



## agenda

**Meeting:** Northwest Straits Commission  
**Date:** April 2, 2026  
**Time:** 10:30 AM- 11:00 AM  
**Location:** [Virtual Zoom Link](#) Meeting ID: 838 1434 6133 Passcode: 703387

*We acknowledge the lands we're on today are the ancestral and current homelands of Indigenous Nations who have stewarded them since time immemorial. We respect their sovereignty, support their Treaty rights, their right to self-determination, and we honor their sacred spiritual connection with the land and water. These Indigenous Nations include the Jamestown S'Klallam, Lower Elwha Klallam, Lummi, Makah, Nooksack, Port Gamble S'Klallam, Samish, Stillaguamish, Swinomish, and Tulalip Tribes.*

### Documents for NW Straits Commission Review:

DRAFT February meeting minutes  
MRC Project Proposals  
NW Straits Commission acknowledgement

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10:30 – 10:35 AM	<b>Welcome and introductions</b> Tribal acknowledgement February meeting minutes approval	Alan Clark, Chair
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10:35 – 10:45 AM	<b>Business Items</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>NW Straits Commission acknowledgement language</li></ul>	Lucas
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*NW Straits Commission provides coordination, technical expertise, and financial support to seven county based Marine Resources Committees (MRCs). The NW Straits Commission amplifies and supports MRC-led work by connecting local priorities to broader regional efforts. Together, we work to protect and restore our local marine habitats and species.*

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10:45 – 10:55 AM	<b>MRC Project Proposal review and approval</b>	
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10:55 – 11:00 AM	<b>Public Comment</b>	
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11:00 AM	<b>Adjourn</b>	
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*The next regularly scheduled NW Straits Commission meeting will be a virtual meeting on Friday, April 24, 2026. Please see the [NWSC Events page](#) for more information about our meetings.*



# Minutes

February 27, 2026, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM  
Northwest Straits Commission meeting

## Attendees

**Commission Members:** Alan Clark (Clallam – Chair), Jamie Stephens (Vice Chair), Rick Beauregard (Whatcom), Elsa Schwartz, Lynne Wenberg (Skagit), Sarah Fisker (Jefferson - Alternate), Emily Grason, Phil Salditt (Snohomish), Ken Collins (Island), Jason Lim (Puget Sound Partnership)

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

**Others in Attendance:**

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

## Welcome and Tribal Acknowledgement

Alan Clark opened the meeting with introductions and the Tribal Acknowledgement.

The January 2026 meeting minutes were approved by consensus.

## Committee Updates

**Executive Committee:** Jessica Owens shared the communications planning process and updates. Caitlyn Blair shared the overview of the spring retreat agenda and logistics.

The Executive Committee considered guidance that directs MRCs and partners on how to acknowledge the NWSC in communications. This includes use of the NWSC logo in acknowledgements, while pausing the use of the NWSI logo. The Committee recommended this approach to the Commission. The Commission approved by consensus.

**External Relations:** Lucas, Jamie, Alan, Elsa met with legislators in Olympia to share about NWSC and MRC projects and results.

**Science Advisory Committee:** Emily shared that Jason Toft is the newest member of the Science Advisory Committee. To read more about Jason and his work, please visit this webpage: [Jason Toft | Freshwater Initiative](#) or [About – Wetland Ecosystem Team](#). The Committee is also working on a workshop for the MRC Conference on November 6 before the conference. There will be questions regarding the workshop on the pre-conference survey scheduled to go out in early March. The Committee is excited to offer the next iteration of MRC/SAC project consultations. They have been rebranded and each MRC can request up to two Collaborative Sessions with members of the SAC. These offerings are meant to be available to support your MRC in a wider phase of project life cycles. Further details and timelines were included in a memo sent out this



# Minutes

month to MRC staff, Chairs, Vice Chairs, and MRC Commission Reps to discuss with your MRCs. If you have questions, please contact Dana Oster ([oster@nwstraits.org](mailto:oster@nwstraits.org)).

## **Business Items**

**Baseline Awareness Survey:** Jessica reminded everyone to take the survey that was sent out to all MRC members, MRC staff, and members of the Commission.

**Skagit MRC project approval:** Sasha reminded the Commission that each MRC was offered an opportunity to receive an additional \$20,000 from the fiscal year 2023 NOAA funding. Skagit MRC proposed a project to use \$1,000 for an existing intertidal monitoring project. The Commission approved this project by consensus. Lynne abstained.

More MRC project proposals will be brought to the Commission for consensus at a later date related to the additional funding.

**NW Straits Commission 101:** Commission staff has scheduled two separate webinar presentations of Northwest Straits Commission 101 to orient new MRC members to the Commission, remind current MRC members of the Commission structure and function and share information with other interested individuals. The meetings are scheduled for March 19 and April 8. Anyone interested can attend; no registration is required.

- March 19, 2:00-3:30pm: [Zoom Link](#), Meeting ID: 848 4786 4722, Passcode: 248150
- April 8, 11:00am-12:30pm: [Zoom Link](#), Meeting ID: 844 5765 9244, Passcode: 542246

**Announcement from Caitlyn Blair:** After three years as the Program Coordinator at the NW Straits Commission, Caitlyn Blair is departing from her position to pursue a new career opportunity. She has greatly appreciated all the support and learning during her time with all the MRC staff, volunteers, NW Straits Commission staff and members, and partners. It's been a joyful and exciting time, and she will miss everyone!

## **Project Updates**

Commission staff shared an update on the European green crab regional project and results from the 2025 trapping season in Drayton Harbor and Samish Bay. Ongoing monitoring and removal of green crabs in these hotspots is a collaborative effort that will continue in 2026. Statewide results from various other trapping partners can be viewed on [WDFW's EGC Hub](#), [2025 blog](#), or WA Sea Grant's [2025 Salish Sea Green Crab Summary](#).



# Minutes

## MRC Reports

### **Clallam MRC** – Alan Clark

- Guest speaker Dr. Chris Bassett presented at the MRC's January meeting, discussing his work on the interactions between animals and a small tidal turbine.
- The MRC established an education & outreach subcommittee with three members, with the main goal of developing interactive new displays.

### **Island MRC** – Ken Collins

- The MRC has welcomed three new members: Brad Thompson, Marena Salerno Collins, and Fran Horvath!
- The Island County MRC attended the annual Sound Waters University on February 7. In coordination with Sound Waters Stewards and WSU – Island Count Extension, the IC MRC presented the Jan Holmes Coastal Volunteer of the Year Award to long-time volunteer, Mary Jo Adams.

### **Jefferson MRC** – Sarah Fisken

- In March, two new members will start – Odhran Waggoner (Local Youth) and Bella Ferland (Local Youth Alternate).
- Two Janette Mestre resigned in February 2026. This has put the Forage fish – Fort Worden project on pause, and the MRC will reevaluate project goals for the Rain Garden project.

### **San Juan MRC** – Read from written report

- The results of benthic habitat mapping were shared out with the MRC, helping fill in data gaps in Lopez Sound. Better understanding of the seafloor can give into habitat features like eelgrass meadows and anthropogenic impacts like anchor scarring, cable crossing and derelict fishing gear. We now have a more complete picture of what is happening in specific locations.
- MRC Youth Rep Lola Walker helped out at the Seattle Boat show, sharing the message of Be Whale Wise and passing out whale warning flags to boaters.

### **Skagit MRC** – Lynne Wenberg

- We are pleased to welcome our newest MRC member, Aaron Esterholt, City of Anacortes Stormwater Manager! Aaron brings a wealth of knowledge and is eager to put his skills to use in support of Skagit MRC's mission.
- Skagit Nearshore Assessment Prioritization Tool and Sound IQ demonstration for county and city staff on February 11th followed by a discussion about the 5 High Priority Project Areas. Around 18 people were in attendance with lots of great questions and conversations.
- 2026 Salish Sea Stewards Training Program is now underway! Classes are held every Tuesday from 1-5pm at Padilla Bay, February 10 – April 14. There are still spots available!



# Minutes

Please help spread the word! The training schedule and online registration form are available on the Skagit MRC website.

## **Snohomish MRC – Phil Salditt**

- The 2026 Starlight Beach Walk had over 150 participants.
- The MRC will elect to use the additional funds from NWSC towards the NWSC derelict vessel turn-in program.

## **Whatcom MRC – Rick Beauregard**

- The MRC's vice chair, Kathy Ketteridge, resigned from the MRC (conservation/environmental seat). Two new members have joined the MRC: Paul Cline, Lummi Nation representative and Abby Neal, recreational interest.
- The MRC sent out applications for the 2026 Beach Seine with Schools events that will take place at Boulevard Park from 11-1:30pm on April 14th, May 12th, and May 22nd.
- MRC staff submitted a proposal for the Terry Husseman Coastal Protection Fund grant opportunity to support additional Olympia oyster restoration efforts in North Chuckanut Bay in partnership with the Puget Sound Restoration Fund and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

## **NW Straits Commissioner Updates**

### ***Puget Sound Partnership***

Jason Lim shared information on the proposed state budget reductions for FY27. The Legislature is still in session, but funding cuts remain for natural resource work that will have significant impacts on Puget sound and salmon restoration. The Partnership hosts a weekly update on legislative activities. Information and recordings are available online: [Puget Sound Legislative Update Call - January 9, 2026](#)

The Vital Sign indicator for [swimming beaches](#) was updated with the Department of Ecology. 2025 is the first year 95% safe swimming standards were reached. The bivalve harvest for personal use indicator has been updated, which is part of the [local food](#) indicator. The Governor's team has announced the Partnership will have an executive director; they hope to have a press release soon.

## 2026 MRC Supplemental Funding Project Proposals

Project	Description	Budget
<b>Clallam</b>		
<b>Pinto abalone</b>	Clallam MRC proposes to expand an existing pinto abalone project by purchasing juvenile abalone from Puget Sound Restoration Fund to outplant at selected locations in the Strait of Juan de Fuca in 2027. The goal of this work is to establish self-sustaining pinto abalone populations in Clallam County.	Up to \$20,000
<b>Island</b>		
<b>Derelict vessels</b>	Funding to be used for derelict vessel removal/vessel turn-in events.	\$ 18,000
<b>Kelp Monitoring</b>	Additional funding to secure insurance coverage for kelp monitoring kayakers for 2026 season. The insurance costs are new for Island this year and were not anticipated or budgeted in the original project proposal.	\$ 2,000
<b>Jefferson</b>		
<b>Derelict vessels</b>	Funding to be used for derelict vessel removal/vessel turn-in events.	\$ 20,000
<b>San Juan</b>		
<b>Derelict vessels</b>	Funding to be used for derelict vessel removal/vessel turn-in events.	\$ 20,000
<b>Skagit</b>		
<b>Intertidal Monitoring</b>	Skagit MRC will conduct summer surveys of the intertidal beach areas in and around Fidalgo Bay to detect trends and to maintain a baseline inventory of marine life. Skagit MRC will coordinate volunteers and contract for an experienced naturalist to conduct surveys for one season in summer of 2026 to avoid any gaps in data collection. With added funding the project staff can do a more thorough job of packaging the various equipment and materials for future use or use by others. With added funding the project staff can coordinate with local school to participate in a survey as able.	\$ 1,000
<b>Bowman Bay</b>	Skagit MRC proposes removal of the existing concrete boat ramp at Bowman Bay to be replaced with a gravel/cobble hand-launch boat ramp including access to the adjacent parking lot as well as removal of hard armoring and establishment of a natural beach matching existing beach slopes in Bowman Bay. The project will include adding beach nourishment and native plants along shoreline consistent with previous MRC-funded beach restoration efforts to the south. State Parks will provide design, permitting, and labor for ramp removal and beach nourishment, and the MRC will provide native plant selection and labor for shoreline planting, as well as supporting direct costs for removal and disposal of the boat ramp and application of beach nourishment.	\$ 19,000
<b>Snohomish</b>		
<b>Derelict vessels</b>	Funding to be used for derelict vessel removal/vessel turn-in events.	\$ 20,000

**Whatcom**

<b>Wildcat Cove</b>	Since 2023, Whatcom MRC has focused on reducing damage to eelgrass near the Wildcat Cove boat launch. The MRC worked with Western Washington University to conduct a series of drone surveys demonstrating damage to the eelgrass beds surrounding the boat launch, and worked with Peak Sustainability to determine key messaging strategies that would foster a voluntary reduction in boaters driving over the eelgrass. Educational posters and materials are on display at the kiosk near the boat launch and to hand out to park visitors, and in 2024-2025, NW Straits Foundation provided seasonal interns for direct contact with boat launch users. The MRC proposes supporting interns to conduct continued education and outreach during the 2026 season (June- September), targeting low tide events. The interns will engage with launch users to provide education on the importance of eelgrass habitat and encouraging best practices to reduce impacts to the eelgrass bed in Wildcat Cove.	\$ 10,100
<b>Education Kits</b>	Whatcom MRC has cultivated relationships with a robust network of organizations involved in marine recreation and conservation, but the MRC does not have the supplies or infrastructure to provide the marine education and outreach content being requested. The MRC proposes piloting a beach exploration and education program at target events in 2026. MRC members will develop 1-3 lesson plans, create a mobile beach education kit, and pilot the program. Lesson plans will focus on plankton, marine invertebrates and/or shore birding. The educational kit and lesson plan would be accessible to any MRC member to use at most beaches with a goal of expanding the programming to field trips and other local outreach and education events.	\$ 6,900
<b>Derelict vessels</b>	Unprogrammed balance for Whatcom. To be used for derelict vessel removal/vessel turn-in events.	\$ 3,000

# MRC Monthly Report

**County:** Clallam

**Month/Year:** March 2026

## Key Items for Verbal Report-Out

1	New member Brian Hilderman was appointed as the member representing the Development Community. Jon Hamilton was appointed as the alternate representing the Port Angeles City Council, replacing Navarra Carr in that role.
2	Annie Raymond, Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe shellfish biologist, gave a presentation at the monthly meeting about the status and trends of the Olympia oyster restoration project in Sequim Bay.

## Project Updates

Project title	Update for current month
Olympia oysters	The next annual population survey of Olympia oysters will likely be scheduled for late spring 2026.
Forage fish	Forage fish sampling continues at Elwha Beach, Cline Spit and Ediz Hook.
Pinto abalone	The MRC is in planning stages for pinto abalone survey dives to be conducted in April 2026.
Kelp monitoring	Planning for the 2026 kelp monitoring season has begun, with several volunteers interested at this time.
Pigeon guillemots	Planning for the 2026 pigeon guillemot monitoring season has begun, with many past season volunteers already signing on to continue for 2026.
Education – outreach cards	MRC members continued supplying local eateries and community establishments with educational outreach cards featuring information on local marine life.
Education – displays	MRC members continued developing new displays for outreach at local festivals. An education/outreach subcommittee consisting of four members has been established and held its first meeting, focused mainly on improved displays/activities for festivals.
Education – oil spill response	A HAZWOPER / oiled wildlife response training is being planned for 2026.
Elwha Beach	Clallam MRC continued to steward the beach at the mouth of the Elwha River, with sponsorship of a Sanikan and dog waste bin through a North Olympic Development Council grant and MRC alternate Dann May replenishing the dog waste bags.

## Membership & Leadership Updates (if changes occurred)

Status	Name	Role	Appointment/ Departure Date
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New	Brian Hilderman	Member representing the Development Community	3/10/26
New	Jon Hamilton	Alternate representing the City of Port Angeles	3/10/26
Departing	Navarra Carr	Alternate representing the City of Port Angeles	3/10/26

### Event & Meetings List

Name	Date(s)	Partner(s)	Link to event on MRC site	Highlight or description
Monthly meeting	3/16/26	Presenter: Annie Raymond, Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe shellfish biologist	No longer published	
Presentation to Dungeness River Management Team	4/8/26	Dungeness River Management Team	N/A	DRMT invited us to give a “what is the MRC” style presentation and updates on current projects
Monthly meeting	4/20/26	Presenter: Julia Parrish, Coastal Observation and Seabird Survey Team	<a href="#">Clallam County Marine Resources Committee</a>	

### Photos



Photographer credit(s): N/A (personal photo shared by Brian Hilderman)

# MRC Monthly Report

**County:** Island County

**Month/Year:** March 2026

## Key Items for Verbal Report-Out

1	The Island MRC held their annual strategic retreat on 3/12 at the Cornet Bay Retreat Center!
2	The Island MRC forage fish team is diligently planning their forage fish community workshop which will be held on Monday, April 27 <sup>th</sup> !

## Project Updates

Project title	Update for current month
Island County MRC Retreat	The Island County MRC hosted their annual strategic retreat on March 12 at the Cornet Bay Retreat Center in Deception Pass State Park. The retreat brought together MRC members, NWSC staff, WSU Island County Extension, Whidbey Conservation District and Sound Water Stewards partners for a day full of 2026 strategic planning and goals discussion. All attendees left the retreat ready to tackle a new project or eager for a successful 2026!
Forage fish & forage fish community workshop	<p>We have continued our year-round monitoring for forage fish eggs with teams conducting monthly monitoring at our Whidbey Island and Camano Island sites.</p> <p>IC MRC forage fish lead, Kirk Larsen, has continued planning, coordinating, and preparing for Spring's forage fish community-based research workshop. Kirk is working with fellow MRC members and community partners to coordinate the upcoming workshop and determine the agenda, invite list, and goals for its completion. The forage fish workshop will be held at the Cornet Bay Retreat Center on April 27<sup>th</sup>.</p>

## Membership & Leadership Updates (if changes occurred)

None

## Event & Meetings List

Name	Date(s)	Partner(s)	Link to event on MRC site	Highlight or description	*Promote this event Y/N
April MRC Meeting	April 7				N
April Island LIO Technical Meeting	April 16			Bi-monthly meeting of Island Local Integrating Organization partners	N
April SRTCC Meeting	April 16			Monthly meeting of salmon recovery technical & citizens committee	N
Earth Day at YMCA Fort Casey	April 18	Island County DNR	<a href="#">Earth Day Fair – Whidbey Earth &amp; Ocean Month</a>	Island MRC will be on site at YMCA Camp Casey's Earth Day celebration on Saturday, April 18 <sup>th</sup>	Y
Forage fish community workshop	April 27				Y
May MRC Meeting	May 5				N

\*May we promote this information in our newsletter/social media? Y/N

# MRC Monthly Report

**County:** Jefferson

**Month/Year:** March 2026

## Key Items for Verbal Report-Out

1	In March, two youth members joined the MRC. Odhran Waggoner (Local Youth) is interested in marine pollution, and Bella Ferland (Local Youth Alternate) is interested in forage fish.
2	On April 6, two MRC members, Emily and Neil, will present the MRC Annual Update to the Jefferson BOCC.
3	* The MRC will discuss options for the future of the rain garden project at the April 7 MRC meeting. Current capacity is likely to hire a gardener to provide regular maintenance. We also may be able to contract with Master Gardener’s (MG) to manage a silt/drainage issue at the Chetzemoka park rain garden.

*\*please note with an asterisk above any items that you do not want shared more broadly at this time.*

## Project Updates

Project title	Update for current month
Kelp kayak monitoring	Summer monitoring dates will be chosen in April. Project lead is interested in incorporating a public outreach component to monitoring events. Working with E+O subcommittee to discuss options. (same update as last month)
Forage fish - Dabob Bay (Index)	Sarah Fisker sampled March 26.
Forage fish - Quilcene Marina	Sarah Fisker sampled March 26.
Forage fish – Fort Worden	Project is on pause as of Feb 2026 (loss of project lead and unclear timeline from State Parks)(same update as last month)
Olympia Oysters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2026 Oly QAPP is in review with the NWSC.</li> <li>• Project lead and Coordinator are working on finalizing a JARPA application.</li> </ul>

Voluntary No-Anchor Zones	Coordinator received a call in February about a buoy washed up at Point Hudson. Bryan DeCaterina picked up the buoy. It will be reinstalled later this spring.
Education & Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subcommittee met 3/24 to check-in on planning for 2026 events.</li> <li>• Connectivity Fair is scheduled for March 28 10am-1pm, Searching for Seaweed April 21 12:45pm-2:45pm, Blessing of the Fleet for April 25 10am-2pm, Crabbing 101 for June 24 6pm-8pm.</li> <li>• 2026-27 E+O Outreach Plan in progress.</li> <li>• A new E+O project, focused on updating MRC outreach/advertising materials, has been proposed to NWSC.</li> </ul>
Shoreline Landowner	Nothing to report.
Rain Gardens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The MRC will discuss options for the future of the rain garden project at the April 7 MRC meeting. Current capacity is likely to hire a gardener to provide regular maintenance. We also may be able to contract with Master Gardener's (MG) to manage a silt/drainage issue at the Chetzemoka park rain garden.</li> <li>• MG volunteers conducted 3 rain garden assessments in March. The assessments measure multiple components of the garden (plant/mulch cover, soil layers, drainage). Assessments will be finalized in April. MG will purchase plants for gardens and install as needed.</li> <li>• Signage is planned to be replaced at several rain gardens.</li> </ul>

### Membership & Leadership Updates (if changes occurred)

Status (new, departing, leadership change)	Name	Role	Appointment/ Departure Date
New	Odhran Waggoner	Local Youth	March 2, 2026
New	Bella Ferland	Local Youth Alternate	March 2, 2026

### Event & Meetings List

Name	Date(s)	Partner(s)	Link to event on MRC site	Highlight or description
MRC annual presentation	4/6/2026	N/A	N/A	N/A

to the Jefferson BOCC				
Searching for Seaweed Workshop	4/21/26	WDFW	<a href="https://www.jeffersonmrc.org/meetings-events/">https://www.jeffersonmrc.org/meetings-events/</a>	Learn about different types of edible seaweeds, where to find them, how to harvest safely and sustainably, and the rules and regulations to follow to help ensure seaweed harvests into the future, along with some recipe ideas!
Crabbing 101	6/24/26	WDFW Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe	TBD	Join the Jefferson County MRC and their partners in Port Hadlock on Thursday, June 15 <sup>th</sup> for a FREE Crabbing 101 workshop!

## Other Notes

Jefferson MRC received a request from Friends of the Salish Sea to send a letter in support of the Aquatic Reserves Program, specifically for an expansion of the reserve area that primarily includes the "North shore" bull kelp beds and associated habitat. A draft letter is being written and will be reviewed at the April 7 MRC meeting.



## MRC Monthly Report

### 1. Basic Info

**County: San Juan**

**Month/Year: March 2026**

### 2. Key Items for Verbal Report-Out

**Up to 3 bullets. ~2 sentences each.**

*These will be included in Commission meeting updates and may be adapted for other communications.*

1	Save the date for the Spring Great Islands Cleanup happening on April 18, 2026. The Great Islands Cleanup brings together friends, visitors, and neighbors to remove debris from beloved beaches and roadways. Visit <a href="http://www.plasticfreesalishsea.org">http://www.plasticfreesalishsea.org</a> for information about how to get involved.
2 *	*The MRC acted in its advisory role by writing a letter to County Council regarding the decision to cancel the Jackson Beach restoration project without public process or MRC input. The letter was well received, and MRC members were invited to provide further input to the council. Chair Adam Parrot, Olivia Graham and Flora Vaught spoke about their concerns around the lack of public process and leaning on local resource experts, like the MRC.
3	We are beginning to plan for summertime outreach with upcoming events like the UW Friday Harbor Labs Open House, opening day for the boating season, and dock talks. Having a presence at local events and being out in the community helps raise awareness around San Juan MRC's key issues like derelict vessel prevention, eelgrass protection, and the marine stewardship area. These opportunities are important avenues to engage the public, recruit new members, and share stories of MRC advisory actions.

**\*please** note with an asterisk above any items that you do not want shared more broadly at this time.

### 3. Project Updates

What happened during this specific month, highlights, what’s next, and any connection to reaching broader communities. Include dates, partners, participants, volunteers, data collect, results and quotes if relevant. Your highlight may be featured in our newsletter or social media. Please note: you do not need to include all of these items every month, this is a reminder that including highlights that will make it easier to amplify MRC work in the NW Straits newsletters and social media.

Project title	Update for current month
Plastic Free Salish Sea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth Reps to the San Juan MRC, Lola Walker and Flora Vaught, joined the Friday Harbor High School Eco Club on their trip to Olympia to advocate for bills that would help reduce plastic impacts on marine waters. HB 1607, known as the bottle bill would extend producer responsibility to create a \$.10 refund for returned bottles and cans. HB 2233 would eliminate plastic bags across the state for grocery stores and take out foods. Students met with Reps. Debra Lekanoff and Alex Rammel and Sen. Liz Lovelett to express their support for these important pieces of legislation. While neither ended up passing during this session, it was great to see young people taking a stand for a better future for our environment.</li> </ul>
Derelict Vessel Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The derelict vessel subcommittee will meet in early April to discuss a variety of emerging issues including: DV legislation updates, abandoned small boats, kayaks, paddleboards, etc. in the nearshore, patrol opportunities, outreach and summer actions, community volunteers, partnerships, and concerns affecting live abords and boat hoarding.</li> </ul>
Marine Stewardship Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*With the County PA refusing to sign the NOAA grant agreement focused on MSA outreach, alternative and creative solutions are still being investigated.</li> <li>Dock talks scheduling for summer is underway. Boating outreach including oil spill prevention, eelgrass information and passing out whale warning flags has been an ongoing effort for the MRC and will remain a priority throughout the busy boating season.</li> </ul>

\*please note with an asterisk above any items that you do not want shared more broadly at this time.

### 4. Membership & Leadership Updates (if changes occurred)

Status (new, departing, leadership change)	Name	Role	Appointment/ Departure Date	Contact info (if new)	Added to website?
Karin Needs to step back in duties	Matt Arata	Vice Chair	March 5, MRC meeting. Finishing out Karin’s Term through August.		Not yet
Change coming in June	Mike Ramsey	NWSC Rep	Christina’s term ends in June, Mike will		Not yet – Will write up mini tribute for Christina next month

			take over starting then		
Departing	Dave Checkley	MRC Member	June 2026		No, <b>Please do mini tribute</b>

May we feature this information in our newsletter/social media?  Yes  Not yet

< Dave Checkley of Shaw Island has been a dedicated and impactful member of the MRC since 2023. As a professor emeritus in oceanography, he’s brought deep knowledge and curiosity to the San Juan MRC. We are so grateful for his contributions, and he will be greatly missed. Dave has been active in advisory efforts to the County Council, research, bringing forward fair and excellent questions, and hosting outreach events.

## 5. Event & Meetings List

Name	Date(s)	Partner(s)	Link to event on MRC site	Highlight or description	*Promote this event Y/N
MRC Meeting	April 9	CAG & LIO	<a href="https://sjcmrc.org/meetings-events/">https://sjcmrc.org/meetings-events/</a>	Monthly MRC Meeting (reschedule due to NWSC retreat)	N
Great Islands Cleanup	Saturday, April 18th	SJC Dept. of Environmental Stewardship, Lopez Solid Waste, Orcas Recycling Service, Lautenbach Recycling, Friends of the San Juans, the Stewardship Network	<a href="http://www.plasticfreesalishsea.org/events">www.plasticfreesalishsea.org/events</a>	When islanders work together, small actions add up to big impact. This spring, the community is invited to take part in the 2026 Spring Great Islands Clean-Up on Saturday, April 18. Each year, hundreds of volunteers come together to care for the places we love. Every piece of litter removed helps keep plastics out of local waterways, protects wildlife, and keeps shorelines healthy for future generations. “The health of the Salish Sea depends on all of us,” says Katie Johnson, Marine Project Coordinator for San Juan County. “When our community shows up, we can make a real difference. Every volunteer and every piece of trash collected helps protect the wildlife, waters, and shorelines that define life in the San Juan Islands.”	Y

Salmon Recovery Site Visits	April 29-30, 2026	CAG & TAG	<a href="https://sjcmrc.org/meetings-events/">https://sjcmrc.org/meetings-events/</a>	The MRC's advisory role extends into helping score potential salmon recovery projects for their socio-economic value in San Juan County. The MRC is invited to join project sponsors and the technical advisory committee (TAG) for site visits to look at proposed projects and ask questions.	N
Friday Harbor Labs Open House	May 2	UW FHL	<a href="https://fhl.uw.edu/about/news-and-events/2025/03/14/open-house-2025/">https://fhl.uw.edu/about/news-and-events/2025/03/14/open-house-2025/</a>	The MRC hosts a booth at the Friday Harbor Labs Open House event annually. It is a great chance to engage with the community about our work, enjoy scientific lectures, watch a dive demonstration and view the research labs.	Y

\*May we promote this information in our newsletter/social media? Y/N

## 6. Other Notes

Optional section for any other notes, such as local issues, advisory actions, questions for the Commission, etc.

The MRC has written a letter to County Council regarding the lack of public process and disregard for advisory committee input for the Jackson Beach restoration project. They have asked Council for time on the agenda at the March 23 meeting to ask for council to reconsider the restoration and complete a public process. The advisory role of the MRC is crucial in making the voices of the public heard. MRC Chair Adam Parrot, member Dr. Olivia Graham, and Youth Rep Flora Vaught urged the council in a convincing way and their messages were heard. It was a great example of democracy in action and reinforcing the importance of bottom-up approach of the MRCs.

## 7. Photos

*Please embed photos in the WordDoc, **also attach your best photos full resolution in the email when you submit your report.***

Great Islands Cleanup



**Saturday**  
**April 18, 2026**

**10am - 2pm**

#GICU2026

THE GREAT ISLANDS CLEANUP

**Our Power.**

**Our Planet.**



Project name(s): PFSS – Save the date ofr the Spring Great Islands Cleanup

Photographer credit(s): Heather Wallace

Approved for use in communications?  Yes

# W

FRIDAY HARBOR LABS  
**OPEN HOUSE**  
**SATURDAY**  
**MAY 3, 2025**  
**11:00 - 4:00**



**620 UNIVERSITY ROAD**

- VISIT OUR RESEARCH LABS
- WATCH SCUBA DEMONSTRATIONS
- HOP ABOARD OUR RESEARCH VESSEL
- CATCH PLANKTON
- ENJOY SCIENTIFIC LECTURES
- OPEN TO THE PUBLIC, BRING THE WHOLE FAMILY! KID FRIENDLY & FREE
- LIVE MUSIC - MARIMBA KUBATANA & MORE

*FOOD AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE FROM*



Project name(s): Outreach & Education - San Juan MRC will be at FHL open house

Photographer credit(s): UW FHL

Approved for use in communications?  Yes



Project name(s): PFSS - Lola Walker and Flora Vaught visited lawmakers in Olympia to advocate for reduced and responsible plastic use (HB 1607, HB 2233).

Photographer credit(s): Katie Fleming

Approved for use in communications?  Yes



Project name(s): Advisory Role - MRC members showed up to County Council to advocate for public process for Jackson Beach restoration

Photographer credit(s): Katie Fleming

Approved for use in communications?  Yes

# MRC Monthly Report

**County:** Skagit

**Month/Year:** March/2026

## Key Items for Verbal Report-Out

1	We are currently in the multi-step process of updating Skagit MRC's 5-Year Strategic Plan. We kicked it off with an in-person brainstorming session facilitated by Dana Oster on March 12.
2	Jason Morgan produced a map of target locations for side-scan sonar and derelict gear removal in Skagit Bay based on Swinomish and Skagit MRC recommendations equivalent to 20 square kilometers. Island MRC is in the process of reviewing and concurring with locations in their county.

## Project Updates

Salish Sea Stewards	The Salish Sea Stewards training program for 2026 is halfway over! The number of students has gone up and down, but the official count is 16. The students have diverse backgrounds and are enthusiastic about the program and presentations. Class topics covered so far include: NWSC and MRC overview, estuaries, tribal treaty rights, Samish and Swinomish natural resources projects and programs, salmon, habitat restoration, forage fish, oyster restoration, plankton, and kelp. A field trip to Washington Park and Rosario Head was originally planned for March 24 but cancelled due to high winds, heavy rain and threats of potential landslides. The SSS Advisory Committee Working Group met on March 5 <sup>th</sup> to discuss how the training is going so far and task assignments for supporting the program. The Communications Team met on February 23. This group's tasks include weekly letters to the SSS Alum, planning for volunteer recognition and organizing the shared Google Drive. The next meeting of the Salish Sea Stewards Advisory Committee Working Group is April 2nd, 2026 at 2:30. This will be another virtual meeting.
Forage Fish Surveys	Monthly surveys continue. A quiet time for surf smelt spawning this time of year. A talk and demo was given to Salish Sea Stewards class on March 3. Reorganized Bowman Bay post restoration survey sites with help of Jason Morgan of NWS Foundation in February.
Intertidal Monitoring	Intertidal Monitoring in Fidalgo Bay is planned for May 18 with Anacortes High School students helping. Preliminary planning and organizing has begun with The Salish Sea School who will be contracted to conduct it. Call for volunteer help will go out in April.

Kids on the Beach	<p>Nothing new to report this month. The spring 2026 KOTB program is as follows:</p> <p>(April 27-May 1) <b>Edison Elementary</b>: 3 classes 5<sup>th</sup> graders 65 students  (April 13-17) <b>Evergreen Elementary</b>: Sedro-Wolley: 92 6<sup>th</sup> grade students  (May 18 -22) <b>Concrete High School</b>: 90 students</p> <p>A call for volunteers will go out for help with field days as we get closer to the spring event.</p>
Kayak Bull Kelp Surveys	<p>NWSC's Spring MRC Kelp Monitoring Workgroup held March 4. Steven Olsen, Bowman Bay/Lone Tree team lead attended. Meeting minutes included registration information for free Kayak Safety Training at Bowman Bay on May 30/31 and dates for the All MRC Kick Off meeting at PBNERR on April 29. Preseason planning activities are underway for Skagit volunteers, including organizing an all-team BBQ, info sharing/recommended improvements, protocol updates and shake-down cruise planning. A Zoom meeting will be scheduled in March to review new Skagit Co volunteer liability forms and Q&amp;A session. Goal is to have all volunteer forms signed and turned into Tracy before end of April.</p>
Skagit Bay Derelict Crab Pot Removal	<p>The contract agreement with the Northwest Straits Foundation is now in place. A kick-off meeting was held March 9th with NWSF, Island MRC and Skagit MRC. Based on Swinomish and Skagit recommendations, Jason proposed a map of final target locations for side-scan sonar and derelict gear removal equal 20 square kilometres, which side-scan sonar can be accomplished over 10 days. The map is being reviewed by Island MRC. NWSF has purchased the ROV and has training from manufacturer soon. NWSF is working with Swinomish with watercraft and diver support for derelict gear removal. WDFS permits are in place for gear removals, however, additional funding anticipated to support removals has been delayed due to staff shortages. NWSF committed to using other funds if needed to remove derelict gear while awaiting WDFW funding. Side-scan sonar is expected to begin as soon as weather permits but before June when crabbing is scheduled to begin for tribes, commercial and then recreational in July.</p>
Crabber Outreach	<p>Project Lead Darla Gay Smith is working on a simpler approach to Crabber Outreach volunteering - organizing a few volunteers who have been trained on Catch More Crab to place NWSF outreach materials in sporting goods stores in the area, near crab fishing equipment &amp; license sales. Darla Gay contacted Don Valasquez-WDFW Shellfish Biologist, for advice on developing a "Target Audience" for our Crabber Ed Program.</p>
Olympia oyster Restoration	<p>Paul Dinnel gave a presentation on Olympia oyster restoration to the Salish Sea Stewards class. Working with Nicole &amp; Sylvia at the Padilla Bay Reserve to find a funding source to purchase more Pacific oyster shells that can be used for further restoration work in Padilla Bay.</p>
Pinto Abalone Restoration	<p>This past month we completed all our post-outplant surveys from juveniles outplanted in 2025. We have the usual mixed survival numbers of roughly around 5%, which we are pretty happy with. We will be starting outplants next week--Samish Indian Nation DNR will be outplanting 3</p>

	<p>sites in Skagit County this year! Two overseeded sites they established last year, and one site we are passing off to them for it's overseed this year. More Skagit sites to be outplanted in April when the Seattle Aquarium team brings their juveniles out in the field! The SPMC nursery is also progressing well--Derek got permission and funding to full epoxy coat the lab space there, so that will dramatically increase the longevity of the space and ability to keep it clean. We'll be moving abalone up to that space hopefully in early April, some those will be outplanted by SPMC students in the summer, some will be used for experiments, and some will continue to grow bigger in the hatchery until 2027!</p>
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**Membership & Leadership Updates (if changes occurred)**

None.

**Event & Meetings List**

Name	Date(s)	Link to event on MRC site	Highlight or description
Skagit MRC Monthly Meeting	April 9 (9am-11am)	<a href="#">Meetings &amp; Events</a>	Virtual Teams Meeting

# MRC Monthly Report

**County: Snohomish**

**Month/Year: March 2026**

## Key Items for Verbal Report-Out

1	Welcome to our new Stillaguamish Tribal Representative Anya Voloshin.
2	The MRC cohosted a beach clean up with WSU Beach Watchers on March 7 at Howarth Park. 14 people were in attendance and 255 lbs of trash was removed from the beach.

## Project Updates

Project title	Update for current month
NW Straits Commission funded projects	
<b>Derelict Vessel</b>	The subcommittee has completed their first grant deliverable, the derelict vessel framework. This framework will be filled in with information about each vessel in Snohomish County.
<b>Marine Vegetation Outreach</b>	The subcommittee has completed their first deliverable, a list of boater focused community groups to reach out to for this year. Additionally, the consultant is helping the subcommittee create a workback plan and timeline for conducting outreach this year.
Other projects of the MRC funded by Snohomish Co. Surface Water Management fees	
<b>Marine Vegetation Monitoring:</b>	Staff attended the kelp working group meeting on March 4. Members and staff met with NWSC staff and members from Skagit County to discuss the process of adding a new kelp monitoring site and gather information about monitoring sites near ferries.
<b>Forage Fish Monitoring</b>	Picnic Point and Meadowdale were sampled on March 19th. Howarth Park was sampled on March 21st.
<b>Outreach</b>	The subcommittee is preparing for tabling at the upcoming Edmonds Fun Fair on May 2.

## Membership & Leadership Updates (if changes occurred)

Status (new, departing, leadership change)	Name	Role	Appointment/ Departure Date
New	Anya Voloshin	Stillaguamish Tribe rep	March

## Event & Meetings List

Name	Date(s)	Partner(s)	Link to event on MRC site	Highlight or description	*Promote this event Y/N
MRC Monthly Meeting	April 15				
Beach Cleanup	June 3			Picnic Point	

# MRC Monthly Report

**County:** Whatcom

**Month/Year:** March 2026

## Key Items for Verbal Report-Out

1	The beach seine with schools field events for 2026 are scheduled from 11-1:35pm at Boulevard Park on April 14 <sup>th</sup> (Kendall Elementary School), May 12 <sup>th</sup> (Columbia Elementary School), and May 22 <sup>nd</sup> (Cordata Elementary School).
2	The MRC will be distributing Olympia oyster spat across 12 bioassays throughout 2 locations in Drayton Harbor on April 22 <sup>nd</sup> .
3	The MRC has made effort to include an educational presentation at their monthly meetings. The March meeting featured Lucy Ritter, WWU undergraduate student, who shared her fascinating research on bioluminescence in Bellingham Bay. April will feature Elaina Thompson with the Islands' Oil Spill Association to discuss their community-based response model. June will feature Tori Kauffman, Be Whale Wise Program Coordinator, The Whale Museum, to discuss the BWW program.

## Project Updates

Project Title	Update for Current Month
Beach Seine with Schools	The project subcommittee selected schools for participation in the program for 2026. The field events for 2026 are scheduled from 11-1:35pm at Boulevard Park on April 14 <sup>th</sup> (Kendall Elementary School), May 12 <sup>th</sup> (Columbia Elementary School), and May 22 <sup>nd</sup> (Cordata Elementary School). Project leads have been working with teachers to coordinate classroom lessons prior to and following the events and have been working to schedule tribal speakers for the field events.
Harmful Algal Bloom Monitoring	The HABs team has shifted from sampling every other week to weekly as the days get longer and temperatures start to warm. Samples were collected on March 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 10 <sup>th</sup> , 17, 24 <sup>th</sup> , and will be collected on the 31 <sup>st</sup> . Staff also attended the 2026 SoundToxins training to learn about program updates.
Forage Fish Surveys	The MRC conducted a forage fish survey at Clayton Beach on March 24 <sup>th</sup> and will survey Little Squalicum on March 26 <sup>th</sup> .
Bull Kelp Monitoring	No updates from this month!
Olympia Oyster Restoration	The project team has been coordinating with the Puget Sound Restoration Fund (PSRF) to determine logistics for the upcoming field season. PSRF staff, WDFW, and the MRC will be distributing Olympia

	oyster spat across 12 bioassays throughout 2 locations in Drayton Harbor on April 22 <sup>nd</sup> . Olympia oyster spat donated by PSRF will also be distributed at 3 sites in North Chuckanut Bay in May (exact date is TBD).
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### Membership & Leadership Updates (if changes occurred)

Status (new, departing, leadership change)	Name	Role	Appointment/ Departure Date
Leadership Change	Laura Hanna	Vice Chair	Appointed 3/5/2026

### Event & Meetings List

Name	Date(s)	Partner(s)	Link to event on MRC site	Highlight or description	*Promote this event Y/N
Sunnyland Earth Day Event	Saturday, April 18 10-1pm	Sunnyland Neighborhood Association	No flyer yet	1 <sup>st</sup> outreach event of the year. Likely to feature new outreach tools/games	N

\*May we promote this information in our newsletter/social media? Y/N

### Photos



Project name(s): Forage Fish Monitoring

Photographer credit(s):  
Dana Daniels



## Commission staff highlights - [March 2026]

### MRC Support

**MRC Grants:** MRCs discussed the supplemental funding opportunity and submitted proposals for projects or directed funds to the derelict vessel/vessel turn-in work. Commission staff reviewed proposals and have included the list on the meeting agenda for review and approval.

**NW Straits Commission 101:** Commission staff hosted a NW Straits Commission 101 virtual session on March 19 offered to MRC members and others. Around 20 participants joined from various MRCs. Another session will be held April 8, 11:00-12:30.

### MRC Meetings:

- Island MRC (3/3) – Leah
- Whatcom MRC (3/5) – Jeff, Sasha
- San Juan MRC meeting (3/5) – Lucas, Dana
- Island MRC Retreat (3/12) – Jeff
- Skagit MRC Strategic Planning meeting (3/12) - Dana

### Regional Projects

**Kelp Plan:** NW Straits Commission staff worked with partners from WA Department of Natural Resources, Puget Sound Partnership, Hakai (in BC), and more, to develop and refine multiple online tools to increase awareness of the Kelp Plan, WA kelp projects, and kelp-related funding opportunities. NWSC staff also worked on social media posts to increase awareness that April 16 is Bull Kelp Day!

**Kelp Monitoring:** Registration for the [2026 Kayak Kickoff](#) training and the on the water [kayak safety](#) classes are open until April 1. The Kelp Monitoring Workgroup had their spring meeting, where they discussed shoreline segments, a new datasheet, and development of this year's Kayak Kickoff.

**Forage Fish:** Staff coordinated with WDFW on sample and supplies deliveries. Staff is also supporting Island County MRC on planning for their forage fish community workshop in April.

**European Green Crab:** Staff are preparing for the field season and upcoming training with partners for Washington Conservation Corps and field staff training. Staff have also developed a tool to summarize EGC trapping data, ensuring ease of reporting and support data management throughout the season.

**Voluntary No-Anchor Zones:** Staff are drafting the final report for the US Fish and Wildlife Service grant to wrap up a funding award that spanned from 2023-2025.



## Commission staff highlights - [March 2026]

**Derelict Vessels:** Staff are coordinating with DNR and the Makah tribe on a potential vessel turn-in event this summer.

**SoundIQ:** The focus this month was on preparation for presentations and How-To reference videos to be shared at MRC meetings starting next month.

### Operations

**Staff:** Caitlyn Blair's last day was March 17. The Program Coordinator position is now vacant, and Lucas is working on the recruitment process through Ecology to re-fill the position.

**Budget:** Commission staff are in communication with NOAA grant staff to begin the process of including fiscal year 2026 funding to the existing award agreement.

**Communications:** Staff continues to make progress updating the communications plan with the ad hoc committee. A baseline awareness survey was developed and sent to internal audiences; results will inform discussions at the spring retreat. The committee is working through the plan language while cross referencing the strategic plan and results from the baseline awareness survey.

**Contracts and grants:** No new updates on contracts or grants during this period.

### Other Meetings Attended

- Understanding Human-Kelp Relationship project meeting (3/2, 3/16, 3/30) – Jeff
- Salish Sea Stewards Presentations (3/3, 3/10) – Lucas, Jeff
- Blue Convergence Fund Informational webinar on the Ocean Biodiversity RFP (3/4) – Dana
- MRC Kelp Monitoring Workgroup (3/4) – Jeff, Leah, Suzanne
- Shorelands and Environmental Assistance Program Management Team (3/2, 3/9, 3/16, 3/23, 3/30) –
- Padilla Bay Leadership Team (3/11) – Lucas
- Communications planning meeting (3/11) – Jessica
- Kelp Project Inventory project meeting (3/17) – Jeff, Leah, Suzanne
- Living Kelp Plan (development of an interactive Kelp Plan) project meeting (3/24) – Dana, Jeff, Jessica, Leah, Suzanne
- A social-ecological systems approach to restoration: applications to kelp systems (3/26) – Jeff
- HSIL Kelp Resilience/Loss Study project meeting (3/27) – Jeff