



# Minutes

## Northwest Straits Commission Meeting June 26, 2026, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

### Attendees

*Commission Members:* Jamie Stephens (Chair), Rick Beauregard (Whatcom), Alan Clark (Clallam), Ken Collins (Island), Cecilia Gobin (Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission), Emily Grason, Peter Haase (Skagit – alternate), Brenda Johnson (Jefferson), Christina Koons (San Juan), Phil Salditt (Snohomish)

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

*Others in Attendance:* Morgan Arrington

*Absent:* Lynne Wenberg (Vice-Chair, Skagit), Mindy Roberts (Puget Sound Partnership), Elsa Schwartz (Island)

### Welcome and Tribal Acknowledgement

Jamie Stephens opened the meeting with the Tribal Acknowledgment, introductions, and a welcome to Katalin Chapman, the new Northwest Straits Commission Program Coordinator.

The May 29, 2026 Northwest Straits Commission meeting minutes were approved by consensus.

### Speed Date with a Scientist: Integrating human dimensions into shoreline restoration monitoring

Morgan Arrington, Ph.D. student at the University of Washington's School of Aquatic and Fishery Sciences presented on a monitoring database and a new survey. The [Shoreline Monitoring Database](#) is a resource to upload data from standardized protocols for monitoring shorelines in the Puget Sound. The [Puget Sound Shoreline Survey](#) aims to learn about place-based experiences and attachment to shorelines in Puget Sound, and community views on shoreline restoration. Please contact Morgan Arrington ([marringt@uw.edu](mailto:marringt@uw.edu)) with any questions, or thoughts on how this survey can support Marine Resource Committee work. Check out the [presentation slides!](#)

### Marine Resources Committee (MRC) Reports

#### *Clallam MRC – Alan Clark*

- The pigeon guillemot team began monitoring colonies this month, with high community volunteer turnout.



- The kelp team met at Freshwater Bay on June 13 to monitor two kelp beds in the area via kayak. One kelp bed is doing well, and one has yet to emerge for the season. There was strong volunteer participation.
- The MRC supported the Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe in completing their annual Olympia oyster monitoring surveys on Sequim Bay.

#### ***Island MRC – Ken Collins***

- The bull kelp monitoring season began with surveys at Possession Point and Lowell Point.
- The stewardship and restoration team is continuing weeding efforts at Hoypus Point.
- The MRC is working on its 2027- 2030 strategic plan to be put into action in January 2027.
- The derelict crab pot removal project, in partnership with Skagit MRC, Swinomish Tribe, and Northwest Straits Foundation, has kicked off with surveys to determine location and removal beginning in July.

#### ***Jefferson MRC – Brenda Johnson***

- The MRC hosted its annual crabbing 101 on June 24 to educate on derelict crab pots, crabbing harvest regulations, and best practices with speakers from WA Department of Fish and Wildlife, Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe, and Northwest Straits Foundation.
- A raingarden work party was led in May to weed and connect with the community on the purpose of rain gardens, and the opportunity to adopt one of the MRC’s raingardens.
- Monitoring of the North Beach kelp bed in June showed growth to the east, and a potential merging with another kelp bed.

#### ***San Juan MRC – Christina Koons***

- The Commission shared gratitude for Christina Koons at her last Commission meeting as the San Juan MRC representative.
- Dock talks have been hosted to engage boaters in best practices on the water, providing resources like whale warning flags, information on anchoring out of eelgrass, and how to report derelict vessels.
- Derelict vessel work is under way with water and aerial surveys to track vessels and see where “hotspots” overlap with sensitive habitats like eelgrass beds.
- Through its advisory role the MRC had County Council send a letter to Transport Canada regarding the transboundary issue of oil spill prevention, particularly with increased tanker traffic. This letter describes the value of prevention and risk reduction. It was well received and the idea of a joint spill response exercise was floated.

#### ***Skagit MRC – Peter Haase***

- The MRC’s 2026-2031 strategic plan has been finalized and approved, one focus is the recruitment and retention of members.
- The Fidalgo Bay Olympia oyster settlement is showing high oyster density and recruitment numbers, including on the west side of the bay which had no previous recruitment.



- Derelict crab pot side-scan sonar surveys identified 169 derelict crab pots for removal in July and August.
- The MRC recently heard of a potential sand lance spawning site and plans to explore it in the fall.

#### ***Snohomish MRC – Phil Salditt***

- Crabber outreach events are planned for July 3 and 4 at the Port of Everett. Informational cards will be shared, and past turnout has been 200-300 people.
- Kelp monitoring and derelict vessel identification work is ongoing, along with outreach to local boating groups on marine vegetation information.
- The MRC's summer intern will work through September to analyze forage fish data. They may reach out to other MRCs for additional data points.

#### ***Whatcom MRC – Rick Beauregard***

- The Puget Sound Restoration Fund provided 200 bags of Olympia oyster spat on Pacific oyster shells which were placed in North Chuckanut Bay. 27 volunteers participated in the event, representing a wide variety of organizations.
- The MRC hosted its last Beach Seine with Schools event of the season. 72 students participated in the May event, and a total of 185 participated in the program this year.
- Two interns were hired to direct boat-launching traffic away from eelgrass beds in Wildcat Cove.

## **Committee Updates**

### ***Executive Committee***

The Committee is discussing the option of moving the annual MRC Conference to an every-other-year cadence, with targeted symposiums in off-years to continue collaborative opportunities while limiting costs. More information will be shared with the Commission as the conversation continues. Potential Environmental Leadership Award nominees are being discussed by the Executive Committee.

Additionally, Lucas shared guidance on Northwest Straits logo usage, which is available online in the [Brand Guide](#).

### ***External Relations***

The Northwest Straits Commission reauthorization bill has passed the House and is advancing in the Senate. Follow progress of the Northwest Straits reauthorization bill through the [House](#) and [Senate](#). The Committee reviewed plans to form a legislative site visit workgroup with MRC participation.



### *Science Advisory Committee (SAC)*

The Science Advisory Committee did not meet in June.

The July meeting will include preparation of discussion plans for the November MRC Conference workshop.

Emily Grason emphasized the Science Advisory Committee's offer of a collaborative session with MRCs is still open. Several MRCs have already scheduled sessions. Please contact Dana Oster ([oster@nwstraits.org](mailto:oster@nwstraits.org)) if your MRC is interested.

## Business Items

### *MRC Legislative Site Visit Workgroup*

Lucas reiterated the importance of highlighting MRC work to federal and state legislators. Workgroup members are planning site visits with their respective MRCs and looking for ways to collaborate across MRCs on site visits.

### *Northwest Straits Commission budget overview with MRCs*

Northwest Straits Commission staff would like to schedule time on MRC agendas to provide education and an overview of the NWSC budget and how it links to MRCs.

### *July Commission meeting reminder*

The Commission will meet in-person in Clallam County on Friday July 24, from 10:45AM to 3:45PM at the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe Community Center and virtually on August 28. More information will be available on our [events page](#).

## Project Updates

### *Green Crab*

Allie Simpson shared updated numbers on green crab trapping efforts in Drayton Harbor and Samish Bay. As of 6/17, a total of 835 crabs were captured, including 29 egg-bearing crabs. Each clutch from an egg-bearing crab can hold 180,000 eggs, meaning an estimated 5 million eggs were removed! Learn more on our European [green crab page](#) and please contact Allie Simpson ([simpson@nwstraits.org](mailto:simpson@nwstraits.org)) with any questions.

### *Volunteer No Anchor Zones*

Allie shared an update on voluntary no-anchor zones. Vessel monitoring trainings are under way for volunteers and MRCs. If your MRC is interested in a training, please contact Allie Simpson ([simpson@nwstraits.org](mailto:simpson@nwstraits.org)).

Northwest Straits Commission's Anchor Out campaign is ramping up for the summer with ads and articles. *The Salish Current* highlighted this work in a recent article, "[Local groups promote green boating during World Cup traffic](#)" which included an interview with Allie Simpson. Waggoner Cruising Guide July eNews featured an article [Protecting Eelgrass Meadows in East Sound, Orcas Island | Waggoner](#). An [anchor out toolkit and resources](#) like graphics and logos are available for



MRC and partner use. Learn more on our [anchor out](#) and [voluntary no-anchor zones](#) pages, or contact Dana Oster ([oster@nwstraits.org](mailto:oster@nwstraits.org)).

## Northwest Straits Commissioner Updates

Phil Salditt noted the Northwest Straits Foundation is hiring a new Executive Director. Learn more through the Valtas Group's [position profile](#).

### *Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission*

Cecilia noted the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission is working to amend Section 120 of the Marine Mammal Protection Act to protect salmon stocks that are listed as endangered or of concern. This could include salmon, sturgeon, lamprey, and more, and would mirror amendments that Columbia River tribes made recently.

Additionally, the WA State Department of Ecology is working to tighten nutrient and stormwater discharges from municipal wastewater treatment plants via individual NPDES permits for facilities along the coast. Public comment periods are open for several facilities. Learn more on Ecology's [Puget Sound Nutrient General Permit](#) page.

### *Puget Sound Partnership*

There was no update this month.

## Public Comment

There was no public comment.

## Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 11:55AM.

*The next meeting of the Northwest Straits Commission will be on July 24, 2026 at Red Cedar Hall, Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe Community Center, 1033 Old Blyn Hwy, Sequim, WA 98382  
Information can be found on our [events page](#).*