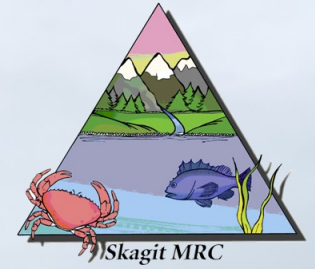


# Skagit County

## MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE



## 2025 Annual Report



Salish Sea Stewards class exploring Deception Pass State Park tidepools.  
Photo By: Padilla Bay NERR staff



This project has been funded wholly or in part by the United States Environmental Protection Agency under Assistance Agreement CE-02J98701-0 to Puget Sound Partnership. The contents of this document do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the Environmental Protection Agency, nor does mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation for use.

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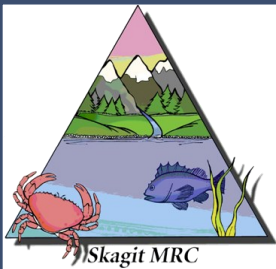
Jellyfish painting by MRC member Darla Gay Smith.

# YEAR IN REVIEW: 2025

This report highlights the Skagit Marine Resources Committee's (MRC) accomplishments and demonstrates the multiple collaborations and partnerships, shared resources, in-kind support, leveraged funding, and trained community volunteers which all contribute to a greater collective impact in protecting and improving the health of the Salish Sea.

|             |                      |                        |              |           |                             |
|-------------|----------------------|------------------------|--------------|-----------|-----------------------------|
| <b>11</b>   | <b>97</b>            | <b>2,669+</b>          | <b>11</b>    | <b>54</b> | <b>\$137,808</b>            |
| MRC Members | Community Volunteers | Volunteer Hours        | MRC Projects | Partners  | Leveraged Funding (In-Kind) |
|             |                      | Value= <b>\$12,571</b> |              |           |                             |

## SKAGIT COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEMBERS



MRC members are volunteers appointed by the Board of Skagit County Commissioners as stakeholders of the marine environment representing a broad spectrum of community interests including tribal, government, economic, recreational, conservation, and scientific. The MRC identifies local priorities and carries out projects that help restore and protect the marine environment. Skagit MRC is administered under the Natural Resources Division of Skagit County Public Works.

MRC members contributed over  
**887**  
Volunteer Hours!



Kevin Anderson  
(Port of Anacortes)



Lynne Wenberg-Davidson  
**MRC Chair**  
**NWSC Rep**  
(Skagit Land Trust)



Pete Haase  
**MRC Vice- Chair**  
(Citizen-at-Large)



Darla Gay Smith  
(Sport Fishing)



Jude Apple  
(Padilla Bay NERR)



Paul Dinnel  
(Marine Scientist)

**Congratulations!**  
**Dr. Paul Dinnel**

**2025 Northwest Straits**  
**Environmental Leadership**  
**Award Recipient**



Matt Castle  
(Samish Indian Nation)



Carolyn Moulton  
(City of Anacortes)



Elizabeth Drozda  
(The Salish Sea School)



Catey Ritchie  
(Swinomish Tribal Community)



Dale Fournier  
(Environmental Education)



Tracy Alker  
**Skagit MRC Staff**  
(Skagit County Public Works)

### Want to Learn More?

MRC meetings occur the second Thursday each month from 9am-11am and are open to the public. For more information, contact Tracy Alker at [tracya@co.skagit.wa.us](mailto:tracya@co.skagit.wa.us) or [www.skagitmrc.org](http://www.skagitmrc.org)

# Organizational Structure and Funding

We are a grassroots collaboration encompassing seven counties with a mission to protect and restore the marine waters, habitats, and species of the Northwest Straits region. Our work is driven by community needs, priorities, and boots on the ground actions. Our unique organizational structure includes the regional coordinating body of the Northwest Straits Commission and seven county-based Marine Resources Committees enabling strong collective action at the local level and across the region.



Northwest Straits Commission carries out regional conservation projects and provides funding, training, guidance, technical support, and regional collaboration to support the 7 MRCs.

Clallam  
MRC

Jefferson  
MRC

Island  
MRC

Skagit  
MRC

San Juan  
MRC

Snohomish  
MRC

Whatcom  
MRC

Marine Resources Committees are a county-based grassroots collaboration of community volunteers representing diverse interest groups that serve as advisors to local government and carry out projects that protect and restore marine resources through sound science and education and outreach.

## 2025 Funding

### Skagit County Marine Resources Committee



PUGET SOUND  
PARTNERSHIP

\$61,500



DEPARTMENT OF  
ECOLOGY  
State of Washington

\$65,000



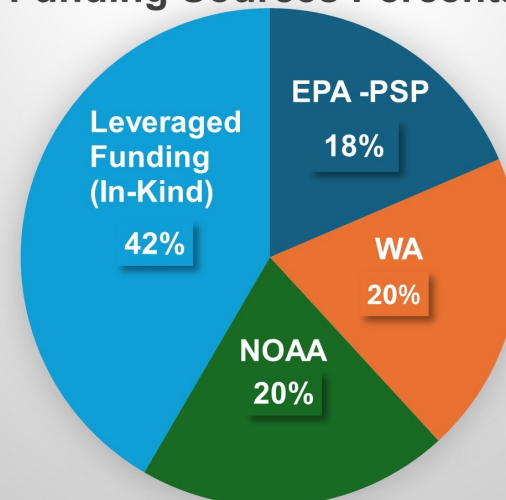
NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

\$67,000

Leveraged Funding (in-kind) \$137,808

**TOTAL MRC FUNDING \$289,934**

### Funding Sources Percentages



## 21st Annual Fidalgo Bay Day

*Fidalgo Bay Resort, 4701, Fidalgo bay Rd Anacortes*

**MRC Budget:** \$3,500

**Project Lead:** Jenn Dumas, Skagit Valley College Environmental Conservation Student and Salish Sea Steward volunteer

**Key Partners:** Samish Indian Nation, Friends of Salish Sea, and Skagit County Natural Resources Division

**Why We Do It:** To raise awareness about the marine environment, foster stewardship and build connections with the community, volunteers, and like-minded organizations and businesses.

**Highlights:** Fidalgo Bay Day is Skagit MRC's signature annual educational event that is FREE for all to enjoy. It kicked off with opening remarks from MRC member and City of Anacortes Council Member, Carolyn Moulton and Coast Salish Elder Rosie Cayou James. The event featured 32 interactive educational booths hosted by local organizations with passports stamped for prizes, a coloring contest, beach seining demonstration, touch tank with living marine creatures, a giant grey whale skull, microscopes, Corra the Selkie, craft activities, face painting, complimentary seafood samples from Taylor Shellfish and chowders from Adrift, Gere-A-Deli, and Island Café, and a no host traditional Coast Salish salmon BBQ lunch, and it was a Zero Waste Event in partnership with Skagit Soils. Local businesses donated door refreshments and prizes for volunteers.

A special thanks to Jenn Dumas for taking the lead, County staff Anna Thomas and Intern Halee Sexton for event planning, and all the volunteers, Samish Indian Nation, Friends of the Salish Sea, and participating organizations and businesses! This event wouldn't have happened without all of you!!



Shannon Point Marine Center volunteer holds a sea star for a child.  
Photo By: Lynne Wenberg-Davidson

|                  |                   |                  |                                         |                                |
|------------------|-------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>300+</b>      | <b>30</b>         | <b>450</b>       | <b>40</b>                               | <b>155</b>                     |
| <b>Attendees</b> | <b>Volunteers</b> | <b>Volunteer</b> | <b>Organizations<br/>and Businesses</b> | <b>Discovery<br/>Passports</b> |



Salish Sea Steward participants learning forage fish survey techniques.  
Photo By: Erin Merklein, PBNERR

## Salish Sea Stewards

*A FREE 40-Hour Training Program for Volunteers Since 2014*

**MRC Budget:** \$45,500

**Project Lead:** Darla Gay Smith



**Key Partners:** Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (PBNERR), Padilla Bay Foundation, Salish Sea Stewards Advisory Committee (SSS alumni and MRC members)

**Why We Do It:** To train and build upon a strong network of community science volunteers to engage in efforts that support the MRC's mission, become better stewards of the marine environment, and help educate others.

**Highlights:** This FREE 40-hour community science volunteer training program was taught by 30 local experts from 21 organizations on a variety of topics impacting the Salish Sea and various volunteer opportunities. 11 classes were held Tuesdays, 1pm-5pm at Padilla Bay, February 18 – April 29. 24 participants completed the training program in 2025. There are now 380 trained SSS volunteers that have contributed over 58,547 volunteer hours since 2014! This program helps connect volunteers to many local conservation organizations with volunteer opportunities, training opportunities, educational and social events through the SSS electronic news bulletin, "The WAVE" and Facebook.

Many thanks to Darla Gay Smith for taking the lead, to Erin Merklein and the Salish Sea Stewards Advisory Committee volunteers for guiding and implementing this program, and to all of the presenters for donating their time and expertise!

|                          |                               |                            |                      |                            |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>11</b>                | <b>40</b>                     | <b>30</b>                  | <b>21</b>            | <b>24</b>                  |
| Classes                  | Training Hours                | Presenters                 | Organizations        | Volunteers Trained in 2025 |
| <b>380</b>               | <b>474</b>                    | <b>58,547+</b>             | <b>668+</b>          |                            |
| Total Trained Volunteers | Class of 2025 Volunteer Hours | Volunteer Hours since 2014 | The WAVE Subscribers |                            |



Conway Middle School 8th grade students and teachers, PBNERR staff, Samish Indian Nation DNR staff, and volunteers at Fidalgo Bay Resort.  
Photo By: Conway Teacher



Allen Elementary School— Kids on the Beach mudflat investigation at Padilla Bay.  
Photo By: Annie England, PBNERR

# Kids on the Beach

*Increasing Marine Science Literacy in Schools Since 2018*

**MRC Budget:** \$19,500

**Project Leads:** Jude Apple & Pete Haase

**Key Partners:** Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (PBNERR), Samish Indian Nation DNR, Evergreen Elementary School, Conway Middle School, Allen Elementary School, and Concrete High School

**Why We Do It:** To increase marine science literacy and accessibility for 5th-12th grade students in Skagit County and inspire the next generation of scientists and environmental stewards.

**Highlights:** This program provides students with authentic hands-on ecological, restoration, and conservation research experiences generating useful scientific data in the classroom and on the beach. In 2025, 258 5th-12th grade students from 4 schools learned about estuarine ecology, data collection and analyses, and communicating results. Students conducted 6 different investigations in Padilla and Fidalgo Bays: bird surveys, crab molt surveys (1 European green crab found!), plankton investigations, embryological stage development investigation, fish seine, and mudflat investigation. For many students, this was their very first time on a beach! This was a collaborative community effort with field support provided by Samish DNR staff and 45 volunteers contributing 208 hours. For more information: [skagitmrc.org– Kids on the Beach](https://skagitmrc.org/Kids-on-the-Beach)

Many thanks to Pete Haase, Jude Apple, Annie England, Samish Indian Nation, participating schools and teachers, and all the volunteers for guiding and supporting this program!

|                 |                |                             |                   |                        |
|-----------------|----------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| <b>258</b>      | <b>4</b>       | <b>6</b>                    | <b>45</b>         | <b>208</b>             |
| <b>Students</b> | <b>Schools</b> | <b>Field Investigations</b> | <b>Volunteers</b> | <b>Volunteer Hours</b> |



La Conner 4th-5th grade class on rain gardens with volunteer educator Elizabeth Drozda.  
Photo By: Cammy Alumbres, La Conner Elementary School teacher

# La Conner School Rain Garden

*2-Year Project (2024—2025)*

**MRC Budget:** \$12,000

**Project Leads:** Elizabeth Drozda, Lynne Wenberg-Davidson, and County intern Halee Sexton

**Key Partners:** La Conner Elementary School, Skagit County Public Works, Skagit Conservation District, Swinomish Tribal Community, Westar Solutions, Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF)

**Why We Do It:** Improve water quality, enhance wildlife habitat, and provide an educational tool for the school and community to increase awareness of stormwater pollution and rain gardens.

**Highlights:** This was a collaborative community project to improve the functionality of the La Conner Elementary School rain garden and provide educational opportunities. In 2024, improvements were made to stormwater flow, a gravel pathway and mulch were added and 25 students installed 38 native plants. In 2025, 25 additional native plants were installed, the rain garden curriculum was implemented and taught to students, and the rain garden interpretive signage and native plant identification signs were installed as additional educational tools for the rain garden curriculum. A rain garden irrigation kit was also purchased to help ensure survival of the new plantings. [Skagitmrc.org– School Rain Gardens](https://Skagitmrc.org-School-Rain-Gardens)

|                 |                      |                        |                              |
|-----------------|----------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>25</b>       | <b>63</b>            | <b>25</b>              | <b>6</b>                     |
| <b>Students</b> | <b>Native Plants</b> | <b>Volunteer Hours</b> | <b>Partner Organizations</b> |

A special thanks to Skagit County Public Works for improving the functionality of the rain garden, Skagit Conservation District for technical guidance, Swinomish Indian Nation for native plant identification, Elizabeth Drozda for educating students about the rain garden, Lynne Wenberg-Davidson and Halee Sexton for installing native plants and plant ID signs, NWSF interns for watering plants, Westar Solutions for donating the interpretive sign, and the La Conner School District for rain garden maintenance, sign installation, and student engagement.

# Miscellaneous Education and Outreach Events



MRC volunteer Lynne Wenberg-Davidson holds up a European green crab in resin to demonstrate how it is identified.  
Photo By: Pete Haase

## Skagit Valley Festival of Family Farms October 4 – 5, 2025

Skagit MRC hosted an outreach booth at Taylor Shellfish Farm in Bow for the Skagit Valley Festival of Family Farms event to increase awareness of our Olympia Oyster Restoration project, invasive European Green Crabs and collaborations with Taylor Shellfish. Activities included a shell identification and tracing game, crab molt identification, and European green



European green crab plinko game  
Photo By: Tracy Alker

|                   |                        |                        |
|-------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>7</b>          | <b>32</b>              | <b>793</b>             |
| <b>Volunteers</b> | <b>Volunteer Hours</b> | <b>Event Attendees</b> |



PSRF and WDFW divers prepare for a pinto abalone outplant site survey and celebrate a birthday.  
Photo By: PSRF



Juvenile pinto abalone in tube for outplanting.  
Photo By: PSRF



Lab techs counting pinto abalone larvae.  
Photo By: PSRF

# Pinto Abalone Restoration

Partners in Pinto Abalone Restoration Since 2014

**MRC Budget:** \$23,000

**Project Lead:** Paul Dinnel

**Key Partners:** Puget Sound Restoration Fund (PSRF), WA Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW), Shannon Point Marine Center (SPMC), Seattle Aquarium, and Samish Indian Nation

**Why We Do It:** Pinto abalone (*Haliotis kamtschatkana*), the only known species of abalone found in Washington State waters, is listed as a state endangered species and cannot recover without help. They are a vital part of a healthy marine ecosystem.

**Highlights:** This project is part of a larger collaborative effort to rebuild a sustainable spawning population in northern Puget Sound. Since 2009, around 33,000 hatchery raised juvenile pinto abalone have been outplanted at 15 rocky reef sites in Skagit County waters in an effort to rebuild abalone population densities needed for natural reproduction.

In 2025, we partnered with PSRF to conduct diver surveys at 9 outplant sites to monitor survival, growth, and movement of the pinto abalone outplanted in 2024. Although the abalone survival rate was lower than expected, 6 of the 9 sites had successful results. 6,596 juvenile abalone were outplanted at 9 sites, 4 of which were newly established and seeded for the first time in 2025. We will continue this important work in 2026 and 2027.

A special thanks to Dr. Paul Dinnel for taking the lead in pinto abalone restoration for Skagit MRC and to PSRF, WDFW, SPMC, and Samish Indian Nation for sharing resources and expanding this important effort.

|                |                    |                    |                               |
|----------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| 15             | 4                  | 6,596              | 33,000                        |
| Outplant Sites | New Outplant Sites | Abalone Outplanted | Abalone Outplanted Since 2009 |

**5.5+ million Olympia oysters in Fidalgo Bay can filter 66 million gallons of water in just one day!**



A naturally recruited Olympia oyster bed in a Fidalgo Bay salt marsh slough.  
Photo By: PSRF

**5.5+  
million!**  
Olympia  
Oysters

**7**  
Olympia  
Oyster  
Settlement  
Shell Bags  
Monitored

**50%**  
More Native  
Oyster  
Larvae in  
2025!

**7**  
Olympia  
Oyster  
Settlement  
Shell Bags  
Deployed

## Olympia Oyster Monitoring

*Partners in Olympia Restoration Since 2002*

**MRC Budget:** \$0

**Project Lead:** Paul Dinnel

**Key Partners:** Puget Sound Restoration Fund (PSRF), Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW), Samish Indian Nation

**Why We Do It:** The Olympia oyster, *Ostrea lurida*, is the only oyster native to the Pacific Coast of North America and were driven to near extinction in the late 1800s from over harvesting and severe water pollution. Olympia oysters provide important habitat for other species, stabilize sediment, contribute to nutrient cycling, are culturally significant for indigenous peoples, and can improve water quality as filter feeders.

**Highlights:** Since 2002, Skagit MRC has been working collaboratively with many partners and community volunteers to establish a sustainable Olympia oyster population in Fidalgo Bay. With our help, the native oyster population in Fidalgo Bay has increased from around 50,000 in 2002 to an estimated 5.5 million oysters in 2023!! MRC volunteers continue to conduct small scale monitoring each year to track and measure oyster larval settlement, densities, settlement locations and sizes. Annual monitoring is also important in assessing the impact of extreme temperature changes or natural or manmade disasters.

In 2025, two MRC volunteers tallied 50% more oyster larvae in 7 oyster recruitment shell bags which indicated 2024 was a good spawning year. Volunteers set out 7 new recruitment shell bags that will be collected in 2026. In addition, volunteers set out shell strings (shells on a stick) as part of a larger project led by PSRF for monitoring oyster settlement throughout Puget Sound. A Story Map of the Olympia Oyster Restoration project was created as project deliverable of the Skagit Shoreline Needs Assessment. A link to the [Native Olympia Oyster Restoration Story Map](#) is available on the MRC's website.

A special thanks to Dr. Paul Dinnel for his expertise and for taking the lead in continuing to drive this project forward each year, even without funding! Paul has also helped expand Olympia oyster restoration to other areas across the northern Puget Sound region.

### Forage Fish Surveys

*Conducting Forage Fish Surveys Since 2012*

**MRC Budget:** \$9,700

**Project Lead:** Pete Haase

**Key Partners:** The Salish Sea School, Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC), Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW), Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF), Swinomish Indian Tribal Community, Friends of the Salish Sea

**Why We Do It:** Forage fish are a critical food source for seabirds, salmon, and marine mammals. Forage fish surveys identify where and when surf smelt and Pacific sand lance spawn on beaches, and examines annual variations and potential trends in the spawning population. Forage fish surveys also provide a great opportunity to educate beach goers and school groups about the importance of forage fish and beach habitat.

**Highlights:** This project is part of a larger collaborative effort to collect forage fish data across the Puget Sound region. In 2025, we partnered with The Salish Sea School to coordinate forage fish surveys with volunteers. Monthly samples were collected at four index sites (Ship Harbor and Lovrics/Guemes Channel, Similk Bay, and Samish Bay) and three restoration sites (Bowman Bay, Clayton Beach, and Similk Bay). WDFW processes and analyzes the eggs and maintains the data collected by volunteers. The data is shared with the MRC, NWSC, and state agencies. Surf smelt eggs were most abundant on Skagit beaches in June—September but spawning can occur year around. 13 Skagit MRC volunteers attended WDFW's forage fish survey training in 2025.

A special thanks to Project Lead Pete Haase for coordinating and leading the forage fish surveys in Skagit County for the last 13 years and to all the volunteers who have helped along the way!

**21**  
**Volunteers**

**335**  
**Volunteer Hours**

**7**  
**Survey Sites**

**13**  
**Beach Stations**

**144**  
**Samples**



Project Lead Pete Haase hands over the forage fish survey materials to Catherine Houck, the new Forage Fish Survey Coordinator with The Salish Sea School.  
Photo By: Lynne Wenberg-Davidson



Kayak volunteer Catherine Houck conducting a bull kelp survey at Biz Point.  
Photo By: Lynne Wenberg-Davidson

# Bull Kelp Kayak Surveys

*Monitoring Bull Kelp in Skagit County Waters Since 2017*

**MRC Budget:** \$0

**Project Lead:** Lynne Wenberg-Davidson

**Key Partners:** Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC), WA Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), and Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF)

**Why We Do It:** Bull kelp is vital to the health of marine ecosystems because it provides a biodiverse habitat and food source for a wide variety of marine life. It also protects shorelines by reducing wave action, produces oxygen, absorbs nutrients, and reduces ocean acidification. An estimated 80% of the historic kelp beds in south Puget Sound have disappeared. Monitoring helps track changes, identify threats, and inform conservation and restoration efforts. <https://nwstraits.org/our-work/kelp-monitoring>

**Highlights:** This is part of a large collaborative effort to monitor changes in kelp populations across the Puget Sound and Northwest Straits region. This project is 100% volunteer driven. Teams of experienced kayak volunteers conduct monthly survey at 7 kelp beds across 4 locations each year from June-September:

- **Coffin Rocks** (healthy kelp bed, density increased)
- **Shannon Point East** (kelp decreasing, no kelp beds observed)
- **Shannon Point West** (kelp bed expanded, but not very dense)
- **Biz Point** (healthy bull kelp)
- **Lone Tree** (moderate to very light kelp density)

A special thanks to Project Lead Lynne Wenberg-Davidson, the kayak team leaders: Steven Olsen, John Freeto, and Brad Smith, and all the other kayak kelp monitoring volunteers for making this project possible and to the NWSC for providing regional coordination, technical support and training.

**7**  
**Kelp Beds Monitored**

**12**  
**Volunteers**

**190**  
**Volunteer Hours**



NWSF interns holding dune grass.  
Photo By: NWSF

# Bowman Bay Stewardship

Partners in Bowman Bay Restoration and Stewardship Since 2015

**MRC Budget:** \$6,000

**Project Lead:** Lynne Wenberg-Davidson

**Key Partners:** Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF), Deception Pass State Park, Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group

**Why We Do It:** Native shoreline vegetation provides good habitat for insects (an important prey for juvenile salmon) and wildlife, and enables natural sediment transport processes along the shoreline for improved ecological resilience. It also offers an opportunity for education and community engagement.

**Highlights:** This project is part of a larger collaborative restoration project that began in 2015, to restore 0.6 acres by removing over 540 linear feet of rock armoring, adding 1080 tons of beach sediment to support forage fish spawning, and enhancing the riparian area with approximately 0.26 acres of native vegetation. Maintaining shoreline vegetation at Bowman Bay has been challenging due to harsh winter storms and increasingly warmer and drier summer seasons.

In 2025, we partnered with the NWSF to maintain the native vegetation at this site with the help of volunteers. Watering occurred 7 times throughout the 2025 summer season with the Parks water truck. Frequent watering had a positive impact on plant survivability and overall health at the restoration site. Monthly stewardship events focused on weeding and spreading mulch with a total of 22 volunteers culminating over 85 volunteer hours which also had a positive impact! NWSF staff, interns, and 10 volunteers planted 66 native plants and pulled invasive weeds on October 15th to celebrate Orca Recovery Day. Monthly stewardship events at Bowman Bay will continue in the summer of 2026.

A special thanks to Project Lead Lynne Wenberg–Davidson, State Parks, NWSF interns and staff, and all the volunteers for the increased stewardship at this site which has substantially increased the survivability and spread of previously planted native vegetation!

|                 |                    |                      |            |                 |
|-----------------|--------------------|----------------------|------------|-----------------|
| 7               | 4                  | 66                   | 22         | 85              |
| Watering Events | Stewardship Events | New Native Plantings | Volunteers | Volunteer Hours |



Bowman Bay beach seining volunteers pulling in net to count fish.  
Photo By: Lynne Wenberg-Davidson



NWSF staff Haley Sherman educates onlookers about nearshore fish species.  
Photo By: Lynne Wenberg-Davidson

## Bowman Bay Beach Seining

*Partners in Bowman Bay Restoration Monitoring Since 2014*

**MRC Budget:** \$11,000

**Project Lead:** Lynne Wenberg-Davidson

**Partners:** Northwest Straits Foundation (NWSF), Deception Pass State Park, Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group (SFEG)

**Why We Do It:** The robust post construction data set produced from this project will be valuable in evaluating nearshore fish use responses to the Bowman Bay Shoreline Restoration Project. Planned events and opportunistic engagement with the public during seining educate community members on the importance of the Puget Sound nearshore ecosystem.

**Highlights:** The schedule outlined in the Bowman Bay Restoration Project Monitoring Plan calls for post-restoration monitoring to occur in years 1-5, and 9 –10 after restoration has occurred. The first five years of post-construction beach seine surveys were completed in 2016 – 2019 and 2021. Years 9 – 10 of post-construction monitoring occurred in 2024 – 2025.

In 2025, NWSF staff along with MRC and SFEG volunteers conducted beach seine surveys throughout the year, surveying twice a month in February – June when juvenile salmon were most likely to be utilizing the nearshore habitat, and once a month July – January to monitor habitat use by other nearshore fish species. Some seining days had to be cancelled due to excessive amounts of ulva. 12 beach seine volunteers contributed over 188 volunteer service hours in 2025! 6,392 fish were counted including 12 Chinook, 1 Pink, and 1031 Chum salmon! A final comprehensive report will be completed and made available in 2026.

A special thanks to Project Lead Lynne Wenberg–Davidson, State Parks, NWSF staff, and all the volunteers for your dedication and perseverance in collecting this important data.

|                     |                       |                   |                        |
|---------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| <b>6,392</b>        | <b>20</b>             | <b>12</b>         | <b>188</b>             |
| <b>Fish Counted</b> | <b>Unique Species</b> | <b>Volunteers</b> | <b>Volunteer Hours</b> |

NEAP tool's geographic map of high priority areas.



# Skagit Shoreline Needs Assessment

*2-Year Multi-Phased Project (2024—2025)*

**MRC Budget:** \$50,000 (2-year project budget)

**Project Lead:** Lynne Wenberg-Davidson

**Key Partners:** Confluence Environmental, Skagit Watershed Council, Northwest Straits Foundation, Northwest Straits Commission (NWSC) Sound IQ, Skagit County GIS

**Why We Do It:** To identify and prioritize project opportunities for shoreline restoration and protection that will improve the ecological function of critical shoreline, estuarine, and nearshore habitats, and help accelerate the rate of recovery efforts as funding becomes available.

**Highlights:** This complex 2-year project resulted in a new geospatial web-based tool to help quickly identify and address current marine ecosystem needs using the most recent available data and research. It involved compiling and reviewing existing data and developing a framework for identifying and prioritizing potential projects and resulted in the following deliverables that are available on the Skagit MRC website: Nearshore Assessment and Priorities ([NEAP](#)) [Tool How-To Video](#), [NEAP Tool](#), and the [High Priority Areas Technical Report](#).

### **5 High Priority Areas:**

1. Crandall Spit and March Point
2. Samish Island and Outer Samish Bay
3. Gibraltar/Campbell Creek Mouth
4. Kiket Bay to SneeOosh Point
5. Cranberry Lake Creek Mouth Vicinity

[www.skagitmrc.org/projects/skagit-shoreline-needs-assessment/](http://www.skagitmrc.org/projects/skagit-shoreline-needs-assessment/)

A Special 'Thank You' goes out to Project Lead Lynne Wenberg-Davidson and the Technical Advisory Team for volunteering their time and expertise to help drive this project forward and to NWSC Sound IQ and Confluence Environmental for understanding our vision and creating this amazing tool accessible on Sound IQ!

# THANK YOU!

The Skagit MRC relies heavily on the technical, financial, and administrative support of the Northwest Straits Commission, Puget Sound Partnership, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Skagit County Public Works Clean Water program and the Skagit County Board of Commissioners. The Skagit MRC's work is driven by our dedicated MRC members, the collaboration and shared resources of many partner organizations, and the hard work of our amazing volunteers. The MRC acknowledges that the land and waters where our work resides are the ancestral homelands of the Coast Salish people and have been since time immemorial. We would like to express our deepest gratitude to the Samish Indian Nation and the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community for their partnership and in-kind staff support for our MRC projects. Thanks to all of our partners for making a difference!!



Salish Sea Stewards class of 2025 at Bowman Bay Deception Pass State Park.  
Photo By: Padilla Bay NERR staff