



# agenda

**Meeting:** Northwest Straits Commission  
**Date:** April 24, 2026  
**Time:** 10:00 AM- 12:00 PM  
**Location:** [Virtual Zoom Link](#) Meeting ID: 834 9189 5935 Passcode: 612322

*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:

- **April 2 NW Straits Commission Meeting Minutes**

10:00 – 10:10 AM	<b>Welcome and introductions</b> Tribal acknowledgement April 2 Meeting Minutes Approval	Alan Clark, Chair
10:10 – 10:35 AM	<b>Speed Date with a Scientist: <i>Understanding the Human Dimensions of Kelp</i></b>	David Trimbach, WA Dept of Fish and Wildlife
10:35 – 10:45	<b>NW Straits Commission Chair and Vice-Chair Elections</b>	Lucas
10:45 – 11:15 AM	<b>MRC Reports</b>	MRC Representatives
11:15 – 11:30 AM	<b>Committee Updates</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Executive Committee</li><li>• External Relations Committee</li><li>• Science Advisory Committee</li></ul>	Jamie Stephens Elsa Schwartz Emily Grason
11:30 – 11:45 AM	<b>Business Items</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Retreat Debrief</li></ul>	Lucas



# agenda

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• European green crab</li></ul>	Lucas
11:45 – 11:50 AM	<b>Project Updates</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Kelp Day Communications</li></ul>	Jessica/Jeff
11:50 – 11:55 AM	<b>Commissioner Updates</b> NW Indian Fisheries Commission Puget Sound Partnership	
11:55 – 12:00 PM	<b>Public Comment</b>	
12:00 PM	<b>Adjourn</b>	

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*The next regularly scheduled NW Straits Commission meeting will be Friday, May 29 2026, in **person** in Everett, Snohomish County. Please see the [NWSC Events page](#) for more information.*



# Minutes

April 2, 2026, 10:30 AM – 11:00 PM  
Northwest Straits Commission meeting

## Attendees

**Commission Members:** Alan Clark (Clallam – Chair), Rick Beauregard (Whatcom), Elsa Schwartz, Lynne Wenberg (Skagit), Brenda Johnson (Jefferson), Emily Grason, Phil Salditt (Snohomish), Ken Collins (Island), Jason Lim (Puget Sound Partnership), Christina Koons (San Juan)

**Commission Staff:** Jeff Whitty, Sasha Horst, Lucas Hart, Leah Skare, Jessica Owens, Dana Oster, Suzanne Shull, Niki Kiriara

**Others in attendance:** Elise Adams (Island MRC)

**Absent:** Cecilia Gobin (NW Indian Fisheries Commission), Jamie Stephens (Vice Chair)

## Welcome and Tribal Acknowledgement

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

The February 2026 meeting minutes were approved by consensus as written with the correction of a typo on page three to remove the word two from Jefferson's update.

## Business Items

**MRC project approval:** The Commission reviewed and approved by consensus the project proposals submitted by Marine Resources Committees for the supplemental funding available in 2026.

**NW Straits Commission acknowledgement language:** The Commission approved language to use in acknowledging the NW Straits Commission on materials when necessary:

*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.*

**NW Straits Commission 101:** Commission staff is hosting a second Northwest Straits Commission 101 webinar 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.

Anyone interested can attend; no registration is required.

- April 8. 11:00am-12:30pm: [Zoom Link](#), Meeting ID: 844 5765 9244, Passcode: 542246

**Next meeting:** The next meeting is a virtual meeting on April 24 which will include a Speed Date with a Scientist, featuring David Trimbach.



# Minutes

**Kelp Day:** Jeff Whitty reminded everyone that Washington Kelp Day is April 16.

**MRC Reports**

Reports from Marine Resources Committees were provided in written format.

DRAFT



## Commission staff highlights - [April 2026]

### MRC Support

**MRC Grants:** The final two MRC grant agreements funded through our NOAA awards were signed this month. The MRC grants funded with State/EPA grant dollars are in the final quarter of year one state funds, which must be spent by June 30, 2026.

**NW Straits Commission 101:** Commission staff hosted a NW Straits Commission 101 virtual session on April 8 offered to MRC members and others. Seventeen participants joined from various MRC and the Science Advisory Committee, as well as other interested individuals.

**MRC Conference:** The first meeting of the planning committee is scheduled

#### MRC Meetings:

Island MRC meeting (4/7): Dana and Suzanne

Skagit MRC meeting (4/9): Dana

San Juan MRC meeting (4/9): Sasha and Jessica

### Regional Projects

**Kelp Plan:** Staff submitted a grant application to Blue Convergence Fund for a project to develop a kelp fact sheet to support local government decision making. Staff concluded their social media campaign to build awareness of Bull Kelp Day, which was on April 16. Staff have also been working with two committees to refine the WA Kelp Project Inventory, a who is doing what with kelp in Washington, and to develop an interactive online Kelp Plan to increase the use and usability of the Kelp Plan.

**Kelp Monitoring:** Commission staff developed and held the Padilla Bay Kayak Kickoff on April 29 to train MRC kayakers on the kelp monitoring protocol. Commission staff also worked with volunteers to register them for one of the on-the-water kayak safety training courses that will be held in late May and early June. Staff met with UW and WA Department of Natural Resources to discuss new metrics for floating kelp monitoring.

**Forage Fish:** Commission staff is supporting and presenting at Island MRC's forage fish workshop on April 27. Sample supplies and coordination will occur with partners at this event as well.

**European Green Crab:** Staff developed and hosted a training week focused on green crab trapping protocols in Samish Bay for the Washington Conservation Corps (WCC) crew. WCC training included partner presentations from Taylor Shellfish, WA Dept. Of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), WA Sea Grant (WSG), and Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve. Staff also developed and hosted a training for WDFW technicians focused on NW Straits specific trapping protocols used in Drayton Harbor. Staff assisted with planning efforts for a joint partner trapping training in Samish Bay with WDFW and WSG. Participants included staff from Stillaguamish, Swinomish, and Tulalip Tribes as well as well as the NW Straits hosted WCC crew. Additionally,



## Commission staff highlights - [April 2026]

staff added the Molt Search Train-the-Trainers workshop. Trapping efforts in Samish Bay and Drayton Harbor has started and will continue through late fall.

**Voluntary No-Anchor Zones:** Staff are planning social marketing and media strategies for the upcoming boating season.

Staff are collaborating with various organizations on messaging and cross posting good boating practices and environmental tips with the anticipated increase in boater traffic for the FIFA World Cup events in Seattle and BC this summer [www.anchorout.org](http://www.anchorout.org).

**Derelict Vessels:** Staff met with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Makah team to continue to plan for a Neah Bay vessel turn-in event led by the Makah Tribe. Staff are also working with DNR to get an updated list of derelict vessels on private and tribally held tidelands in advance of the workgroup reconvening to discuss priorities with additional funding.

**SoundIQ:** Suzanne Shull attended the Island MRC meeting in April and presented on SoundIQ to the MRC.

### Operations

**Staff:** The position announcement for the Program Coordinator was posted April 10, with the first screening of applications on April 17. View the position announcement here: [NWSC Program Coordinator](#).

**Budget:** Commission staff met with NOAA grant staff in early April to discuss reporting and plans for including fiscal year 2026 funds in the existing NOAA award.

**Communications:** 2026 Communications planning committee met April 23 for a fourth meeting to review and align baseline awareness and spring retreat feedback as we continue to the draft communications plan.

Website updates: [Opportunities | NW Straits](#), [Contact Us | NW Straits](#)

**Contracts and grants:** Commission staff is coordinating with WA DNR with an amendment to the interagency agreement for derelict vessel/vessel turn-in work.

### Other Meetings Attended

- Understanding Human-Kelp Relationship project meeting (4/13, 4/27) – Jeff
- Citizen Science Monitoring Webinar (4/21) – Jeff, Dana
- MONITR (Canada's Kelp Inventory for multiple taxa) workgroup meeting (4/21) – Jeff
- Salish Sea Institute Advisory Board meeting (4/1) – Lucas
- SEA Program Management Team meeting (4/6, 4/20, 4/27) – Lucas
- WDFW European green crab planning meeting (4/29) – Lucas, Allie, Dana, Leah

# MRC Monthly Report

**County:** Clallam

**Month/Year:** April 2026

## Key Items for Verbal Report-Out

- Pinto abalone surveys are taking place on April 15 and 16, in partnership with Puget Sound Restoration Fund and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.
- Dr. Julia Parrish of the Coastal Observation and Seabird Survey Team (COASST) is giving a presentation at the MRC's April meeting about that organization's work.

## Project Updates

<b>Project Title</b>	<b>Update for Current Month</b>
<b>Olympia oysters</b>	The next annual population survey of Olympia oysters has been scheduled for early June 2026.
<b>Forage fish</b>	Forage fish sampling continues at Elwha Beach, Cline Spit and Ediz Hook.
<b>Pinto abalone</b>	The first pinto abalone survey dives for 2026 are taking place on April 15 <sup>th</sup> and 16 <sup>th</sup> .
<b>Kelp monitoring</b>	Planning for the 2026 kelp monitoring season has begun, with several volunteers interested at this time.
<b>Pigeon guillemots</b>	Planning for the 2026 pigeon guillemot monitoring season has begun, with many past season volunteers already signing on to continue for 2026.
<b>Education – outreach cards</b>	MRC members continued supplying local eateries and community establishments with educational outreach cards featuring information on local marine life.
<b>Education – displays</b>	MRC members continued developing new displays for outreach at local festivals. An education/outreach subcommittee has been established and held two meetings, focused mainly on improved displays/activities for festivals.
<b>Education – oil spill response</b>	A HAZWOPER / oiled wildlife response training is being planned for 2026.
<b>Elwha Beach</b>	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	Date
New	Beverly Burton	Alternate representing the community at-large	4/6/26
Departing	Amelia Kalagher	Staff – Administrative Specialist	4/27/26

## Event & Meetings List

Name	Date(s)	Partner(s)	Link to event	Highlight or description
Presentation: Dungeness River Management Team	4/8/26	Dungeness River Management Team	N/A	Alan Clark gave a “what is the MRC” style presentation and updates on current projects
Pinto abalone survey dives	4/15/26 and 4/16/26	Puget Sound Restoration Fund, WDFW	N/A	Two days of pinto abalone surveys. More will take place later in 2025.
Monthly meeting	4/20/26	Presenter: Julia Parrish, Coastal Observation and Seabird Survey Team	<a href="#">Clallam County Marine Resources Committee</a>	

# MRC Monthly Report

**County:** Island

**Month/Year:** April 2026

## Key Items for Verbal Report-Out

- Island MRC has decided their monthly meetings will move from 3-5pm to 4-6pm to make it easier for working folks to attend!
- Island MRC is celebrating Earth Day! Island MRC will not only present at Commissioner Janet St. Clair’s upcoming Town Hall but was onsite at the YMCA Fort Casey Earth Day where the collaborated with county partners to educate attendees on shoreline processes and other stewardship work!
- The Island MRC forage fish team is on the home stretch of planning for the upcoming

## Project Updates

<b>Project Title</b>	<b>Update for Current Month</b>
<b>Outreach and Education</b>	<p>Island MRC has been invited by Commissioner Janet St. Clair to participate and present at her upcoming Town Hall which will celebrate Earth Day! Island MRC will present on some of their projects, highlighting their “Big Wins” to celebrate Earth Day and encourage stewardship throughout Island County.</p> <p>Island MRC will be onsite at the upcoming YMCA Camp Casey Earth Day! IC MRC will join local partners such as Sound Water Stewards and IC DNR in hosting an MRC themed booth where attendees will be able to explore the shoreline, learning about shoreline processes, and understanding how healthy IC shorelines impact greater ecosystem health.</p>
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, joined by the workshops facilitator, Emily Bishop, has continued planning, coordinating, and preparing for the Forage Fish Community-based Research Workshop at the Cornet Bay Retreat Center on April 27. Kirk and Emily have continued to hone the workshop agenda, inviting interested researchers and citizen scientists along with fellow MRC members and community partners to participate.</p>

Cornet Bay & Hoypus Point Restoration and Stewardship	Island MRC and the Northwest Straits Foundation have planned their four volunteer stewardship days for Summer 2026. Volunteers will be encouraged to join the work part to help weed, mulch, and care for native vegetation at both of the restoration sites. IC MRC and NWSF will be hosting Stewardship Days on: Wednesday, May 27th, Tuesday, June 30th, Wednesday, July 22nd, and Tuesday, September 1st. Folks interested in signing up to volunteer at one of the four events can head to: <a href="#">Cornet Bay &amp; Hoypus Point Summer 2026 Stewardship Days!</a>
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### Membership & Leadership Updates (if changes occurred)

None.

### Event & Meetings List

<b>Name</b>	<b>Date(s)</b>	<b>Partner(s)</b>	<b>Link to event</b>	<b>Highlight or description</b>
Forage Fish Community Workshop	April 27			
May MRC Meeting	May 5			
Cornet Bay & Hoypus Point Stewardship Day	May 27 June 30 July 22 September 1	NWSF	<a href="#">Meetings &amp; Events   Island County Marine Resource Committee or Cornet Bay &amp; Hoypus Point Summer 2026 Stewardship Days</a>	Join the NW Straits Foundation and Island County MRC in the ongoing stewardship of Cornet Bay & Hoypus Point! Once a month we will spend the morning nurturing the site and native plants with activities such as weeding, watering, and spreading compost and mulch.

# MRC Monthly Report

**County:** Jefferson

**Month/Year:** April 2026

## Key Items for Verbal Report-Out

- Gordon King, Troy McKelvey, and Bryan DeCaterina went out April 17 to do maintenance on the Port Townsend Waterfront buoys, reinstall a buoy that came loose in February, and install a new buoy near the Port Townsend Ferry.
- On April 6, two MRC members, Emily and Neil, presented the MRC Annual Update to the Jefferson BOCC.
- \*The MRC discussed 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 Gardeners to manage a silt/drainage issue at the Chetzemoka park rain garden. A subcommittee was formed to focus on planning of future steps and will have their first meeting on April 27.

## Project Updates

<b>Project Title</b>	<b>Update for Current Month</b>
<b>Kelp kayak monitoring</b>	Summer monitoring dates will be chosen in late April.
<b>Forage fish</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dabob Bay (Index): Sarah Fisker will sample late April.</li><li>• Quilcene Marina: Sarah Fisker will sample late April.</li><li>• Fort Worden: Project is on pause as of Feb 2026 (loss of project lead and unclear timeline from State Parks)</li></ul>
<b>Olympia Oysters</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 2026 Olympia oyster Quality Assurance Project Plan has been approved by NW Straits Commission/Dept of Ecology.</li><li>• Project lead and Coordinator are working on finalizing a JARPA application.</li></ul>
<b>Voluntary No-Anchor Zones</b>	Gordon King, Troy McKelvey, and Bryan DeCaterina went out April 17th to do maintenance on the Port Townsend Waterfront buoys, reinstall a buoy that came loose in February, and install a new buoy near the Port Townsend Ferry.
<b>Education &amp; Outreach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Subcommittee met 4/16 to check-in on planning for 2026 events.</li><li>• Frank Handler, Emily Buckner, and Neil Harrington attended the Connectivity Fair on March 28, networking and making 6-9 contacts each.</li><li>• Searching for Seaweed was held April 21 12:45pm-2:45pm</li><li>• Blessing of the Fleet was attended on April 25 10am-2pm</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2026-27 E+O Outreach Plan submitted</li> <li>• A new E+O project, focused on updating MRC outreach/advertising materials, will be added to the scope of work in the upcoming OTGP-2026 amendment.</li> </ul>
<b>Shoreline Landowner</b>	Nothing to report.
<b>Rain Gardens</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The MRC discussed 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. A subcommittee was formed to focus on planning of future steps and will have their first meeting on April 27.</li> <li>• Rain Garden scope of work will be updated in the upcoming OTGP-2026 amendment.</li> <li>• Master Gardener volunteers purchased plants for 3 gardens and they have been planted.</li> <li>• Signage is planned to be replaced at several rain gardens.</li> </ul>

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

None.

### Event & Meetings List

<b>Name</b>	<b>Date(s)</b>	<b>Partner(s)</b>	<b>Highlight or description</b>
MRC annual presentation to Jefferson BOCC	4/6/26	n/a	
Searching for Seaweed workshop	4/21/26	WDFW	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! <a href="https://www.jeffersonmrc.org/meet">https://www.jeffersonmrc.org/meet</a>
Crabbing 101	6/24/26	WDFW, Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe	Join Jefferson County MRC and partners in Port Hadlock Thursday, June 15 for a FREE Crabbing 101 workshop! Hear from state, Tribal, and recreational crabbing experts about local management strategies, regulations, and general tips and tricks to help you catch more

			crab. The workshop will also include a live demonstration of proper crab pot rigging and ample opportunities to ask all your crabbing-related questions!
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**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 was written and reviewed at the April 7 MRC meeting. MRC members requested additional information and modifications to the letter before committing to a letter of support, and it will be reviewed at the May MRC meeting.

**Photos**

Jefferson MRC group photo at the April 2026 MRC Meeting in Port Townsend, WA.  
Photographer credit: Jeff Taylor



# MRC Monthly Report

**County:** San Juan

**Month/Year:** April 2026

## Key Items for Verbal Report-Out

- The Great Islands Cleanup is scheduled for April 18th. Working with partners across the county and on multiple islands, we will bring together volunteers to clean beaches and roadways across the island. This beloved community event is in its 13th year and garners about 300 participants each Spring.
- The MRC, acting as the Citizen’s Advisory Group for Salmon Recovery will be attending site visits for potential projects to receive funding at the end of April. This advisory is one of the most important roles the MRC plays annually, and helps to shape which salmon recovery projects move forward.

## Project Updates

Project Title	Update for Current Month
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Spring Great Islands Cleanup is on April 18. Activities are happening on all four ferry served islands. Many partners are helping make this a successful event - from waste operators, to dedicated volunteers, environmental groups, boaters and even state parks!</li><li>• **In efforts to reduce plastic waste from shrink wrapping boats, PFSS will pilot recycling boat plastic in conjunction with a local marina. The amount of shrink wrap it takes to cover one boat is equivalent to 2,000 plastic bags! This shrink wrap is huge and takes up loads of space in typical dumpsters, often displacing other trash and causing litter to get into marine waters. We will work with Friday Harbor Marine to gather and responsibly recycle boat wraps in a pilot effort this spring.</li></ul>
Derelict Vessel Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Patrols and boat counts have been ongoing on an opportunistic basis</li><li>• DV coordinator presented to the Friday Harbor Sailing Club</li></ul>
Marine Stewardship Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The OTGP funding was signed! Working towards a broad-based community outreach effort for the MSA, planning meetings have begun. The first year will focus on Kelp and Eelgrass. Our initial steps include crafting a baseline knowledge survey to be used at outreach events, co-creating best practices with kayak groups, creating a map with determined layers to show the complexity of the MSA, and discussing potential signage at key locations.</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dock Talks will resume this summer. Coordination is underway for aligning these with Be Whale Wise partners.</li> </ul>
Eelgrass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boat count data has resumed.</li> <li>• The MRC will celebrate Bull Kelp Day on April 16 via social media.</li> </ul>

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

None.

### Event & Meetings List

Name	Date(s)	Partner(s)	Highlight or description
Salmon Recovery Site Visits	April 29-30, 2026	CAG & TAG	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. <a href="https://sjcmrc.org/meetings-events">https://sjcmrc.org/meetings-events</a>
Friday Harbor Labs Open House	May 2	UW FHL	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.  <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>
Boater's Opening Day + Boat Parade	May 3	Friends of the San Juans, The Whale Museum, IOSA, Dept. of Environmental Stewardship	Boating opening day is upon us and this year environmental groups are banding together for a boating stewardship celebration at the Port of Friday Harbor. Before the 4:00 parade there will be booths with safe boating information, derelict vessel prevention, marine mammal awareness, and oil spill response. Come join in celebrating the wonders of boating in the San Juans and learn how to be safe and respectful on the water.

### Other Notes

Frances Robertson joined in on Puget Sound Day on the Hill in Washington DC to advocate for Northwest Straits Reauthorization, salmon recovery funding, and ecosystem restoration efforts. Connecting with legislature helps emphasize the importance of healthy marine waters throughout the Salish Sea and protecting the livelihoods and resources people depend on.

# MRC Monthly Report

**County:** Skagit

**Month/Year:** April/2026

## Key Items for Verbal Report-Out

- 2026 Salish Sea Stewards Training Program ended April 14. 15 new volunteers completed the program.
- The spring 2026 Kids on the Beach program kicked off April 13-17 with Sedro-Wolley Evergreen Elementary School at Bayview State Park. Around 92 6<sup>th</sup> grade students participated with the help of volunteers.
- 1,000 juvenile pinto abalone will be transferred to a new rearing facility at the Shannon Point Marine Center where students can conduct experiments and assist in outplanting the abalone

## Project Updates

Project title	Update for current month
Salish Sea Stewards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Advisory Committee met on April 2. The next meeting of the Salish Sea Stewards Advisory Committee Working Group is May 7, 2026, at 2:30. This will be another virtual meeting.</li><li>• The 2026 Salish Sea Stewards training program ended April 14th! The SSS Advisory Committee gave a presentation and congratulated the 15 new graduates. Class participants were given graduation packets including name badges and lanyards, certificates, letters, and uniforms. Participants were also asked to complete a program evaluation on the last day of class.</li><li>• This year’s class was small - 15 students - but they seem very engaged and eager to volunteer on projects to help the Salish Sea. The Salish Sea Stewards working group has been brainstorming strategies to improve/expand our recruitment outreach.</li><li>• The Communications Team met on March 30th. This group’s tasks include monthly letters to the SSS Alum, planning social events for Alum and planning for volunteer recognition.</li></ul>

<p>Forage Fish Surveys</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Monthly surveys continue.</li> <li>● The Skagit forage fish survey coordinator and several volunteers plan to attend Island MRC’s Forage Fish Community Science Workshop at Deception Pass State Park.</li> <li>● A few forage fish survey volunteers plan to attend the Mount Vernon High School Science Night with microscopes and surf smelt eggs on April 30<sup>th</sup>.</li> <li>● Forage fish survey volunteers will assist the Island View Elementary School’s 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students with forage fish surveys and microscope activities at the Fidalgo Bay Resort beach in May.</li> <li>● Volunteers are learning and practicing DNR’s new procedures for collecting forage fish data in the Fidalgo Bay Aquatic Reserve.</li> </ul>
<p>Intertidal Monitoring</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The QAAP has been finalized, reviewed, approved, and signed.</li> <li>● Project Lead, Pete Haase, meets with The Salish Sea School once a month to plan for intertidal monitoring.</li> <li>● The intertidal monitoring event will take place June 2, 2026, at Fidalgo Bay RV Park with the Anacortes High School Environmental Science program. Monitoring will be led by The Salish Sea School. A call for volunteers will go out in May.</li> <li>● A Zoom session led by Whatcom MRC is planned for April 20<sup>th</sup> with Dept of Ecology oil spill staff to discuss what baseline data would be important to have in the event of an oil spill.</li> </ul>
<p>Kids on the Beach</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Spring 2026 KOTB program is as follows with field days at Bayview State Park:</li> <li>● (April 14-16) <b>Evergreen Elementary:</b> Sedro-Wolley: 92 6<sup>th</sup> grade students. A call for volunteers went out in the electronic news bulletin, the WAVE. 1 volunteer per 4 students. Students came to the beach prepared with general estuary knowledge and practice identifying marine organisms and collecting data.</li> <li>● (April 27-May 1) <b>Edison Elementary:</b> 3 classes 5<sup>th</sup> graders 65 students</li> <li>● (May 18 -22) <b>Concrete High School:</b> 90 students</li> </ul>
<p>Kayak Bull Kelp Surveys</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 2026 season will start up again in June – September at the following sites: Coffin Rocks (Steven Olsen - Lead), Biz Point (John Freeto - Lead), Shannon Point east/west (Lynne Wenberg - Lead) and new Lone Tree Point (Steven Olsen – Lead).</li> <li>● NWSC All MRC Kick Off meeting is scheduled at PBNERR on April 29. Optional Safety Training at Bowman Bay is scheduled for May 30, 31.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-season planning activities are underway for Skagit volunteers, including organizing an all-team BBQ, info sharing/recommended improvements, protocol updates and shake-down cruise – ECD mid-May.</li> </ul> <p>All MRC kelp kayak volunteers will now require signed Skagit Co volunteer liability forms which have been sent out to kayakers.</p>
<p>Skagit Bay Derelict Crab Pot Removal</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Skagit Bay 2026 Survey Area Map has been updated, reviewed, approved and submitted, but a few adjustments are still needed. Updates include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Cutting off the SW portion of the greater Similk Bay area due to concerns with current.</li> <li>○ Keeping Dewey Beach.</li> <li>○ Adding Miller Bay.</li> <li>○ Extending the Camano Island area east to capture survey results from a 2006 project that found a lot of pots in that area.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Jason Morgan issued an RFP for the side-scan sonar surveys. We will help review the proposals as they come in. 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.</li> <li>• The next review meeting is in process of being scheduled for updates and coordination.</li> </ul>
<p>Crabber Outreach</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project Lead, Darla Gay Smith ordered 250 crabber rack cards and 50 small posters from NWSF and obtained 18 clear rack card holders.</li> <li>• Darla Gay is looking for 3 or 4 volunteers to help deliver the crabber outreach materials to marinas and stores selling fishing/crabbing licenses and gear before the opening of crabbing season. If we can garner enough volunteers, we can extend our distribution to libraries, community centers, ferry docks &amp; seafood restaurants.</li> <li>• Jason Morgan of the NWSF presented the derelict gear program to the 2026 Salish Sea Stewards class and Darla Gay handed out crabber outreach materials to the class participants and challenged them to be familiar with the steps (even if not crab fishers).</li> </ul>
<p>Olympia oyster Restoration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Field work to monitor annual recruitment levels using oyster shell bags will start up again in May.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Paul Dinnel has been working with Sylvia at PBNERR to obtain some oyster shell from the former Blau Oyster Company for oyster restoration work in Padilla Bay and possibly Fidalgo Bay. They are aiming to get a yard of oyster shell for immediate use this year and looking for funding to purchase additional shell next year.</li> </ul>
Pinto Abalone Restoration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finished up field work in January, February, and March.</li> <li>Working on raising juvenile pinto abalone in the hatchery.</li> <li>1,000 juvenile pinto abalone will be transferred to a new rearing facility at Shannon Point Marine Center where students can conduct experiments and assist in outplanting the abalone.</li> <li>Eileen will give a presentation on the pinto abalone project at the May 14 MRC monthly meeting.</li> </ul>

**Membership & Leadership Updates**

None.

**Event & Meetings List**

Name	Date(s)	Partner(s)	Link to event	Highlight or description
Skagit MRC Monthly Meeting	May 14 (9am-11am)		<a href="#">Meetings &amp; Events</a>	Virtual Teams Meeting

**Other Notes**

Skagit MRC is interested in exploring other options for covering liability insurance for kayaker bull kelp survey volunteers.

**Photos**

Project: Salish Sea  
 Stewards Class of 2026,  
 Photographer credit:  
 Lynne Wenberg-Davidson



# MRC Monthly Report

**County: Snohomish**

**Month/Year: April 2026**

## Key Items for Verbal Report-Out

- The MRC is planning and preparing to table at the Edmonds Watershed Fun Fair on May 2. Topics of focus include marine vegetation and crab pot loss.
- The MRC will be doing their annual presentation to County Council on May 19 and are currently finalizing the presentation and two recommendations.

## Project Updates

<b>Project title</b>	<b>Update for current month</b>
<b>Grant Funded Projects</b>	
<b>Derelict Vessel (MRC Grant 2025-2027)</b>	The derelict vessel framework was completed and submitted along with grant reporting. The subcommittee is working on gathering information on individual vessels to populate the framework.
<b>Marine Vegetation Outreach (MRC OTGP Grant 2026-2027)</b>	The consultant contract and outreach groups list were submitted along with grant report. The subcommittee is currently working on draft versions of outreach materials.
<b>SWM Fee Funded Projects</b>	
<b>Forage Fish Monitoring</b>	Monthly monitoring was completed Picnic Point and Meadowdale - March 19, April 22 Howarth Park - March 21, April 17
<b>Marine Vegetation Monitoring</b>	Staff and members are preparing for the monitoring season and plan to attend the kayak kick off on April 29.
<b>Outreach</b>	The MRC is planning and preparing to table at the Edmonds Watershed Fun Fair on May 2. Topics of focus include marine vegetation and crab pot loss.
<b>Oil Spill Preparedness and Prevention</b>	Members from the subcommittee attended the local emergency planning commission meeting on April 16.
<b>Shoreline Armoring/Nearshore</b>	None
<b>Marine Water Quality</b>	None

## Membership & Leadership Updates (if changes occurred)

None.

## Event & Meetings List

<b>Name</b>	<b>Date(s)</b>	<b>Partner(s)</b>	<b>Link to event</b>	<b>Highlight or description</b>
MRC Meeting	May 20			Virtual
Beach Cleanup	June 3	WSU Beach Watchers	TBD	Beach cleanup at Picnic Point from 12:30 - 2

## Other Notes

The MRC will be doing their annual presentation to County Council on May 19 and are currently finalizing the presentation and two recommendations.

# MRC Monthly Report

**County:** Whatcom

**Month/Year:** April 2026

## Key Items for Verbal Report-Out

- The MRC hosted their first Beach Seine with Schools event on April 14 with 45 students from Kendall Elementary School. Despite the wind and rain, we caught several salmonids and had a very engaged group of students. The next two events are scheduled for May 12 (Columbia Elementary School) and May 22 (Cordata Elementary School).
- The MRC will be kicking off their Olympia oyster restoration project in Drayton Harbor on April 22. Volunteers will be distributing bags of Olympia oyster spat to multiple sites.
- The MRC received additional grant funding through the Terry Husseman Coastal Protection Fund to support continued Olympia Oyster restoration efforts in North Chuckanut Bay in 2027/2028.

## Project updates

<b>Project Title</b>	<b>Update for Current Month</b>
<b>Beach Seine with Schools</b>	The MRC hosted their first Beach Seine with Schools event on April 14 with 45 students from Kendall Elementary School. Despite the wind and rain, we caught several salmonids and had a very engaged group of students. The next two events are scheduled for May 12 (Columbia Elementary School) and May 22nd (Cordata Elementary School).
<b>Harmful Algal Bloom Monitoring</b>	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 April 7 and 15 and will be collected on April 21 and 28. Recreational shellfish harvest remains open in Drayton Harbor/Birch Bay.
<b>Forage Fish Surveys</b>	The MRC conducted a forage fish survey at Little Squalicum Beach on April 17.
<b>Bull Kelp Monitoring</b>	The MRC has scheduled survey dates for their 4 sites for the 2026 monitoring season.
<b>Olympia Oyster Restoration</b>	PSRF staff, WDFW, and the MRC and other volunteers will be distributing Olympia oyster spat at 2 locations in Drayton Harbor on April 22 from 2-6pm. Olympia oyster spat donated by PSRF will also be distributed at 3 sites in North Chuckanut Bay on June 8 or 9 (weather dependent).

## 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
Sunnyland Earth Day Event	Saturday, April 18, 10-1pm	Sunnyland Neighborhood Association	No flyer yet	1 <sup>st</sup> outreach event of the year.	N

## Other Notes

- Laura Hanna provided testimony to Whatcom County Council on April 7, emphasizing the importance of the MRC's suggested edits to Chapter 8 – Resource Lands and Chapter 10 – Environment for Whatcom County's Comprehensive Plan update.
- At the April MRC meeting, the MRC heard an inspiring presentation from Elaina Thompson, the Islands' Oil Spill Association (IOSA) Executive Director. This organization consists of 2 staff members and a trained group of volunteers equipped to respond to oil spill incidents that the US Coast Guard and Department of Ecology have are unable to immediately respond to due to the remote nature of the islands.

## Photos

Project name(s): Beach Seine with Schools. Photographer credit(s): Dana Daniels (top left) and Alexi Guddal (other 3 photos)



