



agenda

Meeting: Northwest Straits Commission Meeting
Date: May 29, 2026
Time: 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
Location: [Zoom link](#) Meeting ID: 841 3567 6253 Passcode: 184380

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 24 Draft Meeting Minutes (Page 3)**
- **Retreat summary (Page 8)**
- **Relational diagram and questions for meeting discussion (Page 45-46)**

| | | |
|------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| 10:00 – 10:20 AM | Welcome and Introductions Tribal acknowledgement April 24 meeting minutes approval Welcome Mindy Roberts, Director, Puget Sound Partnership | Jamie Stephens, Chair |
| 10:20 – 10:45 AM | Retreat follow-up Refresher on retreat agenda and outcomes Communications plan actions | Lucas Jessica |
| 10:45 – 11:15 AM | MRC Reports | |
| 11:15 – 11:25 AM | Committee Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none">• External Relations• Science Advisory Committee | Elsa Schwartz Emily Grason |



agenda

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| 11:25 – 11:45 PM | Business Items | |
| | MRC feedback on green crab molt search regional project idea | Dana |
| | MRC feedback on how they would allocate additional funding if it were available | Lucas |

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|------------------|--|--|
| 11:45 – 11:55 PM | NW Straits Commissioner Updates | |
| | NW Indian Fisheries Commission | |
| | Puget Sound Partnership | |

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| 11:55 – 12:00 PM | Public Comment | |
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| 12:00 PM | Adjourn | |
|----------|----------------|--|

*The next regular monthly NW Straits Commission meeting will be on June 26, 2026 via Zoom.
Please visit the [website](#) for more information.*



Minutes

Northwest Straits Commission meeting

April 24, 2026, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Attendees

Commission Members: Alan Clark (Clallam – Chair), Jamie Stephens (Vice Chair), Rick Beauregard (Whatcom), Brenda Johnson (Jefferson), Elsa Schwartz, Lynne Wenberg (Skagit), Emily Grason, Phil Salditt (Snohomish), Ken Collins (Island), Jason Lim (Puget Sound Partnership), Cecilia Gobin (NW Indian Fisheries Commission)

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

Others in Attendance: Mindy Roberts (Puget Sound Partnership), David Trimbach, Tim Ellis and Lowin, Mark Fairhart (Whatcom MRC), Stuart Thomas (WA Sea Grant), Mike Ramsey (San Juan)

Absent: Christina Koons (San Juan)

Welcome and Tribal Acknowledgement

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

The April 2, 2026 Northwest Straits Commission meeting minutes were approved by consensus.

Speed Date with a Scientist: Understanding the Human Dimensions of Kelp

David Trimbach from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and member of the NW Straits Commission's Science Advisory Committee, presented on a collaborative social science research project to better understand human interactions with, connections to, and uses of kelp. The project is community-based participatory research, using facilitated dialogues and freelistening exercises, participatory mapping, and photovoice to collect visual, spatial, qualitative, and quantitative data. They have a series of workshops scheduled and additional information online at their project website: <https://wdfw.wa.gov/species-habitats/ecosystems/marine-shorelines/kelp>

Election of Officers

The Commission moved and approved by consensus to elect **Jamie Stephens** as the chair and **Lynne Wenberg Davidson** as vice-chair of the Commission for the year beginning at the May 2026 meeting.

MRC Reports

Clallam MRC – Alan Clark

- 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.



Minutes

- 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.

Island MRC – Ken Collins

- 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 they 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 workshop Forage Fish Community Workshop on April 27th at Cornet Bay Retreat Center!

Jefferson MRC – Brenda Johnson

- 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. They 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.

San Juan MRC – Mike Ramsey

- The Great Islands Cleanup is scheduled for April 18. Working with partners across the county and on multiple islands, they 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.

Skagit MRC – Lynne Wenberg

- 2026 Salish Sea Stewards Training Program ended April 14. 15 new volunteers completed the program.



Minutes

- The spring 2026 Kids on the Beach program kicked off April 13-17 with Sedro-Woolley Evergreen Elementary School at Bayview State Park. Around 92 6th-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.

Snohomish MRC – Phil Salditt

- 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 recommendations.

Whatcom MRC – Rick Beauregard

- 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.

Committee Updates

- Executive Committee: Jamie provided an update on Puget Sound Day on the Hill attendance, the status of the Northwest Straits Commission reauthorization bill that they heard while there, and the potential opportunities for MRCs to host elected officials during Congressional recess in August. He also noted that the committee discussed the retreat debrief that is elsewhere on the agenda and consideration of a strategy for state funding in the next biennium. The Executive Committee asked MRCs to discuss the following items and share back to the Commission at the May meeting:
 - Green crab: Although we do not have funding at the present time for this work, the Commission is proactively evaluating interest in a NW Straits Commission coordinated regional [green crab molt search](#) program among MRCs. This would involve the NW Straits Commission coordinating 1 or 2 molt search classroom trainings per year in each county, crafting of local informational letter for public in each county, and coordination of molt



Minutes

search blitz events in partnership with MRCs. Would your MRC be interested in participating in such a project? What would your MRC need in order to participate?

- Big money: What would happen if your MRC was receiving \$500,000 per year? What work would you prioritize? Although this level of funding is not secured, nor promised, this is an exercise to help us dream big and generate ideas that can be considered in the future!

The Executive Committee also recommended the Commission approve sending a letter of support for a Reef Check grant proposal. The Commission moved and approved by consensus to send the letter of support as written.

External Relations: Elsa noted that Jamie's report on Puget Sound Day on the Hill covered relevant updates on the NW Straits reauthorization bill. The External Relations Committee is interested in strategies for getting elected officials out in and on the water and will be looking to partner with MRCs for site visits this summer and fall.

Science Advisory Committee (SAC): Emily Horton has volunteered to serve as the SAC rep to the 2026 conference planning committee. Welcome to Nicole Naar, a new member of the SAC. The SAC discussed hosting a pre-conference workshop for MRCs and hosting collaborative sessions on MRC projects with interested MRCs. These are currently being scheduled upon request by MRCs.

Business Items

Retreat: Lucas noted that a summary of key takeaways and action items from the retreat was sent via separate email for reference. A discussion will be part of the May 29 NW Straits Commission meeting. Members of the Commission are encouraged to consider the notes between now and then and come to the May meeting with key action items they feel we should focus on moving forward.

Green crab: After 2027 NW Straits Commission will phase out of its current role in green crab trapping. Commission staff and the Executive Committee would like to explore if there would be a role for MRCs in performing molt searches post-2027, coordinated by the NW Straits Commission. Molt Search is a program of Crab Team at WA Sea Grant and is a low-barrier monitoring effort. WSU offers a training to interested entities: <https://wsg.uw.edu/moltsearch>. Although there is not currently funding in hand to support the work, staff prepared a brief document to provide information to MRCs for proactive discussions. Please direct any questions to Allie Simpson (simpson@nwstraits.org). MRC representatives are encouraged to discuss this idea with their MRCs to gauge interest. The Commission will follow up on this topic at the May meeting.



Minutes

Project Updates

Kelp Day Communications: Jeff Whitty shared an update on the first celebration of Bull Kelp Day launched in 2025. Jessica Owens highlighted the Kelp Day social media and blog campaign which were highly successful and generated higher than usual engagement with new audiences across platforms. The campaign included multiple posts showcasing kelp information and featured the artwork from three collaborating partner artists.

NW Straits Commissioner Updates

Puget Sound Partnership – Over 50 representatives from the region attended the successful Puget Sound Day on the Hill in mid-April. The latest issue of their online magazine, Making Waves, was just released and can be found here: <https://makingwaves.psp.wa.gov/>

NW Indian Fisheries Commission – Cecilia Gobin provided an update on a variety of activities happening at the NW Indian Fisheries Commission. They recently published their 2025 State of the Watersheds Report: <https://nwifc.org/publications/state-of-our-watersheds/>. These reports have been prepared since 2012, and previous reports are also available online.

NW Indian Fisheries Commission is preparing to comment on the State Waters Alteration Permit, a new permit that is housed and issued by Ecology that regulates impacts to wetlands and streams that are not otherwise managed under federal authorities. These impacts are currently authorized through administrative orders rather than a permit mechanism. The new permit system will create more robust and transparent system. More information is available online:

<https://ecology.wa.gov/regulations-permits/laws-rules-rulemaking/rulemaking/wac-173-217>

Other topics raised included the Department of Agriculture roadless rule, which would open federal lands to areas that were previously inaccessible, and locatable minerals rule that would open national forestlands to extractive activities. These rules have impacts on cultural uses and treaty rights. Concern was also shared related to other federal regulatory rollbacks, such as the Sacket decision that defines US waters and 401 water quality certifications that states issue to federally permitted projects, which are slated to be rolled back to previous versions.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 12:10pm.

The next meeting of the Northwest Straits Commission will be on May 29, 2026 via Zoom.

Information can be found at <https://nwstraits.org/upcoming-events>.

MRC Monthly Report: Clallam

May 2026

Key Items for Verbal Report-Out

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|---|--|
| 1 | Clallam MRC and volunteers attended the 2026 Kayak Kick-off event |
| 2 | The forage fish project team updated the Clallam MRC at the monthly meeting and discussed the future of the project. |

Project Updates

| Project title | Update for current month |
|----------------------|--|
| Kelp monitoring | Clallam MRC members and volunteers attended the 2026 Kayak Kick-off hosted by NW Straits at Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe's Red Cedar Hall. Project leads coordinated first paddle event/shake out (for mid June). |
| Pigeon guillemots | MRC project lead coordinated pigeon guillemot volunteers, assigned sites, and scheduled the first week of the season. Some volunteers also attended a virtual training hosted by the Salish Sea Guillemot Network. |
| Education – displays | The education/outreach subcommittee met to discuss educational displays ideas (and outreach ideas in general) and to create action items. |
| Forage Fish | Project update presentation for the monthly committee meeting. Continual monthly monitoring. |
| Pinto Abalone | Coordinated with Feiro Marine Life Center on a future meeting to discuss pinto abalone outreach ideas and strategic planning. |

Membership & Leadership Updates (if changes occurred)

None

Event & Meetings List

| Name | Date(s) | Partner(s) |
|----------------------------|---|--|
| Kayak Kick-off 2026 | 5/8/2026 | NW Straits Commission |
| Description | MRC members and volunteers attended the NW Straits Kayak Kick-off event | |
| Monthly meeting | 5/18/26 | NA Clallam County Marine Resources Committee |
| Description | Forage fish team (Chelsea Korbolic and Tim Cochnauer) gave a presentation on current project status | |

MRC Monthly Report: Island

Month/Year: May 2026

Key Items for Verbal Report-Out

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|---|---|
| 1 | Island MRC hosted a successful Forage Fish Community Workshop on April 27! |
| 2 | Island MRC and Northwest Straits Foundation are hosting their Cornet Bay and Hoypus Point Stewardship Day on May 27 th ! |
| 3 | Island County Comprehensive Plan Final Draft was released and the policy subcommittee will report on next steps moving forward! |

Project Updates

| Project title | Update for current month |
|---|--|
| Outreach and Education | Outreach season has kicked off for Island MRC with a busy April and the many Earth Day celebrations, quickly followed by Penn Cove Water Festival! Volunteers loved being at the Penn Cove Water Festival for another year and are looking forward to engaging the Island County community further! |
| 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 workshop facilitator, Emily Bishop hosted the Forage Fish Community-based Research Workshop at the Cornet Bay Retreat Center on April 27. Joined by local forage fish researchers, managers, and citizen scientists, the group explored the region’s research questions, and management and policy connections to better understand the most effective next steps for Salish Sea forage fish research!</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 27 th , Tuesday, June 30 th , Wednesday, July 22 nd , and Tuesday, September 1 st . Folks interested in signing up to volunteer at one of the four events can head to: Cornet Bay & Hoypus Point Summer 2026 Stewardship Days! |
| Bull Kelp Monitoring | Island MRC Bull Kelp Monitoring is kicking off this month with its two practice survey sessions before kicking off with the season’s surveys next month! All volunteers are eager to get on the water and continue the surveys! |

Membership & Leadership Updates (if changes occurred)

None

Event & Meetings List

| Name | Date(s) | Partner(s) | Link to event on MRC site | | |
|---|--|-----------------------|---|--|--|
| Cornet Bay & Hoypus Point Stewardship Day | May 27 th June 30 th July 22 nd September 1 st | NW Straits Foundation | Meetings & Events Island County Marine Resource Committee or Cornet Bay & Hoypus Point Summer 2026 Stewardship Days | | |
| Description | Join the Northwest Straits Foundation and Island County Marine Resources Committee 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. Wednesday May 27th , 2026: 10:00am - 1:00pm | | | | |
| June MRC Meeting | June 2 | | | | |

Photos

Project name(s): Community Forage Fish Research

Photographer credit(s): Elise Adams









MRC Monthly Report: Jefferson

Month/Year: May 2026

Key Items for Verbal Report-Out

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| 1 | Neil and WDFW partner Julietta Martinelli met with property owners in Kilisut Harbor on 5/15 to discuss future Olympia oyster restoration opportunities. |
| 2* | The MRC had their first planning meeting on April 27 th , to discuss the future of the RG project. Group established the MRC would hold two work parties in 2026, enlist help from a contracted landscaper and MG Coordinator to address additional maintenance issues, and continue to discuss next steps for long-term sustainability of project. |

**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 | <p>Summer monitoring dates are tentatively planned for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June 20, 1:30pm • July 18, 12:30pm • August 15, 11:00am • September 25, 8:00am <p>Three MRC members attended the Kelp Kayak Kickoff on 5/8 in Blyn.</p> |
| Forage fish - Dabob Bay (Index) | Sarah Fisken will sample late May. Sarah also attended Island County's Forage Fish Community Workshop on 4/27. |
| Forage fish - Quilcene Marina | Sarah Fisken will sample late May. |
| Olympia Oysters | <p>Neil and Coordinator are working on finalizing the last task (Eelgrass Summary Report) before submitting a JARPA application – recently received approval from JC Planning for SEPA exemption.</p> <p>Neil and WDFW partner Julietta Martinelli met with property owners in Kilisut Harbor on 5/15 to discuss future restoration opportunities.</p> <p>Neil is also looking into a future restoration site in Port Ludlow.</p> |
| Voluntary No-Anchor Zones | |

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| | New strap wrench was received; the NAZ team will go back out soon to try again to sink an anchor for the new buoy location along the PT Waterfront. |
| Education & Outreach | <p>Coordinator and Betsy Carlson met on 5/12 to design a new MRC outreach ad for an upcoming issue of Working Waterfront.</p> <p>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.</p> |
| Shoreline Landowner | NWSF is continuing to work on permitting for bulkhead removal at the Quilcene Marina. |
| Rain Gardens* | <p>The MRC had their first planning meeting on April 27th, to discuss the future of the RG project. Group established the MRC would hold two work parties in 2026, enlist help from a contracted landscaper and MG Coordinator to address additional maintenance issues, and continue to discuss next steps for long-term sustainability of project.</p> <p>Rain Garden scope of work will be updated in the upcoming OTGP-2026 amendment.</p> <p>Signage is planned to be replaced at several rain gardens.</p> |

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

Membership & Leadership Updates (if changes occurred)

| Status (new, departing, leadership change) | Name | Role | Appointment/Departure Date | Contact info (if new) | Added to website? |
|--|-------------|------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Departing | Jeff Taylor | District 2 | April 30, 2026 | N/A | N/A |

Event & Meetings List

| Name | Date(s) | Partner(s) | Information |
|--|---------|---|---|
| Rain Garden Work Party – Adams + Lincoln | 5/23/26 | N/A | <p>https://www.jeffersonmrc.org/meetings-events/</p> <p>Join Jefferson MRC for a morning of weeding and socializing at the Rain Garden on the corner of Lincoln and Adams!</p> |
| Crabbing 101 | 6/24/26 | WDFW Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe | <p>https://www.eventbrite.com/e/crabbing-101-workshop-tickets-1986721158466?aff=oddtcreator</p> <p>Join Jefferson County MRC and partners in Port Hadlock Wed. June 24 for a FREE Crabbing 101 workshop! You’ll 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!</p> |

Other Past Events/Meetings (for Jefferson recordkeeping)

- April 21 – Searching for Seaweed
- April 25 – Blessing of the Fleet
- April 27 – Rain Garden Planning subcommittee meeting
- April 30 – Forage Fish sampling @ Quilcene
- May 5 - MRC Monthly Meeting
- May 8 – Kelp Kayak Monitoing Kickoff
- May 12 – E+O WW Ad meeting
- May 15 – Olympia Oyster site visit @ Kilisut Harbor (Nordland)
- May 19 – MRC Executive Committee Meeting

Other Upcoming Events/Meetings (for Jefferson recordkeeping)

- June 2 - MRC Monthly Meeting
- June 24 – Crabbing 101
- July 15+16 – Olympia oyster Population Surveys @ Discovery Beach
- July 21 – MRC Executive Committee Meeting
- August 4 - MRC Monthly Meeting

Other Notes

Jefferson MRC was contacted by WA Department of Health re: the 2010 Mystery Bay Management Plan, which the JCMRC participated in developing. Several MRC members are in contact with DOH to provide additional information, and provide input on any revisions/updates to the plan.

Photos

Project name(s): Education + Outreach

The Searching for Seaweed Workshop was held April 21, 2026 in Point Hudson. Reed Stevens of WDFW led a group of 20 participants along the beach, identifying seaweeds and providing information on safe and sustainable harvesting.

Photographer credit: Betsy Carlson



Participants consult the seaweed identification guide to ID an unknown seaweed.



Participants wade into a shallow pool to examine a large blade of kelp.



Jefferson MRC member Bryan DeCaterina works with participants to identify several seaweed species collected on the beach.



Budding biologist in action!



MRC Monthly Report

San Juan

May 2026

Key Items for Verbal Report-Out

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| <p>May 3 was the kickoff to boating season here in the San Juans – with this comes the revival of dock talks to engage boaters with best practices, education about the Marine Stewardship Area and giving whales space, and resumed vessel counts at known eelgrass locations.</p> |
| <p>MRC members, acting as the Citizen’s Advisory Group for Salmon Recovery attended site visits and virtual presentations for potential projects to receive funding at the end of April. This advisory action provides input on the socio-economic benefit of projects and helps direct funding towards salmon recovery.</p> |

Project updates

| Project title | Update for current month |
|----------------------------|--|
| Plastic Free Salish Sea | Another year, another successful Great Islands Cleanup! This spring 250 volunteers participated across Orcas, San Juan, Lopez, Shaw, and Sucia Islands covering 200 miles of shoreline, roads, and trails. Together, we removed 2,550 lbs. of waste destined for the landfill and diverted another 170 lbs. for recycling. This event would not be possible without the dedicated volunteers, willing operators, and planning team. A huge thanks to all who helped make this a great day for keeping plastic debris out of the sea! |
| Derelict Vessel Prevention | Marine patrols are scheduled for multiple days throughout the end of May and early June. Getting back on the water will allow us to understand the status of vessels on the water, tag those that need to be addressed, and check in at popular boating locations. |
| Marine Stewardship Area | Dock Talks will resume this summer. Coordination is underway for aligning these with Be Whale Wise partners. |
| Eelgrass | Boat count data has resumed. Upcoming training for vessel counts data is scheduled with the NW Straits Commission. We will be inviting MRC members and other interested volunteers who are passionate about eelgrass to participate and add to the growing body of data. Aerial Surveys for vessel counts across the MSA have begun. This is part of the HSIL eelgrass stressors project, but the data will also be used in conjunction with previous vessel counts to get a read on how this data is changing year to year. |

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| Outreach and Education | The Friday Harbor Labs Open House was a fun and exciting day of celebrating all things marine! Over 700 attendees came through the labs to participate. The MRC hosted a trivia wheel based on marine projects and passed out 20+ whale warning flags to boaters. |
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Membership & Leadership Updates (if changes occurred)

| Status | Name | Role | Date |
|-------------------|-----------------|---|----------|
| Leadership change | Mike Ramsey | NW Straits Commission representative | 5/7/2026 |
| Departing | Christina Koons | MRC member and NW Straits Commission representative | 6/2026 |

Christina Koons has been an integral part of the MRC since 2018. She always provides guidance, represents San Juan on the NWSC, is actively involved in advancing projects and was an excellent chair to the committee. She is an exemplary MRC member who leads by example, asks tough questions, and helps uplift the work of the MRC. Her contributions towards protecting marine waters will be felt in San Juan County for years to come. We are grateful for her service and will miss her dearly.

Event & Meetings List

| Name | Date(s) | Partner(s) | Description |
|----------------|--|--------------------|--|
| Marine Patrols | May 18, 26, 28, June 8, 9 | San Juan County DV | Marine patrols allow us to know what is happening on the water. From checking up on vessels of concern to counting boats in eelgrass zones and ground truthing the location and registration of buoys, these patrols provide important data that can help shape policy and management decisions. |
| MRC Meeting | June 4 | | Regularly scheduled MRC meeting – In person at San Juan Island Grange |
| Dock Talks | May 22, June 15, 19 or 20, July 3, 17, August 1, September 5 | Roche Harbor | Educating folks about the marine stewardship area and how to be responsible on the water is a major goal for MRC outreach. At dock talks we pass out what warning flags, discuss anchoring out of eelgrass, looking for derelict vessels, and oil spill prevention measures. |

Other Notes

Acting as the Citizens Advisory Group (CAG) for Salmon Recovery, members of the MRC joined in for site visits and virtual presentations on April 29-30. Visiting the proposed sites and digging into project plans will help MRC members conceptualize the projects and allow them to add important views as it relates to social and economic values of the potential projects.

Photos



Project name(s): Plastic Free Salish Sea – Great Island Clean up volunteers at Sucia & Jones Islands Photographer credit(s): WA State Parks



L - Project name(s): Plastic Free Salish Sea – Nurdle Hunters at Jackson Beach Photographer credit(s): Friends of the San Juans



R - Project name(s): Plastic Free Salish Sea – Happy Volunteers making a difference Photographer credit(s): Katie Fleming



L - Project name(s): Plastic Free Salish Sea – Great Island Clean up volunteers at Deadman’s Bay Photographer credit(s): Kari Koski

R - Project name(s): Plastic Free Salish Sea – Rotary Club members show off their exciting find – 235 pound tire! Photographer credit(s): Katie Johnson



Project name(s): Advisory - MRC members attended site visits for the Salmon Recovery Grant round. Top Photographer credit(s): Frances Roberston Bottom Photo Credit: Katie Johnson





Project name(s): MRC Education/Outreach “Friday Harbor Labs Opening Day was a great chance to connect with the public! Flora, Karin and Beth did a great job sharing the work and engaging with people of all ages.

Photographer credit(s): Katie Johnson



MRC Monthly Report: Skagit

May/2026

Key Items for Verbal Report-Out

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| The Salish Sea School will be taking over the lead in coordinating Fidalgo Bay Day this year with planning support from the MRC. The date has been set for Saturday, September 26, 2026. |
| Sonar surveys for derelict crab pots in Skagit Bay are now underway in collaboration with the Northwest Straits Foundation, Island MRC, and Swinomish Tribe. |
| Spring 2026 KOTB program just wrapped up during the week of May 18 -22. Around 90 students from Concrete High School explored the Padilla Bay mudflats with the help of volunteers. |

Project Updates

| Project title | Update for current month |
|---------------------|---|
| Salish Sea Stewards | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The SSS Communications Team met on April 27th. This group's tasks included monthly letters to the SSS Alumni, cleaning and organizing documents on the shared Google drive, helping with planning social events for Alumni and gathering ideas for volunteer recognition.• The SSS Working Group met on May 7th to continue planning social events for the alum, continuing to work on recruitment ideas for the Salish Sea Stewards training program and finalizing any unfinished business by our June 4th meeting so we're ready to start fresh on October 1, 2026.• The next SSS Working Group meeting will be held June 4th, 2026 at 2:30pm. We will meet in-person at the Padilla Bay Reserve. At this meeting we will go over the Program Evaluations that SSS participants completed on April 14th.• Salish Sea Stewards Summer Social scheduled for June 17th, 11:30-1:30 at Washington Park for some tidepooling and lunch. Planning is also underway for a fall social. |
| Forage Fish Surveys | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Salish Sea School's Catherine Houck continues to coordinate the monthly forage fish monitoring at 7 Skagit MRC restoration and index sites. WDFW Index Sites: Guemes Channel Index, Lovrics Assessment, Samish Index, Similk Bay Index. Restoration Sites: Clayton Beach, Bowman Bay, and Similk Restore. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveys continue with good participation and new team members. Catherine has organized a periodic "training" opportunity for new interested folks during our monthly Bowman Bay survey. • On Thursday May 14th the Anacortes Island View Elementary School 1st and 2nd grade class of Abigail Ross participated in mini forage fish surveys at Fidalgo Bay with the help of volunteers. Something this class has done for several years now. |
| <p>Intertidal Monitoring</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The grant amendment adding additional funding to this project was just recently signed. • A contract agreement with The Salish Sea School is currently being routed through the county signature process. • The intertidal monitoring event is scheduled to take place June 2, 2026, at Fidalgo Bay RV Park. Monitoring will be led by Elizabeth Drozda of The Salish Sea School and involve 12 Anacortes Green Club students. A classroom orientation for the students was held on Monday May 18 in preparation for the intertidal monitoring event. • We have a nice group of volunteers signed up. If anyone else wants to come and help, let Pete know. No experience needed - you team with experienced folks and learn a lot. • Pete put out a call for press coverage. |
| <p>Kids on the Beach</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring 2026 KOTB program just wrapped up (May 18 -22) with 90 students from Concrete High School exploring the Padilla Bay mudflats with the help of volunteers during the field days May 19th and 20th. |
| <p>Kayak Bull Kelp Surveys</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2026 season will start 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) • NWSC All MRC Kick Off meeting was held at PBNERR on April 29 with over 25 participants, including 5 Skagit yakkers. • Optional Safety Training at Bowman Bay is scheduled for May 30, 31. • Preseason Skagit activities are scheduled, including a shakedown cruise on May 28 at Bowman Bay and an all-team BBQ on June 2nd. • Unfortunately, this season we have lost 4 of our most experienced Skagit kayakers due to various reasons. However, we are happy to announce that we gained 4 new experienced kayakers from Hole in the Wall Kayak Club. • Kayak volunteers are in process of submitting or waiting approval of their Skagit County volunteer liability forms -- which must be approved by Skagit Co HR before hitting the water. • Survey schedules for all 4 sites for June – September have been established and posted on a shared drive. Process is for kayak volunteers to sign up for all surveys that they wish. |

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| <p>Skagit Bay Derelict Crab Pot Removal</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skagit MRC has a contract with NWSF to perform (6) side scan sonar surveys and derelict crab pot removals in Skagit Bay. This is part of a large collaborative project with Swinomish Tribe and Island MRC. • Side Scan surveys: After a competitive RFP process Fenn Enterprises was selected for sidescan sonar surveys. Surveys commenced Monday, May 11th. Winds moved them off of Camano, but they were still able to scan one of our more sheltered areas. Surveys and data processing will take about two and half weeks, working to have our targets in hand by end of May. There were some modifications to the survey areas. The shallow east end of Similk Bay survey area was reduced by 1 sq.km and the area between Hope Island and Dewey Beach was reduced by 1 sq.km. • ROV Ops: ROV removal ops will begin early June. We are partnering with the Swinomish Department of Environmental Protection for conducting ROV ops from their vessel. • Dive ops: NWSF experienced some delays and challenges in funding for dive ops but will still be able to complete the dive ops as planned. NWSF has contingency funds to cover this project in the event WDFW funding does not come through. Dive ops will be conducted on Tuesdays and Wednesdays and closed during summer crabbing days. They will also potentially take place September – October between the summer and winter crabbing seasons. |
| <p>Crabber Outreach</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Crabber Outreach this year consists of MRC Members: Lynne Wenberg, Dale Fournier, Matt Castle and Darla Gay Smith (MRC Project Lead). • In June we will deliver outreach materials (around 600+ “Catch More Crab” Rack Cards and 20 wall Posters) provided by the NWSF to 10 select businesses in Skagit County who sell crabbing licenses and crabbing gear. The information will be placed near crab equipment and license sales. In response to the past merchant requests, we have obtained 18 clear rack card holders to hold the cards securely. |
| <p>Olympia Oyster Restoration</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field work to monitor annual recruitment levels using oyster shell bags started up again mid-May. • Should have some 2025 recruitment numbers to share in June. |
| <p>Pinto Abalone Restoration</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finished up field work in January, February, and March. • Eileen Bates of PSRF presented on the pinto abalone project at the May 14th MRC monthly meeting. |
| <p>Bowman Bay Boat Ramp Removal</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The grant amendment for this new project just got signed mid-May! We are working on getting an Interlocal Agreement in place with State Parks. • State Parks received an emergency permit and removed the water-side broken portions of ramp on the beach on March 24. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A native planting plan is in development to support both the boat ramp removal area as well as the pier demolition. The plan will be reviewed with State Parks for approval. NWSF will also be asked for feedback and recommendations. • The remaining work is scheduled for September – December to include: Final shoreline armoring and debris removal during in water work window (September); apply beach nourishment (September-November); install native plants and mulch (November-December); and Final report (December). |
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Membership & Leadership Updates (if changes occurred)

None

Event & Meetings List

| Name | Date(s) | Partner(s) | Link to event on MRC site | Highlight or description |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Skagit MRC Monthly Meeting | June 11 (9am-11am) | | Meetings & Events | Virtual Teams Meeting |
| Fidalgo Bay Day | September 26 (11am – 3pm) | The Salish Sea School, City of Anacortes, Skagit County, Samish Indian Nation | TBD | Free annual educational event |

MRC Monthly Report: Snohomish

Month/Year: May 2026

Key Items for Verbal Report-Out

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| 1 | The MRC tabled at the Edmonds Watershed Fun Fair on May 2. Over 145 people stopped at the activities and learned about forage fish, eelgrass, and crab pot loss. |
| 2 | The MRC presented to County Council on May 19 and highlighted their marine vegetation outreach. They recommended that Council continue support for the MRC through funding, especially for the summer marine ecology intern position.* |

Project Updates

| Project title | Update for current month |
|---|--|
| Grant Funded Projects | |
| Derelict Vessel (MRC Grant 2025-2027) | The subcommittee is working on gathering information on individual vessels to populate the framework. |
| Marine Vegetation Outreach (MRC OTGP Grant 2026-2027) | Draft versions of outreach materials are in review by the full MRC. The subcommittee is planning to begin reaching out to boating groups in June. |
| SWM Fee Funded Projects | |
| Forage Fish Monitoring | Monthly monitoring was completed Picnic Point and Meadowdale – May 28 Howarth Park – May 23 |
| Marine Vegetation Monitoring | Kayak dates and back up dates are scheduled as follows |
| Outreach | The MRC tabled at the Edmonds Watershed Fun Fair on May 2. Over 145 people stopped at the activities and learned about forage fish, eelgrass, and crab pot loss. |
| Oil Spill Preparedness and Prevention | None |
| Shoreline Armoring/Nearshore | None |
| Marine Water Quality | None |

Membership & Leadership Updates

| Status | Name | Role | Appointment/ Departure Date |
|--------|-------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| New | Cali Webber | SWM Planner | May 4 |
| New | Brenly Lott | SWM Marine Ecology Intern | June 1 |

Event & Meetings List

| Name | Date | Partners | Link and description |
|---------------|---------|--------------------|--|
| MRC Meeting | May 20 | | Virtual |
| Beach Cleanup | June 3 | WSU Beach Watchers | Beach cleanup at Picnic Point from 12:30 - 2 |
| MRC Meeting | June 17 | | Virtual Teams meeting link Meeting ID: 280 690 223 462 097 Passcode: L6Cj9To6 |

Other Notes

The MRC presented to County Council on May 19 and highlighted their marine vegetation outreach. They recommended that Council continue support for the MRC through funding, especially for the summer marine ecology intern position.*

Photos

Project name(s): Edmonds Watershed Fun Fair

Photographer credit(s): Julie Schlenger



Project name(s): Edmonds Watershed Fun Fair
Photographer credit(s): Julie Schlenger



MRC Monthly Report: Whatcom

Month/Year: May 2026

Key Items for Verbal Report-Out

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| <p>The MRC is wrapping up their Beach Seine with Schools events, with the last one taking place on Friday, May 22nd.</p> |
| <p>The MRC kicked off their Olympia oyster restoration project in Drayton Harbor on April 22nd. In partnership with the Puget Sound Restoration Fund, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and many volunteers, the MRC distributed 150 bags of Olympia oyster cultch across 6 sites in Drayton Harbor.</p> |
| <p>The MRC received additional NWSC funding to support 2 additional projects including support for 2 interns to conduct education and outreach to protect eelgrass beds in Wildcat Cove and an education and outreach toolkit that is going to be piloted at the Day at the Beach event at Birch Bay State Park on May 30th and the What's the Point Intertidal Exploration Event at Point Whitehorn on June 14th.</p> |

Project Updates

| Project Title | Update for Current Month |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Beach Seine with Schools | The MRC hosted their second Beach Seine with Schools event on May 12 th with 72 students from Columbia Elementary School. It was a calm, beautiful day at Boulevard Park and several salmonids and other fish species were observed. The final event is scheduled for May 22 nd with 68 students from Cordata Elementary School. |
| 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 May 5 th , 12 th , and 19 th and will be collected on the 26 th . Recreational shellfish harvest closed in mid-April and remains closed in Drayton Harbor and Birch Bay. |
| Forage Fish Surveys | The MRC will conduct a forage fish survey at Little Squalicum Beach on May 28 th and at Clayton Beach on May 29 th . |
| Bull Kelp Monitoring | The MRC has scheduled survey dates for their 4 sites for the 2026 monitoring season. MRC staff and volunteers will be participating in kayak safety trainings at the end of May. |
| Wildcat Cove Eelgrass Preservation | The MRC kicked off planning discussions for outreach and education efforts at the boat launch in Wildcat Cove in Larrabee State Park. |

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| Olympia Oyster Restoration | <p>The MRC kicked off their Olympia oyster restoration project in Drayton Harbor on April 22nd. In partnership with the Puget Sound Restoration Fund (PSRF), the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and many volunteers, the MRC distributed 150 bags of Olympia oyster cultch across 6 sites in Drayton Harbor. Volunteers will be returning on June 17th to establish baseline data for the number of live Olympia oysters to account for any mortality that may have occurred since they were moved from PSRF's hatchery a year ago.</p> <p>Olympia oyster spat provided by PSRF will also be distributed at 3 sites in North Chuckanut Bay on June 10th. The bags will be dropped by boat into the 3 plots and the MRC will return in August to open the bags and distribute the shell within the plots.</p> |
| Education and Outreach Toolkit | <p>The MRC kicked off planning meetings to determine supplies and draft lesson plans to compile an outreach and education toolkit that will be piloted at upcoming outreach events during May and June. The main topic/provided tools will be for intertidal exploration.</p> |

Membership & Leadership Updates (if changes occurred)

| Status | Name | Role | Departure Date |
|------------------|-----------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Departing Member | Abby Neal | Recreational Interest | 5/15 |
| Departing Member | Joe Hoats | Economic Interest | 4/23 |

Event & Meetings List

| Name | Date(s) | Partner(s) | Information |
|---|---|---|---|
| Day at the Beach | Saturday, May 30 th , 10-1pm | Birch Bay State Park | https://www.whatcomcd.org/event-details/day-at-the-beach-2026 |
| What's the Point Intertidal Exploration Event | Sunday, June 14 th , 10-1pm | Whatcom Land Trust, Whatcom Conservation District, DNR Aquatic Reserves, etc. | https://www.whatcomcountymrc.org/media/pzdhuyxu/whats-the-point-flyer-2026-002.png A free, family friendly event to explore the amazing intertidal habitats at Point Whitehorn Park |

Photos



Project name(s): Olympia Oyster Restoration – Drayton Harbor April 22nd Event
Photographer credit(s): Dana Daniels (top left), Laura Hanna (top right), and Izzi Lavalle (bottom left)



Project name(s): Beach Seine with Schools – May 12th, Columbia Elementary Event
Photographer credit(s): Dana Daniels



Commission staff highlights - [May 2026]

MRC Support

MRC Grants: Quarterly payment requests and progress reports were submitted by MRC and county staff, which were processed by NW Straits Commission and Ecology fiscal staff. Several MRC grants are in the amendment process to add the projects proposed in the supplemental funding round approved by the Commission in April.

MRC Meetings:

May 5, Island – Sasha

May 14, Skagit – Leah, Jeff, Jessica

Regional Projects

Kelp Plan: Staff presented the idea of the Living Kelp Plan at WA Dept of Natural Resources' (DNR) Kelp Research and Monitoring Workshop. Staff also met with the Kelp Plan Coordination Advisory Committee to discuss advances in kelp conservation and recovery. Staff co-presented on the Kelp Plan and kayak monitoring at WWU with Dana Daniels (Whatcom MRC).

Kelp Monitoring: Staff hosted the Peninsula Kayak Kickoff on May 8 at the beautiful Jamestown S'Klallam Tribal Center. During the event, participants from Jefferson and Clallam MRC reviewed kelp monitoring and safety protocols and practiced how to conduct kelp surveys using a GPS. We want to give a big thank you to Jamestown S'Klallam and Neil Harrington (Jamestown S'Klallam DNR staff and Jefferson MRC Vice Chair) for hosting us. NW Straits Commission also hosted MRC volunteers at this year's on the water Bowman Bay kayak safety class, which was run by Fidalgo Paddlesports.

European Green Crab: Trapping efforts continue in Drayton Harbor and Samish Bay with help from Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and Washington Conservation Corps. Staff are coordinating trapping efforts via airboat with both Washington Department of Natural Resources and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife for later in the season.

Voluntary No-Anchor Zones: Staff held a Transboundary eelgrass protection workgroup meeting May 14 with partners across WA and BC to discuss the upcoming boating season. Staff also are working to add virtual voluntary no-anchor zones to other navigational platforms.

Derelict Vessels: Planning continues with the Makah Tribe and DNR about co-hosting a vessel turn-in with the Neah Bay community and Tribe. Additionally, staff are planning to reconvene the derelict vessel work group to plan how to prioritize funds for 2026 and 2027.



Commission staff highlights - [May 2026]

SoundIQ: Recorded new HowTo video on export of data to GIS file formats and how to access the metadata.

Operations

Staff: The hiring process is in progress to fill the Program Coordinator position that is currently vacant.

Budget: As we approach the end of the state fiscal year (June 30), Commission staff are reviewing MRC grant spending to ensure year one funds are fully expended.

Communications: Approved logo guidance shared with MRC lead staff and Commission members. Communications plan work continues with an overview of progress at the May Commission meeting. Requested Commission feedback on communications tools (Baselines awareness survey 2027, Commission staff role clarification [Contact Us | NW Straits](#), Structural diagram/one page graphic).

Contracts and grants: Commission staff is renewing the service agreement with WA Tech for ongoing website hosting and maintenance. The grant agreement with the NW Straits Foundation that directed Skagit MRC project funds from our fiscal year 2022 NOAA award to tasks carried out by the NW Straits Foundation was completed and closed.

Broad Community Engagement: Staff are exploring ways to implement Community Connectivity Analysis into MRC recruitment efforts.

Other Meetings Attended

Island MRCs Community Science Forage Fish workshop (4/27) – Dana and Leah

Kelp Research and Monitoring Workgroup (5/13) – Jeff presented

Transboundary Kelp Node (May 5, 14) – Jeff

Transboundary Eelgrass (5/14) – Dana, Leah, Allie, Jessica

Ecology SEA Program Management Team (4/27, 5/11, 5/18, 5/25) - Lucas

Puget Sound Partnership Ecosystem Coordination Board Meeting (5/7) - Lucas

Washington Interagency Communicators Roundtable (5/15) – Jessica