidalgo Bay Resort in Anacortes.
- Salish Sea Stewards volunteer Jenn Dumas did an outstanding job coordinating the event this year. We estimated around 325 attendees, 11 businesses, 50 volunteers, 33 outreach booths, 28 passport stations, 162 passports distributed, and 106 passports completed. MRC member and City of Anacortes Council Member Carolyn Moulton and Coast Salish elder, Rosie Cayou James kicked off the event with a warm welcome. Event highlights included a beach seining demo, Shannon Point Marine Center touch tank, educational booths and passport stations, complimentary samples of seafood, kids craft activities, and Corra the Selkie.

Snohomish MRC – Tim Ellis

- A successful outreach event was held on September 10 at the Rose Hill Community Center in Mukilteo. Over 80 members of the public were in attendance and learned about kelp and eelgrass in their local communities.
- MRC members Phil Salditt and Julie Schlenger presented about the MRC and it's work to the Port of Edmonds on Sep 8.

Whatcom MRC – Mike MacKay

- The MRC will be tabling at upcoming outreach events including Run with the Chums (part of Whatcom Water Week) on September 13th and Bellingham SeaFeast on September 27th.
- There are two vacancies on the MRC, each representing a 'Recreational' Interest.
- Mark Fairhart has stepped up to be the MRC Chair.

Update from NW Straits Commission Director

Lucas Hart shared some highlights from the year, including completion of the NW Straits Commission strategic plan, the creation of a supporting implementation plan, strategic plan outreach materials, advancements in the federal NW Straits reauthorization bill, and completing a draft Ecology-NWSC MOU.

The Commission also created a fundraising guidance document for MRCs to consult when considering engaging in fundraising. The guidance will be shared with the NWS Foundation for



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awareness. It can also be used when working with other organizations or counties when considering joint-participation in events where funds will be solicited.

Lucas shared that the funding agreements with NOAA and EPA have been signed and contracts with counties are moving forward as originally planned.

Committee Updates

External Relations: The Committee met to discuss formalizing roles, strategies for federal and state funding, as well as how the Committee will assist in moving strategic plan actions forward. The Committee briefly touched on the draft Ecology/NW Straits Commission Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and possible invitations to elected officials to the annual conference.

Executive Committee: The Committee discussed the nominee for the Environmental Leadership award. This is the first year the Committee will serve as the nomination body for this award. The Committee also discussed adding the NW Straits Commission logo to the Orca Taskforce Website. They recommended this topic be brought to the Commission for discussion. Additionally, the Committee discussed the idea of creating talking points that describe how the Commission, MRCs, and Foundation work together, which will require further conversation.

Science Advisory Committee: Ron Thom will be stepping down from the Science Advisory Committee. The Committee appreciates his many years of service to the Commission and the Committee.

Business Items

Strategic Plan Launch: Staff shared a video by Jessica Owens about the strategic plan launch that was posted on NW Straits Commission social media pages.

Approval of the 2026 NWSC Meeting Dates: The Commission approved the 2026 meeting dates by consensus.

Conference: Reminders and Registration: The MRC Conference will be at Maple Hall in La Conner, Skagit County on November 7th and 8th. Registration for the annual conference closes on October 7th, please reach out to Caitlyn (info@nwstraits.org) if you are unsure if you registered, need the registration link, or have general questions about the conference. Additionally, if you are interested in submitting artwork for the digital art slideshow, please contact (info@nwstraits.org) or visit the [website](#).

NWSC Logo on Orca Taskforce Website: Jeff shared his discussion with Orca Recovery Coordinator, Tara Galuska, about utilizing the NW Straits Commission logo on the Orca Taskforce website. The Commission recognizes the importance of our support and discussed the development of a statement that clarifies our role in orca recovery. The Commission approved



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adding the logo to the orca task force website with the caveat that a statement be written to describe our role in orca recovery.

Project Updates

Kayak Monitoring: Jeff shared that MRC volunteer kayakers completed all bull kelp surveys for 2025. A big thank you goes out to all their hard work. Staff have been busy working to prepare MRC data for partners to include in the WA Floating Kelp Indicator and other research.

European Green Crab: Land-based trapping efforts in Samish Bay and Drayton Harbor have ended for the season. Staff are collaborating with WA Dept. of Natural Resources and WA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife to conduct boat-based trapping efforts in Samish Bay and Drayton Harbor. Staff participated in Fidalgo Bay Day, hosting a green crab focused booth highlighting how to identify green crabs and best public reporting mechanisms.

No-Anchor Zone and Anchor Out Campaign: NW Straits Commission staff are working with partners in Washington and British Columbia to create a map that indicates high-priority areas for anchoring out of eelgrass. For more information visit anchorout.org.

Communications Plan Overview

Staff shared that the communications plan is due for an update, and Jessica is working to convene an ad hoc committee or workgroup that will review the existing communications plan, align communications with the strategic plan, and provide recommendations for an updated communications plan.

The Commission discussed three questions:

- How will improved communications help us meet goals or address gaps?
- What does success look like (outcomes, priorities, impact)?
- What type of feedback does the Commission need to feel confident the process is moving in the right direction with the ad hoc committee?

NW Straits Commissioner Updates

Sasha recently talked with Jason Lim and shared that the application period has closed for the Puget Sound Partnership's Executive Director position. A panel is reviewing applications.



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December 12, 2025, 10:00 AM- 12:00 PM
Virtual Zoom Meeting
Northwest Straits Commission meeting

Attendees

Commission Members: Christina Koons (San Juan), Tim Ellis (Snohomish), Alan Clark (Clallam – chair), Lynne Wenberg (Skagit), Rick Beauregard (Whatcom), Elsa Schwartz, Jamie Stephens, Jason Lim (Puget Sound Partnership – alternate), Emily Grason, Ken Collins (Island), Jeff Taylor (Jefferson)

Commission Staff: Lucas Hart, Leah Skare, Sasha Horst, Jessica Owens, Jeff Whitty

Absent: Cecilia Gobin, Jeff Taylor

Others attending: Amelia Kalagher (Clallam), Erik Young

Welcome and Introductions

The Chair, Alan Clark, opened the meeting with the Tribal acknowledgement and introductions.

The Commission approved the September meeting minutes as written by consensus.

Committee Updates

Executive Committee: Jamie updated the group about the November Committee meeting where the group had a debrief on the conference, budget planning, and a letter of support to be discussed later in the agenda.

External Relations Committee: Elsa Schwartz reported on attending Puget Sound Day on the Sound and noted that the reauthorization bill is still pending in the current session of Congress in the hope that there may be a bill to attach to that will pass.

Science Advisory Committee (SAC): Emily Grason shared a summary of the Committee meeting earlier in the week, which included debriefing 2025 committee activities. The committee completed MRC proposal review and feedback as well as individual project consultations. They are looking forward to future opportunities for connecting with MRCs by piloting consultations outside of the proposal process. They are interested in feedback from MRCs to gauge interest. They also debriefed on the MRC conference and dug into planning for a 2026 SAC-hosted workshop. They are planning to bring back Speed Dates with a Scientist in 2026 as well, so anyone with ideas for timely or emerging themes please reach out to Emily.

Business Items

Staff gave updates on the following business items:



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Conference Debrief: Staff reported that 101 attendees joined us for the 2025 MRC Conference in La Conner at Maple Hall. Thanks to everyone who attended and made this conference possible. Staff shared a few reflections from the post-conference survey. A summary from the Reaching your MRC's Full Potential session will be compiled and shared with MRCs soon. Suggestions, ideas, and recommendations from the post-event survey have been collected and will be considered in the planning process for the 2026 conference and other purposes.

2026 NW Straits Commission meeting dates: The first meeting of 2026 will be January 30 at Padilla Bay Reserve. MRCs representatives in counties where there will be an in-person meeting this year are encouraged to get it on their calendar to consider whether they would like to present anything. Caitlyn will be in contact in advance to coordinate agenda plans and logistics. She will also send calendar invitations before the end of the year.

Retreat Planning: The retreat will be Thursday and Friday April 2-3, 2026, at Elsa's house on Camano Island. Caitlyn will send the calendar invitation soon and will be in contact with Commission members and MRC staff in the new year to begin on logistical plans and retreat content input.

Budget Update: Sasha shared an update on the status of the NOAA FY23 Congressionally Directed Spending award, which has funding remaining to be spent in 2026 before it expires. Commission staff will work with the Executive Committee to bring forward a proposal to the full Commission in early 2026 on how to redistribute funds to MRCs with identified needs.

Approve NWSC Rules of Procedure: Lucas introduced the topic and summarized the changes. A draft with tracked changes was provided in the meeting materials for review.

During discussion it was noted that there is an increased number to meet quorum requirements and that the even number may result in a tie. This scenario was discussed by the Executive Committee, but it was determined that in such a situation the Commission would table the decision for more discussion. Another question was related to the funding policy, and staff confirmed that the language in that was previously approved by the Commission and included in the Request for Proposals for MRCs and is now being incorporated in the rules of procedure through this version.

The Commission moved and approved the revised rules of procedure by consensus.

Marine, Economic, and Research Institute for Sustainability (MERIS) Letter of Support: The Commission moved and approved the proposed letter of support by consensus.



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Project Updates

No-Anchor Zone Report Out: Jessica presented information on the phase two activities from the social marketing campaign.

Campaign goals: raising boater awareness about eelgrass and eelgrass zones, driving traffic to the www.anchorout.org informational website, and engaging partners to amplify reach.

Actions: protection measures, messaging/branding, and goals/actions. The campaign had targeted communication and visual tools to keep anchors out of eelgrass.

Campaign reach: Analytics from trackable messaging tools (social media posts, digital ads, website traffic), as well as reflections about the work of the past year, and next steps for 2026.

Evaluate the behavior change: partners are tracking that. We may not have good metrics on pre-but we can do post-. We are monitoring compliance. Can check later when there is a lull in the campaign and then a re-start.

MRC Reports

Full written reports from the MRCs are available in the meeting materials on our website.

Clallam MRC – Alan Clark

- Five members and two staff attended the Northwest Straits Commission's annual MRC conference on November 7-8.
- At the regular monthly meeting November 17, Clallam County Director of Community Development Bruce Emery presented on the County Comprehensive Plan update.

Island MRC – Ken Collins

- Many Island MRC members attended the MRC Conference where they were able to educate and inform other MRCs on their Shoreline Armoring Analysis and Report!
- Thanks to Scott Chase and Barbara Bennett as long-term members who are completing their time on the MRC.

Jefferson MRC – Jeff Taylor

- An ad hoc subcommittee is drafting an advisory letter to the Board of County Commissioners in support of WA Department of Natural Resources' Dabob Bay Natural Area Land Trust transfer.
- Akeykla Behrenfeld resigned as the Youth Local representative.

San Juan MRC – Christina Koons

- Two youth members have begun working with the MRC. Lola Walker and Flora Vaught have joined the MRC as youth representatives, and we are thrilled to hear their voices.



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- MRC members and staff attended the MRC Conference in November in La Conner. It is always a wonderful event to connect with MRC members across the region and hear inspiring stories, ideas and collaborations.
- Derelict Vessel prevention efforts are underway through recently produced video about winterizing your vessel as well as a poster campaign for end-of-life planning for your boat.

Skagit MRC – Lynne Wenberg-Davidson

- **2026 Salish Sea Stewards Training** - dates have been set. Classes will be held Tuesdays, 1-5pm from February 10 through April 14. Classes will mostly be held at Padilla Bay, with some field days. Registration is open December 1, 2025 – January 31, 2026. A link to the online registration will be made available soon on the [Skagit MRC website](#).
- **La Conner School Rain Garden** - The interpretive sign has been installed. Skagit County Intern got approval from the school to purchase and plant an additional 25 native plants which will hopefully get done before the end of the month.
- **Olympia Oyster Restoration**- Paul Dinnel wrote a piece on Fidalgo Bay oyster restoration project for an upcoming shellfish exhibit at the Skagit County Historical Museum in La Conner, which will also include oyster restoration in other bays in the county.

Snohomish MRC – Tim Ellis

- The MRC 2026 workplan is finalized and will be available on the website soon.
- A few members and staff attended the Habitat Strategic Initiative Lead Bull Kelp webinar on November 18.

Whatcom MRC – Rick Beauregard

- MRC members (7) and staff attended the 2025 NWS MRC Conference in November
- Laura Hanna joined the committee representing recreational interest.

Commissioner Updates

Jason Lim reported from the Puget Sound Partnership. The Governor's team is working on hiring for the Executive Director position expects an announcement in January. A Leadership Council meeting next will be held on Wednesday, December 17 in Federal Way, and will also be available to watch on TVW.

Public Comment and Partner Updates

There was no public comment.

The next meeting of the Northwest Straits Commission will be on January 30, 2026, at Padilla Bay Reserve in Skagit County.