



EDUCATION/OUTREACH

OIL SPILL READINESS TRAINING

Oil spills are a hazard to marine life and habitat. We offer oil spill readiness training to prepare the community to respond if needed.



MAIN ACTIVITIES

- Partner with International Bird Rescue to provide free training.
- We offer three options, depending on the year: 24-hour Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response (HAZWOPER) training (certificate program), HAZWOPER refresher training (annual 8-hour renewal for certification) and Oiled Wildlife First Response training.

BUDGET & TIME FRAME

\$13,800 supports two years with one workshop per year. Lower Elwha Tribe sponsored the use of the Heritage Center this year (two days = \$650).

Ongoing time frame.

OUR PARTNERS

- International Bird Rescue (IBR): We contract with IBR and they give the training
- Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe: In 2025-2026 the Tribe sponsored the training at the Elwha Klallam Heritage Center for free or at a reduced cost.
- Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe: We have partnered with in the past and used their building for the training.





DELIVERABLES

- Training plan
- Promotional flyer
- Number of workshops
- Number of participants/attendees trained in HAZWOPER and/or Oiled Wildlife First Response training

OUTCOMES

- Increase the number of trained professional staff and volunteers who can respond to oil spills in Clallam County
- Provide training on safe handling of oiled and stressed wildlife
- Provide professional development for participants



This is a low-lift high impact project. We have a terrific partner, International Bird Rescue, that offers high-value professional trainings for a reasonable price. We have great Tribal partners (Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe and Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe) that support the training and help us with renting a space. We also continue to have community members interested in this learning opportunity, particularly this year, after a local oil spill caused immense environmental harm in 2025. After this local event, more people than usual signed up for the full course offered this fall.

Project leads:

Nancy Stephanz: ngstephanz@sisna.com
Chase O’Neil: chase.oneil@clallamcountywa.gov



Vision: To sustain and enhance a healthy, resilient marine environment where individuals are engaged and strive to support life for all inhabitants of Island County.

Values: The MRC values collaboration, inclusivity, and community-driven projects which are scientifically based, meaningful, and generate lasting results.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

As funding, support, and our volunteer base either expands or contracts, the MRC needs a way to expand, review, or prioritize projects. The strategic plan supports decision-making.

MAIN ACTIVITIES

- Create a Strategic Planning Subcommittee
- Contact partners and obtain copies of their strategic plans, lessons learned, and discuss the merits of our strategic planning process
- Discuss with the full IC MRC and consider how to organize the plan and narrow and concentrate our main areas of focus into pillars
- Regroup with the strategic planning subcommittee to consider the feedback and provide a rewrite
- Obtain feedback on the pillars, goals, and 2030 objectives. The objectives are designed to be SMART (Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound)

OUR PARTNERS

All of the partners were interviewed to provide a copy of their strategic plan, discuss lessons learned in strategic planning, and/or to talk about our areas of concentration or pillars in our plan.

BUDGET & TIMEFRAME

Budget: N/A

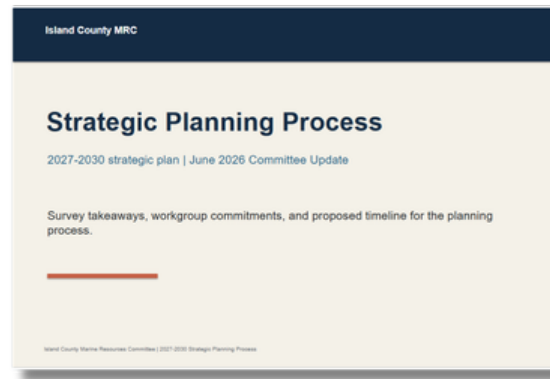
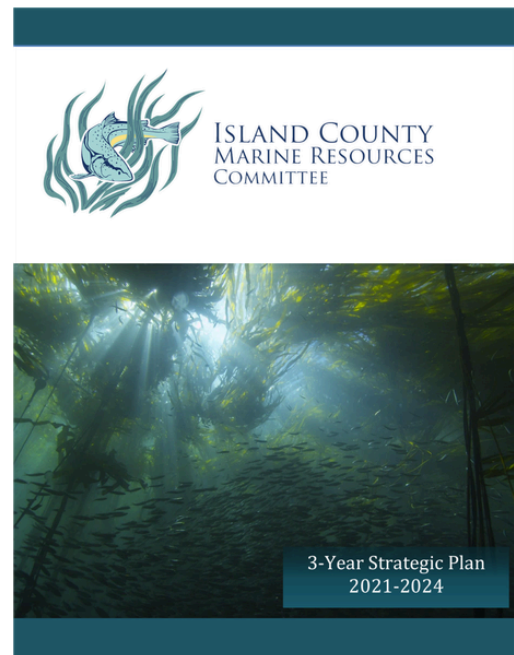
Timeframe for the planning document will occur by EOY 2026, the plan should be ongoing as the Island 2027-2030 Strategic Plan is a living document that should be utilized monthly and adapted on as needed.



DELIVERABLES

- Strategic Plan that all MRC members have bought into
- Easy and effective ways to communicate with partners and governing bodies about the MRC's work
- Develop processes that ensure the Plan is used throughout the three-year timeline and benchmarks are reviewed. In addition, as things change, the MRC is prepared to pivot effectively from the Plan and move in a coordinated manner.

“Throughout 2026, the Island County MRC Strategic Planning Subcommittee has worked to develop a framework for 2027–2030. The committee met regularly, hosting presentations, interviews, research, discussions, and creative working sessions to consider how the MRC sees its role over the next several years and to shape goals that will guide its work. As fellow MRCs and partners embark on similar Strategic Planning projects, this presentation offer lessons learned as helpful guideposts for future Strategic Planning projects.”



OUTCOMES

- Empower and encourage fellow MRCs to embark on a Strategic Planning process by demonstrating a successful project process.
- Coordinating with fellow MRCs and partner organizations for continued Strategic Plan discussions moving forward.
- Inspire continued relationship-building between community partners, fellow MRCs, and new and future collaborators throughout Strategic Planning goal implementation.



project lead: Elise Adams
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CONSERVATION/RESTORATION

DISCOVERY BAY OLYMPIA OYSTER RESTORATION

This project seeks to re-establish a large self-sustaining Olympia oyster bed in Discovery Bay. Olympia oysters improve water quality and provide habitat structure.



Baby oyster line art: PSRF

OUR PARTNERS

Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe contributes staff time and the expertise of one of their biologists as a project lead and he also leads population surveys each year.

WA Dept of Fish and Wildlife contributes staff expertise and guidance, crew to distribute shell and assistance with shellfish transfer permits. In 2025 they contributed 1000 bags of shell.

Taylor Shellfish provides free shell and staff time.

Puget Sound Restoration Fund supplies shell stacks and data analysis for oyster recruitment for MRC sites, in 2026 four PSRF employees also helped with the survey at Discovery Bay.



Waiting for the tide to come in high enough to drop 1200 bags of shell onto the powerlines restoration area. The bags would be emptied onto the tideflat at low tide by volunteers. (Neil Harrington)

MAIN ACTIVITIES

- The MRC has spread settlement substrate in the form of Pacific oyster shell to facilitate the expansion of a small native Olympia oyster population.
- Yearly population surveys of the powerlines restoration site.

BUDGET & TIMEFRAME

\$99,203

Ongoing timeframe.



Volunteers celebrating after emptying over a thousand bags of shell onto the powerlines site. (DNR)

DELIVERABLES

1. The powerlines site has received a total of about 140 yards of shell since 2014 to establish a large bed on the tide flats. 120 yards of that was in the last three years.
2. The lagoon site has received roughly 10 yards of shell beginning in 2019 to expand a small population which has acted as a larval source for the bay.

OUTCOMES

- The powerlines population is now up to nearly 470,000 oysters and has shown strong population recruitment and growth after the shell placement in the last three years.
- Baby oysters have settled and grown on the shell in the lagoons- expanding the population.

“The Discovery Bay Olympia oyster project started off relatively modestly- could we expand the lagoon population out onto the tide flat? That was successful and when the opportunity presented itself to add another tideland parcel the project was expanded. Now there is a population of Olympia oysters nearing half a million where 12 years ago there were just scattered oysters. Setting out shell in suitable habitat in the lagoon and along the spit was the same- a modest project, that worked so it was continued. The lesson is to start small and go big if it works.”

**project leads: Katie Kowal kkowal@co.jefferson.wa.us
Neil Harrington nharrington@jamestowntribe.org**





SAN JUAN COUNTY
Marine Resources
Committee

EDUCATION/OUTREACH

PLASTIC FREE SALISH SEA

The purpose is to unify and mobilize Salish Sea communities toward actively participating in the reduction of plastic waste in our waterways and landscapes.

MAIN ACTIVITIES

- Great Islands Cleanup Events
- Adopt a Beach/Adopt a Road Programs
- Boat Shrink Wrap Recycling Pilot
- Outreach and Engagement at Community Events

OUR PARTNERS

Friends of the San Juans, San Juan Islands Conservation District, San Juan County Solid Waste Program, Lautenbach Recycling, Orcas Island Exchange, San Juan Islands Yacht Club, Lopez Solid Waste Disposal District

BUDGET & TIMEFRAME

\$20,000 annual funding (SEANWS grant)

In kind contributions from:

300+ Great Island Cleanup volunteers

76 Adopt-a-Beach Stewards

8 Adopt-a-Road Stewards

8 Subcommittee members

Ongoing timeframe



Great Island Cleanup volunteers on San Juan. (Katie Johnson).

Plastic Free Salish Sea is an initiative working to reduce the use of single-use plastics and keep plastic out of marine waters. Long term goals include changing behaviors around plastic use and empowering people to make responsible choices for a more sustainable future. The short-term goal of this project is to continue to educate and engage the public with resources, social and print media, and through clean up activities.

The success of Plastic Free Salish Sea is dependent upon dedicated volunteers to lend their time, expertise, and passion to furthering this initiative. Led by the MRC, educators, community members, waste operators, environmental groups, nonprofits, and volunteers come together to reduce plastic waste in our waterways and landscapes.



Staff and Volunteers cleaning up trash on outer islands in the Humpback Hauler. (Katie Fleming).

DELIVERABLES

- Community engagement through participation in events and targeted outreach
- Making plastic reduction toolkits readily available for the public
- Engaging the community through regular beach clean-up events, such as the GICU in April and September

OUTCOMES

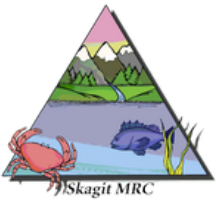
- Reduce plastic pollution through cleanup events and prevention efforts.
- Engage the community through volunteer opportunities and educational outreach.
- Inspire sustainable habits by promoting alternatives to single-use plastics.
- Raise awareness about the impacts of plastic on marine ecosystems.
- Foster collaboration with partners to create lasting regional change.

Project leads:

Sam Whitridge: samw@sanjuancountywa.gov

Katie Johnson: katiej@sanjuancountywa.gov

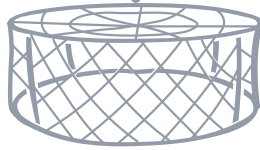




CONSERVATION/RESTORATION

SKAGIT BAY DERELICT CRAB POT REMOVAL

Lost shellfish pots cause negative economic and environmental impacts in marine waters. This project is a collaborative effort to remove derelict crab pots in Skagit Bay.



MAIN ACTIVITIES

- Area identification, prioritization and selection of derelict crab pot locations in Skagit Bay using local knowledge (Swinomish, neighbors) in collaboration with Island MRC (shared waters) and Salish Sea Alliance (SSA) – prioritize 6 sites (2.5 sq. km. or 1 sq.m.). Target sites will include high density gear areas and those that support ROV testing requirements.
- Contract for side-scan sonar to locate derelict crab pots in high density areas identified above in Skagit Bay in preparation for gear removal and recycling by Salish Sea Alliance (SSA) (6 days scanning / 2.5 sq.km. per day).
- Monitor SSA gear removals, coordinate adjustments as needed, and communicate findings and messaging to public for education and outreach.

Skagit MRC in collaboration with Swinomish Indian Tribal Community and Island MRC.

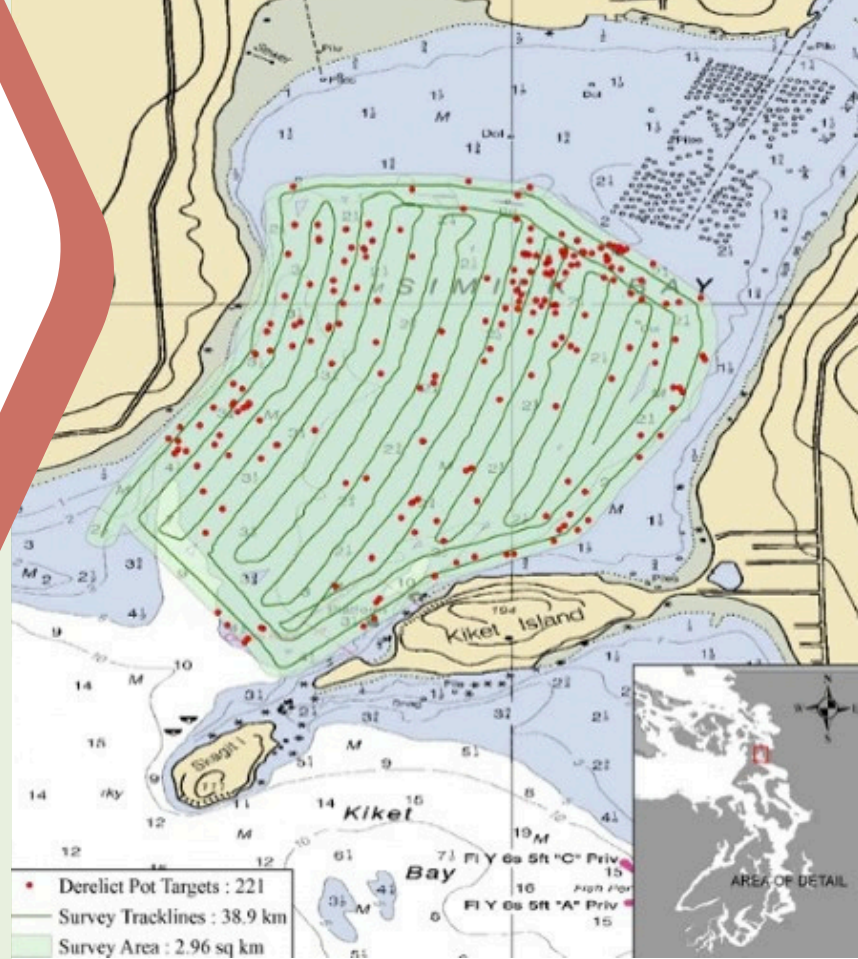
OUR PARTNERS

- **Skagit MRC:** Lynne Wenberg-Davidson (project lead), Tracy Alker (Skagit Co Admin)
- **Swinomish:** Catey Ritchie (co-project lead)
- **Island MRC:** Ken Collins and Jeff Wheeler (co-project leads); Elise Adams (Island Co Admin)
- **Salish Sea Alliance:** Jason Morgan (Marine Projects Manager)

BUDGET & TIMEFRAME

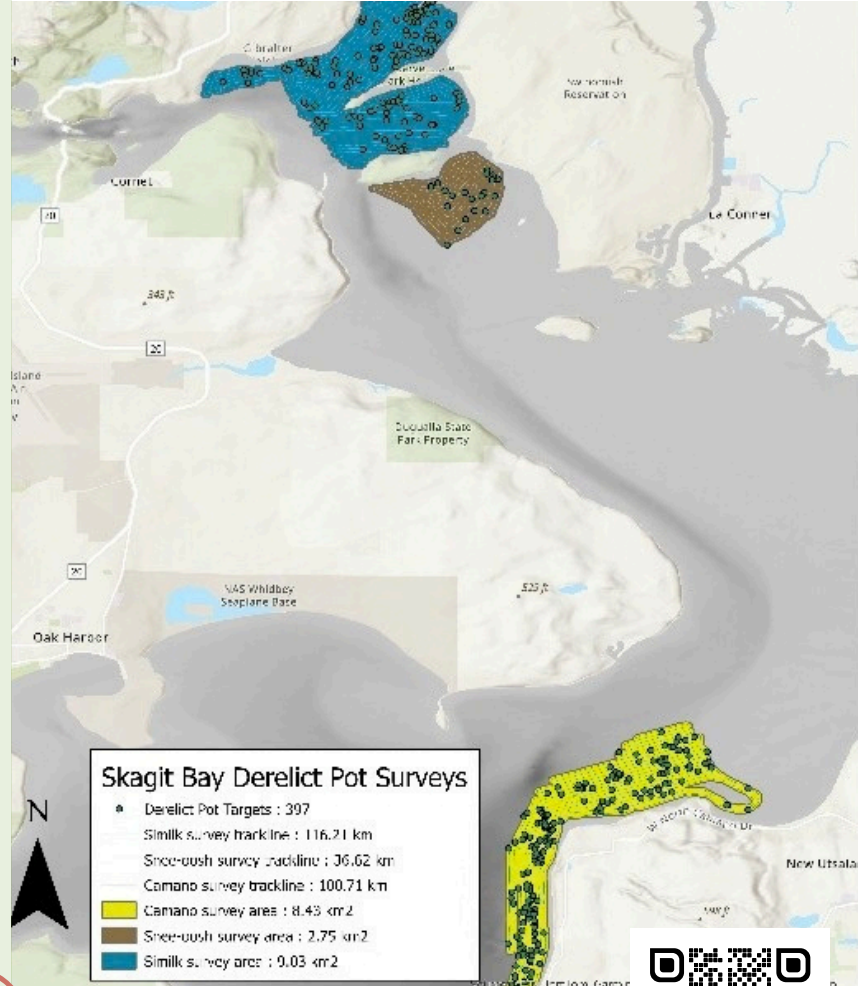
- 2026: Skagit MRC \$30K, Island MRC \$10K, SSA \$100K (est. WDFW funds)
- 2027: Skagit MRC \$2.4K, Island MRC \$10K, SSA \$100K (est. WDFW funds)
- May 2026 – December 2027

- Skagit Bay Map of proposed target areas for high density crabbing in collaboration with Swinomish Fish Commission
- Skagit Bay Map of side scan surveys showing number and location of targets discovered.
- Monthly status and final report of shellfish gear removed and findings of overall project such as # of recreational vs commercial pots, determination of causes for lost gear upon inspection, ROV vs diver results, etc.



OUTCOMES

- Reduced crab mortality and other unobserved mortality caused by lost shellfish pots
- Increased crab harvest opportunities
- Reduced marine habitat damage caused by lost shellfish pots
- Reduced repair/maintenance costs for vessels caused by conflicts with shellfish gear and lost shellfish pots
- Reduced marine pollution



scan to watch an
ROV video from
Salish Sea Alliance

project lead:
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EDUCATION/OUTREACH

MARINE VEG INFORMATION FOR BOATERS

Educate boaters regarding local kelp and eelgrass beds so they know where they are, why they are important, and their role in helping protect them

“When developing materials for public viewing, most people are in a rush so your visuals need to be attractive and concise so they can be memorable in less than six seconds. Focus on 1) issue, 2) why it is important to them and 3) what they can do about it. Audiences are unique in their communication preferences and opportunities; try to cater to their needs to be most effective in communicating information.”

OUR PARTNERS

- NW Straits – grant
- Maul Foster & Alongi – consultant to help with action plan, graphics, and email communications wording so that it can be repeated for other audiences
- MRC Education/Outreach Subteam – MRC members assigned to various tasks to draft posters, fact sheets, email communications, and be points of contact with the various focus groups

OUTCOMES

Develop new boating behaviors, establish new relationships for future opportunities.

BUDGET & TIMEFRAME

- \$40,000 consultant
- \$30,000 staff,
- \$5000 printing/supplies/rentals
- Ongoing timeframe, reusable template for other audiences

MAIN ACTIVITIES

Identify:

- action plan
- target audience
- specific organizations and contact information
- method of outreach/education

Develop:

- Outreach materials
- Make accessible – print, online

Communicate:

- Send communications
- Distribute in-person

DELIVERABLES

- posters
- fact sheets
- presentation (PPT, recorded)



We're connected to bull kelp and eelgrass...

and so are salmon, crab, and orca. When kelp and eelgrass disappear, so do the animals that need them. Help protect these vital habitats from boating impacts!

Snohomish County is at the northern edge of bull kelp die offs occurring in south Puget Sound.

How YOU can help:



Know where bull kelp and eelgrass beds are located.



Anchor in at least 25 feet of water at low tide to protect eelgrass beds.



Steer around bull kelp beds.



Set crab pots outside eelgrass and bull kelp beds.

PLAN AHEAD AND PROTECT OUR SHARED WATERS

Find out how at snocomrc.org or scan the QR code.





Baby oyster line art: PSRF

CONSERVATION/RESTORATION

DRAYTON HARBOR OLYMPIA OYSTER RESTORATION

The ultimate goal of this project is to establish a self-sustaining population of Olympia oysters in Drayton Harbor, while enhancing water quality and habitat complexity.

MAIN ACTIVITIES

- Purchasing Olympia oyster seeded cultch from PSRF to use in test plots
- Recruiting volunteers from local schools / environmental groups / community
- Establishing 6 bioassay test sites across 2 primary locations in Drayton Harbor (2026)
- Assessing habitat conditions at each test plot (2026)
- Will conduct the first annual population survey to assess the survival of Olympia oysters at each test site (starting in 2027). These monitoring efforts may continue for up to five years and will provide critical information for guiding future restoration priorities.

BUDGET & TIMEFRAME

\$28,375 (2 year budget, and most of this is to support the purchase of Olympia oyster seeded cultch from PSRF). Ongoing timeframe.

OUR PARTNERS

- **Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW):** Provides expertise on Olympia oysters and guides project planning and implementation. Assists with Olympia oyster outplanting.
- **The Puget Sound Restoration Fund (PSRF):** Provides expertise on Olympia oysters and guides project planning and implementation. Helped guide the Olympia oyster outplanting process and establishment of bioassays in Drayton Harbor. Provided 150 bags of hatchery reared Olympia oyster seeded cultch that was used to establish the bioassays.
- **Drayton Harbor Oyster Company (DHOC):** Allowed the Olympia oyster seeded cultch to overwinter on their tidelands for a year prior to outplanting. Assisted with the coordination and transport of the 150 bags of Olympia oyster cultch from their tidelands to the bioassay plots.

Close-up of a Pacific oyster shell with multiple Olympia oysters growing on it. (Alexi Guddal).



Volunteers participate in Olympia oyster restoration efforts in Drayton Harbor. (Alexi Guddal).

DELIVERABLES

From October 2025 through September 2026:

- 150 bags of Olympia oyster seeded cultch were purchased in full from PSRF
- 2 field events occurred to establish six Olympia oyster restoration plots at 2 sites in Drayton Harbor
- 23 total volunteers participated in the field events
- Over 110 hours of volunteer time were contributed

OUTCOMES

- Increase in community engagement and participation around Olympia oyster restoration in Whatcom County
- Understanding of locations / habitat patches that are the most suitable for continued Olympia oyster restoration efforts
- And ultimately (and hopefully), the establishment of a self-sustaining population of Olympia Oysters in Drayton Harbor (as defined as 2 million or more individuals).

“Olympia oyster restoration efforts rely on project partners and lots of engaged, community volunteers. The Whatcom MRC is demonstrating that locally organized, volunteer driven programs can help to accelerate restoration outcomes, while also strengthening public engagement in marine conservation.”



MRC volunteers work to establish a restoration test plot in Drayton Harbor. (Dana Daniels).

project lead: Jackie Dexter
jedexter@gmail.com

